

CABINET

Minutes of the special Cabinet meeting held in Conference Room 1, PFI, Ruthin on Tuesday 2 November 2004 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Business & Communications; M A German, Lead Member for Children and Young People; R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Regeneration; P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Finance and Personnel; D Owens, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management

Observers: Councillors R E Barton; D Cooper; M LI Davies; G C Evans; S Frobisher; I M German; N J Hughes; D Jones; M M Jones; G M Kensler.

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources and County Clerk; Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES

Councillors P A Dobb; E C Edwards; E W Williams.

PART II

1 PERSONNEL MATTER

Due to the confidentiality of the meeting the report was individually numbered and distributed at the start of the meeting. Members were requested to sign for their copy and sign again when they returned it at the end of the meeting. The report could be consulted by prior appointment with the County Clerk and under his supervision or that of one of his staff. The Chief Executive distributed guidelines to Members on how to respond to any media enquiries regarding this matter.

Councillor R W Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting and stressed the confidentiality of the meeting. She also thanked Members and officers for acting in the best interest of the Council in dealing with this matter. The Chief Executive also thanked Members for their understanding during this difficult time.

The Chief Executive presented a joint report by himself, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer seeking to agree the principle of entering a compromise agreement with the officer identified in the report and drew particular attention to paragraphs 4.1 – 4.3 on confidentiality. He thanked the Deputy Chief

Executive / Corporate Director: Resources, County Clerk and Alison Walsh for their assistance in compiling the report. The Deputy Chief Executive/ Corporate Director: Resources reiterated the Chief Executive's comments. The County Clerk hoped that in respecting the confidentiality of the matter this would give everyone confidence and protect the integrity of the Council and the officer. Councillor P J Marfleet proposed and Councillor D Owens seconded the decision sought.

Councillor M A German stated all Cabinet members had not been involved in this matter throughout. He felt that his vote would be based on very little information. Councillor M A German also said that he had no problems with issuing the statement in the Chief Executive's note if approached by the media. Councillor R W Hughes accepted Councillor M A German's comments. She said that Members did not usually get involved in personnel matters and that this was a unique case. The decision not to involve all Cabinet in this matter had been made in the interest of the Council as a whole as it was sensitive to an individual member of staff.

The Chief Executive explained that he had written to Group Leaders regarding the matter but did not share with them as much as was in the present report. He explained that there were good reasons why the full details of the situation were not presented in the report. There could be a risk that it could get out to the public domain. If information was leaked it could jeopardise the compromise agreement and also that of the officer's situation. The Chief Executive stated that Appendix II gave more detailed information than has been given so far. Councillor M A German thanked the Chief Executive for the information and stated that his Group will be acting in the best interest of the Council.

Councillor D Owens was keen to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. The Chief Executive could not guarantee the time scale in concluding this matter but hoped that it would be resolved in the next few weeks.

RESOLVED that Members agree:

- (a) *the principle of entering a compromise agreement with the officer identified in the report;*
- (b) *that finalisation of the compromise agreement and all associated matters be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer.*

The meeting concluded at 9.50 a.m.

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Town Hall, Llangollen on Tuesday 23 November 2004 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Business & Communications; P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Communities; M A German, Lead Member for Children and Young People; R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Regeneration; P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Finance and Personnel; D Owens, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

Observers: Councillors R E Barton; D Hannam; T R Hughes; M M Jones and N J Hughes.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

None.

1 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26 October 2004 were submitted.

Item 10[a] Closure of Benefit Office, Brighton Road, Rhyl: Councillor R W Hughes reported that Chris Ruane MP had met with the Chief Executive of Job Centre Plus and she was willing to consider locating some of their services through the County's libraries, One Stop Shops and other Council buildings.

Item 9 Free Swimming for Older People: Councillor S Roberts reported that the working group had been set up and was to meet on 24.11.2004.

Item 17 Prestatyn: Ffrith Beach:

The County Clerk reported an amendment to the comment made by Councillor J M Davies to read: "Prestatyn Members were full of enthusiasm to

find a successful outcome for the Ffrith, but that the proposed retail park development was completely unsuitable, and that any DIY type development ought to be located in the town centre rather than near the beach".

Councillor M A German said his comment should read "a canvass had revealed that development of the site and the provision of a roundabout with a supermarket or affordable housing would be welcomed by some residents".

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26 October 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

3 CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT: APPROVAL OF ACTION PLAN

The Chief Executive presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to the Action Plan at Annex 1 to the report.

Councillor R W Hughes emphasised that parts of the report should be viewed in historic terms.

Councillor E C Edwards reminded Members that it was an important document and said the Council must act on its recommendations. Councillor R W Hughes agreed and said consideration was being given to holding more informal meetings where Cabinet Members could meet every fortnight.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Action Plan at Annex 1 to the report.

4 PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT 2004-2005

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the report, circulated at the meeting, seeking Cabinet approval to the response to the Provisional Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlement 2005-2006. He apologised for the lateness of the report but said that it had been held back in anticipation of further announcements from the Assembly. The previous day Sue Essex AM, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services had announced that there would be a delay in the confirmation of the settlement until 12 January 2005 but every effort would be made to release the figures in December. The Chancellor's Pre-Budget statement would be made on 2 December 2004 and should hopefully be incorporated in the Settlement in January 2005.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources confirmed that the provisional increase of 3.8% would reduce to approximately 2.3% after allowing for additional responsibilities within the settlement. He informed Members that the Corporate Director: Personal Services had worked closely with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Authority were pleased with the support shown by the Assembly in delaying the introduction of conversion of residential allowances to a formula basis.

He went on to emphasise the importance of making early progress with three year plans but recognised the complications involved in such financial planning.

Councillor R W Hughes thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for producing the report so promptly and also for detailing the implications of the delay in publishing the Settlement. She asked that any further comments be sent direct to the Deputy Chief Executive by 25.11.2004 at the latest.

Councillor P J Marfleet informed Members that the Welsh Assembly Government, MPs and the Secretary of State for Wales had been contacted regarding the settlement. He went on to thank all Members, particularly the leaders of the political groups on working and standing closely together on the matter.

Councillor E C Edwards asked whether the Queen's Speech would have an impact on the settlement. The Chief Executive agreed there would be an impact for Local Government.

The Chief Executive confirmed that based upon current information in the settlement, to achieve a standstill budget the Council Tax yield would need to increase by up to 16 - 17%.

Councillor E W Williams stressed the importance of informing the public what the Council Tax would have been and what it would be after the Valuation Office re-banding was applied. The re-banding increases were carried out as a result of Assembly directives. He suggested the Assembly be informed that the Authority would be highlighting this to the public.

Councillor R E Barton reminded Members that Denbighshire had Objective 1 status because of the deprived areas and suggested the demographic issues should be stressed.

Councillor E C Edwards said Objective 1 funding could be adversely affected with more countries being included in the European Community.

Councillor Edwards also informed Members that the Home Office had delayed the Police settlement until December 2004 and this figure would need to be included in the Authority's final Council Tax figures.

Councillor P J Marfleet said the allocation formula resulted in a low figure and in certain areas, for example adult services, the Authority had been disadvantaged by £400k. He also emphasised that the transient nature of the population in parts of Denbighshire distorted the figures and it was imperative that work was undertaken to ensure that the needs of the Council were adequately reflected in the formulae used for the settlement.

Councillor D Hannam reminded Members that some people who work were also deprived and would find it increasingly difficult to pay the Council Tax increases and could cause hardship.

RESOLVED that Members approve the response to the Provisional Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlement 2004-2006.

5 CORPORATE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report seeking Members' consideration of the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report against the Improvement Plan for 2004 / 2005 and urged Members to monitor closely the progress being made against corporate and service risks with reference to local performance indicators with a view to considering any issue in greater depth as deemed necessary.

