

## CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Town Hall, Rhyl on Tuesday 20 April 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

### PRESENT

Councillors P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Safeguarding our Communities; M A German, Lead Member for Sustainable Development and Environment; G M Kensler, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; R W Hughes, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; 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, Lead Member for Economic Wellbeing.

Observers: Councillors M LI Davies, S Drew, R E Jones and K E Wells.

### ALSO PRESENT

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

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor R W Hughes MBE was congratulated by Councillor E W Williams, on behalf of Cabinet, on her appointment as a member of the Arts Council of Wales.

#### 1160 URGENT MATTERS

Part II Item 13A CCTV North Denbighshire Upgrade Project report - following presentation.

#### 1161 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 March 2004 were submitted.

Item 5 European Policy and Regional Issues: The Chief Executive had received an invitation to visit Lalitpur, Nepal in connection with the Brick Children School.

Item 13 Yellow Bus Initiative and Education Transport: Councillor E A Owens said the second paragraph on page 10 should read "She also said this could be achieved by insisting that a 3 point ..."

Typographical error: The meeting had closed at 12.30 p.m.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 March 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

#### 1162 UPDATE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY SOCIAL SERVICES

Councillor J A Smith presented the report seeking agreement to continue endorsement of the current approach to stabilising Children and Family Social Services.

Councillor E W Williams said overseas recruitment of staff was one way of meeting short term needs and this was happening throughout Wales. The Corporate Director: Personal Services said trainees would also be in post from the summer of 2004.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet endorse the ongoing approach to stabilising Children's Services.

#### 1163 REVISED PROTOCOLS FOR DISPOSALS

Councillor W R Webb presented the report seeking Members' agreement to adopt proposed revised protocol for disposal of property, having noted the advice of the Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the advice of Resources Scrutiny Committee and approve the adoption of the proposed revised protocol for disposal of property [attached to the report at Appendix 1].

**1164 WELSH ASSEMBLY GUIDANCE ON DISPOSALS OF LAND AT LESS THAN BEST CONSIDERATION**

Councillor W R Web presented the report for Members to note the comments of the Resources Scrutiny Committee and endorse the policy interpretation and practice paper (attached at Appendix 2 to the report). Members were also asked to recommend that AMC should be given authority to approve or refuse grants towards the rent and, the decision to dispose of the freehold at an undervalue should be a Cabinet decision [but that all must go through the Asset Management Group / Committee route].

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Members note the comments of the Resources Scrutiny Committee and endorse the policy interpretation and practice paper (attached at Appendix 2 to the report), and
- (b) AMC be given authority to approve or refuse grants towards the rent and, the decision to dispose of the freehold at an undervalue should be a Cabinet decision [but that all must go through the Asset Management Group / Committee route].

**1165 REVENUE BUDGET 2003-2004**

Councillor E A Owens presented the report which advised Members of the estimated Revenue Outturn position for 2003-2004.

Councillor Owens said Departments are likely to have underspends at year end once the final figures are produced. She thanked Members and officers for containing the currently forecasted overspend, which amounted to £382k. The overspend would be met by a review of borrowing charges and investment income. The early indication therefore, unless anything unexpected came to light, was that the Authority would achieve the target of £3m in general balances.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the figures in the appendices.

**1166 WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE BALANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING IN WALES**

Councillor E A Owens presented the report seeking agreement to a response to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation on the Balance of Local Authority Funding in Wales. She apologised for the way in which the consultation had taken place and explained that the Welsh Assembly Government required a response by 30 April 2004.

Councillor Owens said there was a political dimension to the document, in particularly the balance between Central and Local Government funding. She said she would appreciate comments from Members on the draft response.

In response to a request from Councillor P A Dobb, the Corporate Director: Resources said a member of the Resources staff would be available to answer any queries Members may have on the document.

Councillor K E Wells said as the consultation document had been received by the Authority in February 2004 he would have expected the consultation with Members to have taken place sooner. He stressed the need for every Council Member to be made aware of the document and asked for their comments. He said the document was crucially important and some changes could add to the burden of taxes for residents of Denbighshire. He said it was unacceptable for a response to be made by the Cabinet Members only.

