

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Assembly Rooms, Town Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 2nd July, 2002 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors P.A. Dobb, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing; E.C. Edwards, Lead Member for Safeguarding our Communities; M.A. German, Lead Member for Sustainable Development and Environment; R.W. Hughes, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; G.M. Kensler, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire, D.M. Morris, Lead Member for Communications; E.A. Owens, Lead Member for Finance; J.A. Smith, Lead Member for Social Inclusion; W.R. Webb, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management, and E.W. Williams, Leader and Member for Economic Wellbeing.

Observers: Councillors S. Drew, K. Hawkins, D.M. Holder, M.M. Jones and R.J.R. Jones.

ALSO PRESENT

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader informed Members the Corporate Director: Environment was unavailable to attend the meeting as he had commenced paternity leave, following the birth of his son. Cabinet wished to pass on their congratulations to the family.

The Leader had also passed on Cabinet's congratulations to Mrs. Marilyn Raine, Headteacher, Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen on her success in the Teaching Awards 2002 - she gained the Leadership of Secondary School Award for the whole of Wales.

1 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 A Objective 1 Partnership
- (ii) Part II Item 11B Wirral and North Wales Purchasing Organisation

2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET [CABINET 2002 - 113]

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 June 2002 were submitted.

Cabinet Minutes 07.05.2002 - Item 14 Inspection of the Authority's Child Protection Services by the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales: The Chief Executive said that he would be writing to Councillor E.C. Edwards and other Group Leaders today regarding his findings into the leaked report.

Item 5 Joint Arrangements: With regard to membership of the AONB, the Chief Executive said only Councillor A.E. Roberts had been nominated and a further 5 places were available. Councillor R.W. Hughes said at the last County Council meeting it had been agreed that relevant Members could nominate themselves. Councillor G.M. Kensler said Flintshire County Council would be nominating Cabinet Members to the AONB. With regard to the membership requirements in respect of Joint Arrangements with other authorities for Executive Functions, the Chief Executive said the legislation on such arrangements had not yet been changed and the consultation process on possible changes had not yet started.

Item 9 Communities First: The Chief Executive said that Councillor P. Douglas was unable to serve as the representative on Communities First and Councillor G Williams, Leader of the Labour Group had nominated Councillor J. Butterfield as the representative.

RESOLVED that Members appoint Councillor J. Butterfield as the Local Member to sit on the Interim Steering Group.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 June 2002 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

3 SPECIALIST EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE - BEST VALUE REVIEW [CABINET 2002 - 126]

Councillor R.W. Hughes presented the report seeking Cabinet's approval of the Specialist Education Support Service [SESS] Best Value Review methodology and Action Plan for 2002-2005 for inspection in February 2003. Councillor Hughes said that SEN was the biggest management challenge for any Education Authority and detailed the five key objectives from the National Assembly for Wales guidance 'BEST for Special Education' as the framework for the Authority's provision. Budget allocation was discussed and the limited services provision. However, Denbighshire had fewer staff and less money spent on SEN than other Authorities but the services provided in many cases was better.

Councillor G.M. Kensler congratulated the Department on the Review document and reminded Members that the Directorate was understaffed and that the number of children with special needs requirements was increasing.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- (a) *note and approve the Specialist Education Support Service Review methodology and Action Plan to enable the service to be inspected, and*
- (b) *note the conclusion of the Best Value Review of SESS that, in the light of the statutory nature of the services and the value and importance users of the service attach to it, the service should remain in LA control but that there should be internal redefining of roles and urgent appointment of a lead officer for SEN, Access and inclusion.*

4 DENBIGHSHIRE MEDIATION [CABINET 2002 - 127]

(Councillor E.A. Owens declared an interest in the item and took no part in the discussion or vote).

Councillor E.W. Williams presented the report seeking Cabinet approval of a rescue package, as detailed in paragraph 2.4 of the report, to enable Denbighshire Mediation to reformulate its financial basis.

Councillor G.M. Kensler asked whether discussion should continue when a representative of the Mediation Service was present. The Leader said the meeting was open for any member of the public to attend but they would not be able to participate in the meeting. Councillor Kensler queried whether use of the Contingency Fund was the correct way forward for such services.

Councillor R.W. Hughes said funding for such services should not be an issue and that the services occasionally fail owing to the lack of funding.

Councillor W.R. Webb asked whether the Mediation Service had made any efforts to raise funding elsewhere. Councillor Kensler agreed and suggested the Service should ask for funding through the usual grant procedures, which would ensure the accounts were scrutinised and the funds wisely spent. Councillor Hughes, said if approved in this way, then theoretically other services could ask for funds in

the same way. However, Members agreed that the service provided had been supportive to the Authority.

The Chief Executive said the Authority did use the Mediation Service and should therefore part fund the service. He suggested a compromise to the level of funding requested, and suggested £20,000 be grant aided by Denbighshire which would allow the Mediation Service to carry on for a further 2 or 3 months, adopt a recovery plan for the coming year with a further report to Cabinet in September 2002.

Councillor D.M. Morris asked why funding for the service had not been included six months ago.

Councillor R.W. Hughes suggested that if funding of the service continued, a Service Level Agreement should be arranged between the Service and Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to a rescue package for Denbighshire Mediation of £20,000, subject to the provision of a Service Level Agreement and report back to Cabinet in September 2002.

5 REVENUE BUDGET 2002-2003 [CABINET 2002 - 128]

Councillor E.A. Owens presented the report seeking Members' consideration of any further actions required, as detailed in the appendices attached to the report, to reduce the balance of overspending on services. Councillor Owens said the Services would need to reprofile the budgets.

RESOLVED that Members receive the report and note the figures in the appendices regarding remedial action required to ensure that balances of £1.0m are achieved by the end of the current financial year.

6 CONTINGENCY BUDGET 2002-2003 [CABINET 2002 - 129]

Councillor E.A. Owens presented the report seeking Cabinet consideration to grant funding for the urgent pressures detailed in column 2 of the appendix attached to the report, from the Contingency Budget for 2002-2003 and that the relevant Scrutiny Committees consider the case for agreeing further bids for funding from the Contingency Budget as detailed in column 3 of the appendix. £720k support would be required for the Schools' Budget to provide for the underfunding by the Assembly of the Teachers' Threshold payments and the Head Teachers' Leadership Scheme, however the Assembly should refund the Authority with an element of this, likely to be at least £600k.

Councillor Owens also reminded Members of the District Auditor's requirements that the Authority had to remain solvent and maintain a legal budget at all times.

Budget decisions affecting the Joint Review Preparation, Insurances Renewal, Denbighshire Mediation and Community Development Team would be discussed as part of the relevant reports following.

Councillor W.R. Webb it was disappointing the threshold payments were not being met in full and suggested the Assembly be informed of the Authority's disappointment. The Corporate Director: Resources said the WLGA were writing to the Assembly on the matter.

Councillor G.M. Kensler asked whether the savings on the Mediation Service grant could be included in the Culture and Leisure budget. Councillor Kensler informed Members of the need to address the rates of pay for staff in the Pavilion Theatre.

Councillor E.A. Owens requested Corporate Directors give an indication of priorities and details of the corporate objectives affected by proposals, as a guide for Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- (a) agree the urgent pressures detailed in column 2 of the appendix attached to the report for immediate approval for funding from the Contingency Budget for 2002-2003, with the amendments to the Denbighshire Mediation Service funding as detailed in Minute 4, and

- (b) request Scrutiny Committees review the further bids for funding as detailed in column 3 of the appendix attached to the report, with a report back to Cabinet in September 2002.

7 JOINT REVIEW PREPARATION [CABINET 2002 - 129]

Councillor J.A. Smith and Councillor P.A. Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet approval of the allocation of additional resources in 2002-2003 to respond to the Joint Review. Councillor Smith drew Members' attention to the reduced sum sought from the Contingency Fund with the balance to be reviewed by Scrutiny.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:_

- (a) allocate £122k from the contingency funds to meet part of the additional costs of £142,031 in 2002-2003, the balance to be reviewed in accordance with Minute 6(b) above, and
- (b) note the rollover costs for future financial years will be submitted as part of the budget preparation for 2003-2004.

8 TRANSITIONAL HOUSING BENEFIT AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND VARIATION OF COUNCIL TENANCY AGREEMENTS [CABINET 2002 - 131]

Councillor J.A. Smith and Councillor P.A. Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet approval of the variation of tenancy agreements for Council tenants who want to claim Transitional Housing Benefit as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve variations to Council tenancy agreements when required for Traditional Housing Benefit claims as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

9 CABINET APPOINTMENTS [CABINET 2002 - 132]

Councillor E.W. Williams presented the report seeking Members' agreement to the Cabinet appointments to various partnerships and bodies. Councillor Williams advised Members that the reference to Councillor R.W. Hughes in paragraph 2.1 of the report should have been to himself.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed Councillors R.W. Hughes and J.A. Smith represent the Authority on the Rural Group of the North Wales Economic Forum and the Childcare Partnership respectively.