Councillor Marfleet referred in particular to waste management, although currently on target he said if the targets were not met, the Authority could incur financial penalties. Councillor E W Williams agreed and said Denbighshire should work together with other Local Authorities on joint procurement for refuse collection and that strong leadership was required from the Welsh Assembly Government. He said targets should be robust when set.

RESOLVED that Members note the progress on the Corporate Quarterly Performance report attached at Appendices I and II to the report.

6 HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

Councillor R W Hughes welcomed Mr Andrew Jones, Local Director of Public Health for Conwy and Denbighshire Local Health Board to the meeting.

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2005-2008 and Action Plan, and to receive detailed proposals on Health Challenge Denbighshire. Cabinet were also asked to recommend adoption of the Strategy to Full Council.

Councillor Dobb said the Wanless Review recommended that Personal Services should work closely with the National Health Service to provide a seamless care system. She also said Denbighshire had taken a joint approach with Lifelong Learning for various initiatives.

Councillor E W Williams briefly outlined an initiative started to deliver groceries to local villages which was of help to many communities.

Councillor P J Marfleet said a structure was required to ensure all partners were involved in ascertaining real needs and then allocating resources.

Councillor R W Hughes thanked Councillor Dobb and officers for their work and commitment to the Strategy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

[a] *agrees the action plan of the Health Social Care and Well-Being Strategy 2005-2008*

[b] *receives the detailed proposals on Health Challenge Denbighshire, as outlined in paragraphs 2.3.15 to 2.3.17 of the report*

[c] *recommends adoption of the Strategy to Full Council*

7 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRAMEWORK PLAN / CHILDREN'S PLAN (0-10)

Councillor M A German presented the report for Members to comment and agree the action plans for the Children and Young People's Framework Plan and the Children's Plan (0-10) to cover the period to March 2008.

The Corporate Director: Personal Services confirmed that a small additional sum would be received from Cymorth but as yet the terms and conditions were not known.

RESOLVED *that Cabinet agrees the Action Plans for the Children and Young People's Framework Plan and the Children's Plan (0-10) to cover the period to March 2008.*

8 IMPROVING THE COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking agreement to enter into a new round of consultation with Members and tenants on the options for improving the Council Housing Stock to Welsh Housing Quality Standards. Members were also asked to agree a Seminar and Discussion Day be arranged for Members and tenant representatives to explore the new information and assess the options. Further consultation with all tenants was to be arranged as appropriate, including re-establishing the Housing Options Working Party and the Welsh Assembly Government be consulted on the alternatives of a Provisional Application for Housing Stock Transfer and the Housing Stock Business Plan for Stock Retention with Prudential Borrowing.

Councillor Dobb briefly updated Members on the recent meeting the Leader, Councillor P J Marfleet and she had met with tenant representatives and that the first step was for the tenant advisers to meet with officers to consider prudential borrowing in more detail. The tenants had said although the offer of stock transfer was appealing, any change should be decided by ballot. It was also suggested that the housing working group be re-established. Councillor R W Hughes agreed with the comments and said it was imperative that the tenants be kept informed.

Councillor P J Marfleet said all Members should be made fully aware of the situation and suggested seminars be convened to ensure Members were given detailed information. A substantial refurbishment programme was to be implemented during the next year and he suggested that officers should commence on the tender work as soon as possible.

The Head of Housing Services said a seminar for all Members had been arranged for the afternoon of 20 December, to be held at the Henllan Centre. With regard to the refurbishment of the housing stock, the principles and the properties to be refurbished would need to be the subject of consultation with tenants. Councillor Dobb suggested a new mechanism for selecting membership of the Working Party be agreed and the Head of Housing Services said the original working party membership was 5 (politically balanced) Denbighshire County Council Members and 5 tenants. He suggested an observer from Dyffryn Housing be included, with no decision making powers.

Councillor E W Williams suggested the average rent increases should be included on a north - south basis. He also asked that consideration be given to introduce local craftsmen in the refurbishment programme wherever possible and that the educational training establishments in the County also be included.

The Corporate Director: Personal Services agreed that local people would be involved wherever possible and that a system would be put in place to start the refurbishment programme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree:

- [a] *to enter into a new round of consultation with Members and tenants on the options for improving the Council Housing Stock to Welsh Housing Quality Standards*
- [b] *a Seminar and Discussion Day be arranged for Members and tenant representatives to explore the new information and assess the options*
- [c] *further consultation with all tenants be arranged as appropriate, including re-establishing the Housing Options Working Party as listed above*
- [d] *the Welsh Assembly Government be consulted on the alternatives of a Provisional Application for Housing Stock Transfer and the Housing Stock Business Plan for Stock Retention with Prudential Borrowing*

9 REVENUE BUDGET 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members, in the light of the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the appendices attached to the report, to consider any actions necessary to reduce the balance of overspending on services. He expressed his disappointment in the figures and said improvements in performance were required each month otherwise a shortfall of up to £0.5m would occur by the year end.

Councillor Marfleet said the current month had showed an improvement of only £5k. He suggested meetings be convened with Lead Members to go to relevant departments to discuss the balance of the current year's budget.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the figures in the Appendices and agree the remedial actions to align projected spending levels with approved budgets.

10 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2004/2005

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to note the latest financial forecast position of £971 potential underspend of the Housing Revenue Account for the current financial year.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the figures in Appendix 1 to the report and agree the remedial actions to align projected spending levels with approved budgets.

11 CORPORATE FONT SIZE POLICY

Councillor S A Davies presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement to standardise the font size and typeface for all Council information and communication to Arial 12 point except in limited cases where practical or design issues apply and to revoke the existing policy requiring 14 point Arial for Cabinet and Asset Management Committee reports.

Councillor Davies said the change would meeting DDA requirements and also was in line with Welsh Assembly Government and other Local Authority standards.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree the policy regarding font size for Council information and communication is standardised to Arial 12 point except in limited cases where practical or design issues apply.

12 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor S A Davies presented the report and asked officers to ensure that Lead Members were fully involved in developing the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and involving Members from the start.

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

13 URGENT ITEMS

There were no Urgent Items.

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

PART II

14 CAPITAL PLAN 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report seeking Members' consideration of any actions necessary in the management of the Capital Plan. He said only approximately £4m of the £13m general funding had been spent to date and that reinstatement of the Block Allocations was dependent on the generation of capital receipts. He said as some of the original estimates in the Capital Plan had been understated and because of inflation they would now be insufficient to carry out the work and so would need to be addressed.

Councillor E C Edwards asked whether it was possible to reallocate and prioritise some of the funding. The Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director: Resources said there was undoubtedly slippage in the programme, and an update of the report would be presented to Council in December 2004 following more detailed work and consideration could be given to other projects.

Councillor E W Williams agreed the capital be readdressed but reminded Members that time was required to set up contracts and follow the tendering process. He said some officers were concerned over the need to carry out work for some Members in their areas, which had not been included in the original schedule. Councillor Williams said he hoped this was not happening and could be seen as a form of bullying.

Councillor R W Hughes said she would address and challenge any issues of bullying and stressed she wanted to be informed immediately of any such instances.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

[a] note the updated position in respect of the Capital Plan

[b] agree Services review the estimates of projected 2004-2005 expenditure, taking account of the in-year spend to date, with the objective of identifying any areas where slippage may arise.

15 COMMUNITIES FIRST

Councillor M A German presented the report seeking Members' agreement for the proposals for change to the Communities First programme set out in the Assembly report as set out in Section 5 of the Appendix attached to the report.

Councillor E C Edwards congratulated Councillor German and officers on moving the matter forward and asked whether there would be an opportunity to make retrospective claims. The Corporate Director: Personal Services said she also was pleased the matter was being progressed, however, it would not be possible to make retrospective claims. She also said it was difficult to produce community action plans but the Authority needed to ensure the funding would not be allocated elsewhere.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree the proposals for change to the Communities First programme set out in the Assembly report as set out in Section 5 of the Appendix attached to the report.