The Chief Executive said the Lead Member for Finance had the authority to respond to the document without consultation with the 47 Members. The response proposed the return of control of business rates to Local Authorities as currently the Council Tax was the only tax in Local Authority control.

Councillor E A Owens said she would welcome written responses from Members which could be incorporated into a Denbighshire response.

Councillor R W Hughes said although the Lead Member was able to provide a response without consultation, she supported Councillor Wells' suggestion that all 47 Members be consulted and that the Welsh Assembly Government be asked for an extension of time to enable Full Council to respond. In response, Councillor Owens said a half day seminar would be required to detail the document to all Members.

Councillor E W Williams said the rationalisation of funding was an issue and less funding would come to Wales as a result of the cuts in the number of Civil Service posts.

Councillor G M Kensler suggested Members receive the report and a letter be despatched with the report to all Members asking for their comments. She felt there was no need for a special meeting to discuss the document. The Chief Executive agreed a letter be despatched to all Members asking for their comments. He said £17m Business Rates was collected by the Council and £28m Council Tax. However, the Council was a net beneficiary of Business Rates, receiving more than it collected.

Councillor E C Edwards said business rates for small businesses should be taken into consideration as there were serious problems caused by high business rates, particularly in the small market towns in Denbighshire and he felt the employment of Town Managers was not the way forward.

Councillor M LI Davies said he agreed with Councillor K E Wells' statements and it was essential for all Members to be consulted.

The Corporate Director: Resources agreed to convene a meeting to discuss the consultation document and the response.

**RESOLVED** that the Corporate Director: Resources convene a short meeting for all Councillors before the 28 April 2004 to discuss the consultation document and to provide observations to enable the Lead Member for Finance to finalise a response to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation on the Balance of Local Authority Funding in Wales.

#### **1167 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SERVICE REVIEW TIMETABLE**

Councillor E W Williams presented the report for Members to note the progress on the Service Review Timetable and to highlight issues of concern.

Councillor R E Jones referred to discussions on the possible centralisation of the Personnel function and said staff were not in favour of centralisation. However he felt the reasons for Personnel remaining decentralised were unacceptable and the opportunity for centralisation should be followed. The Chief Executive agreed to take Councillor Jones' comments into account and said consideration would be given to having all Personnel staff in one department rather than one location.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the progress on the Service Review Timetable attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **1168 PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO ACIW REPORT ON THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Councillor E W Williams presented the report for Members to consider the progress report on the action plan produced in response to the statutory recommendations made in the Audit Commission's report on the Improvement Plan and to monitor closely the progress of identified actions with a view to considering any issue in greater depth as deemed necessary.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the progress report at Appendix 1 to the report.

**1169 CORPORATE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Councillor E W Williams presented the report for Members to consider the Corporate Quarterly Performance report and to monitor closely the progress towards target of the statutory performance indicators with a view to considering any issue in greater depth as deemed necessary.

Councillor E A Owens referred to the Performance Incentive Grant figures and said the varying figures had been discussed with the Welsh Assembly Government and could have serious financial implications for the Authority. The Corporate Director: Resources said a new cycle of PIG funding was due to start and would be monitored very closely.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the progress on the Corporate Quarterly Performance report attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

**1170 YSGOL PLAS BRONDYFFRYN**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking agreement to outline proposals to undertake the next phase of development at Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn.

Councillor Hughes reported that the Brondyffryn Trust had met on 13.04.2004 and confirmed the decision to dissolve itself.

Service Level Agreements with the other North Wales Authorities have been submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government. Councillor Hughes further indicated that it was now necessary to decide how the Authority would progress with the development of the Primary phase at Ty'n Fron and the residential facilities. Prudential Borrowing remained a potential funding route. She suggested, and was supported by the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning, the formation of a small working group of relevant Lead Members, officers and school representative be formed.

Councillor E W Williams expressed his disappointment that the Trustees of the Brondyffryn Trust had decided not to continue with joint arrangements to develop residential care facilities at Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn but was pleased they will continue to work with DCC and the Assembly to develop regional facilities for autism. He suggested a letter be sent to Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning setting out the Authority's continued support for the projects.

