

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held in the Town Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday 29 January 2002 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Observers: Councillors S. Drew, R.J.R. Jones, K.N. Hawkins, J.A. Smith, A .J. Tobin and C.H. Williams.

ALSO PRESENT

Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Resources, Financial Controller and the County Clerk.

1182. URGENT MATTERS

The Leader of the Council gave notice of the following items 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:-

- (i) Item 11 ~ Withdrawn
- (ii) Item 9 ~ Appendix to the item circulated at the meeting.

1183. MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet held on 17 January 2002 [previously circulated] were submitted.

Item 20 ~ Wirral and North Wales Purchasing Organisation: Councillor E.A. Owens reported on a preliminary meeting held with the WNWPO and said further meetings would follow.

***RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 January 2002 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.*

1184. RECRUITMENT

The Leader of the Council, Councillor E.C. Edwards submitted the following applications for approval:

- 3(i) Sc 6 Revenues Officer ~ Resources: Revenues
- 3(ii) Sc 1 Revenues Assistant [Clerical] ~ Resources: Revenues
- 3(iii) Soulbury 1-11 Education Psychologist ~ Lifelong Learning: Education
- 3(iv) Soulbury 1-11 Education Psychologist ~ Lifelong Learning: Education
- 3(v) Temporary Social Worker SW 1-3 to 31.02.03 ~ Personal Services: Purchasing Section
- 3(vi) PO1 Senior Practitioner ~ Personal Services: Children's Services
- 3(vii) Sc 2 Temporary Admin Assistant from 01.04.2002 ~ Personal Services: Admin Section, Rhyl

***RESOLVED** that the external advertisement of the above mentioned posts be approved.*

1185. TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY TRAINING COURSE - 19 OCTOBER 2001

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Members' retrospective approval to attendance by Denbighshire County Councillors at the

Telecommunication Industry Training Course on 19 October 2001 in Caernarfon thereby allowing Members to claim attendance expenses. The course was arranged and hosted by Gwynedd County Council following a meeting of the North Wales Planning Officers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet retrospectively approved the attendance of Denbighshire County Councillors at the Telecommunication Industry Training Course held in Caernarfon on 19 October 2001, thereby allowing Members to claim attendance expenses.

1186. MEMBERS NOMINATIONS FOR LEA GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor K.E. Wells, Lead Cabinet Member for Education and ICT presented the report [previously circulated] detailing nominations for LEA Governor vacancies submitted by the Local Members for the areas in which the schools are located.

RESOLVED that the LEA Governor appointments be approved as listed below:

Clocaenog CP School ~ Mrs. S. McCarter

Henllan CP School ~ Mr. T.D. Jones

1187. DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES - E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Councillor K.E. Wells, Lead Cabinet Member for Education and ICT presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Cabinet approval of the overall vision for delivering quality services and to take ownership of the E-Government Strategy. Cabinet were asked to agree that year one was used as the preparation year during which a full audit and of analysis customer needs would be undertaken, followed by a review of existing service processes based on the findings of the audit, which would lead to a strategy for delivering quality services. Immediate measures to secure improvements to services were sought, identified in the Draft Strategy attached to the report. Councillor Wells reminded Members that a complete service would need to be provided for customers and Appendix 4 contained details of where the County is currently. The Project Manager would require the co-operation of the County as a whole. At some stage a Quality Services Manager would need to be appointed to drive the project forward.

In answer to a query from Councillor G.M. Kensler, Lead Cabinet Member for the Welsh Language, Councillor Wells said since its inception Denbighshire had devolved administrative centres but for the future, the Authority would have one point of contact which would deal with customers sympathetically. In the past, some systems had been implemented ahead of their time and this had a detrimental effect on the service provision hence the need for year one of the project to gather and test information as an essential part of the strategy.

Councillor R.W. Hughes, Lead Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism congratulated the Lead Member and the Head of ICT on the detailed report and in particular the Vision Statement at Appendix 1.

Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance concurred with Councillor Hughes' sentiments and said this would be an effective use of revenues in the future. The strategy of Delivering Quality Services was not an 'add-on' to the current system but a modification and improvement to the system. Councillor Owens informed Members that Nelson, New Zealand had 4 Directors within their Authority, one of whom was the specialist customer services officer.

Councillor Wells in replying to a query from Councillor I.M. German, Lead Cabinet Member for Human Resources said the system for Denbighshire would have to meet critical tests and one could not presume in advance what the solution might be.

The Leader congratulated the Head of ICT and the ICT Department on the good results in the Best Value report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) *that Cabinet approve the overall vision for delivering quality services in the context of the e-Government Strategy;*
- (b) *that Cabinet agree that year one is used as a preparation year during which:*
 - (i). *a full audit and analysis of customer needs will be undertaken;*
 - (ii) *followed by a review of existing service processes based on the findings of the audit,*
 - (iii). *leading to a strategy for delivering quality services which determine the steps needed to deliver Option 2 as an interim measure [pending a detailed Best Value Review to be determined at a future date], and*
- (c) *that immediate measures to secure improvements to services as identified in the draft strategy attached to the report be pursued.*

1188. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISION FOR PEOPLE WITH A SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Members' approval for extending the Priority Levels and Eligibility Criteria for Social Services Provision, with some amendments, to people with a sensory impairment and the introduction of more detailed criteria for accessing equipment and minor adaptations as detailed in the Appendices.

Councillor G.M. Kensler, Lead Cabinet Member for the Welsh Language queried how many people within Denbighshire were affected with a sensory impairment. The Corporate Director for Personal Services undertook to provide Councillor Kensler with the information.

RESOLVED *that Cabinet approve extending the existing Priority Levels and Eligibility Criteria, with the amendment referred to in paragraph 5.1.1 of the report, to services for People with a Sensory Impairment [Appendix 1 of the report] and the introduction of more detailed criteria for accessing equipment and minor adaptations [Appendix 2 of the report].*

1189. SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS - MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1983 - APPROVED SOCIAL WORKERS

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Cabinet approval for the Appointment of an Approved Social Worker. The period of appointment of the Social Worker employed by the Authority to act as an Approved Social Worker is due for renewal.

RESOLVED *that Members approved the appointment of Verona Wikluk, as an Approved Social Worker with immediate effect and to remain valid until 31 December 2006.*

1190. HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services presented the report [previously circulated] on Housing Stock Transfer and for Members to give further consideration to the Shadow Board and the separation of the functions. A Shadow Board for the proposed Dyffryn Community Housing would be formed with 5 Members and 5 Tenants nominated and 5 Independent Members nominated. The Tenant representatives had expressed concern regarding the limited geographic coverage of the County by the nominated Members, particularly in relation to the Dee Valley and Members were asked to give further consideration to the nominations. Further consideration was required of the Strategic Housing Function which would remain with the Authority following any stock transfer along with a number of capital and revenue finance issues for the Council. A report would be prepared on the issues and submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance suggested that Cabinet should not adopt at this stage the recommendations made to the Working Group at 4.5(c). The Head of Housing Services said Cabinet were not at this stage being asked to adopt or endorse the Consultant's recommendations at 4.5.