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor R W Hughes, Leader of the Council

DATE: 21 December 2004

SUBJECT: Draft International Strategy

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- to adopt a strategy for developments with regions who wish to co-operate with Denbighshire. (Appendix 1)
- to approve the memorandum of understanding with Powiat Gliwicki, Poland, (Appendix 2)
- to agree that International activity be considered at one of the Directorate days to identify future opportunities.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

It is opportune to develop a strategy, given that several exchanges have recently occurred, and two major European applications are being processed, to ensure that the international element of regeneration secures Denbighshire's continuing access to EU funding as EU policies change: These initiatives need to be properly governed by the proper agencies and the draft memorandum of understanding with Powiat Gliwcki provides for this.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Section 2 Local Government Act 2000

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

Cost of international visits are met from the budget allocations for this purpose. As projects receive European or other external group funding approvals, then the costs of international exchanges are contained within the funding approvals. Some management costs in relation to officer time and officer visits may be excluded from some funding approvals and are then contained within the budget allocation for international links. Opportunity cost of officer time is contained within existing budgets.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

Costs detailed in section 4 will need to be contained within the funding mentioned. Any match funding for potential capital projects will need to follow the Council's capital projects appraisal route to ensure the best use of scarce capital resources currently available to the Council.

6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Two cross-service meetings involving external agencies have been held in order to contribute to the enclosed strategy and the Head of Development Services has also consulted with representatives of our partner regions who support the continuation of inter-regional links. An International Development Forum linking Council services and external bodies meets regularly and there is clear enthusiasm for taking forward the Council's international work in a co-ordinated fashion that contributes to the Council's policies and objectives. It would be my intention to present the draft strategy to the Forum once it had the approval of the Cabinet.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The International strategy is intended to contribute to the overall regeneration strategy of the Council by producing additional resources, professional experiences, benchmarking opportunities and comparators for future work. Responding to European initiatives such as Leader and Interreg, substantial resources for a range of corporate strategic areas which are beyond the reach of the Structural Funds are provided. Specific strategies such as the Economic Regeneration Strategy, Cultural Tourism Strategy, Tourism Strategy and the Objective One Local Action Plan are principal beneficiaries of this Strategy. As the strategy evolves, it will need to develop strong synergies with the Council's new priorities. Policy areas are increasingly finding benefit from developing international contacts.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- that the Cabinet support the Draft International Strategy as a basis for further consultation.
- that the Cabinet approve the memorandum of understanding with Powiat Gliwicki.
- that International activity be considered at one of the forthcoming Directorate days to identify future opportunities.

DENBIGHSHIRE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Denbighshire is as affected by global forces as everywhere else in the world. Basic services, especially in the field of regeneration are increasingly being funded by the European Union and employment patterns are requiring the County and the Council to reach far overseas to satisfy recruitment needs.

Denbighshire can also learn from other areas and it can use the needs of other areas to stimulate employment and investment within the County. As more and more people travel, international tourism becomes important for the citizens of Denbighshire and also for the tourist industry and the general economy in Denbighshire and communities within the County are also seeing the need to forge links with communities overseas. Towns, villages, schools, sports clubs and a whole range of community organisations are increasingly finding the need to lay permanent foundations for relations with similar organisations in other countries.

Denbighshire is already one of the most successful recipients of European domestic funding. Substantial funds are made available by the European Commission to provide grants for inter-regional links. These resources come in the form of high rates of grants which provide resources not only for the international links but also for locally based activity as well. The European Commission targets many mainstream areas of regeneration, employment creation, business support, tourism development, education and training, community development and rural development. More and more Authorities are using the inter-regional funds of the European Commission to add to the funds being obtained from the main structural programmes, Objective One in the case of Denbighshire and there are examples of Authorities who are now obtaining from inter-regional projects streams of resources which are as important and higher than those they are obtaining from Objective One.

It is against this background of developing activity that I have commissioned this strategy. The Council needs to be clear that it is making best use of the opportunities that come its way for developing International links and accessing European funding streams. With its new priorities and the Community Strategy an International Strategy that compliments these is essential. It needs to be sure that it is providing adequate support for those organisations that depend on International links for their very existence, such as the International Eisteddfod and ECTARC. Critically, as an Objective One area with access to all the funds which the European Union provides for the development of inter-regional activity, the Council needs to maximise its access to European resources to ensure that its basic services benefit from additional funding while Denbighshire's top tier European designation continues.

This is a draft strategy which has had the benefit of input from a wide range of organisation in Denbighshire which deal with International activity. It is my intention to circulate it as widely as possible to all the organisations and individuals within the County so that their experience can amplify the final strategy. I commend the draft for wider discussion.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

LEAD MEMBER FOR INTERNATIONAL LINKS

STRATEGIC STATEMENT

Denbighshire is part of the global community and the citizens of Denbighshire are citizens of a wider world. Across a range of sectors there are economic, resource and community benefits to be obtained from mutual collaboration with other International regions. Denbighshire County Council will seek to build relations with like minded Councils and organisations overseas. It will seek to build these relations into active partnerships that animate and improve service activity within Denbighshire. It will support internationally orientated organisations within Denbighshire to build up their activity in ways that are beneficial to these organisations and to the wider community.

The strategy has these aims -

1. To secure robust sources of funds to provide resources for essential regeneration strategies and partnerships arising from the Council's Mission Statement and priorities.
2. To provide support for the expansion of the economy.
3. To promote, within Denbighshire, increased awareness of international opportunities for the community as a whole.
4. To provide opportunities for young people to expand their horizons and encounter different experiences and cultures.
5. To help satisfy the Authority's recruitment needs in areas of recruitment difficulties.
6. To enhance the profile and reputation of Denbighshire and the County Council within the E.U. and elsewhere
7. To provide opportunities for expanding members' and officers' experiences developing long-term relations with selected areas and councils

Reasons for Strategy

The major principle underlying Denbighshire's involvement with communities and Authorities overseas has been the need to secure financial benefits for Denbighshire County Council and Denbighshire. The earliest visits targeted funding streams which eventually provided a basis for the development of ECTARC and the development of the Cadwyn Leader Plus Group. With the resource difficulties of the Council during the 1990s, fresh efforts were made to secure additional resources to take forward parts of the regeneration strategy of the Council. This in turn led to the identification of the European Union's Interreg Programme as an opportunity which needed to be explored.

Currently neither the Council nor other domestic agencies in Wales have adequate funds to meet the Council's regeneration strategy resource requirements.

In the last few years, the Council's needs have been extended into the field of staffing recruitment. With virtually full employment in the United Kingdom, recruitment difficulties in some sectors are severe and the need to provide for adequate staffing levels is forging the development of new international networks.

In the field of education, the need to provide all the experiences which pupils will need in the increasingly global economy has led Lifelong Learning Directorate and its schools to develop ever increasing connections abroad. These visits now provide for routine experiences across a range of the curriculum benefiting young pupils and their teachers and managers.

On account of the range of authorities and the need to ensure conformity with the Council's overall strategies and priorities an International Strategy is necessary to govern and derive best value from the activity.

DRAFT

ACTION PLAN

1. Funding for Regeneration

The Council is currently trying to ensure that all the main strands of Interreg are exploited by Denbighshire to maximise the resource benefits to the County. Economic Development, community regeneration and the developing of links with the accession countries are all target areas being exploited for future grant applications. In building up its capacity to develop and manage applications of this type, the Council has been aware of the significant benefits accruing to other Councils in Wales from similar activities. As the European Union moves away from the provision of Structural Funds to funding the development of robust inter-regional networks, so the Council must reflect in its strategies, the need to continue moving in this direction.

One authority in Wales has had considerable success in this area. Attracting €7m, in 2003 of funding, Torfaen has developed inter-regional projects covering a wide range of regeneration issues.

Currently the Council and its partner Authorities have over £2 million worth of Interreg funds under management, a further £600,000 is being bid for and further projects totalling £1 million are under consideration. The rate of grant for most projects is 75%, although recently in one very competitive strand, it was reduced to 59%.