10 BARRIERS COMING DOWN - CONFERENCE [CABINET 2002 - 133]

Councillor E.W. Williams presented the report seeking Cabinet approval for Council Members to attend the forthcoming conference 'Barriers Coming Down' at Conwy Business Centre on 12 July 2002.

RESOLVED that Members approve Councillors P.A. Dobb, D.M. Morris and J.A. Smith attend the 'Barriers Coming Down' conference on 12 July 2002.

At this juncture (11.05 a.m) the meeting adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

11A URGENT ITEM [CABINET 2002 - 134A]

OBJECTIVE ONE PARTNERSHIP [CABINET 2002 - 134A]

The Chief Executive presented the report [circulated at the meeting] seeking Members' agreement to the recommendations on Denbighshire County Council's membership of the Executive Group and to appoint Members to serve on the Key Funds Approval Committee. The Chief Executive apologised for the lateness of the report but said the Objective One Partnership was due to meet on 11 July 2002. The Chief Executive's recommendation was for Denbighshire's representation to be reduced from 4 to 3, as the current membership was large and to allow for the perception of the membership to change.

Councillor W.R. Webb said he was disappointed with the Chief Executive's recommendations and saw no reason why Denbighshire should relinquish a seat to either the WDA or ELWa. He suggested the membership remain at 4, politically balanced with the Leader taking one of the seats. Councillor E.C. Edwards agreed and said the committee was one of the most successful in Wales, there had been no concern regarding the number of the members previous to this report and he could see no reason why the numbers should change, but added the Leader should become part of the membership.

Councillor G.M. Kensler asked whether the membership had to be politically balanced. The Chief Executive confirmed that political balance did have to apply.

Councillor D.M. Morris said this had been a most successful group and the membership should remain at 4. Councillor R.W. Hughes agreed and said it was important to have continuity with such an important and complicated subject.

Councillor E.C. Edwards reminded Members that both the North and South of the County had received significant funding from Objective 1.

Councillor G.M. Kensler suggested the membership be reduced to 3 seats.

The amendment that the Council's representation on the Executive Group remains at 4 seats was put and was carried by a majority. The original proposal therefore fell.

RESOLUTION that:-

- (a) *Members recommend to the public sector group of the Objective 1 Partnership Executive Group that Denbighshire County Council's representation should be 4 seats allocated on the basis of political balance, and that Councillors P. Douglas, E.C. Edwards, W.R. Webb and E.W. Williams be the nominees, and*
- (b) *Councillors P. Douglas and E.W. Williams be appointed to the Key Funds Approval Committee.*

12. 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.

13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND FUNDING ISSUES [CABINET 2002 - 135]

Councillor J.A. Smith presented the report seeking Members' support to the allocation of funding for the revised management structure for community development in Denbighshire, in the light of significant increased staffing arising from successful funding bids and to meet current funding shortfalls so as to consolidate existing community development resources and assure match funding.

Councillor E.A. Owens said she was pleased to see the Directorate assuming the responsibility for the tapering funding.

Councillor E.C. Edwards referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report, Councillor J.A. Smith's reference to the concern expressed by Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities regarding the Communities First funding allocated the previous year and which had not yet been spent and took the opportunity to congratulate the Corporate Director: Personal Services on her report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- (a) allocate funding for the revised community development management structure in Denbighshire be supported as detailed in the report, and
- (b) support the allocation of funding to address funding shortfalls as detailed in the report subject to the exploration of alternative temporary funding sources.

13 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME GROUP REPORT [CABINET 2002 - 136]**

The Corporate Director: Resources presented the report and appendices [previously circulated] advising Members of applications received for new capital schemes which had been considered by the Capital Programme Group [CPG] as follows:-

1a *Vehicles Emission Reduction*

CPG Recommendation: *Approval of Option 1 of the application.*

1b *Denbighshire Countryside Grant Scheme*

CPG Recommendation: *Approval of application.*

1c *Reconsolidation of Castell Dinas Bran, Llangollen*

CPG Recommendation: *Approval of application*

The Corporate Director: Resources discussed the new applications and progress on existing projects with Members. Applications for the Community Projects block allocation would be considered on their relative merits applying the prioritisation scoring methodology approved by Council on 15.05.2001.

The Leader reminded Members that more applications for capital funding for community projects were required and said that the Principal Management Accountant was always available to give guidance to Members.

In answer to a query from Councillor Kensler, the Lead Member for Finance confirmed that the application forms included provision for the costs of Design Services where appropriate. The Corporate Director: Resources indicated the need to ensure that the in-house Design Services team were fully utilised before external consultants were used.

RESOLVED that Members endorse the recommendations of the Capital Programme Group for items in Appendices 1a, 1b and 1c, and approve the recommendation of the Group in regard to the Community Projects block allocation.

14 **INSURANCE RENEWAL 2002-2003 [CABINET 2002 - 137]**

Councillor E.A. Owens presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to the renewal of insurance cover without resort to a retendering exercise, as detailed in the report. Members were also asked to note the need to consider the funding of the increased level of premium costs.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the renewal of insurance cover with Zurich Municipal without resort to a retendering exercise for these services, and
- (b) the report on the distribution of the Contingency Budget for 2002-2003 include an allocation to fund the additional costs of insurances.

15 **PROPERTY ACQUISITION STRATEGY - WEST PARADE, RHYL [CABINET 2002- 138]**

Councillor M.A. German and Councillor W.R. Webb presented the report seeking Members' approval in principle to the acquisition by agreement or through compulsory purchase of selected properties

situated on West Parade, Rhyl. Members agreed the importance of this strategy to bring about a positive programme of improvement for Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- (a) Authorise Officers to investigate detailed proposals for the regeneration of West Parade, including a property acquisition strategy as set out in the report and the development of proposals for acquisition by CPO where necessary;
- (b) Authorise negotiations with the WDA to pursue a further Joint Venture agreement for property acquisition and redevelopment along West Parade, and
- (c) Authorise officers to undertake a detailed consultation process including Local Members, Rhyl Town Council and other partners in the Rhyl Going Forward process noting that a further report will be submitted in due course, including approval for allocation of finance/allocation of funding being included in the Cabinet budget proposals 2003/2004.

16 **NORTH WALES WASTE PLAN [CABINET 2002 - 139]**

Councillor M.A. German presented the report to inform Members of a course of action taken under Standing Order 9.1(c), detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the decision by the Head of Planning Services to appoint SLR as consultants, dispensing with the need for three competitive bids, be noted.

17 **WIRRAL AND NORTH WALES PURCHASING ORGANISATION [CABINET 2002 - 134A]**

Councillor E.A. Owens presented the report [circulated at the meeting] seeking the Authority's support for the continued operation of the Wirral & North Wales Purchasing Organisation (W&NWPO) in the short term, pending further investigation into its trading position and the production of proposals for alternative procurement arrangements that may be available. Councillor Owens detailed recent events to Members and emphasised the confidential nature of the information contained in this report. The next meeting of the Board would be attended by Councillor W.R. Webb, who had expressed his concerns on previous occasions regarding the way in which the Organisation operated. Members also expressed their concerns regarding the Organisation and it was agreed that the Leader write to the Leaders of the partner Authorities expressing those concerns in detail.

RESOLVED that Denbighshire County Council supports continued operation of the trading activities of W&NWPO in the short term, but that options for procurement are considered with a view to establishing future arrangements which are financially viable and administratively cost effective. It was further resolved that the Leader write to the Leaders of the partner Authorities as discussed.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 p.m.

REPORT TO CABINET**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor P A Dobb, Lead Memembr for Health and Wellbeing**DATE:** 16 July 2002**SUBJECT:** BEST VALUE REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL HOMES**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

A report was brought to Cabinet on the 7 May 2002, which requested that Cabinet needs to consider and decide upon a range of options for further analysis. The same request is made here in the light of further information.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The report of the 7 May 2002 set out 7 options with 3 of them not being recommended for further analysis. The options and the recommendations were as follows:-

	OPTION	RECOMMENDATION
1	Retain homes, do not undertake capital investment, leave terms and conditions and practices unchanged	No
2	Retain the homes and invest where necessary	Yes
3	To put the homes on the open market	No
4	To transfer the management arrangements to another body e.g. Housing Associations, Independent Health Provider	Yes
5	Seek partnership arrangements (e.g. With Health and/or Public Sector Housing) to remodel the services	Yes
6	To create a body to manage the homes, e.g. a charitable trust	Yes
7	Close the homes	No

It was resolved at Cabinet to agree those options recommended for further consideration with a decision on Options 3 and 4 deferred until further information became available.