Councillor W.R. Webb, Lead Cabinet Member for Property queried the figures quoted in the Progress Report Appendix. The Head of Housing Services said formal confirmation of provision was not available from the National Assembly for Wales at this time but this would be pursued.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *Cabinet receive the progress report;*
- (b) *the Political Groups be asked to give further consideration to their representation on the Shadow Board of Dyffryn Community Housing;*
- (c) *a further report on the implications of Stock Transfer for the Council be presented to Cabinet before an application is made to the National Assembly for Wales for Provisional Approval for Stock Transfer in accordance with their Guidelines, based on the adopted draft Business Plan , and*
- (ch) *a special meeting of the County Council be held as appropriate to consider any recommendation to go forward with formal consultation with tenants.*

1191. CONCESSIONARY FARE SCHEME

Councillor D.M. Morris, Lead Member for the Environment presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Members' approval to awarding a contract to Securit World Ltd for the provision of Smart Card based Concessionary Travel passes in Denbighshire from April 2002. Members' approval was also sought for the creation of a new full time post within the Highways and Transportation Department to assist with the administration of the Concessionary Travel Scheme. The National Assembly for Wales regulations state that Local Authorities have to offer elderly or disabled people free travel on local bus services in Wales from 1 April 2002. The Taith Consortium of North Wales Local Authorities intend to issue Smart Concessionary Travel Passes.

Councillor K.E. Wells, Lead Cabinet Member for Education and ICT reminded Members that in considering such items they should be assessed in the light of the Delivering Quality Services report. Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance sought reassurance from the Head of Highways and Transportation that travel passes would be available from 1 April 2002. Councillor Owens also queried the provision of one extra full time post. The Head of Highways and Transportation said there would be a threefold increase in the workload of the department hence the request for another post. The Head of Highways and Transportation also stated that the issue of Smartcard travel passes was an efficient joint process with other North Wales Authorities.

In answer to queries from Members, the Head of Highways and Transportation reminded Members that the travel service was free for travel within Wales from 1 April 2002.

RESOLVED that Members approve:

- (a) *the award of a contract to Securit World Ltd for the provision of Smart Card based Concessionary Travel Passes, and*
- (b) *the creation of a new Scale 2 full time post in the Highways and Transportation Department to assist with the administration of the Concessionary Travel Scheme.*

1192. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY ASSET AND CONDITION SURVEY

Item withdrawn.

1193. CORONATION GARDENS, PRESTATYN

[Councillor I.M. German and Councillor D.M. Morris declared an interest in the item as serving Prestatyn Town Councillors].

Councillor R.W. Hughes, Lead Cabinet Member for the Culture, Leisure and Tourism presented the report [previously circulated] seeking a Cabinet steer in the light of the request from Prestatyn Town Council concerning the devolvement of management functions to Town and Community Councils and to determine whether to support the exploration of proposals to devolve Coronation Gardens to Prestatyn Town Council as requested. Prestatyn Town Council were keen to develop the Coronation Gardens site.

Councillor Hughes read a letter received from Councillor S. Drew, detailing her objections to devolve management functions of Coronation Gardens to Prestatyn Town Council.

The Leader said agreed procedures regarding the devolvement of management functions were required and suggested that a protocol be devised and brought to Cabinet. The item should be considered by the Asset Management and Property Group before being considered by Cabinet.

Councillor E.W. Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Best Value suggested that Prestatyn Town Council be asked to give an indication of what plans they had for Coronation Gardens which would enable both the Asset Management / Property Group and Cabinet make a more informed decision.

The Acting Chief Executive reminded Members of the Authority's aspirations to work closely with Town and Community Councils and that officers would require a steer as to how best to meet Member's aspirations.

RESOLVED that a further report be presented to Cabinet on a possible protocol following consideration of the matter by the Asset Management and Property Group.

1194. REVENUE BUDGET 2001/2002

Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Members' consideration of further actions to reduce the balance of overspendings on services. Councillor Owens detailed the appendices to Members.

RESOLVED that Members noted the figures in the appendices and the possible future need for remedial actions to ensure the elimination of negative balances by the end of the current financial year.

At this juncture (11.25 a.m) the meeting adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

1195. 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 7, 8, 9 and 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

1196. WAIVER OF GRANT CONDITIONS - WEST RHYL GROUP REPAIR SCHEME PHASE 5/2. 4. AQUARIUM STREET, RHYL

Councillor D.M. Morris, Lead Member for the Environment presented the report [previously circulated] seeking Members' consideration of a request from the property owners to waive the Council's right to reclaim the grant aid paid to the owners in respect of works carried out. Following a report to Cabinet on

20.12.2001 officers were instructed to bring the matter to Cabinet to confirm the circumstances of the sale / potential purchase as detailed in the report.