The Interreg Programme is in three strands and it is intended to facilitate inter-regional activity between various regions of Europe.

Strand A – the development of links between Ireland and Wales.

The Authority has successfully obtained a project linking Athy in Kildare with Rhyl in Denbighshire providing £500,000 for business regeneration in Denbighshire. A further project had been submitted totalling £640,000 for tourism development in Denbigh. A third project is being worked up to provide resources for the developing museum project at Rhyl which will be partnered with a similar project in Waterford in Ireland.

Strand B – This strand provides resources for links between regions on the Atlantic coast of the European Union. The Council has successfully obtained a £1.3million grant to enhance business and community involvement in the development of tourism products in the areas of Denbighshire, County Clare – Ireland, Galicia – Spain, Poher- Brittany and Montemor-o-Velho in Portugal.

Strand C – This strand covers the whole of the European Union and is intended to facilitate support for the accession countries. The Council is negotiating an agreement with Gliwicky in Silesia, Poland for the development of support for food producers, which in the case of Denbighshire will provide much needed additional funding to enable the Llangollen Food Festival to be expanded and allow more targeted support to be provided to food businesses. Alto Adige are also looking at developing a Strand C food project and have the experience and skills to manage such.

Denbighshire's regeneration activities flow from funds in the main provided through the European Structural Funds. The Interreg Programme operates to the same detailed rules as the Structural Funds and with broadly the same strategies and aims.

In the case of connections with Ireland, liabilities for a project are shared with the Irish partners. For the other strands, liabilities lie with the lead partner. In the case of the Strand B application referred to above the Council is the lead partner. A significant amount of work to identify the risks and to provide for the legal contracts between all the partners in order to satisfactorily contain and control the Council's liabilities has been undertaken.

In the case of the Strand C project, the current suggestion is that the Council should also be the lead partner, but significant additional work on forming a partnership would be required before any proper consideration can be given to this. The principal benefits of being a lead partner are the ability to frame activity in such a way as to ensure that Denbighshire strategic policies are fully reflected in the project as well as opening up other areas of potential activity for the future. The best advice provided to the Head of development Services from Interreg Secretariats, the Welsh European Funding Office, the Welsh Local Government Association office in Brussels as well as the European Commission is that there will be a significant transfer of resources away from the Structural Funds to Interreg activity in the coming years and that bodies who gain experience at the present stages are likely to be those who reap most benefit from this shift in resources. The difficulty of securing adequate resources for regeneration both within Denbighshire and within Wales would suggest that it would be prudent to gain capacity at this time and develop these connections further.

2. Expanding the Economy

The Council's international regeneration connections have all been intended to provide for the expansion of the Denbighshire economy. Contacts have been in the field of European resources, business support, tourism development, tourism marketing, rural development and community development.

The global market increasingly requires companies to compete and co-operate across International frontiers. Significant resources are available for the Welsh Assembly Government to facilitate this. Interestingly, companies with local markets are also finding it beneficial to co-operate across borders. The Council will continue to encourage this by providing resources so as to assist particularly the smaller companies to benefit from International contacts.

As a recognised peripheral area with structural economic difficulties, Denbighshire has been able to obtain high levels of grant for regeneration work. Through this resources have been obtained for establishing a clear priority within rural development through the establishment of Leader II and subsequently a Leader Plus Group. The establishment of a business support group in Rhyl targeting the creation of business strategies and community enterprise support has been a further development.

Additional work is being undertaken to generate direct business contact for exporting companies and those anxious to learn from overseas competitors.

The principal beneficiary however has been the County Council. The Council has secured significant experience by studying the workings of regeneration activity elsewhere. Many of the initiatives which the Council has taken has been the result of strategies initially promoted by regions overseas who have become close partners.

A principal benefit has been the work undertaken to justify Denbighshire's inclusion in the West Wales and the Valley area thereby gaining Objective One status for the County and substantial additional resources. A significant amount of help and information was provided to the County by Shannon Development Company as the Council explored the reasons for Denbighshire's low Gross Domestic Product and methods which could be adopted to improve its position through the use of European Structural Funds.

3. **Community Development** – Many communities in Denbighshire have their own individual links with communities overseas. These links are seen as very important within Denbighshire's communities. Many town and community councils perform pivotal roles within local organisations and together with community groups have been able to sustain twinning initiatives for several decades.

The Council sees this area as a matter for local communities and local councils. It will seek on request to provide support in the nature of sourcing information, providing technical expertise and advising on sources of funding. The Council can also perform a useful civic role in relation to these links at the beginning and perhaps on important anniversaries and the Council should also make available its facilities to visiting groups in order to assist in the development and maturity of twinning connections. All these however should be on request from local organisations who have worked so hard to establish the twinning links.

The Council will provide support through existing databases and through providing advice on European resources for twinning to encourage communities to take advantage of these connections.

4. **Young People** – Schools in Denbighshire are encouraged to develop overseas ideas or visits with foreign counterparts. This is becoming increasingly important. The Denbighshire International Development Forum hold regular meetings to encourage and promote such developments and consideration is being given to expand the Forum to include colleges so that education links can be grown into community links. At the heart of the Forum's work is encouraging young people to experience visits across International borders and within this the work of ECTARC to place students in Europe is extremely important. The work of ECTARC provides opportunities for young people to have an extensive stay and employment opportunities in European regions so that young people get an in-depth understanding of the way in which the new Europe is developing across many of its regions.

The British Council, education and Training Division provides funding for schools to link with schools abroad and for professional development study visits.

Schools are enthusiastic supporters of developing international connections because they:

- Offer opportunities to explore, learn about and understand different cultures
- Foster an understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.
- Help understand the impact of globalisation.
- Develop cross-curricula links and are particularly useful in the fields of PSE and Humanities. All schools are encouraged as part of the PSE framework to develop links with school communities overseas (e-mail and letter writing) and the majority of Denbighshire schools have flourishing international links.
- Enable young people to become aware of the importance of democracy in the organisation of society and of governance.
- Offering a very different challenge in a whole range of curricula experiences which contribute to the education of pupils.

Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen has a partnership with a secondary school in Patan, Nepal. It was set up in 2001 to enable pupils from both countries to study the very different and contrasting ways of life of people living in the east and west.

The respective heads plus a teacher have visited each others schools. Pupils are engaged in studies of each others culture in all subjects across the curriculum.

Ysgol Bro Cinmeich, Ysgol y Llys and Ysgol Gwaenynog are linked to schools in Kenya. Head teachers visited Kenya in 2003 to set up the project with the support of the British Council. Teachers and pupils now communicate regularly with their counterparts as well as study their countries and culture across the curriculum.

The Council has facilitated visits from North Wales Young Farmers to Alto Adige and reciprocal visits from Sudtirolo Young Farmers and these exchanges are ongoing as well as facilitating visits from young people in the area of the performing arts.

5. **Recruitment** – The Personal Services Directorate has experienced difficulties in attracting social workers. Consequently it has had to resort to the development of links with Canada in order to provide an adequate supply of personnel. There are other statutory sectors facing similar challenges, for example the Health service and professional staff are currently also at a premium in the design and development of capital projects. It is likely that increasing resort will be made to these areas as staff remain difficult to recruit for some Local Authority Services.

6. The Image of Denbighshire

The way in which an area is perceived is critical for a whole range of beneficial activity. Decisions on whether a visit should be made to Denbighshire are dependent on a good perception of the County. Initial investment decisions are conditioned by a sense of how confident a community is and how outward going the area's people are likely to be.

Exchanges with overseas areas and overseas authorities allow representatives from Denbighshire to gain a better idea of the trends in many of the sectors in which the Council is concerned and in which the County itself is interested in. Visits provide understanding of and ideas on product development, investment priorities, and the general state of business. They provide a very good sounding board in the fields of promotion and marketing as areas which receive delegations from Denbighshire tend to be anxious to present themselves in a most positive image and much can be learnt from this.