The Best Value Project Review Group subsequently sought advice from Leonie Cowen Associates who have extensive knowledge of homes transfers and related issues. This advice has now been:-

- a) discussed at the Best Value Project Group, and
- b) incorporated into Appendix 1

It will be seen that, based upon the Consultant's knowledge of the market, options 3 and 4 are not recommended for further analysis when judged against cost and other criteria.

3 COST IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the next stage of the Review will be accommodated within existing budgets.

4 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

There is no adverse impact on the Council's budgetary position as a result of undertaking the next stage of the Review process carried out.

5 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

The options analysis were fully discussed at the Best Value Project Review Group which includes the following Elected Member representatives (Cllr P A Dobb, Cllr E A Owens, Cllr J Jones, Cllr J Butterfield, Cllr W R Webb and Cllr A E Fletcher-Williams) and Trade Union representatives. The view of the meeting was that they believe the advice from the external consultant was sound and therefore agree with the recommendations as set out below.

	Option	Recommendation
1	Retain homes, do not undertake capital investment, leave terms and conditions and practices unchanged	No
2	Retain the homes and invest where necessary	Yes
3	To put the homes on the open market as a going concern	No
4	To transfer the management arrangements to another body e.g. Housing Associations, Independent Health Provider	No
5	Seek partnership arrangements (e.g. With Health and/or Public Sector Housing) to remodel the services	Yes
6	To create a body to manage the homes, e.g. a charitable trust	Yes
7	Close the homes	No

6 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The different options of a range of potential impacts including economic development implications, personnel impacts and opportunities for developing health/social care working.

7 RECOMMENDATION

That Members agree the options recommended for further consideration as set out in paragraph 5 (above).

	OPTIONS	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF	OPTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS
1	Retain homes, do not undertake capital investment, leave terms and conditions and practices unchanged	<p>The 'do nothing' option.</p> <p>Maintains total number of beds to meet demand</p> <p>May not be feasible post 2007 without sufficient capital investment</p>	<p>None, except that unit cost will continue to be higher than independent sector.</p> <p>Does not represent Best Value.</p> <p>May not be affordable</p>	Deteriorating physical conditions	Deteriorating physical conditions	No
2	Retain the homes and invest where necessary	<p>Maintains total number of beds to meet demand</p> <p>May not be feasible post 2007 without sufficient investment</p>	<p>Capital investment of £922,000 required over 5 years</p> <p>Tackling terms and conditions may result in savings on unit cost</p>	Improved physical conditions	Improved physical conditions. Renegotiation of conditions of service and other practices.	Yes

OPTIONS	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF	OPTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS
<p>3 To put the homes on the open market as a going concern</p>	<p>Maintains total number of beds to meet demand, but limited influence on bed numbers or policy. However, this maybe achievable through block contracts</p> <p>May not be achievable, possibility there will be no buyers</p> <p>Possibility of increased cost to Social Services purchasing without mixed market.</p> <p>Buildings not likely to be attractive to prospective buyers in current market. - substantial investment required and an extremely unstable market.</p>	<p>Capital receipts uncertain due to current market.</p> <p>Staff likely to transfer on TUPE, and therefore would not produce cost savings.</p> <p>The net cost of this option, taking into account that the purchaser is likely to require a block contract is that the council takes any TUPE and registration risk and the implementation costs mean this is likely to be a very expensive option.</p> <p>Capital investment of £922,000 required over 5 years.</p> <p>If provider passes cost of capital upgrades through in increased fees, Denbighshire pays for them in any event.</p> <p>Does not necessarily tackle issues about terms and conditions or other practices.</p>	<p>Significant uncertainty</p> <p>Unlikely that respite beds, or short term emergency admissions will be a priority for alternative supplier. Could be delivered through block contract, but associated high costs</p>	<p>Uncertainty. Staff likely to have terms and conditions protected under TUPE. Renegotiation likely in longer term.</p>	<p>No</p>

OPTIONS	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF	OPTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS
<p>4 To transfer the management arrangements to another body/voluntary sector, e.g. Housing Associations, Independent Health Provider</p>	<p>Maintains total number of beds to meet demand. May result in long term and expensive contractual obligations.</p>	<p>Capital investment of £922,000 required over 5 years, but costs may be shared.</p> <p>Capital investment may be met by partner or by D.C.C.</p> <p>Costs unlikely to reduce down fully to those of the Independent Sector. If provider passes cost of capital upgrades through in increased fees, Denbighshire pays for them in any event.</p> <p>Does not necessarily tackle issues about terms and conditions or other practices.</p> <p>Staff likely to transfer on TUPE, and therefore would not produce cost savings.</p> <p>The net cost of this option, taking into account that the purchaser is likely to require a block contract is that the council takes any TUPE and registration risk and the implementation costs mean this is likely to be a very expensive option.</p>	<p>Initial uncertainty</p>	<p>Similar to Option 3</p>	<p>No</p>

	OPTIONS	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF	OPTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS
5	Seek partnership arrangements (e.g. with Health and/or Public Sector Housing) to remodel the services	<p>Consistent with National Assembly for Wales requirements for partnerships - and with the need to develop new services e.g. rehabilitation.</p> <p>More flexible provision of care. Provides an opportunity for provision which is fit for the future and which properly meets requirements and aspirations set out in the Care Standards Act</p>	<p>Capital investment in existing homes of £922,000 required over 5 years, but costs may be shared.</p> <p>Likely to require additional capital investment from either the Council or Health (e.g. for extension to building).</p> <p>May also include relocating them to new sites, where joint services could be provided.</p> <p>Terms and conditions and other practices would still need to be tackled.</p>	<p>Relocation would involve disruption</p> <p>Residents would be provided with service in modern homes meeting modern care standards and aspirations and they should have a better quality of care due to improved physical environment</p>	Renegotiation of conditions of service	Yes

	OPTIONS	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF	OPTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS
6	To create a body to manage the homes, e.g. a charitable trust	<p>Maintains beds to meet demand</p> <p>More community involvement and more flexible provision of care.</p> <p>Extremely unlikely that this would be affordable</p> <p>There would still be pressures relating to the cost of capital investment, renegotiation of terms & conditions and the ability to survive, as with any other provider</p>	<p>Capital investment of £922,000 required over 5 years.</p> <p>Financial implications in relation to Central and Directorate management costs need to be established.</p> <p>Staff likely to transfer on TUPE, and therefore would not produce cost savings.</p>	Negligible	Some renegotiation of conditions of service	Yes
7	Close the homes	<p>Reduces capacity to meet demand.</p> <p>Effectively no alternative suppliers in 3 of the 4 neighbourhoods (and insufficient spare capacity in the fourth).</p> <p>The homes are significant local employers, especially in rural localities.</p>	<p>Initial redundancy costs - savings through purchasing in independent sector (assumes availability of beds) - savings on capital requirements and possible capital receipt.</p> <p>Probable bed blocking penalty.</p>	Significant - High level of distress	Redundancy / redeployment	No

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR M A GERMAN, LEAD MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 16 JULY 2002

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CHARGING IN APPROPRIATE CAR PARKS IN DENBIGHSHIRE

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 To approve the introduction of charges at Post Office Lane (Denbigh), Hall Street (Llangollen), and Troed y Rhiw (Ruthin) car parks.
- 1.2 To approve the introduction of charges at Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street (Ruthin) car park.
- 1.3 To approve the introduction of charges at Rhos Street (Ruthin) car park.
- 1.4 To confirm the intention, when capital resources are available, to instal CCTV cameras and make other improvements at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park (Denbigh) and to introduce charges at the car park following those improvements.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 The Cabinet meeting on 14 February 2002 (Minute no 11) considered a report reviewing car parks and charges in Denbighshire. The proposals had been developed by the Environment Scrutiny Committee and among other things recommended that, based on criteria applied in a consistent fashion across the county, charges should be introduced in a number of long stay car parks. The policy is to charge in car parks located in or adjacent to the town centres of the County's largest towns (Rhyl, Prestatyn, Denbigh, Ruthin and Llangollen).
- 2.2 The Cabinet agreed with the Environment Scrutiny Committee's proposals, subject to consultation on the introduction of charging at the free long stay car parks at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park (Denbigh), Post Office Lane (Denbigh), Hall Street (Llangollen), Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street (Ruthin), Rhos Street (Ruthin) and Troed y Rhiw (Ruthin).
- 2.3 In considering the outcome of the consultation outlined below, the option of having a mixture of free and charged spaces within the same long stay car park, with the free spaces perhaps being subject to a time limit, has been looked at but rejected. This is to simplify monitoring of car parks and whether users have paid charges - a dual regime could allow users to claim that they thought that they had parked in the free spaces and dispute any penalty charges. So the only choice is whether or not there should be charges in long-stay car parks. If the decision is to charge, there is the option of offering a short-term rate e.g. 20p for up to one hour, as well as one or more long-term rates.
- 2.4 Introducing charges at the 6 car parks would result in a consistent approach across the county, as recommended by the Environment Scrutiny Committee, and would increase potential revenue to the council. If charging were introduced, annual permits would be available and would represent a cost-effective option for business employees or residents who wish to use car parks on all or most days. Permits are at a discount of approximately 82% compared to the daily charge.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 3.1 The local Members and the Town Councils for Denbigh, Llangollen and Ruthin have been consulted regarding extending charging.

