

## **CABINET**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held in the Assembly Rooms, Town Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday 3rd April 2001 at 10.00 a.m.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors E.C. Edwards (Leader), I.M. German, D.M. Holder, G.M. Kensler, D.M. Morris, E.A. Owens, A.E. Roberts, W.R. Webb and K.E. Wells.

Observers - Councillors M.LI. Davies, K.N. Hawkins, D. Jones, M.M. Jones and W.G. Thomas.

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive, County Clerk, Assistant Chief Executive: Strategy, Corporate Director: Resources, Financial Controller.

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors R.W. Hughes and E.W. Williams.

The Leader welcomed Councillor D. Jones, Vice Chairman of Denbighshire County Council to his first Cabinet meeting. The Leader also welcomed the Press and thanked them for their positive reporting on Denbighshire matters.

## **1291. URGENT MATTERS**

The Leader gave notice of the following item which in his opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972:-

Objective 1 - the Leader would give a verbal update of the latest approvals.

Foot and Mouth Disease - Access to Countryside paper distributed at the meeting and would become item 7 of the Agenda.

Agenda Item 9 - Barnardo's - Henllan Training Centre was withdrawn but would be included at a later date when more information would be available.

## **1292. MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

The Minutes of the Cabinet held on 22 March 2001 (previously circulated) were submitted.

### **Matters Arising:-**

Item 4 Leisure Centre Use Forum - Councillor G.M. Kensler asked if some local flexibility could be achieved to enable representation of other interested organisations within the locality e.g. For the Denbigh Forum could tennis or bowls clubs be represented on the forum. It was agreed that this be explored by the relevant officers.

Item 13 Proposed Renewal Areas - South West Rhyl and Denbigh - typographical error to read Councillor D.M. Morris.

Item 17 Applications to Lease Commercial Units B and C, Rhyl Railway Station - minute to incorporate the need for offloading arrangements for the Units to be made.

Item 22 Land Adjacent to Pen y Llan, Bishop's Wood Road, Prestatyn - typographical error to read: 375 sq metres in both the minute and resolution.

***RESOLVED*** that subject to the above the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 March 2001 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**1293. RECRUITMENT**

The Leader of the Council submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking approval for external advertisement:-

Clerical Officer - Denbighshire childcare Partnership Scale 2 Part Time

**RESOLVED** that the external advertisement of the above post be approved.

**1294. BETTER BUSINESS WALES**

The Leader submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members approval for the County Council to become a member of a company limited by guarantee established to deliver the Better Business Wales initiative, a major initiative to enable Welsh businesses to maximise the opportunities provided by e-commerce. The initiative is supported by BT, HSBC, the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association and EU Objective One Funding.

**RESOLVED** that Council should apply to become a member of the company limited by guarantee established to deliver the Better Business Wales initiative.

**1295. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION - INTERIM FLOOD RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

Councillor D.M. Morris, the Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to interim land drainage flood response procedure for use on a year-round basis, in conjunction with the winter maintenance and 24 hour emergency call-out procedures already operated by Highways and Transportation. Members were asked to recognise the importance of having such a service in place and support the allocation of additional funding within subsequent years' revenue budget, to enable continued provision.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the observations of the Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committees, Members:-

- (a) approved the Highways and Transportation Interim Flood Procedure as a formal methodology for responding to land drainage flooding threats, and
- (b) recognised the need to allocate additional funds within subsequent years' budget rounds in order for this enhanced level of service to be maintained.

**1296. FLOOD DEFENCE PROGRAMME 2001-2004**

Councillor D.M. Morris, the Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to proceed with a flood defence programme encompassing the major sites within the County which were prone to repeated and/or severe flooding from non-main river land drainage systems. Approval was sought to utilise designated Capital funding allocated by the County Council and supplemented as far as possible by external grants, to firstly carry out the necessary specialist feasibility/design exercises for each location, followed by execution of the appropriate flood defence works.

Councillor G.M. Kensler asked that Dalar Wen, Denbigh be included as a site where flood defence should be included as a priority alongside the Clwyd Avenue Culvert and Lenten Pool Culvert, Denbigh.

Councillor G.M. Kensler pointed out that Lenten Pool is Pwll y Grawys in Welsh.

The Leader and Head of Economic Regeneration said Denbighshire was making an application for additional money to WEFO.

Councillor E.A. Owens outlined the revenue and capital items and reminded Cabinet that if there was a change in priority this should not create an additional spend. Councillor Owens suggested that when

Scrutiny consider this they look at compensatory savings on the revenue side as part of their remit. Resources Scrutiny will follow through the application of capital procedures.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the observations of the Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committees, Members authorised the Head of Highways, to utilise the specifically allocated Capital funding, supplemented by grant aid as appropriate, to prepare and implement a flood defence programme (initially based on a 3 year period) covering the major flooding-prone locations within the County.

#### **1297. FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**

Councillor D.M. Morris, the Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment presented the report which was circulated at the meeting. Councillor Morris said the National Assembly for Wales expected Local Authorities to open areas to the public where there would be minimal risk. The Appendix 1 document attached was a Draft Risk Assessment for the Opening of Selected Countryside Sites and Appendix 2 gave examples of signage which could be used. Before any areas were opened to the public, consultation would be carried out with MAFF, NFU, FUW, CCW and Local Members.

Councillor K.E. Wells said that opening some areas to the public could create confusion and the Authority could be sending out the wrong message to the public.

The Head of Public Protection reminded Members of the needs of the tourist industry and said that any proposed opening of sites would be discussed with both the farming unions.

Councillor D.M. Morris suggested that the detailed risk assessments could be brought to Cabinet along with details of the consultations carried out.