A community which actively seeks partners overseas will also be anxious to develop and refine its own image. Preparations for visits and feedback from visits serve to enhance the overall quality of the image that Denbighshire is projecting to the world. Of vital importance is the opportunity to take part in joint projects so that expertise from elsewhere is crafted onto Denbighshire's own basic experience in this area.

The image of Denbighshire is of special importance to the tourist trade and to those organisations who depend on external connections for their livelihood. In particular, Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod and ECTARC rely for their success on the way in which they are perceived overseas and support from the Council through creating an effective and efficient image for itself and its community supports these organisations.

7. Gaining Experience

Members and officers in their reports from international visits have commented on the insight and experiences provided them through the opportunity to see how local Councils work in other countries and have valued the opportunity of seeing close up how services are arranged differently and how operations are carried through facilitated visits with experts.

As a relationship with an area or a Council develops, the initial focus on relations tends to expand and deepen so that the earlier regeneration issues are expanded into a range of other service connections. The initial emphasis on regeneration issues arises from the importance of the European funding but the educational benefits of forming contacts in other areas of Council activity should not be overlooked and need to be strengthened. Members and officers have found value in discussions with Authorities abroad on a diverse range of subjects including strategic planning, budget arrangements, Council structures, international investment and the development of local education provision.

European resources to foster training through International secondment and short-term experiences exist. A more extensive resort to this method will be sought in future so as to expand the range of staff that benefit.

Currently the Council has formal arrangements with two European areas, Vasternorrland County Council and Clare County Council. Vasternorrland invited Denbighshire to take part in an Interreg project which, unfortunately because of European rules, it was not possible for the Council to accept. Vasternorrland have also enquired about the prospect of a delegation from them visiting Denbighshire in 2005. Clare County Council is involved in an Interreg project with Denbighshire and earlier this year invited Denbighshire to strengthen its relations with Clare. This will need to be the subject of a further report but the Cabinet should endorse a strengthening of the links.

A developing relationship with Powiat Gliwicki in Poland has reached the stage where Gliwicki Council suggested that relations be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. This Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Leader but requires further ratification by the Cabinet. The memorandum is attached as Appendix 2 and the approval of the Cabinet is sought for its ratification.

The Council has also been developing a range of links with Alto Adige regional Council in Italy. These links are providing important sources of experience for members of staff in economic development, culture and the rural development. The important area of teaching English to Italians can produce significant economic benefits for Denbighshire and the relationship has every chance of maturing and requiring its own governing memorandum in due course. The Council is supporting the Cadwyn Leader Plus Group which is developing a trans-national project with the Alto Adige Leader Plus Group targeted on improving the range of languages in which businesses can deal with customers within the tourism industry. The significant added value which bi-lingualism can bring to the tourist product will be exploited to enhance the local tourist industry.

The Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Lalitpur in Nepal, to develop friendship and joint marketing between the authorities and this is focussed on schools and education.

Relationships with areas and Councils abroad have been developed because it has been seen to be in the interests of the Council providing a benefit to its strategies and priorities and of the community in Denbighshire to pursue such links. That should remain the key criteria for developing a relationship. Relationships should be seen as long term but subject to review and the intensity of a relationship should be allowed to vary as opportunities alter circumstances. However, it is important that the relationship should not be entered into lightly and should be seen as a medium to long term opportunity for both parties.

MONITORING AND CONTROL

The Council will monitor and control the strategy as follows.

- a.** International visits are defined as visits outside of Great Britain and Ireland.
- b.** Approve responsibilities for international visits by members will remain the responsibility of the Leader of the Council.
- c.** Approve responsibility for international visits by the Leader of the Council on Council business will be the responsibility of the Lead Members for Finance and Personnel
- d.** Approval of international travel by members of staff will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive
- e.** In seeking authority for international visits, a proposal outlining cost, benefits, conformity with Council Strategy and Policy shall be submitted.
- f.** Council staff employed through inter-regional project contracts will have their own decision making procedures for international travel as will members who are on the Steering Groups of inter-regional projects. These are excluded from the provisions of this section.
- g.** The leading member of any delegation, or the leading officer of any delegation shall make sure that a report on the delegation visit and outcomes of the visits shall be provided to the Chief Executive after a visit has occurred. The report shall contain details of the cost of the visit, time taken and participants.
- h.** The Council has been developing partnership arrangements with other Authorities. The present practice of governing such relationships by letters of intent or memorandums of understanding shall be extended into the future. Each memorandum will be subject to approval by Cabinet.
- i.** The Leader shall provide regular summary reports to Cabinet as activity warrants. The summary report will provide an opportunity for Environment Scrutiny Committee to give consideration to it as part of its work programme

5 Examples of International Projects

INTERNATIONAL LINKS - Rhyl (Denbighshire) Athy (Ireland)

Rhyl Athy Regeneration Project

Project description

A project that explores regeneration issues in the most deprived towns in Denbighshire and Kildare seeking to develop and implement sustainable solutions.

Activities undertaken within the project

Specific to Rhyl the project has sought to address enterprise capacity issues within the voluntary sector operating within the town. Work has been undertaken with development of enterprise ideas with operators within the voluntary sector. Business support has been provided to a variety of enterprises – some of whom operate wholly within the commercial sector of the economy.

A business network has been inaugurated and meets on a regular basis out of summer months. A bi-monthly “bRHYLiant for business” is produced and these activities are complemented by a virtual business network operated via a yahoo group.

Cross border co-operation has included expertise cribbing (by Rhyl) on the operation of a pitch and putt golf course (proposed for Glan Morfa and progressing via the Welsh Golf Association); development of community enterprise thinking and operation; joint exploration of barriers for business locating to either town; development of a craft association in each town; attendance at the Athy Waterways festival (providing publicity for Rhyl as a destination as well as a sales outlet for craft home workers in Rhyl).

Outputs

67 different actions have been undertaken in Rhyl. 16 of these qualify for ‘business support’ under EU regulations with many others working towards that threshold. The project requirement is 50 businesses between both towns. 16FTE jobs have been safeguarded (joint target 10) with 4 FTE jobs created (joint target 14). The FE/SME links output required under the project has also been exceeded.

In £p terms grant funding of £48,000 has been secured as development funding towards a £480,000 scheme at the Marine Lake. The application for this, second sum, is looking very secure. Loan finance of £80,000 has been secured to safeguard 15 FTE jobs.

Applications in the assessment process include £250,000 towards pitch and putt facility at Glan Morfa (an existing DCC countryside services secured grant can be used as match funding) and £180,000 revenue funding (until May 2006) for a retail/catering supported employment scheme on Wellington Road Rhyl.

A commercial property database is being developed for use of interested parties in Rhyl.

Resources

Three members of staff are employed under the Development Services umbrella. The project is funded under the Interreg IIIa stream at a 75% intervention rate and has a budget of £500,000

Andrew Rainsford
Project Coordinator 25th October 2004

DRAFT

INTERNATIONAL LINKS – Denbigh (Denbighshire) Ballitore (Kildare)

Title of Project:

The Ballitore Uniting with Denbigh Development (BUDD)

Description of Project:

The project will target two towns through local partnerships, involving social partners at grass roots level, in order to:

- Promote joint advertising, promotion and marketing strategies to stimulate growth in visitor traffic.
- Develop and promote the joint tourism, heritage and culture in both towns.
- Support sustainable tourism development to achieve wider economic, environmental and cultural benefits.
- Enhance the social environment for both residents and visitors to the areas.

The main aim of this project is to maximise the potential for sustainable tourism development. Both towns are currently bypassed by tourism, Denbigh by the A55, likewise, the national primary route N9 runs past Ballitore. Both areas also have suffered economic decline and tourism, particularly centering around heritage and culture, presents the greatest opportunity for revitalisation.

The project links the Tannery in Ballitore, County Kildare and The Gwasg Gee Building in Denbigh. Both are 19th century buildings with previous industrial histories and are capable of making a firm contribution to the economic and social life of both regions.