- 3.2 The Denbigh proposals were the subject of a meeting involving the local Members and the Town Council. The consultees' views were that the predecessor authority Glyndwr District Council had made the Barkers Well Lane multi storey car park available to the community for free parking. In view of this and the need to make upgrades in terms of lighting and security it was considered that this should be retained free of charge for the time being subject to further consideration only when funding for capital improvements are available. However, there was agreement that charges could be introduced in the Post Office Lane car park. This would generate community benefits in encouraging a higher turnover of parking which would assist the businesses located in Post Office Lane. A response has also been received from Jones Peckover (Chartered Surveyors) of Vale Street, Denbigh expressing concerns about the adverse effect charging is having on businesses in the town.
- 3.3 With regard to Llangollen, the only response was from the Town Council which requested that some thought be given to making Hall Street car park a dedicated residents' car park. They made no specific objection to the principle of introducing charging.
- 3.4 Councillor E C Edwards at the Cabinet meeting on 14 February expressed his reservations about introducing charging in Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street car park, Ruthin. Ruthin Town Council has also objected to charging in Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street car park on the basis that it would be unfair for parents and others taking their children to the nearby playground as it is the only such facility in the town. They are also opposed to charging at Rhos Street car park as it is used by residents with no alternative parking. Previous objections have also been received to charging in Rhos Street car park, and are listed in full in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 Rhyl Town Council has commented that only one level of parking charge should apply throughout the whole County.

CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Council is not under a duty to provide free off-street parking whether for residents, employees of businesses, shoppers or visitors. Nor is it obliged to carry on providing free car parks even if their use has been free in the past. Various policy considerations weigh heavily in favour of introducing charges at the 6 car parks, notwithstanding the comments received in the consultation.
- 4.2 For many years, the Audit Commission and central government have been encouraging councils to review regularly the activities for which they charge and the level of charges. It is desirable for the council to maximise the other revenues available to it in order to keep down potential increases in council tax. It is estimated that charges at the 6 car parks would generate income of £32,000 a year compared to one-off additional costs of £102,000 (of which £60,000 would be for security improvements at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park).
- 4.3 Introducing charges would be fairer, because there would be a more consistent approach across the county. This does not necessarily mean that charges should be the same in every car park or even within every town. The Environment Scrutiny Committee noted that the issue of whether or not charges are levied in car parks should be determined by the attractiveness to motorists to park in the car parks as opposed to parking on-street. The opportunity to park on-street conveniently for town centre destinations increases as the size of towns decrease. In addition, the willingness to pay is determined in part by the nature of the shops and other facilities in the town centre. Larger towns have more retail outlets and therefore willingness to pay increases. It is also noted that, in the case of Rhyl, charges compare favourably with other major towns in North Wales.
- 4.4 Charging would support this council's Local Transport Plan and the Assembly's policies on encouraging car users to consider alternative transport options. In the case of the multi-storey car park in Denbigh, charging will be essential to fund the revenue costs of CCTV cameras, thereby contributing to the council's duty to reduce crime and disorder.

- 4.5 No objection has been raised to the introduction of charging at Post Office Lane (Denbigh), Hall Street (Llangollen) and Troed y Rhiw (Ruthin). In view of the location of Hall Street (Llangollen) on the edge of the town centre and close to Market Street car park which operates at capacity in the peak summer season, it is recommended that it should remain as a public car park and not be designated solely for residents' use. As noted above, designation as a long stay car park will allow residents to purchase annual season tickets to enable them to park at any time in the car park.
- 4.6 In the case of Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street (Ruthin), the question to be addressed is whether the arguments in favour of introducing charges are outweighed by the desire to promote use of play and recreation facilities which support healthy living. While the pressure on car parks is not as great in Ruthin as in other towns, that is not a satisfactory reason for there to be no charges: the car park is on the edge of the town centre and there is undoubtedly scope to generate revenue from it. With the availability of a large new, free car park in Park Street, which is within about 300 metres of the play area, it could be argued that alternative free provision is available. This car park would be suitable for the option of a short-term price for parking of up to an hour as well as long-term ticket options. On balance, the recommendation of this report is in favour of introduction of charging.
- 4.7 In the case of Rhos Street (Ruthin), it has already been noted that the council is under no duty to provide free on-street or off-street parking for residents. If the Cabinet agrees the other recommendations in this report, residents of Llangollen will have to buy permits if they wish to park in Hall Street car park. It is not apparent how the council can sustain an argument that residents of Ruthin should enjoy more favourable treatment. The recommendation of this report is therefore in favour of introducing charging for Rhos Street.
- 4.8 We have identified the need for improvements to the Barker's Well Lane multi-storey car park [Denbigh], including the installation of CCTV cameras and other security improvements, in order to help meet the council's duty to reduce crime and disorder and to make it more attractive for people (in particular women) to use the car park. However, capital resources have not yet been allocated to fund the security improvements. Charges will be needed at the car park in order to meet the running costs of CCTV cameras. The question is whether charges should nevertheless be introduced, for reasons mentioned earlier, in the absence of improved security arrangements. On balance, this report recommends that the Cabinet should confirm the intention, when resources are available, to instal CCTV cameras and make other improvements at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park (Denbigh) and to introduce charges at the car park following those improvements.
- 4.9 If Cabinet approves the introduction of charges at any or all of the 6 car parks, the proposed charges and periods during which they would be payable are set out in appendix 2.

5 COST IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of additional ticket machines and signage will be approximately £42,000. This will be set off against future revenue, with all costs covered in less than two years. The initial cost would be £15,000 for the surface car parks, with a further £27,000 for introducing ticket machines in the Barker Well Lane multi storey car park following the implementation of the security improvements.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

- 6.1 The review and maximising of income is in line with the Council's agreed priorities.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

- 7.1 The implications are considered in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4. The implication of car park charges on the attractiveness or otherwise of town centre shops compared to out-of-town shopping centres

is more difficult to assess. The price and range of goods available seem as likely to affect shopping habits as the cost and availability of car parking.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To approve the introduction of charges in the Post Office Lane (Denbigh), Hall Street (Llangollen), and Troed y Rhiw (Ruthin) car parks.
- 8.2 To approve the introduction of charges at Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street (Ruthin) car park.
- 8.3 To approve the introduction of charges at Rhos Street (Ruthin) car park.
- 8.4 To confirm the intention, when resources are available, to instal CCTV cameras and make other improvements at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park (Denbigh) and to introduce charges at the car park following those improvements.

APPENDIX 1

Objections to proposals to introduce charges at Rhos Street car park, Ruthin.

<p>D Taylor Rhos Street Ruthin</p>	<p>Unable to park outside house due to double yellow lines. Believes charging would result in more on-street parking.</p>
<p>J Jones Rhos Street Ruthin</p>	<p>Resident of a property in Rhos Street that has no off-street parking and therefore uses the car park.</p> <p>Believes the car park is too far from the town centre to be used by shoppers.</p> <p>Charging would further exacerbate problems caused when parents are taking children to and from the schools on Rhos Street. Believes they would be unwilling to pay to use the car park and would park on-street instead.</p>
<p>D Llywelyn Railway Terrace Ruthin</p>	<p>Objects to introducing charges as has no realistic option for daytime parking as nearby roads have parking restrictions</p>

APPENDIX 2

Proposed charges and periods during which they would be payable if the Cabinet decides to approve introduction of charges

	up to 2 hours	up to 4 hours	over 4 hours
Post Office Lane (Denbigh) }			
Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park (Denbigh) }			
Hall Street (Llangollen) September - June inclusive }	25p	60p	£1.10
Crispin Yard - Clwyd Street (Ruthin) }			
Rhos Street (Ruthin) }			
Troed y Rhiw (Ruthin) }			
Hall Street (Llangollen) - July & August	45p	80p	£1.40

Charges apply Monday to Sunday 0800 - 1700.

