

## CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Parish Church Hall, Prestatyn on Tuesday 25 February 2003 at 11.00 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; 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: Councillor M L Davies; S Drew, I M German and C Halliday, Chair of Standards Committee

## ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources; Financial Controller and the County Clerk.

## APOLOGIES

E A Owens, Lead Member for Finance.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor E W Williams referred to the sudden death of ex Councillor Peter Williams of Prestatyn and asked Members to stand in silent tribute. Councillor Williams also referred to Eira, the wife of Councillor Neville Hughes who was seriously ill in hospital.

Councillor R W Hughes, Deputy Leader welcomed Nicola Francis, Head of Service: Children and Families to Denbighshire and her first Cabinet meeting and also welcomed Keith Watson, Deputy Head of Ysgol Tir Morfa to the meeting.

### **1074 URGENT MATTERS**

Part I - Representation on the WLGA -to be taken at item 7.

### **1075 MINUTES OF THE CABINET [CABINET 2002 - 01]**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 January 2003 were submitted.

***RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 January 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.*

### **1076 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS: CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS 2002/03 AND 2003/04 [CABINET 2003-20]**

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' agreement to set the HRA Budgets and increase Council rents for dwellings and garages from Monday 7 April 2003 as set out in the Appendices to the report. Councillor Dobb referred Members to two typographical errors: the first in Annex 1 where the Basic Credit Approval figure should read £1,146,000 and the second in Annex 2 where the Overall Total should read £2116k.

Councillor Dobb detailed various aspects of the report to Members. The National Housing Strategy requires all Local Authorities and Housing Associations to benchmark their rents and the average

rent in Denbighshire was below the £43.48 notional rent. Benchmarking would allow those paying higher than target rents to remain unchanged whilst those below target rents would increase towards the target but with the increase dependent on the property size. Garage rents of £2.80 per week would be increased by £0.10 per week.

Councillor E C Edwards asked the Head of Housing Services whether the Council properties on Rhos Street had been repaired to the required standard. In reply, the Head of Housing Services said the repairs had been carried out to a lesser cost than demolishing the properties and rebuilding.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree:-

- (a) *the Housing Revenue Accounts, Capital and Revenue be adopted;*
- (b) *the rents for Council dwellings be increased in accordance with the Rent Setting Framework set out in Annex 5 (average 3.8%) from Monday 7 April 2003, and*
- (c) *the rents for Council garages be increased by 10p per week with effect from Monday 7 April 2003.*

**1077 SCHOOL MEAL PRICES [CABINET 2003 - 21]**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' agreement to an increase in paid school meal prices and an associated increase in free school meal charges. Councillor Hughes informed Members that Denbighshire was in the process of forming a nutrition policy for school meals.

Councillor E W Williams said he agreed with Option 2 in the report but emphasised the need to ensure quality meals were produced. He said only 50% of primary school children had school meals and only 70% of the free school meal allocation was used.

Councillor P A Dobb said she was delighted a nutrition policy was to be provided. Councillor Dobb, as a rural school governor, said she had also received complaints regarding the quality of school meals.

Councillor G M Kensler emphasised the need for good quality food and said in many instances this would be the only meal they would have in the day. Councillor Kensler agreed with Councillor M A German's suggestion of a survey / questionnaire regarding quality of school meals but suggested the children were the customers, not the parents.

Councillor W R Webb suggested that local procurement could both be better and cheaper than bulk buying of produce.

In reply, the Catering Manager said a survey had recently been completed which covered a broad range of schools and this evaluation was available to Members. With regard to formal complaints, only two schools [Betws G G and Pentrecelyn] had made complaints. Whilst agreeing the 50% uptake could be improved upon, she said the national average was 42%.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree the prices to be charged for paid and free school meals in Denbighshire's Primary and Secondary Schools with effect from 7 April 2003 in accordance with Option 2 of the report and confirm the level of subsidy per meal at 10p.

**1078 YSGOL TIR MORFA, RHYL [CABINET 2003 - 22]**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' agreement:-

- [i] that a replacement for Tir Morfa be given priority status and that officers identify options for funding the replacement facility as a matter of urgency.
- [ii] that a Member/Officer Task Group be set up initially to report back to Cabinet by April 2003 on the funding options including those which embrace other priority schemes, and subsequently to oversee the development of agreed proposals.

Councillor Hughes said the consultation document was now ready to be sent to schools.

Councillor W R Webb said he was concerned regarding the poor state of the buildings and said Denbighshire needed to work in partnership with outside agencies to develop a new centre, rather than trying to bring the present buildings to standard. The Head of Consultancy Services agreed with Councillor Webb and said both sites had a backlog of maintenance which needed to be carried out.