At Denbigh the development of a rural tourist project founded on heritage and artistic usage will be explored. At its core will be the development of an interpretation facility dealing with Thomas Gee, his contribution to the Welsh language literary revival of the 19th century, and his connections with the well-known explorer HM Stanley.

The Ballitore project aims to build on the recently completed Mary Leadbeater House/Quaker Museum, contained in the community library, by developing an arts/crafts facility in the courtyard buildings to the rear of the library, thereby creating a cultural campus on the site.

Activities undertaken within the Project:

Key common and cross-border links will develop through this project, centring on the following;

- Development of partnership structures involving the local authorities and communities, to manage facilities and exchange learning and experience in this regard
- Develop interpretation and appreciation of the contribution of local heritage to the areas, and capitalise on this for niche tourism and cultural development
- Development of educational and heritage links and publications.
- Creation of local employment generation within the projects
- Increase of visitor numbers and tourism potential of both areas

- Potential for regeneration of disused buildings, core to both towns, as central focal points for community interaction
- Transfer of learning from Ballitore to Denbigh in relation to the creation and development of interpretation centres

Outcomes of the project:

Number of cross border festivals/events and activities - 1

Number of joint tourism marketing initiatives - 3

Number of sustainable networks created - 2

Number of visitors to cross border festivals/events and activities - 5000

Number of gross direct jobs created - 2

Number of jobs safeguarded - 8

Resources involved in the project:

Total Project cost Denbighshire: £320,000

Denbighshire County Council: £80,000

EU Grant: £240,000

DRAFT

INTERNATIONAL LINKS – Denbighshire, Galicia (Spain), Montemor o Velho, (Portugal), Clare (Ireland), Poher (France)

CANTATA – Celtic Authentic Niche Tourism Advancing the Atlantic Area

Tourism is a key economic driver in the Atlantic Area but recent research indicates that visitors are becoming increasingly immune to mainstream marketing, they suffer from marketing overload and can be disappointed by their tourism experiences. In a sophisticated marketplace the visitor has become keen to 'get to know the real thing', to meet real people and enjoy the genuine culture of any given area, especially in the Atlantic Arc. Visitors want an engaging experience that expresses the freshness, uniqueness and dynamism of a culture, the genuine warmth of the people and a sense of belonging to the place they visit.

Tourism in regions in the Atlantic Area often tends to be structured so that a comparatively small number of conventional tourist attractions attract the majority of tourist visits into a given region. This pattern of concentration in a small number of attractions can mean that the social and economic benefits of tourism are not evenly distributed and that negative environmental impacts can accrue from heavy tourist concentrations in particular areas.

Mainstream tourism drives the visitors to tourism 'hot spots' or 'honey pots' whereas CANTATA aims to move visitors from the 'hot spots' to more peripheral and under developed areas and deliver authentic and genuine visitor experiences, thus promoting and strengthening local distinctiveness.

The broad aims are: -

- To distribute visits more evenly in a given area
- To attract more visitors
- To increase length of stay
- To generate more repeat visits

Thus improving quality and with the end result of improving local economic benefit.

The project intends to stimulate efforts to develop and promote this tourism offer in a sustainable way from local community-level up by building local capacity; increasing local connectivity; and improving marketing. CANTATA aims to enhance the cultural and environmental profiles of rural and peripheral areas.

There are 5 partners in this project. Denbighshire (Wales), Galicia (Spain), Co. Clare (Ireland) Poher (France), and Montemor o Velho (Portugal). This all 5 countries of the Atlantic area are represented. Together as an Atlantic Area we can have more impact than alone.

Activities

The project aims to provide an alternative to mass tourism where the visitor gets a real sense of the locality they visit, and there is a genuine encounter of people and tourists.

The CANTATA concept has two central themes:

1. Capacity building – workshops open to all local tourism actors; training to build local knowledge; encouragement of local distinctiveness; growing pride in the local tourism asset and developing ways of transmitting this pride and providing a welcome for visitors.

2. Improving marketing – from the combination of market research and the workshops with local tourism actors ideas will emerge for improving marketing. It is intended to improve communication between tourism actors, identify ways for them to tap into existing marketing activities and embark on new marketing initiatives.

It is intended that each area will conduct market research to gain better understanding of tourism needs. Workshops open to the community will be held in each area so that local people can identify gaps in tourism knowledge, and actions can be suggested to correct these and improve marketing by e.g. the creation of interpretation materials and promotional trails.

The workshops have a dual purpose: to collect tourism information from the community and then to use that information to improve quality, provide training and develop new marketing practices and/or material. The concept is thus community based with people taking on responsibility for their region and its tourism development.

Each region will test the CANTATA model but in a way adapted to their particular needs and capacity. For example the emphasis in Montemor o Velho is intended to be on research and in Brittany on the workshops and training aspect, whilst Galicia and Denbighshire intend to hold more cross sectoral workshops, and in Clare the emphasis will fall on marketing and developing the concept further with the assistance of the transnational partners.

The project will result in practical actions and an enriched identity. It is intended in this way to create a solid basis for on-going collaboration. The exchange of knowledge and know how between the partner will strengthen the project. It is intended that the partners will meet twice per year to exchange information and to identify ways of cross promoting their regions. The partnership intends to produce a joint website as well as a joint promotional leaflet in addition to the marketing activities undertaken by each region.

People are at the heart of CANTATA. The project is intended to foster a sense of pride within local communities, pride in the region and in the way of life. This will communicate itself to the visitors in terms of a welcoming attitude and in-depth knowledge of the area, a confidence that what the area has to offer is of interest and value to the visitors. This in turn leads to sustainable economic growth and contributes to balanced spatial development.

Outcomes

A tool that can be used by any Atlantic Area region for sustainable, authentic, tourism management.

Short Term :

- Increased research knowledge
- Increased tourism confidence and competences in the tourism industry
- Development of sustainable economic activity and healthy economic development

- The promotion of local identity and local distinctiveness as an attraction for tourist visits.
- Enhanced trans-national knowledge exchange that should unlock the tourism potential of natural and cultural heritage.
- Adding value to existing, under utilised, tourism assets
- Enhanced use of ICT.

Long Term :-

- Developing a culture of cooperation between public and private sector enterprise
- Increased variety in the local tourism offer that is both market-led and community-driven.
- Increased exposure of local tourism products to inter-regional and other markets.
- Enhanced balance in the volume of tourist visits between conventional mass-tourism destinations and culturally- and environmentally-focussed tourism projects in less-established, rural communities
- Increased visitor income leading to improved sustainable employment growth and, thus, population retention in the Atlantic Area
- Increased cultural and environmental sensitivity among visitors.
- Ongoing local and inter-regional networks that promote culturally distinct, “authentic”, sustainable and typical tourist experience.

Resources

£115,000 over 3 years from each of the five partners will generate a project total of £1,375,000 which will pay for all activity including the creation of 3 new posts to deliver the project.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS – Denbighshire (Wales), Alto Adige (Italy)

TITLE OF PROJECT: ALTO ADIGE / SÜDTIROL

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Initially a joint project developed with Conwy County Borough Council to form links where appropriate and to exchange skills and experience especially in the fields of bilingualism. Through action and projects which are undertaken to improve provision of services at a local level whilst becoming familiar with the culture and systems of another country within Europe when dealing with SMEs, the Arts, Lifelong Learning, Tourism and regeneration generally.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE PROJECT SO FAR

Strategy and Business Competitiveness

A report was commissioned jointly by DCC and Conwy CBC in 2003 to look at how two border regions in Europe; deal with economic competitiveness, language and cultural differences.

The report supported an interregional approach to increase business competitiveness, as it would 'flag up' the difficulties that small companies have in playing in a world marketplace. Language difficulties being almost as much of a barrier to inter European trade as financial/currency differences. It was clear that NE Italy could gain much in the way of English language skills whilst participating whilst DCC and CCBC could gain much in the way of potentially new trade partners. It was agreed to take forward at least one of the suggestions of the report which was to hold a seminar in Bolzano .