SEASON TICKETS - season tickets are available for use in all existing or proposed charged long stay car parks. The annual cost is £45. A discount price of £25 is offered for any Denbighshire resident of pensionable age who is the registered owner of a vehicle.

NOTE - Charges at Barker's Well Lane multi storey car park would not be introduced until after security improvements had been implemented.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR M A GERMAN, LEAD MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 16 JULY 2002

SUBJECT: DENBIGHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

1 DECISION SOUGHT

Authority to seek and appoint members of the public onto the Denbighshire Local Access Forum.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW 2000) in Section 94 of Part V places a duty on this Council to establish a Local Access Forum (LAF) to advise the Council on the improvement of public access for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The Council is required thereafter to have regard to the forum's views in reaching decisions with regard to imposing bylaws and long-term closures on open access land as well as on wider issues contained in the new duty established by the Act for the County to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Welsh Assembly Government issued Countryside Access (Local Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001 No 4002 establishing specific regulations for the setting up of the forum. This directs the County as follows;

- ◆ The LAF must be established and have met by 1 Jan 2003
- ◆ The LAF must consist of Chair, Deputy Chair, a secretary, together with not less than 10 and no more than 20 members
- ◆ All appointments to the LAF continue for a period of 3 years from the date of the first meeting
- ◆ The Council must appoint one (but may not appoint more than one) member to the LAF who is either an officer or member.

In appointing members to the LAF this Council must undertake the following;

- ◆ Consult any interested individuals or organisations it thinks fit
- ◆ Place adverts in a newspaper circulating in the locality giving persons an opportunity of expressing interest in becoming a member
- ◆ Invite organisations having an interest in the functions of the LAF to nominate a person for consideration
- ◆ Have regard to appoint persons who reside in or are familiar with or who have an interest especially relevant to the area of Denbighshire
- ◆ Ensure the membership of the forum achieves a reasonable balance between the interests of users of local rights of way or rights of access and owners and occupiers of access land over which rights of way subsist
- ◆ Have regard to the need to achieve a fair balance between genders, races, ages, disabilities and other characteristics.

Before appointing to the LAF the Council must require all prospective applicants to provide such information it may require for assessing the person's suitability to be a member of the LAF.

Upon appointing the LAF the Council is required to appoint a person to act as secretary who must be present at all meetings. The Council must defray all reasonable expenses incurred by the LAF in discharging its function, including such expenses incurred in attending meetings, other than those connected to loss of earnings or connected to a person's employment. The appointments of Chair and Deputy Chair are made by the LAF at its first meeting by ballot.

In considering how to establish a LAF the county has had the benefit of being part of a CCW pilot LAF project to establish a cross authority LAF to cover the Berwyn Mountains. The possibility of sharing a LAF with a neighbouring authority such as Flintshire was considered as we already operate a cross boundary co-operation in regards to the AONB. However given the importance of the LAF to this county's own rights of way improvement plan and the differences of a topological, cultural and economic nature with those authorities to the east of us it was felt such a body may not be able to develop a focus of benefit to Denbighshire. Our neighbouring authorities are at the moment selecting applicants for their fora and it would now be difficult to develop a shared forum

To appoint the LAF it is proposed that the organisations on a list attached to this report, that are considered to be representative of all user and land holding groups, are provided with an application form and requested to nominate two or more persons for consideration for appointment.

As this authority is required to service the LAF the position of secretary will be filled following consultations with Senior Officers and the Chief Executive. As officers of the Countryside and Highways services will be required to provide technical advice to the LAF the best solution is likely to be for the LAF to be serviced from within the central committee clerk service.

Due to the release of important open access map consultations for the North of Denbighshire from the CCW in late autumn of 2002, it is likely the forum will need to meet by September to appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair, and then be in a position to contribute to the consultation within the CCW consultation's deadline for responses. To expedite the appointment of the forum I propose that, with one exception the appointments should be made jointly by the Cabinet Members for Sustainable Development and Environment and for Promoting Denbighshire based on advice from officers. The exception is that it is recommended now that the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development and Environment should be appointed as the Denbighshire County Council representative.

3 COST IMPLICATIONS

The advertising of the vacancies in the press

Mileage and other expenses for 16 persons for 4 meetings per annum

Costs associated in producing minutes and reports required to service and support the forum including Welsh translation facilities.

As an estimate based on the casual user rate of 39p per mile, with an average return journey of 30 miles the cost per meeting would be £199, without considering any additional cost for child or dependant relative care. The likely advertising fee will be £750. The annual settlement from the Welsh Assembly Government includes a sum to cover the new costs related to the introduction of CROW 2000. This should includes the costs arising from holding the forum and for this year the Countryside Division of WAG advise that sum allocated to the council to meet this additional burden is in the region of £106,000 and there has been a settlement in this year's departmental funding in respect of this.

4 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The costs of this proposal will need to be contained within the additional funding built into the service budget concerned

5 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

This report has been presented to the Environment Scrutiny Panel who welcome the proposals and are in general agreement with the purpose of the report. The report has been presented to the Cabinet Member for Promoting Denbighshire who has expressed her support for the creation of the LAF. Careful note has been taken of the Act, the accompanying Statutory Instrument and Government Agency guidance. In addition the comments of neighbouring authorities who have already appointed forums have been taken into account as well as the experiences we have encountered when setting up with the CCW the Welsh pilot forum in the Berwyn Mountains in 2000 which will be replaced by the Denbighshire Local Access Forum for that area within Denbighshire.

6 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The forum will have a positive contribution to make to Council matters in respect of Agenda 21 – Impact on the Environment

Community Strategy and Partnerships – Impact on Overall vision

Corporate Governance – Enables the Council to relate to it's communities and enables the Council to comply with statutory framework.

Social inclusion and equal opportunities – The LAF would promote opportunities for representation on access matters for these groups as well as contribute to the mandatory County Rights of Way Improvement Plan which will incorporate measures to improve countryside access for people with disabilities or with other special needs or past exclusion.

7 RECOMMENDATION

I. Approval is given to contact those organisations on the enclosed list to nominate persons for consideration to appointment to the LAF

II. Approval to advertise for public candidates to apply to the County for consideration for appointment to the LAF

III. Delegate to the Chief Executive the function under regulation 10 of the Countryside Access (Local Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001 No 4002 to appoint the secretary to the LAF

IV. Appoint Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development and Environment as Denbighshire member to the LAF

V. Delegate to Cabinet Members for Sustainable Development and Environment and for Promoting Denbighshire jointly to appoint other members to the forum that satisfy the criteria for selection provided by the regulations and guidance for the formation of a LAF

List of Organisations to be invited to submit nominations

Principle User bodies (statutory consultees for all public rights of way orders WCA 1981)

i.e

Ramblers Association (Denbighshire Group)

British Horse Society (North East Wales Area)

British Driving Society (North Wales Group)

Cyclist Touring Club (Wales)

Land Access and Rights Association

Other bodies

Sustrans

Denbighshire Association of Local Councils

Bodies with Landholding Interests

Countryside Landowners Association

National Farmers Union

Farmers Union of Wales

RICS

The Forestry and Timber Association (Welsh section)

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing

DATE: 16 July 2002

SUBJECT: HOUSING RENTS AUTHORISATIONS

1. DECISION SOUGHT

That future authority to nominate officers to sign correspondence, to issue notices and to represent the Council in the County Court upon Council Housing Rents matters, pursuant to the Housing Act 1985, be delegated to the Chief Executive.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 As a point of good customer practice, since September 2001 all correspondence produced by the Housing Rents department has been signed and issued by the officer responsible for that individual area. From April 2002, this practice has been further extended to incorporate officer representation upon behalf of the Council within the County Court.

2.2 Each time a vacancy occurs within the department, Cabinet approval must be sought before a new officer can either issue correspondence or represent the Council in the County Court. This has already arisen twice in the last 12 months, with approval having already been received for all other current staff within the department. It will simplify matters if authorisation is delegated to officers because authorisation should follow automatically on appointment and not be delayed by the need for approval by Members.

3. COST IMPLICATIONS

Cost savings to the Council have been achieved through a reduction in rental loss as arrears cases are actioned more swiftly and a reduction in legal charges as the department now undertake their own court work.

4. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER'S STATEMENT

The proposal will assist in the ongoing process of rent arrears recovery and debt prevention for all council tenants.

5. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Consultation with staff has been undertaken and the policy supported.

6. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

This policy has emerged as a key element of the ongoing Best Value review of Housing Rents.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That future authority to nominate officers to sign correspondence, to issue notices and to represent the Council in the County Court upon Council Housing Rents matters, pursuant to the Housing Act 1985, be delegated to the Chief Executive.

