

Agenda item 2.4

P-04-651 To Work to Protect Local Government When Determining the Budgets this Autumn

We look upon the Welsh Assembly Government to maintain the present level of funding for Local Authorities across Wales and to safeguard Neath Port Talbot Councils funding needs.

The Welsh Assembly Government need to go through their budgets line by line and eliminate wasteful spending to ensure that they protect public services in Wales. We understand that Local Authorities have a role to play in eliminating wasteful spending; but Local Authorities have largely done this and are now down to the bare bones and core services in terms of further cuts

The Welsh Government now need to spend smarter not spend less, without smart spending by Welsh Government communities across Wales will see key services scaled back or lost. Further Local Authority budget cuts will devastate local jobs, services and communities. We are hearing of more and more public services being closed or outsourced. Local authorities are major employers and any more reduction of funding will have a huge impact on the local economy. This will result in more deprivation in our communities.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is one of the most deprived councils in Wales and requires additional funding to maintain the services provided to the most vulnerable within the Borough. NPT are the major employer in the area and any reduction in funding will have a detrimental impact on employment and the ability for these vital services to be sustainable and remain in-house.

Lack of funding to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and other Local Authorities in Wales results in: disruptive, costly and poor quality service provision, the loss of jobs and employees terms and conditions and most importantly the loss of democratic accountability if services are lost to the private or third sector. Currently the only solution to ensure current services and jobs are maintained, if funding continues to be cut from Welsh Government, is for local authorities to use their reserves to

plug funding cuts. If this happens then reserves will be spent within 3 years, there will be no money left to manage financial risk, this is not viable.

We agree with Welsh Governments vision that everybody in Wales should live in well-connected vibrant, viable and sustainable communities with a strong local economy and good quality of life. In order for this vision to succeed we must safeguard public services. This will ensure that the residents of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the rest of Wales have a belief in a better future.

Wiser allocation of finances is essential, for example to ensure a vibrant integrated Social Care model fit for the 21st Century Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council require funding to be passported from Health to Local Government.

The Welsh Government must understand that leaving Local Authorities to pick up the bill for national policies is not an option. If our public services within Wales are to survive the next 5 years then the Welsh Government must ensure that all Local Authorities received fair funding.