Outcome of Initial Report

Business Seminar - The seminar was held in March, attended by 120 + and was covered by all major newspapers in the area. At least two businesses are developing trade links.

Joint Leader + project

Resources: circa £2,500 (flights and hotel and transfers)

Young Farmers Links

Activity

In early 2004 10 young farmers visited Alto Adige to witness how agriculture is adapting to change and how 'part time' farming is becoming the norm. Synergies with what is happening in Wales in farming were clear. They also visited tourism attractions, an agricultural college and the business seminar being hosted by Wales at that time.

Outcome of project;

An invitation will be extended to the young farmers of Alto Adige to visit Wales in the future.

Resources:

A contribution of £1,000 was given and CADWYN CLWYD assisted also.

Lifelong Learning.

Activity

An officer from the provincial government of Bolzano came to Wales in July 2004 to spend time with DCC officers, WAG officials and teachers to explain how bilingualism is promoted in schools and society generally in Alto Adige. This has resulted in an invitation to return the offer and an officer from Lifelong Learning visited Bolzano during Oct.

(NB. Up to 10+ students from Alto Adige are currently studying at AS level in schools in Conwy and DCC , this is the second year of such a project.)

Outcome; 3 areas are being explored for further opportunities

- **Language acquisition in children 0-11**
Denbighshire has good practice in second language teaching methodologies but there is room to explore further the success that Alto Adige achieves with bilingualism and with introducing a third language at the age of 5
- **Transition between settings**
As Wales approaches the Foundation Phase, Denbighshire need to be proactive in work on transition between the playgroups and school Nursery settings and also between the end of Foundation Phase and entry to a more formal curriculum at Key Stage 2. In Rossa they are working towards the same goal as us and are very keen to work alongside Denbighshire, where there will be mutual benefits.
- **Lifelong Learning approach to languages**
Although children and young people have the best opportunities of becoming multilingual. It is possible to learn new languages throughout life provided the learner is motivated. They seem to have achieved this motivation in Bolzano. The multilingual centres were used regularly and their experiences fit in well with the new learning centres developing in Denbighshire

Resources: flights and accommodation £250 + €700

Arts and Theatre

Activity:

The Royal International Pavilion was invited to take part in the fifth anniversary celebrations of Teatro Comunale Nuovo in Bolzano by facilitating a series of participatory workshops at La Fiera- the largest cultural and commercial trade fair in North East Italy. The Royal International Pavilion took 9 members of the Pavilion Youth Theatre (aged 13-18 years), 5 members of North East Wales Youth Dance Company (aged 14-18 years), accompanied by an actor, a director, a painter, a musician and 2 dancers.

The purpose of the visit was to introduce the German/Italian speaking public of Alto Adige/Sud Tyrol to the notion of Community Arts, by running participatory workshops in drama, dance, art and music.

There was great interest from the media, educationalists, the Ministry of Culture and from other European artists who had not previously been exposed to this type of work.

Outcome of project:

... will be work experience for 2 technicians from Llangollen in April 2005 in Teatro Nuovo a state of the art theatre. The Italian side is very enthusiastic, having seen our work, to introduce the notion of community arts to practitioners and to educationalists in Alto Adige. For that purpose we are considering a proposal by Teatro Nuovo to return our practitioners in September 2005 to lead workshops for teachers and artists in the Bolzano region.

Resources :

Total cost: £6529.80

DCC contrib. £2,250

The Llangollen Food Festival

Activity

Seven companies from Alto Adige exhibited their products at the event which attracted 6,000 visitors and two senior officers from provincial government.

Outcome;

There is potential to develop a project which will bring Italian products to Wales and return the carrier with Welsh products to Italy.

There is also potential for developing an Italian bistro in Conwy which will complement the English language training for visitors from Italy.

A larger project expanding the scope of the Food Festival and involving other partners is also being explored.

Resources:

Cost of hospitality at Corn Mill on evening prior to Food Festival : £500

Museums

Activity

It is planned to investigate the potential for hosting the Ice Man exhibition in the county during 2005 or 2006. This would be the first time it has been to UK and will attract a great deal of interest.

Resources: not yet known

PROJECTS INVOLVING CADWYN CLWYD

Language / Cultural Exchange in Agritourism (Wales, Portugal, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland)

A project to encourage farm based tourism enterprises to be immersed in the partner country's culture and to learn a little language skills. To encourage the raising of quality provision and to engage the accommodation providers in imparting knowledge of their immediate area and the partner country's area to visitors.

Outcome of project;

To engage tourism providers in increasing their language skills and provision of information to guests.

Resources:

LEADER+ Action II - All costs are met by E.U.

Local Distinctiveness

Activity:

To investigate the potential for developing new products in each area and to exchange knowledge and information about each respectively.

Outcome of project;

It is hoped the project will assist in the diversification of the agricultural sector and the sustainable management of woodlands.

Resources:

CADWYN CLWYD LEADER + Action II

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Title

Global school links

Description of project

Eight secondary schools and twenty primary schools have educational links with schools in other countries.

Activities undertaken.

Schools become involved in curriculum linking projects which last for up to three years.

Pupils and teachers are involved in a wide range of educational projects with schools abroad, covering all subject areas.

A number of schools are involved in the British Council 'Comenius' project, which connects schools in at least three countries.

Some schools use the Department for International Development scheme, 'Global schools Partnerships' which connects schools with schools in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

Schools are supplying a local initiative to establish a new school in Nepal building on the successful brick school project. Teacher exchanges promote professional experiences.

Outcomes

Pupils learn about the lives of people in other countries and are able to compare and contrast them with their own.

They learn to appreciate diversity and break down stereotypes and misconceptions

They study the history, geography, language, culture and economic circumstances of people in other countries.

Teachers make use of links with schools abroad to teach all subjects across the curriculum.

Resources.

Comenius projects are funded by grants from the British Council.

Global School Partnerships are funded with grants from the Department of International Development.

There is no cost to DCC at the moment

INTERNATIONAL LINKS – Denbighshire (Wales), Gliwicki (Poland)

1. Submitted projects

a. Project - An action programme for public manager 2000-2006

Programme - Leonardo Da Vinci

Objectives - to outline administrative structures and decision making processes in governance to assist in the training of administrators in Powiat Gliwicki and share experiences with partner organisations. To afford language courses for administrators

Budget 104,000 euros
DCC contribution - nominal 5,000 euros
Resources to be received - 15,000 euros

Partners - Powiat Gliwicki , BEST Training (Vienna, Austria), Volks Hochschule Regen (Bavaria, Germany), Alsace France and DCC.

2. Potential Projects

a. Project - Tourism and ICT

Programme - Leonardo Da Vinci

Objectives - maximising the potential of ICT as a means of tourism promotion, to provide appropriate training for tourist related SMEs and for staff in local authority tourism promotion departments.
ECTARC are to explore leading on the project

Budget details - to be finalised

Partners - DCC / ECTARC, Powiat Gliwicki, Czech Republic, Hungary, Volks Hochschule Regen (Bavaria, Germany), Gross Siegharts Austria

b. Project - Economic Cooperation Network

Programme INTERREG IIIC

Objectives - Business development to exchange information on goods, services, financial systems and staffing related matters. The International Food Festival is an example The work packages include:

- i) networking and the network development plan
- ii) the network contact points
- iii) wide promotion of the international cooperation between firms in the regions involved in the project. DCC have been requested to lead on the project

Budget - to be finalised

Potential Partners - DCC, Saxonia mbH (Saxony, Germany), Landkreis Freiberg (Saxony, Germany) Kozimbarcika Chamber of Craft in Regensburg (Bavaria, Germany), Landkreis Tirschenreuth (Bavaria, Germany), Internationales Interkommunales Zentrum Gross Siegharts (Austria)Pamina (Alsace, France), Powiat Gliwicki (Poland), Cech Rzemiosł Różnych Gliwice (Craftsmen Organisation)(Upper Silesia), Foundation of the Development of Knurow City (Silesia, Poland)

Interreg IIIc

Community Development

To assist in the Community Regeneration of deprived urban areas of Powiat Gliwicki, Denbighshire and other partners focusing on a business development, community Enterprise support and strategic approaches to inward investment.