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REPORT TO: CABINET

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR D M MORRIS, LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATIONS

DATE: 16 JULY 2002

SUBJECT: PROPERTY BASED SYSTEMS

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 Allocation of budget in 2002/3 and 2003/04 for the acquisition, implementation, and maintenance of a number of property based information management systems within a coherent data storage infrastructure.

2 REASONS FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 There are currently a number of property and information management initiatives at different stages of development. This presents the Council with a unique opportunity to create a hardware infrastructure for the future.
- 2.2 If this opportunity is missed, it is probable that the long term cost will be :
- difficult to maintain: databases, system security, backup regimes and storage solutions
 - difficulty in linking datasets
 - piecemeal purchase of hardware when new systems come online
 - lack of a co-ordinated, maintainable Geographic Information System for the foreseeable future
 - lack of a cross-cutting approach to information management
- 2.3 Implementation of this proposal will allow more efficient ICT support and help to alleviate current resource pressures, but more importantly, will give key services the essential tools necessary to effectively deliver key statutory services in the most cost effective way.
- 2.4 Without immediate enhancement to the hardware used by Planning Services and upgrading of the Planning Software before June 2003, the Council will not be able to process planning and building control applications.
- 2.5 Continued operation and development of the Corporate Property Database is dependent on the acquisition of hardware included in this project.
- 2.6 Funding for the acquisition and implementation of a Land Charges system has been identified previously. The project is currently on hold pending the purchase of an Oracle server, which would be provided as part of this initiative.
- 2.7 The system will help towards the achievement of e-Government targets through access to information and the production and maintenance of a definitive address database.
- 2.8 The variety and scope of the applications included in this initiative ensure that it underpins many of the Council's Corporate and Service Objectives.
- 2.9 Indications from suppliers are that providing the same infrastructure on a piecemeal basis would add approximately £50,000 to the overall cost.

3 PROJECT OUTLINES

3.1 The projects have been developed by a group of officers from the Environment Directorate, Resources Directorate and Chief Executive's. The following is a brief description of each of the initiatives.

3.1.1 *Planning Services*

In November 2001, SX3, suppliers of the planning system, announced their intention to cease support and enhancement of the current version of their software on the 30 June 2003. The company are replacing the existing Topspeed database with an Oracle database that will enable:

- easier management and reporting of information
- better web based access to customers
- electronic submission of applications

The Council needs to implement the changes to ensure it can undertake its statutory duties, achieve the budgeted income of £530,000 and hit a number of performance targets.

Electing to continue with the existing software and accepting the risks identified above is not an option. An additional problem is that the server currently providing the platform for the Planning software is operating to capacity and requires upgrading in the short term.

3.1.2 *Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)*

The provision of the LLPG is key to the development of e-Government in Denbighshire and forms the hub of the Council's vision for future service delivery.

The gazetteer will provide the referencing point for all property-based systems by creating a Unique Property Reference Number for each piece of land and property in Denbighshire. This will ultimately allow a single point of address maintenance in the Council and the creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS – see 3.3).

It is likely that there will be a statutory requirement for the Council to provide the data contained in the LLPG to the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). This will form the basis for both NLIS (online conveyancing) and LASER (online rolling Electoral Register).

The Senior Management Task Force on Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) has approved funding for the first half of this project from the 2002/03 IEG Supplementary Credit Approval.

3.1.3 *Land Charges*

Computerising the Land Charges system will enable an increase in productivity that will allow improvement in the Key Performance Indicator. Denbighshire is currently bottom of the performance table for Wales.

Future developments will allow access to the system by departments that contribute to the process and will also provide an online search facility. This will assist the Council in achieving e-Government targets and increases in performance, which will allow the possibility of raising charges.

Funding for this project is contained within the departmental revenue budget. If the overall project does not proceed there will be additional hardware costs of £20,000 for an Oracle server.

3.1.4 *Corporate Property Database*

The Authority is committed to the IPF Asset Manager system, which consists of a linked suite of modules covering County Landlord, Asset Management, Property Maintenance, and

Valuation and Estates functions. It also includes the property terrier that is used by Legal Services.

The sections involved in this process work in different locations and therefore in order to allow reasonable access speeds, need to work in a Citrix environment.

The Asset Manager product is now being changed to operate on a SQL server basis (rather than being installed on individual PCs) in order to improve its all-round performance. The Authority needs to align with this approach in order to continue to operate and develop the system in the future.

The majority of the funding for this project has previously been identified. If the overall project does not proceed, there will be a need for additional funding of £10,000 for an SQL server.

3.1.5 Hardware

The approach to hardware purchase in the past has been piecemeal; whenever a new system has been required, new hardware has been purchased to accommodate that system. This has left the Authority with a large number of individual pieces of hardware which:

- does not allow proper data sharing
- leads to duplication of data/systems e.g. mapping
- is difficult to support (hardware, software and data)
- does not provide easily for business continuity
- increases costs

As so many systems are in need of investment/purchase at the same time, this is an opportunity to purchase hardware to correct the points above.

The new infrastructure will mean that :

- the system will provide a cross cutting storage solution which will form the foundation of the *future ICT storage strategy, making the same base data readily available* to all users across the Authority. This shared data approach will mean faster access, less data storage areas, easier maintenance and a more centralised approach to backups.
- allocation of storage space will be easier to manage via 'drag and drop' reducing the problems of *disk space administration*. Storage space could be monitored in a controlled proactive environment.
- *future hardware requirements* will be easier to accommodate as 'upgrades' rather than complete new systems, as the infrastructure would already be in place.
- new systems would become more *affordable and considerable savings* could be achieved in the future.
- RAID protection, mirroring of system disks and the introduction of servers into a 'farm' will reduce the likelihood of *downtime and system failure* to an *absolute minimum* giving users a system which would be available 24/7.

The 'farm' approach involves linking three servers together to provide continuous cover if any one is unavailable. Initially there is a requirement for the purchase of two servers to be linked to the existing Planning server.

In the future it is hoped that the current Public Protection server will be added to the farm thereby further enhancing the level of protection against failures.

3.2 Future Developments

There are currently a number of systems being investigated which could form the next developmental phase.

Public Protection and Trading Standards

Following discussions with software suppliers it has been decided to remain with the current system. This is based on an Oracle platform and, following enhancements by the supplier, will fit into the strategy being developed.

Highways Information Management System

Initial investigations have taken place but there is still a programme of further evaluation needed before making any recommendations. The Streetworks system is becoming seriously unreliable and needs urgent replacement. This has been recommended for urgent funding from the contingency for the current year.

3.3 *Geographic Information System*

At present, Ordnance Survey map data is held on a number of different servers. The data is updated regularly by Ordnance Survey and the Authority then has to maintain each of the servers accessing this data individually. This is an inefficient use of resources (space on the servers), is time consuming and leads to different versions of the base data being used by different officers.

A properly maintained and resourced Geographic Information System (GIS) would prove to be the most informative tool at the Council's disposal. Geographic information is becoming central to the business decision-making process by enabling access to location-based data. GIS therefore has a significant part to play in meeting the e-Government and joined-up government agendas through the management of location-based information and, via the Local Land and Property Gazetteer, access to other property based datasets.

In the future GIS should make socioeconomic, and other, data available in such a format as to enable the creation and graphical presentation of a complete statistical picture of an area. This will prove invaluable in informing Community Strategy and other work.

4. **COST IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 CAPITAL

As stated, a number of separate projects proceeding at the same time have given rise to an opportunity to create a robust, coherent, data storage solution for the future. The individual projects require different levels of new hardware and by moving forward together these costs can be significantly reduced (estimated saving of **£50,000**). These savings can be attributed to special deals on certain pieces of hardware if purchased as part of an overall package.

Capital Funding Requirement and Availability			
Overall Project Elements	Estimated Cost	Budget Available	Funding Shortfall
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Planning Services	36	-	36
Land Charges	10	10	-
Corporate Property	21	21	-
NLPG	72	34	38
Hardware	102	-	102

<u>TOTAL REQUIRED</u>	<u>241</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>176</u>
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The 'budget available' of £34k for the implementation of the first year of the NLPG has been funded from the Supplementary Credit Approval for Implementing Electronic Government.

The separate elements of this project are interdependent in that the software used for one may also be used for another (e.g. The Oracle database licenses will be used by Planning, Land Charges and possibly NLPG). The hardware cost for all elements is noted separately on one line.

To progress with each element autonomously will result in multiplication of some software costs (e.g. Oracle x 3) as well as increased costs in individual hardware which would be sub standard in comparison with the composite solution above.

The project has limited flexibility in terms of timescale as the majority of systems are needed this financial year.

