

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT HYBRID MEETING - ZOOM - COUNTY HALL ON TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2024**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)

County Councillors J Berriman, J Charlton, R Church, S Cox, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, P Roberts, D Selby and D A Thomas

In attendance: County Councillors B Baynham, J Brignell-Thorp (Cabinet Assistant), Aled Davies, Angela Davies, A Kennerley (Cabinet Assistant), A Williams

<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Gary Mitchell, Chair of the Farms Estate Advisory Group and the Chief Executive.

<b>2. MINUTES</b>
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The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as a correct record.

<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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There were no declarations of interest reported.

<b>4. COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2025/26</b>
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Cabinet considered the Council Tax base for 2025/26. The Head of Corporate Services agreed to look into a request to calculate the Council Tax base in each of the locality areas.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the whole of its area for the year 2025-26 of £64,771.66. That the calculation of the Council Tax Base for each Town and Community Council contained within paragraph 4.2 of the report be approved to meet the legal requirement of the Council to set a Council Tax Base for 2025-26.**

<b>5. FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025 (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024)</b>
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Cabinet considered the financial forecast for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The report set out the reasons for the projected overspend position of £3.9 million if nothing changed. This was mostly due to forecast overspends on Adults Social Care (£2.9 million), Children's Services (£0.8 million), and the cost of borrowing (£1.3 million). The report also set out details of grants received and virements required.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that Cabinet would have details of the reserves held. In response to a challenge from the Cabinet on unachieved savings, she advised that Directors were preparing a report on the delivery of savings for Cabinet. The Director also confirmed that staffing levels were also kept under constant review.

County Councillor Aled Davies presented the recommendation of the Finance Panel that paragraph 7.4 of the report be incorporated into the recommendations, which the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation said he was happy to accept.

The Director of Social Services and Wellbeing reported on the pressures in Adult Social Care and Children's Services and the mitigating actions that had been taken. She confirmed that Directors of Social Services in Wales were lobbying Welsh Government on the costs being placed on local authorities by hospital discharges and the Home Office on the support needed for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That Cabinet note the current budget position and the projected full year forecast to the end of March 2024.**
- 2. That the grants set out in section 5.1 of the report and Appendix C are noted.**
- 3. That the virements set out in section 5.2 are approved and those in 5.3 agreed for recommendation to Council. This is to comply with the virement rules for budget movements as set out in the financial regulations.**
- 4. That a review of all budget lines be undertaken and where underspends are already being reported at Appendix A and are unlikely to change, or where income is higher than expected and projected to continue, the section 151 officer has delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to freeze or realign these budgets for the remainder of this financial year.**
- 5. That Cabinet notes the budget position of Social Services and the actions proposed as set out in Appendix D to the report.**

<b>6.</b>	<b>CAPITAL FORECAST 2024-25, AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
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Cabinet considered an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme for 2024/25 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

<b>7.</b>	<b>STAR SURVEY RESULTS</b>
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Cabinet considered the results of the STAR survey of the Council's housing tenants, undertaken in 2023. The survey showed overall improvements in many areas of the services offered by the Council to its tenants. To further improve satisfaction, the Customer First programme was one of the top priorities for Housing Services in 2024-2025. This recognised that improvements still need to be made in communication between the Council and its tenants and all those who use Housing Services. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys placed on record his thanks to the staff of the Housing Service.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet accept the report and appendices for information and note the overall improvement in performance since 2021 and 2019.**

<b>8.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FARM ESTATE ADVISORY GROUP</b>
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Cabinet received the recommendations of the Farm Estate Advisory Group. The Leader thanked County Councillor Gary Mitchell for the way he had chaired the Group and said that he was happy to accept the recommendations.

**RESOLVED to accept the recommendations of the Farm Estate Advisory Group.**

<b>9.</b>	<b>DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING</b>
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Cabinet noted the delegated decisions taken since the last meeting.

<b>10.</b>	<b>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Cabinet noted the forward work programme. The Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer would check whether the report on the response to the proposed new national park in North Wales could be dealt with as a delegated decision.

**County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)**