Councillor E A Owens said Cabinet needed to be informed of any recommendations on the way forward, particularly on the structures and strategies recommended by the working group. The Chief Executive agreed the working group provide a report on the next steps by May 2004 if possible and at the latest by July 2004. Councillor G M Kensler agreed with Councillor R W Hughes that a report by provided to Cabinet in May 2004.

**RESOLVED** that Members:-

- (a) agree the way forward in the next phase of development at Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report;
- (b) agree the formation of a working group of relevant Lead Members, officers and school representative, and
- (c) a press release be issued on the latest position.

**1171 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor R W Hughes said a items from the Lifelong Learning Directorate would be included in the programme later in the week.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the contents of the Forward Work Programme.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions.

## 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 9 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## PART II

### PRESENTATION BY MR GWYN HUGHES, CCTV CONSULTANT:

Mr Hughes said he had first been asked to investigate the CCTV issues in Rhyl and Prestatyn and the control room in July 2003 and had commenced an initial survey with a staff questionnaire being completed. The findings of the initial survey had been reported to Management Team on 23 July 2003. Mr Hughes said regular meetings had been held with Councillor E C Edwards and the officers.

Mr Hughes went on to review the positive and negative points of the Control Room system, the external equipment used and also detailed the system operation and management. The staff questionnaire findings were detailed. Mr Hughes said an engineering company had been engaged for the servicing of the equipment and an engineering audit had been carried out with temporary works initiated. A Code of Practice had also been produced.

Mr Hughes detailed the issues which needed to be addressed, including the possible relocation of the control room and the upgrading of the equipment and the upgrading/replacement of external equipment in Prestatyn and Rhyl. He stressed that, in his opinion, if no action was taken the system would eventually need to be closed down. He went on to detail the approximate costs of relocating the control room and upgrading the equipment with approximate costs being given for a Vale of Clwyd extension to the system.

Members took the opportunity to raise a number queries, including the monitoring of out of hours calls and staffing levels. The Corporate Director: Environment said extra staffing would be financed from last year's budget bid.

Councillor E C Edwards and the Chief Executive confirmed that the Police had made a contribution to the scheme.

Councillor D M Morris asked about the current situation with the Prestatyn Scheme. Mr Hughes said it would not be cost effective to have a control room in both Prestatyn and Rhyl and agreed the transmission link from Prestatyn needed upgrading. However, he confirmed that the link between the Rhyl control room and the Police was to be in place by the weekend. Councillor D M Morris reminded Members that both the Town Council and businesses in Prestatyn had contributed to the scheme.

Councillor E A Owens queried the operation of the maintenance contract. Mr Hughes confirmed that a repair and not maintenance contract had been in place, which had resulted in a reactive rather than preventative approach. Difficulties had also arisen with the manager being based in Bodelwyddan and the control room located in Rhyl but this would be addressed by the staff quota increase.

Mr Hughes stressed that it would be difficult to engage a company on a maintenance contract to maintain the equipment currently in use. He said £80k had been received from the Welsh Assembly Government for the installation of 3 new cameras in Rhyl. He said the relocation and upgrade of the control room had not been costed in detail.

Councillor G M Kensler said various department in Denbighshire used cameras, for example some schools and leisure centres, and suggested that the technical information on CCTV should be shared between the relevant departments.

Members agreed the need for a partnership with the North Wales Police for the provision of CCTV equipment.

Councillor E C Edwards thanked Mr Hughes for his presentation.

## **1172 URGENT ITEMS**

### **1172A CCTV - NORTH DENBIGHSHIRE UPGRADE PROJECT**

Councillor E C Edwards presented the report to update Members on progress with the development of a project for renewing the CCTV system in Denbighshire and to recommend to Council the approval of the funding for the project.

In response to a query from Councillor E A Owens as to the reason for the report being despatched later than other Cabinet papers, the Corporate Director: Environment said it had not been possible to have meetings with the Police to meet despatch times and both he and Councillor Edwards had felt it important to have a report available to follow the presentation. The Deputy Leader reminded Councillor Owens that the Chief Executive had informed Members a report would be brought to this meeting.