- The current Planning system will not be maintained or enhanced from June 2003.
- The Property database is urgently required to progress the Asset Management Plan.
- The Land Charges system is needed urgently to improve performance.
- The NLPG should be phased over two financial years to allow proper implementation.

4.2 REVENUE

The revenue costs that have been identified as additional to the current budget provision are:

Oracle Licence Maintenance	£5.5k
NLPG Maintenance	£36k

There will be a further revenue cost of £9,500 for hardware maintenance commencing in year 3.

Other costs have been/will be accommodated within existing revenue budgets.

5. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The Capital costs of acquisition are currently the subject of a bid to the Capital Projects group and will be considered shortly. There is however a shortage of funding in the current financial year for the many desirable schemes that are already approved and the schemes that continue to come forward for consideration. There is an urgent need to prioritise schemes already approved and generate additional funding from disposals etc to enable schemes to proceed.

Revenue implications from the proposal would need to be considered as part of the budget setting exercise for 2003/4 due to begin in the autumn.

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Due to the implication on services, the Cabinet Member for Finance, together with other Cabinet Members at the Environment Contingency Allocation meeting on 25 June 2002, requested that this report be presented to Cabinet by the Lead Member for Communications.

Lead Member for Sustainable Development and Environment, Lead Member for Finance are supportive of this report and these proposals.

The following officers have been involved in this initiative:

Head of Planning Services, Head of ICT, Trading Standards Manager, County Asset Manager, County Landlord, Legal Services Manager, Networks and Operations Manager, Principal Technical Support Analyst, Support Services Manager

7. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

- 7.1 The direction noted in this report has been subject to a robust challenge, is endorsed by the Head of ICT and is in line with the ICT Strategy.
- 7.2 The implementation of the Property Based Systems will have an impact on the continued effective delivery of statutory services and on the corporate policy areas noted below:
- ✓ Maximising income opportunities
 - ✓ The asset management programme
 - ✓ Support of Best Value
 - ✓ Development of e Government

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That Cabinet approves the overall strategy of the joint procurement.
- 8.2 In light of this urgent requirement, that Cabinet review the capital plan to determine projects for the current and next year and submit a revised capital plan to Council for approval.
- 8.3 That the revenue budget implication, of £42k in 2003/04, is considered as part of the next year's budget setting process.

Report to Cabinet

From **The Leader**
Date **16 July 2002**
Subject **Policy and Priorities**

1. Decision sought

1.1 To consider the attached appendix containing the policy and priorities proposals for the 2003-04 budget round and to recommend to Council.

2. Reasons for seeking a decision

2.1 Under the constitution Council approves the policy and budgetary framework, but it is Cabinet's responsibility to put together proposals for Council's acceptance.

2.2 The Council has an annual budgetary cycle which commences with a policy and priorities review which is carried out between April and May and results in guidelines for the forthcoming budget round. These commitments will be reviewed annually and adjusted, but they should be considered as providing the basis for prioritisation for the medium term.

2.3. This year directorates have drawn up the major issues facing their services and these have appeared in several discussions with members both in the informal discussion meeting on 13 June and subsequently at the full day seminar at Ruthin on the 8 July 2002.

2.4 Members have therefore had the chance to examine the key issues facing services and in the light of them to look at suggestions for policy and priorities.

2.5 Following the discussion on the 8th July a set of proposals has been drawn up which reflect the points arising from the group discussion and feedback. In summary the main conclusions of the day were:

- That the 4 main priorities met with general acceptance
- That the number of priorities should be limited
- That there should be an emphasis on customer care and serving customer needs
- That basic services should be improved.
- That to deliver the above it was necessary to seek to maximise resources thereby increasing funding where needed and to invest in Member and staff training to ensure that services have clear leadership and are well managed.
- That the image of the Authority with its public would be greatly improved through providing a focus on the main priorities.

2.6 In putting these priorities forward for consideration by Cabinet it is necessary to underline that the priorities agreed for recommendation to Council are to provide direction for the authority. Their purpose is to help structure the budget round with the expectation that services will, when drawing up their budget proposals, include items in line with the priorities and targets and for these proposals to receive priority consideration.

2.7 Members need also to be aware that absence of an issue from the priority list does not imply absence of provision or exclusion from consideration for additional funding. There are certain issues the Authority will have to respond to because of statute, e.g. the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act etc., or because of unavoidable service pressures. Ordinarily, however, non prioritised services will continue to receive funding at or in line with inflationary

increases. The prioritised services however will have a prior claim to receive higher levels of funding to secure service improvements.

- 2.8 Following agreement to the priorities by Council, services will draw up proposals. These will be prepared by the end of August ready for directorate based meetings with the Lead Member for Finance. Members will be invited to attend the meetings on the usual basis. Following these discussions a draft budget will be produced by the end of September for Cabinet consideration after which it will be discussed in the individual Scrutiny Committees during October and November.
- 2.9. Members need to be aware that this year the Whole Authority Analysis is taking place. The results of this assessment will be available in November and if there are policy or budgetary implications arising from this exercise, these will need to be included in the budget round. Similar issues may arise in respect of the joint review of Social services which starts in January 2003 and the Audit Commission/Estyn review of Special Educational needs in February 2003

3. Cost Implications

- 3.1 There are none arising from this report. The implications of delivering on the priorities will be assessed during the budget discussions.

4. Financial Controller Statement

- 4.1 2003/4 is the third year in the Assembly's original 3 Year Budget Strategy. The Finance Minister declared that funding for Local Authorities would grow by 3.5% in 2002/3 and 2003/4. This was later revised to 3.7% for the current financial year. Assuming an increase in funding in line with the original plan that suggests growth of nearly double the current level of general inflation. However the pay settlements for teaching staff have in recent years run ahead of general inflation levels and the current dispute over the non teaching settlement together with uncertainty at present over the impact of Single Status and employer's pension contributions suggest pay related inflation could average above 3% again next year. As pay costs are the largest element of the Council's spending and several other areas are experiencing high cost increases, e.g. insurances and contract based costs, the likely level of additional funding available for service growth could well be minimal.
- 4.2 The exercise to identify service pressures in the current financial year has produced a list of bids which will inevitably exceed the additional contingency funding available and is likely to produce bids for additional funding next year off at least £1.5m.
- 4.3 During the Budget Setting exercise for the current year it was possible to reduce the level of top slicing for balances as the Recovery Plan was clearly producing the desired effect of eliminating negative balances. This released £1m for addressing service pressures. It will not be possible to repeat the reduction to the current level of top slicing. i.e. £1m, as a prudent level of balances still needs to be built up. It is likely to be 2005/6 at the earliest before a further boost can be given to Service Budgets from this source, as Council has already agreed that the first call upon that top sliced sum will be the ongoing costs from the Ruthin Civic Facilities PFI scheme due for completion just before the start of 2004/5.
- 4.4 There is further potential pressure from the transfer out of the RSG settlement of funding for nursing care for clients in residential care together with the transfer in of additional funding for Supporting People. In the current year the levels of additional funding for services transferred in were initially underfunded by the Assembly and resources had to be set aside to ensure the costs involved could be financed.
- 4.5 As the position on Revenue account becomes clearer during the early Autumn a further report estimating likely funding and additional commitments in 2003/4 will be produced.

4.6 The Capital programme picture is one of an ever increasing list of approved schemes awaiting funding mainly from the generation of capital receipts resulting from disposals. The list of approved schemes will need to be prioritised to ensure schemes are released on an approved basis for commencement as funding becomes available.

4.7 The current programme includes annual sums for major property and highway works, at £1m each pa, that were originally set in 2001/2 to ensure a start was made on the huge backlog of works in both areas. These levels of spend will not eliminate the backlog within the foreseeable future and should be reviewed as a matter of urgency along with works resulting from new statutory obligations such as Health & Safety, Asbestos Removal and Disability & Disabled Access.

5. Consultation

5.1 This paper has been put together following the seminar on 8th of July for all Council Members.

6. Impact on Other Policy Areas

6.1 By prioritising certain services the Council is not demoting other services, but will be seeking specific service improvement/enhancements in line with the main priorities.

7. Recommendation

7.1 That Members approve the attached draft with any amendments as necessary (including choosing one of the Mission Statements) for forwarding to Council on 23 July 2002.