The Head of Public Protection and Regulatory Services detailed further information received regarding the health of the owner of the property. He also informed Members that a period of 5 years had to elapse before a property could be sold which had received grant aid otherwise the Authority could reclaim the grant paid.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed to claim re-payment of the sum of £3149.08, representing one fifth of the total outlay, taking into account the time lapse since the grant has been completed.

1197. GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

[Councillor G.M. Kensler declared an interest in the DVSC - Eirianfa application]

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Member for Personal Services presented the report [previously circulated] seeking approval for the allocation of grant funding to Voluntary Organisations in 2002/2003.

The Assistant Chief Executive: Strategy informed Members that some of the applications received via Social Services were not part of that Service's remit and ideally should be considered corporately. However, no discussion regarding such applications had taken place during the budget setting procedure. New corporate grant setting procedures should be in place for the next financial year enabling those grant applications to be formally considered. Members discussed the application of grants in detail.

RESOLVED that Members agreed:

- (a) that grant payments are made in line with the proposals in Appendix 2 attached to the report, and
- (b) that contracts are awarded in line with Appendix 2 attached to the report.

1198. CAPITAL PROGRAMME GROUP REPORT

[Councillor A.E. Roberts declared an interest in Item 1e.]

The Corporate Director of Resources presented the report [previously circulated] advising Members of applications for new capital schemes which had been considered the Capital Programme Group and seeking Cabinet's approval of the Group's recommendations.

The Capital Projects Group suggested that the balance of available funding, approximately £80k, should be prioritised to finance projects which have secured match funding in this current year.

Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance apologised to Members and said her statement with regard to funding of capital projects, made at a recent County Council meeting, had been inadvertently misleading. The Council was in a position to provide funding for external capital projects. It was, however, a policy matter if Members wished to amend that to restrict funding to Council projects only.

Councillor E.W. Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Best Value again asked Members to consider making available a list of funding available nationally which would provide clarification for those seeking funds to develop projects. Councillor E.A. Owens, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance agreed a list of funding would be of great use but this would be a huge undertaking and she felt at this time the resources to provide such detail was not available. The Acting Chief Executive suggested the Corporate Directors could discuss the way forward regarding this and provide a position statement for Cabinet in due course.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) *Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the Capital Programme Group in relation to individual projects as detailed in Appendices 1a to 1h to the report;*
- (b)] *Cabinet approved the use of the remaining capital funds for 2001/2002 as detailed in Appendix 2 to finance projects that have secured match funding which could be jeopardized by delay to 2002/2003, and*
- (c) *Cabinet noted the proposed development of the Capital Plan for 2002/2003.*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor E.W. Williams informed Members that he was resigning his Cabinet Best Value portfolio forthwith but would be remaining as a Cabinet Member.

RETIREMENT

The Leader took the opportunity to thank Meirion Hughes, Acting Chief Executive for all his work on behalf of the Authority, particularly during the past seven months following the retirement of the Chief Executive. The Leader also thanked the Acting Chief Executive for his work in Social Services both in Clwyd and Denbighshire. On behalf of the Cabinet, he went on to wish Meirion Hughes well in his retirement and presented him on behalf of Cabinet with the Denbighshire County Shield. Councillor G.M. Kensler also thanked the Acting Chief Executive for all his work with the National Eisteddfod at Denbigh in 2001.

In reply, the Acting Chief Executive thanked the Leader for his kind words and said he had particularly enjoyed the challenge of the last 7 months. He said he was proud of the time he had spent in Denbighshire and said the Authority was facing an exciting time in the future.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 p.m.