Councillor E C Edwards reminded Members that the CCTV system was owned by Denbighshire County Council and it would not be feasible to expect funding from other sources until the current system had been upgraded. He went on to stress the need for a full partnership to be developed with the Police Authority which could include the relocation of the control room in Rhyl. Councillor Edwards detailed some health and safety issues and said the staff had been very co-operative. He said funding from new initiatives continued to be a priority.

The Corporate Director: Environment said possible expansion of the CCTV system to the Vale of Clwyd was a free standing project and until the current system had been upgraded the Authority was unable to apply for new funding for such expansions or look for partnership funding.

Councillor E W Williams said the main beneficiaries of the CCTV system were the Police and they should be asked to contribute appropriately to the system as currently the costs of funding the system lay solely with the Authority.

Councillor R W Hughes said that whilst CCTV was a non statutory service owned by the Authority, the Police partnership was the way forward. She suggested that as closing the system down could be an option in the future, they should be made aware of the difficulties with funding the current system.

Councillor G M Kensler reminded Members the Chief Constable had previously agreed to fund a proportion of the CCTV system. She suggested Members should visit the CCTV control room in Conwy County Borough Council to see the system used. She also highlighted the need for lighting systems in schools and leisure centres to be considered.

Councillor P A Dobb said it was essential to have partnership funding for CCTV. She stressed the need for prioritising of capital receipts and said affordable housing should not be jeopardised as a result of funding required for CCTV.

Councillor E A Owens said the Police should be formally approached for funding. Re-equipping of the control room would allow the Authority to apply for funding from other sources. She said she supported the decision to relocate the control room and to re-equip but only if a partnership was established with the Police. Councillor E C Edwards said the Police had discussed a partnership approach but he felt they would not be willing to contribute towards the system until it had been upgraded.

Councillor E W Williams suggested Members accept the presentation and reaffirm the importance of CCTV in the Authority. He also suggested that a delegation of relevant Lead Members and officers meet with the Chief Constable to discuss the issue.

The Chief Executive said it was entirely appropriate that Denbighshire fund some of the investment costs and that the Police should be asked to contribute to the capital costs. He also agreed the control room should be relocated on a rent free basis in Rhyl Police Station. He suggested a revenue stream from North Wales Police would allow Denbighshire to use prudential borrowing as a funding route.

**RESOLVED** that Members accept the presentation by the consultant appointed to develop proposals for improving the CCTV network and support the need for CCTV. It was further agreed that a delegation of relevant Lead Members and officers meet with the Chief Constable and Police to achieve a partnership solution.

At this juncture (11.25 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

#### **1173 EIRIANFA**

Councillor E W Williams presented the report for Members to consider the implications of two potential options either the freehold disposal or long lease of the property and to agree a preferred option.

The County Clerk reported on the comments received from two local Members, that Councillor G M Kensler was in support of a freehold sale under best value terms and Councillor R E Jones was in support of a lease of the property. He also referred to the Trustees of the Association and their responsibilities.

Members discussed the options of freehold disposal and long lease of the property in detail. Members recognised the Authority's commitment both to the community of Denbigh and the residents of Denbighshire as a whole. The Eirianfa Association would be able to apply for funding for improvements whichever option was agreed.

Councillor R E Jones said he firmly supported the recommendation and asked that Cabinet finalise the decision.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree:-

- (a) *subject to receipt of a satisfactory business plan and subject to the Eirianfa Association entering into a Service Level Agreement, to grant the Association a long lease on Eirianfa, and*
- (b) *that the rental throughout the term should be at an undervalue using the powers in the General Disposals Consent (Wales) 2003, the discounted rent for the duration of the lease to be 10% of the market rent with the balance paid by a grant from Personal Services as recorded by way of side letter.*

#### **1174 NEW VEHICLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP - ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS**

Councillor M A German presented the report for:

1.1 Members' approval to the acquisition of depot workshop facilities on a site in Bodelwyddan, by means of lease arrangement with private sector landowners/developer (Option B in the report). The facility would be constructed by the developer, to the Council's specification, and leased to the Council for, initially, a 10 year period.

The proposal constituted an alternative to the new Kinmel Park, Bodelwyddan vehicle maintenance facility, funding for which Members approved by means of a Cabinet resolution on 16 December 2003. Should Members resolve to approve the alternative proposal, consideration could be given to funding the necessary redevelopment of the Lon Parcwr, Ruthin depot, utilizing part of the released capital funding.