- Option 1** **Denbighshire County Council will work to secure the social, environmental and economic well being of all the people of Denbighshire.**
- Option 2** **Denbighshire Works**
- Option 3** **We will deliver the best possible services to the people of Denbighshire.**

Priorities

A. We will focus on our customers and strive to meet their needs in particular for effective basic services

- We will establish a fully bilingual system to provide customers with a single contact point for the delivery of all services either face to face, via the telephone or electronically via the web site.
[Target 40% of all Council transactions by April 2004. 80% by 2005.]
- We will be an open authority, listening to customer's needs and providing responsive service delivery
- Significantly improve our performance in service by March 2004 [e.g. benefits, land charges, SEN statements]
- We will improve consultation and communication with the public, including young people, through the community strategy and area partnerships [targets to insert]

B. We will maximise resources for Denbighshire and use them wisely

- Maximise resources from European and other funding sources [e.g. Up to £10m million from bid-based funding for each year of Objective One]
- Maximise opportunities to generate revenue income through fees and charges to provide funding for service improvements e.g. charging for toilets to increase the number of sustainable service outlets and improve service quality.
- Identify savings to fund improvements to services by for example [removing 300 surplus school places by 2005]
- Generate £3 million a year of capital receipts
- Gradually build reserves to £3 million by March 2005
- Stimulate the local economy by supporting an integrated procurement policy, e.g. joint ventures

C. We will invest in our elected Members and staff

- Increase budget for staff training from [£343k to £518k], and for member training from [£10k to £25k,] for 2003-04. and by £50k from 2004-05
- Implement measures to improve recruitment and retention of key staff, e.g. social workers, by April 2003
- Gradually remove restrictions on mileage and subsistence allowances, with separate mileage allowance for training abolished from 1 April 2003

- Implement measures to recruit more young people from Denbighshire by April 2004, and reduce expenditure on agency staff to £1m by [October 2003]. [£800k by Oct. 2004]
- Implement single status by [2004/05].
- By [April 2004], introduce system of appointments to grades rather than jobs - to create a more flexible workforce

D. We will improve the image of Denbighshire

- Increase spending in 2003-04 and later years on services which improve the look of the area
 - Public conveniences
 - Street cleansing
 - Replacement of all signs referring to abolished councils [by March 2005]
 - Removing visible signs of dereliction and deprivation
- Implement extension of registration scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation
- No ward in Denbighshire to be in the top 20 of the Welsh index of multiple deprivation by [2007], with none in the top 50 by [2012]
- More visible presence at Llangollen International Eisteddfod from 2003 onwards.

REPORT TO CABINET

Report by Councillor Eryl Williams, Leader

DATE: 16 July 2002

SUBJECT: DENBIGHSHIRE'S INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Decision sought

1.1 To consider, in the context of the international links already developed by Denbighshire, whether we should take steps to establish a more formal relationship with Alto Adige/Südtirol in Italy.

Reason for seeking decision

2.1 We have been approached by the province of Alto Adige in north east Italy with a request to consider developing joint projects in a number of areas, which are detailed below. Information on existing international links in place in Denbighshire is in appendix 1, together with a brief note on Alto Adige.

2.2 The rationale for building such international links is multi-faceted. It enables us to learn how similar issues are tackled in different ways by local governments in various countries: cross-fertilisation of ideas is an important feature. There can be practical benefits such as strengthening skills in other languages through work placements or study visits, and economic spin offs in fostering trade and tourism between different areas. There are many opportunities to seek potentially substantial funding under EU programmes for joint projects. The Council has recognised the importance of this work by allocating a budget of £20k in 2002-03.

2.3 But there is a limit to how many different links we can nurture and maintain at the same time. We have not reached full capacity yet but we would be unlikely to be able to support links with more than one or two more partners. The expansion of the EU in 2004 means that there are keen potential partners in Eastern Europe, many of which face serious issues of deprivation that may allow us, for example, to share the approaches that we have developed in Rhyl.

2.4 There are already links between Alto Adige and Denbighshire. A training and consultancy company which is based in Bozen/Bolzano has already brought 5 groups of students to Denbighshire under a partnership with ECTARC. Senior representatives from ECTARC, including the chair Councillor Rhiannon Hughes, visited Alto Adige in April to further these links. Preliminary discussions with officials have identified that there are common issues and geographical, political and economic similarities which provide a sound base for co-operation, particularly with relevance to the European funds available. Specific suggestions that have been identified include:

- work and exchange programmes for officers of the public administration. Any Denbighshire personnel involved would need a fair knowledge of either German or Italian to make the scheme operational. Staff from Alto Adige's department of European Union Affairs would take part and the following areas of interest have been noted:

- a)Agriculture
- b)Tourism
- c)Economic Development
- d)Overseas aid programmes
- e)European Union training programmes

- Alto Adige would be pleased to support as second or support partner any Interreg 3c proposal which Denbighshire is taking forward as a lead partner. (Interreg 3c is a Europe-wide fund, aimed at studies and other work to encourage co-operation between different areas of the EU, in particular the new countries joining the EU in 2004.)

- there is interest in developing a LEADER+ project. (The LEADER group, Cadwyn Clwyd, is hoping to run at least two projects under LEADER+, one a cultural project and one a possible eco farm project, which are due to be submitted to Welsh European Funding Office next year.)

2.5 I believe that we should respond positively and express our willingness to examine these suggestions. Both Denbighshire and Alto Adige depend heavily on tourism and agriculture, and serve bilingual (or trilingual) communities. There are opportunities for links to be developed between businesses and schools.

2.6 Under the Leonardo programme, funding of up to £5k is available for study visits with a view to developing links between different regions of Europe. The deadline for applications is 24 July. If the Cabinet were to support the case for developing more formal links with Alto Adige, a visit would be planned for the late autumn of 2002.

Cost implications

3.1 The main cost at this stage would be a visit by a small team of up to 4 members and officers in the autumn. We would seek external funding for this from the Leonardo programme, and any shortfall would be covered from the existing budget for international links.

Financial controller's statement

4.1 The net costs of the proposed visit, after any special external funding made available, should be contained within the budget provision agreed for 2002/3.

Consultation

5.1 Councillor Rhiannon Hughes, Chair of ECTARC - response not yet received: to be reported orally.

Implication on other policy areas including corporate

6.1 International links help to build and promote Denbighshire's image, and can have impacts in many policy areas as existing links demonstrate.

Recommendation

7.1 That Denbighshire should seek to establish a more formal relationship with Alto Adige/Südtirol.

Appendix 1

Denbighshire County Council's existing international links

A formal letter of agreement was signed with the county of **Västernorrland, Sweden** in March when a delegation visited the county. We have identified 5 priority areas for joint action between the two councils which include Lifelong Learning, Culture, Business Support, Tourism and there will be specific developments in the field of contemporary dance associating Llangollen Pavilion with Västernorrland. Denbighshire's delegation will visit Sweden in 2003, with the expectation that visits will alternate each year thereafter.

We are working with Counties **Clare and Kildare in Ireland** on a number of joint projects under the Interreg programme, such as a project on historic gardens that could include Nantclwyd House in Ruthin.

We are proposing to utilise the Interreg 3b programme to build on the partnership with South West Ireland to develop a tourism project linking with **Galicia in North West Spain** and **Finistère in Brittany**.

A representative from **Silesia in Poland** has visited Denbighshire for discussions, but no concrete proposals have yet been developed.

Some primary schools in Denbighshire have developed links with Nepal, and are fund-raising to build a new school there. A memorandum of understanding with **Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal** was signed in June. The main purposes of the agreement are:

- 1 to develop mutual exchange of experience and ideas on matters relating to education, such as exchange visits between teachers;
- 2 to provide assistance in terms of developing and implementing projects related to educational and extra curricular activities to school children;
- 3 to assist in establishing school and learning centres to provide educational opportunities to underprivileged children and women from undeveloped communities;
- 4 exchange of cultural programmes, scholarships to learn traditional performing arts and assistance to projects related to the conservation of traditional culture.

And every year, the **Llangollen Eisteddfod** provides a window on the world for the people of Denbighshire, Wales and further afield.

This pattern of links involving the county council is in addition to the twinning arrangements which many of our towns and villages have with places in continental Europe.

Alto Adige/Südtirol - background information

It is one of two provinces within the region of Trentino-Alto Adige and enjoys a high degree of autonomy, with its own provincial Assembly. This reflects its distinct history and culture: the area was part of Austria until 1918, and German is still the dominant language group (nearly 70% of the population) although Italian and German is taught to all children. There are also two valleys where Ladin is spoken, representing about 4 per cent of the population. Extensive provision is made to support all three language groups in education, public administration, culture, broadcasting etc. This provides an interesting parallel to the linguistic situation in Denbighshire.

The land area and population are both larger than Denbighshire's, the population being about 420,000. The province is divided into eight districts which between them include a total of 116 municipalities. The capital is Bozen/Bolzano which has a population slightly larger than the whole of Denbighshire.

The province is rural in character, with extensive mountains including the Dolomites and forests. The manufacturing and services sectors are both significant employers, as are agriculture and public services.