The Deputy Head of Tir Morfa said a split site was not the ideal and said there were health and safety concerns. Provision of a new centre would allow Denbighshire pupils currently travelling to Chester or Llandudno to be educated in Denbighshire.

The Chief Executive said monies would have to be spent on health and safety whilst the existing buildings were in use.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said a paper would be available for the next Cabinet meeting detailing where additional money was being sought and the funding sources available to the Authority.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:-

- (a) acknowledge that the immediate remedial works are temporary and endorse work to identify funding for a replacement facility as a matter of urgency, and
- (b) agree that a Member/Officer Task Group be set up initially to report back to Cabinet by April 2003 on the funding option including those which embrace other priority schemes, and subsequently to oversee the development of agreed proposals.

**1079** **REVENUE BUDGET 2002/03** [CABINET 2003 - 23]

The Corporate Director: Resources presented the report seeking Members' support for remedial action to be taken within the Lifelong Learning Directorate to remove the projected overspendings in the light of the latest budget performance figures.

The Corporate Director: Resources said the overall position had improved slightly. However the target figure of £1m in balances would not be met if the overspend within Lifelong Learning continued.

Councillor R W Hughes said difficulties with the core budget had been accepted by the Council and said it was important the language used in reports should be selected with care. The Council had agreed to look at the Directorate budgets.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet Members note the projected outturn position and its impact on the strategy to deliver balances of £1.0m by the end of 2002/03 and emphasise the requirement for the Lifelong Learning Directorate to take measures to review service provision and improve budgetary control.

**1080** **URGENT ITEMS** [CABINET 2002 - 16]

## **REPRESENTATION ON WLGA COUNCIL AND VOTING**

Councillor R W Hughes informed Members that membership of the WLGA Council had to be renewed at each annual meeting and the Authority had to declare to the WLGA how it would use its votes for the next 12 months. Accordingly, re-nomination of the two Denbighshire Members i.e. Councillor W R Webb and Councillor E W Williams was sought, on the basis of one person one vote.

In reply to a query from Councillor W R Webb, the Chief Executive agreed to check on the membership of the LGA. The County Clerk reminded Members that Cabinet had agreed not to attend the LGA Annual meeting.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor W R Webb and Councillor E W Williams be the Denbighshire Members on the WLGA Council, on a one person one vote basis.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No questions had been received by the closing date.

Councillor E W Williams thanked both Members and officers for their participation in the earlier public open session.

## **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 8 and 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **1081 CHILDREN'S VILLAGE CABINET 2003 - 25]**

Councillor G M Kensler presented the report seeking Members' agreement under paragraph 9b of Contract Standing Orders' Exceptions to Tendering Procedures for the re-appointment of the existing consultants to provide proposals for improvements to the Children's Village and area west up to the Lifeguard Centre to ensure continuity of design and build upon previous public consultation.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approval is given under paragraph 9b of Contract Standing Orders' Exceptions to Tendering Procedures for the re-appointment of the existing consultants to provide proposals for improvements to the Children's Village and area west up to the Lifeguard Centre to ensure continuity of design and build upon previous public consultation.

### **1082 APPOINTMENT OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS [CABINET 2003 - 26]**

The Corporate Director: Resources presented the report seeking Cabinet confirmation of the re-appointment of the existing treasury management consultants whose quotation was not the lowest, for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006.

The Corporate Director emphasised the quality of advice received from the recommended consultants and their understanding of the Welsh Assembly Government developments.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet confirms the re-appointment of the Council's existing consultants as treasury management consultants for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006, in accordance with paragraph 14.2 of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

### **1083 WIRRAL AND NORTH WALES PURCHASING CONSORTIUM [CABINET 2003 - 27]**

Councillor W R Webb presented the report seeking:-

- [i] Cabinet to confirm its decision to withdraw from the Wirral and North Wales Purchasing Organisation [WNWPO].
- [ii] Cabinet agreement that the Corporate Director: Resources, in consultation with the County Clerk, be given full power to act to mitigate any loss to the County Council, subject to reporting back any recommendation upon any proposal to constitute any future shared purchasing agreement.

The Corporate Director: Resources emphasised that the Board would continue to be involved in the likely winding up of the WNWPO. The purpose of the senior officer group was to facilitate operational activities in relation to interim arrangements. The Corporate Director: Resources also detailed the current position in relation to the winding up, in particular the financial position.

Councillor E W Williams said it was important that a procurement policy be produced within the next 6 months.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *Members reconfirm their original decision to withdraw from the WNWPO Consortium, and*
- (b) *the Corporate Director: Resources, in consultation with the County Clerk, be given full power to act to mitigate any loss to the County Council, subject to reporting back any recommendation upon any proposal to constitute any future shared purchasing agreement.*

The meeting concluded at 12.05 p.m.

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