

PHASE 2 BUDGET CONSULTATION (2024/25)
**(EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee held on
Monday, 29 January 2024 at 5.00 pm

**County Borough Councillors – The following Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027
Committee Councillors were present online:**

Councillor J Edwards (Chair)

Councillor B Stephens	Councillor M Ashford
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor R Davis	Councillor Sheryl Evans
Councillor Sera Evans	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor G L Warren	Councillor M Powell
Councillor S Emanuel	

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr M Veale

Officers in attendance:-

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Mrs S Daniel, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Ms L Lawson, Performance Manager

Apologies for absence

Councillor K Morgan
Councillor C Middle

Extract from the minutes

Budget Consultation 2024-25 (Phase 2)

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the report to Members to be consulted on and for the Committee to formally respond to the second phase of the Council's 2024-25 Budget Consultation.

The Service Director advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to pre-scrutinise the draft 2024/25 Revenue Budget Strategy, as part of the second phase of the 2024-25 Budget Consultation process.

The Service Director Finance and Improvement Services then gave a presentation to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered the following areas: Introduction – 2024/25 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy; The Council's Current Financial Position (2023/24); Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines; Provisional Local Government Settlement 2024/25 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf; Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2024/25; and Next steps and key dates.

A Member was pleased to see that 63% of respondents to the phase 1 budget consultation process fed back that the Council should continue with its strategy on reserves, recognising that reserves cannot be used every year without being replenished.

A Member fed back that the number of responses to the first phase of the consultation seemed disproportionate in comparison to the number of people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf and asked if there was an opportunity to learn from this and use different engagement strategies.

The Service Director Finance and Improvement Services indicated that the Council considers its arrangements on an ongoing basis to learn lessons, with a comprehensive approach to engagement in place that includes face-to-face events in town centre locations, engagement with third sector partners and schools, and also through the use of social media.

A Member asked if the Council are doing enough to educate people on the work of the Council, so they can better understand its finances, how funds are spent and its different functions.

The Service Director Finance and Improvement Services fed back that the Council aims to make available information to aid residents' understanding of the Council's finances and where it spends public money, and provided examples in the form of an easy read guide produced for budget consultation purposes; a leaflet included within Council Tax notices to residents that provides a breakdown on the Council's budget and how it is spent and also how the Council is funded; and engaging directly with school-based learners through consultation processes. The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications added that the number of consultees referenced in the presentation does not reflect on-going communication activity the Council undertakes via its social media channels and noted that a number of separate public consultation processes have also been undertaken in recent months linked to the budget setting process that have received high levels of engagement from the public.

A Member asked if demographic information in relation to individuals responding to the budget consultation was available to analyse. The Service Director Finance and Improvement Services fed back that this information is captured and can be used to inform on-going consultation arrangements.

A Member of the Committee commented that whilst increasing Council Tax is never popular and is a decision that is not taken lightly, the Council also need to

ensure the necessary funding is in place to provide a wide range of vital services to our residents.