

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 11TH MARCH, 2021</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

Councillors P. Baldwin
D. Bevan
J. Collins
M. Cook
M. Cross
N. Daniels
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
G. L. Davies
P. Edwards
L. Elias
D. Hancock
K. Hayden
S. Healy
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
J. Mason
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
C. Meredith
J. Millard
J. C. Morgan
J. P. Morgan
L. Parsons
G. Paulsen
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
T. Sharrem
T. Smith

B. Summers
 B. Thomas
 G. Thomas
 S. Thomas
 J. Wilkins
 B. Willis
 L. Winnett

AND: Managing Director
 Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Communications, Marketing and Customer Access Manager

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier, H. Trollope, D. Wilkshire, Interim Chief Officer Commercial and Corporate Director of Education.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	

4. **REVENUE BUDGET 2021/2022**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chief Officer Resources commenced by advising that this was the final stage of the 2021/2022 budget setting process which, brought together the budget decisions of Council which had previously been made together with the precepts as notified by the statutory authorities. In addition, the report highlighted and set out the budget requirement for 2021/2022, the overall Council Tax level for 2021/2022 which included the statutory precepts and the relevant statutory resolutions.

It was noted that the Council had calculated the amounts for the year (2021/2022) in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 and details of the overall Council Tax proposals including the valuation bands were provided within paragraph 3.4(k) of the report

Members were advised of the following correction to the report. It was noted that the amount of £224,556,491 referred to in paragraph 3.4(a) should be amended to read £224,856,491.

The Chief Officer continued by advising that the precept from the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for 2021/2022 totalled £5,987,866 and the Town/Community Councils precept for the same period totalled £456,101.

Table 1 attached at Appendix 1, provided a summary of the resulting portfolio estimates taking into account the Bridging the Gap proposals, cost pressures and growth items. In addition, £1.254m would be transferred into the Council's reserves. This resulted in a statutory budget requirement of £157,379,330. Discretionary rate relief of £208,000 would also need to be added to the budget requirement to give the total net revenue budget for 2021/2022 of £157,587,330.

To conclude, the Chief Officer Resources reported on the following two points in accordance with the requirements of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003:

- i. The robustness of the estimates included in the budget.
- ii. The adequacy of the Authority's reserves.

The Chief Officer was able to conclude that the estimates had been compiled with the most up to date information available and were suitably robust. Cost pressures had been considered during the budget setting process and for the medium term.

In respect of the adequacy of the Authority's reserves, paragraphs 5.1.9 to 5.1.12 of the report demonstrated that the Authority was looking to achieve a sustainable position for the forthcoming year and in the medium term. The reserves protocol would continue to review reserves in order to ensure that General Reserves were kept at a sustainable level in the medium term.

The Leader of the Labour Group advised that neither of the Labour Group or the Minority Independent Group supported the 3.3% increase in the level of council tax or indeed any other increase above the rate of inflation and requested that this be noted accordingly.

The Leader of the Council stated that the Council had a statutory responsibility to agree the report and the options were outlined in paragraph 3. Several of these recommendations were for noting purposes only and one recommendation was for Council to acknowledge the precept set by the Town/Community Councils and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. He concluded by proposing that these recommendations be approved en bloc. This proposal was seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group stated that because the report contained factual information to note and detailed the decisions that took place at Special Council the previous week (4th March) he suggested that a recorded vote was not required on this occasion. He indicated that the Labour Group, and the Minority Independent Group, accepted and noted the recommendation which accurately and correctly flowed from the decision taken by Special Council on 4th March, 2021. But in doing so he added that both opposition groups remained firm in their belief that Council Tax should not have been set higher than inflation this year. The Leader of the Minority Independent Group confirmed that was also their position i.e. they accepted the recommendation.

The Leader of the Council stated that because these were statutory resolutions which would enable the Resources Department to undertake work for the council tax base for the forthcoming year, he was

content with the suggestion made, subject to the approval of the Monitoring Officer and assumed that the view of the Labour Group and Minority Independent Group Members would be to oppose the recommendation and if no Member indicated otherwise, that the Independent Group Members would be supporting the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that as there was no stated intention voiced from any Member present, to oppose the recommendation, the proposed course of action in not proceeding to a recorded individual vote was acceptable.

Therefore, it was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and it was noted that:

- 3.1** The Council agreed at its meeting on 4th March, 2021 a Council Tax increase of 3.3% for the 2021/2022 financial year. As a result, the Blaenau Gwent Council element of the full council tax charge would be:-

Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15

- 3.2** The Council had calculated the following amounts for the year (2021/2022) in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Act 1992:

- 3.3** The Council Tax base was the number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g. discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate which for 2021/2022 was 95%.

- a)** The amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3, of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year was:

20,794.09

- b)** The amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

4,662.72	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,697.24	Brynmawr
2,710.35	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,731.02	Tredegar

- c) For the year 2021/2022 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £5,987,866), in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner								
Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
191.97	223.97	255.96	287.96	351.95	415.94	479.93	575.92	671.91

- 3.4 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2021/2022 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- a) 224,856,491 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (d) of the Act.
- b) 67,477,161 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) and (c) of the Act.
- c) 157,379,330 Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- d) 208,000 Being the amount the Authority estimates in relation to Sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.
- e) 120,360,000 Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.

- f)** 1,790.28 Being the amount at (c) above plus the amount at (d) above and less the amount at (e) above, all divided by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- g)** 456,101 Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- h)** 1,768.35 Being the amount at (f) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (g) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- i)** The amounts given by adding to the amount at (h) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

1,809.10	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,793.69	Brynmawr
1,799.60	Nantyglo & Blaina
1,797.60	Tredeggar

- j)** The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) and (i) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, was applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion was applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands were:

The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,206.07	1,407.07	1,608.09	1,809.10	2,211.13	2,613.14	3,015.17	3,618.20	4,221.23
Brynmawr	1,195.79	1,395.09	1,594.39	1,793.69	2,192.29	2,590.88	2,989.48	3,587.38	4,185.28
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,199.73	1,399.69	1,599.65	1,799.60	2,199.51	2,599.42	2,999.33	3,599.20	4,199.07
Tredeggar	1,198.40	1,398.13	1,597.87	1,797.60	2,197.07	2,596.53	2,996.00	3,595.20	4,194.40

Ebbw Vale	1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15
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- k)** That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (c) and (j) above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

The Full Tax of the County Borough Tax including Police and Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,398.04	1,631.04	1,864.05	2,097.06	2,563.08	3,029.08	3,495.10	4,194.12	4,893.14
Brynmawr	1,387.76	1,619.06	1,850.35	2,081.65	2,544.24	3,006.82	3,469.41	4,163.30	4,857.19
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,391.70	1,623.66	1,855.61	2,087.56	2,551.46	3,015.36	3,479.26	4,175.12	4,870.98
Tredegar	1,390.37	1,622.10	1,853.83	2,085.56	2,549.02	3,012.47	3,475.93	4,171.12	4,866.31
Ebbw Vale	1,370.87	1,599.35	1,827.83	2,056.31	2,513.27	2,970.22	3,427.18	4,112.62	4,798.06