**RESOLVED** that Members agreed to a risk assessment being carried out with the results being presented to a Special Meeting of the Cabinet.

#### **1298. REGISTRATION SERVICE (BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES) - INCREASE IN SCALE OF FEES - CIVIL WEDDINGS**

The Leader submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members approval to an increase in the existing fees in respect of applications for the approval of premises for use as venues for Civil Marriages and attendance of Registration staff at such marriages.

**RESOLVED** that Members approved the increase in existing fees as detailed in the report.

#### **1299. STREET LIGHTING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT - EXTENSION**

Councillor D.M. Morris, the Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' agreement to extend the 4 year contract for a further 12 months in accordance with the terms of the contract.

The Leader said this contract demonstrated an ideal partnership with another Local Authority.

**RESOLVED** that Members agreed:-

- (a) that the contractor be offered an extension to the contract until 30 June 2002, and
- (b) that the Head of Highways and Transportation be given delegated powers to extend and let such contracts in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

#### **1300. CHARGING FOR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES 2001-2002**

Councillor A.E. Roberts, the Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval for the maximum charge for Local Authority Residential Accommodation 2001/2002 and that Members approve an inflation factor increase of 2.5%.

**RESOLVED** that Members approved the 2.5% increase in charges as detailed in the report with effect from April 2001.

**1301. CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES 2001-2002**

Councillor A.E. Roberts, the Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to increase charges by inflation and to approve the revised table of charges as set out in the Appendix to the report.

**RESOLVED** that Members approved the 2.5% increase in charges as set out in Appendix 1.

**1302. NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CHILD CARE - CONSORTIUM BIDS**

Councillor K.E. Wells, the Lead Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' agreement to Denbighshire County Council Directorate for Lifelong Learning becoming the lead body for consortium bids to the New Opportunities Fund (Out of School Hours Childcare).

**RESOLVED** that Members agreed for Denbighshire County Council Lifelong Learning Department to become the lead body of consortium bids for New Opportunities Fund Out of School Hours Childcare.

**1303. OBJECTIVE ONE**

The Leader gave a verbal update on Objective One in Denbighshire - four applications have been approved:-

Showcase Project for the ground floor of Denbigh Town Hall to provide a focus for new development opportunities in the town - grant of £216,000 towards the total project cost of £550,000.

A Visitor Enhancement Programme to update the environment around the High Street, Rhuddlan - grant of £235,000 towards the total project cost of £690,000.

A Community Key Fund providing capital grants for the most deprived parts of Denbighshire - grant of £385,000 together with National Assembly funding of £138,000 towards a total project cost of £523,000.

A Rural Key Fund - grant of £182,000 together with National Assembly funding of £185,000 towards a total project cost of £367,000.

At this juncture (11.50 a.m) the meeting adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

**1304. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 8, 9 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**1305. RESTRUCTURE AND STRENGTHENING OF CENTRAL ACCOUNTANCY FUNCTION**

Councillor E.A. Owens, the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval for a new structure for Central Accountancy, the strengthening of links between the centre and the staff devolved to Directorates, together with the appointment of 2 accountants by external advertisement and as detailed in the appendices to the report.

**RESOLVED** that Members approved the new structure for Central Accountancy Division together with the strengthened links between the central and devolved staff and that approval be given to the external advertisement of accountant posts following the appointment of the Principal Management Accountant.

**1306. BEST VALUE - PAYROLL SERVICES**

Councillor E.A. Owens, the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources submitted the detailed report and appendices (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to the Best Value Performance Plan for Payroll Services.

The Head of Exchequer expanded on the process of the preparation of the Best Value Review. Members were informed of the outcome of the external challenge.

**RESOLVED** that Members received and approved the Payroll Services Best Value report.

**1307. CORWEN RAILWAY STATION AND TOWN CENTRE LINK STUDY**

The Leader submitted the report (previously circulated) seeking Members approval to the appointment of RPS Chapman Warren Limited by the County Council to undertake the Corwen Railway Station and Town Centre Link Study.

**RESOLVED** Members agreed the implementation of the Corwen Railway Station and Town Centre link Study by confirming the appointment of RPS Chapman Warren Limited by the County Council to undertake the study.

**1308. THE POST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive submitted the report and appendix (previously circulated) which detailed guidance to Members on whether or not Council continue with a Chief Executive post and gave details of draft guidance circulated to both England and Wales together with the key characteristics of a Chief Executive Post for a Modernised Local Authority.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommend to Council:-

- (a) that a Chief Executive should be appointed;
- (b) tenders be sought for specialist consultants, and
- (c) the specialist consultants advise with regard to the eventual Job Description/Person Specification for the post.

Councillor G.M. Kensler abstained from voting.

**1309. INTERIM POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Beverlea Frowen, District Audit gave an overview of her role within the District Audit which looked at Performance Management and the Modernising Agenda.

Her research would address:-

- 1 improved policy making;
- 2 improved decision making, and
- 3 the achievement of greater accountability.

This would entail examining the operation of the County's Executive and Scrutiny arrangements together with arrangements to meet the new ethical framework via Standards Committee and a New Code of Conduct. In addition the views would be sought of external partners e.g. Health Authority, Police, Schools and the Voluntary Sector, as to the Council's modernisation programme.

Work had commenced by holding 5 focus groups and there would be further individual Member and Officer interviews. Cabinet was requested to consider whether it wished to participate by means of a focus group, individual interviews or a combination of both.

Members then questioned Ms. Frowen on a range of issues appertaining to the implementation of the Modernising Agenda.

Three key areas were identified, namely - mechanisms for “call in” of decisions, scrutiny of proposals and the review of policy and strategic direction.

***RESOLVED*** that Members agreed to meet with Ms. Frowen both on an individual basis and as a Cabinet.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.

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