1.2 Subject to Option B being confirmed as the Council's preferred option, Members' approval in principle to officers from Transport & Infrastructure in conjunction with colleagues from Resources and

Legal Services, determining the most expedient and economically beneficial method of procurement for the new facility, noting the possible benefits to be gained by engaging the proposed developer to both build and equip the new workshop through a single contractual arrangement.

1.3 Members to note that, complimentary with the revised operational arrangements, revisions would be made to the fleet management and vehicle maintenance management structure. This would result in some posts being re-designated, but no increase in the overall number of posts. In the case of Option A it is possible that a post will be lost, but with short / medium term cost savings offset by redundancy costs

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) *Members approve the procurement of a single vehicle maintenance facility by means of the alternative, Option B, arrangement. This requires the Council to enter a 10 year lease arrangement with a private sector provider, who will construct the facility. The cost of equipping the facility will be met from a reduced utilisation of previously approved general capital funding;*

(b) *Members approve in principle the establishment by officers of the most expedient and economically beneficial method of procurement for the facility, in accordance with Financial Regulations, noting the possible benefits to be gained in combining build and fit out processes into a single commercial arrangement;*

(c) *Members consider the utilisation of a proportion of the released capital funding to enable the necessary redevelopment of the Lon Parcwr, Ruthin depot, consequential to construction of the proposed Glasdir Link Road, and*

(ch)*As a consequence of the decision covered in [a] above, Members note the introduction of revised integrated management arrangements.*

## **1175 CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE / CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Councillor D M Morris presented the report seeking Members' approval to a capital and revenue bid to allow progression towards implementing a Customer Service Centre and associated Customer Relation Management (CRM) System. The report had been amended with updated expenditure and an outline project plan in light of information gained from Member reference visits to Knowsley Council and Surrey County Council.

Councillor E A Owens said it had been very useful to see the setup in Knowsley and she had been impressed with their development process. Whilst she supported Option 3 In House and Best Value Sourcing she stressed that Members needed to agree a programme of training, location of the centre's staff and so on, in partnership with officers. The Head of ICT said a steering committee of Corporate Directors and officers from all Directorates would consider the services to be phased in at the contact centre. The Lead Member would be involved and regular reports would be provided to Cabinet.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that as the Head of Paid Service he was responsible for the operational decisions. In regard to this budgets would be affected, therefore reports would be brought to Cabinet.

Councillor K E Wells suggested the figures presented were optimistic as training costs would be high and basic costs had not been included in the report.

Councillor E W Williams said decisions would need to be taken on whether the public would benefit more from such systems. The Authority would lead with one service initially, thereby allowing any problems to be resolved quickly.

The Corporate Director: Resources reminded Members that this was a low cost - low risk way forward as a means of introducing the concept of a Contact Centre pilot. Decisions had not been taken on which service would be the pilot nor the location of the centre. It would be essential to ensure high calibre staff would be working in the centre. In response to Councillor K E Wells' comments, the

Corporate Director Resources agreed that when / if the Authority moved to a full scale implementation, costs would be higher and decisions would need to be taken to ensure service improvements.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *Cabinet ratifies the allocation of the funding required to progress Option 3 as the preferred approach for the implementation of a Customer Service Centre / Customer Relationship Management System;*
- (b) *regular reports to be brought to Cabinet outlining progress, and*
- (c) *a review to be brought to Cabinet after the implementation of the first phase, which would not preclude consideration of any of the four options.*

**1176 APPROVAL OF SINGLE TENDER FOR REPLACEMENT OF DIGITAL PRINTER**

Councillor E A Owens presented the report seeking Members' approval to replace the existing digital printer with a network printer as detailed in the report, as an exception to the tendering procedure and to consider the option of the provision of a colour printer. She congratulated the County Clerk's administration team on being able to fund the printer lease through savings within the Department.

The County Clerk said it was an excellent opportunity to upgrade to a network printer which would allow links to another local authority if required in the event of an emergency.

**RESOLVED** that *Cabinet agree the exception to the tendering procedure and the County Clerk be authorised to enter into a lease agreement with Xerox for the supply of a network printer as detailed in the report.*

The meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.

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