The project is in a positive stage of development and other partners will need to be developed.

DRAFT

Memorandum of Understanding
between Denbighshire County (Wales, Great Britain)
and Powiat Gliwicki (Upper Silesia, Republic of Poland)

Denbighshire County represented by the Leader Rhiannon Wyn Hughes, and Powiat Gliwicki represented by the Starosta Gliwicki Michał Nieszporek,

known as the Parties,

- furthering the Memorandum of Understanding between Śląskie Voivodship and the Welsh Assembly Government signed in Cardiff, 16th October 2002.,
- furthering the commitment to building the European Union,
- furthering the intention of strengthening the friendly relations between citizens of Denbighshire County and Powiat Gliwicki and developing mutual links between the councils, businesses and cultural institutions,
- taking into consideration existing links and good cooperation between partners in Denbighshire County and Powiat Gliwicki,
- acting in partnership and mutuality,

agree as follows:

Article 1

1. The Memorandum is a covenant establishing co – operation between both Parties.
2. The Memorandum sets out the understanding between the Parties and the principles that will underline relations between them.

Article 2

Parties have agreed that they will work together for their mutual benefit to:

- 1) strengthen the friendship that exists between the citizens of Denbighshire and Powiat Gliwicki,
- 2) reinforce economic, social and cultural co – operation between the two regions through collaborative projects and exchanges,
- 3) develop exchanges of experience and information in areas of mutual interest,
- 4) explore the potential for identifying and taking forward a programme of joint projects and exchanges that will underpin the co-operation between the Parties,
- 5) maximise the opportunities for accessing European Union Structural Funding.

Article 3

In order to progress opportunities for mutual co- operation, it is agreed that there will be regular meetings at a senior level between the delegation of the two parties and thereafter meetings will be arranged at the most appropriate level to progress projects identified for mutual furtherance.

Article 4

Parties will take the necessary action in order to encourage local partners to implement joint projects.

Article 5

Specified programmes of co-operation within the areas indicated in the present Memorandum will be the subject of the separate agreements which will set out aims, funding and working schedules.

Article 6

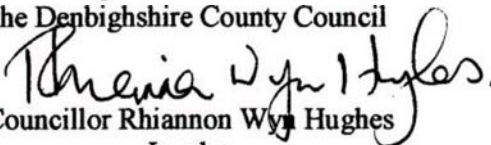
1. Possible disputes arising from the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding should be resolved by mutual consent between parties.
2. The content of the memorandum of Understanding can be changed or appended by annex to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both Parties.

Article 7

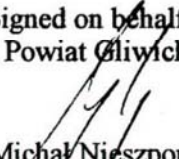
1. The Memorandum is valid for 10 years and can be extended at the wish of both parties.
2. The Memorandum will come into effect after the its signature and following the approval of Denbighshire County Council and the Rada Powiatu Gliwickiego.

This memorandum was signed in Gliwice, 9th of November 2004, in two identical copies, one each in Polish, English and Welsh, and all copies are equivalent; in case of discord with their interpretation the text in English will be regarded as the arbitratve one.

Signed on behalf of
the Denbighshire County Council


Councillor Rhianon Wyn Hughes
Leader

Signed on behalf of
Powiat Gliwicki


Michał Nieszporek
Starosta

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR D OWENS, LEAD MEMBER, LIFELONG LEARNING

DATE: 21 DECEMBER 2004

SUBJECT: SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To review the decision taken by Cabinet in January 2004 to amend the School and College Transport Policy in respect of eligibility for free transport to denominational schools in the County.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 At their meeting on 22 July 2003, Cabinet reviewed the School and College Transport Policy with the aim of implementing changes to address the mismatch of expenditure and funding. The minimum statutory provision and extensions beyond the minimum provision were examined, and several changes were agreed. For the benefit of those members not on the Cabinet at that time, details of the decision are outlined below. The relevant extract from the school transport policy is attached as Appendix 1.

2.2 The wording of the definition of “appropriate school” in the Policy was amended in line with the precise wording of the 1996 Education Act, so that, in respect of denominational schools, free transport would only be provided where “the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination to which the pupil’s parent adheres”.

2.3 The Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee (January 2004) reviewed Cabinet’s decision and referred the matter back for reconsideration on the grounds that (a) no consultation had taken place with those likely to be affected and (b) Cabinet did not have before them all relevant information on which to base an informed decision. On 27 January 2004, the Cabinet resolved to reconsider its earlier decision and it was agreed that full consultation be carried out so that with effect from September 2005 the definition of “appropriate school” be amended as resolved on 22 July 2003 and that a further report be considered in good time before parents make choices for September 2005.

2.4 An initial consultation meeting was held on 24 February 2004 when concerns were raised by the diocesan representatives present about the implications of the Cabinet’s decision, particularly in terms of the need for a “test” to be introduced of parent’s adherence to the faith of the school in question. Although there are no known Welsh authorities operating such a policy, Torfaen Borough Council is currently carrying out a consultation exercise on a proposal to amend their school transport policy along similar lines. In addition, Essex County Council’s transport policy contains a statement that a child

must have been baptized in the faith of the school in question to receive entitlement to free transport, and parents are required to sign a declaration and submit a copy of the baptism certificate or Priest's confirmation.

- 2.5 In February 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government indicated that school transport legislation would be the subject of a detailed review and also that Post 16 transport policy in particular would be revisited. A draft School Transport Bill was published in March and guidance on Post 16 transport was not received until May, at which time Denbighshire's "Schools Information Guide" for parents, relating to admissions to schools in September 2005, was already being prepared in order to meet admission deadlines. Given the time needed to carry out full consultation with parents, schools, etc on the proposed amendment to the policy agreed by Cabinet, it was considered that there was insufficient time to do this prior to parents making their choice of schools for September 2005. Officers are aware of the delay in dealing with this issue whilst awaiting the guidance but felt it was necessary to await confirmation that the proposals in the draft Bill would not impinge directly upon this matter. Discussions were also ongoing at this time with Diocesan representatives. (The consultation document from the Assembly sets out proposals for changes to the law which will give a small number of local authorities freedom to trial new approaches to school transport, adopting schemes tailored to their locality and which address local priorities. Denbighshire is not one of the pilot authorities, and therefore will continue with the existing legislative provisions for the time being.)
- 2.6 I asked officers to look again at the likely effects of implementing the proposed change to the transport policy in relation to denominational schools, prior to carrying out any detailed consultation. Appendix 2 provides details of the number of pupils currently transported under the provision, where they live, their denominational status (as advised by the individual schools), the current transport costs and the potential savings. It should be noted that these statistics reflect the **present** position: in accordance with the guidance outlined in paragraph 2.7 below, any changes to the current policy would not apply to existing pupils.
- 2.7 Guidance contained in Welsh Assembly Circular 19/95 states that where an authority intends to change their school transport policy, adequate consultation should be carried out with the schools and parents of those pupils likely to be affected. The Guidance also states that it is "desirable" for authorities to change their transport arrangements only at the beginning of a school year and for amended policies to be applied to pupils only as they change school (i.e. from primary to secondary), not to those pupils whose parents were not informed of the amended policy at the time of their applications for admission. The Assembly has further advised that an authority needs to consider whether to apply an amended policy to siblings, although there is nothing in the guidance to suggest that, once a new policy is in place, new pupils should receive free transport on account of an older sibling at the school who enjoys free transport under a previous policy. The changes highlighted in this report can not be implemented until September 2006 at the earliest, following full consultation.

2.8 Analysis of pupils currently transported

2.8.1 Pupils transported to Blessed Edward Jones RC High School from Prestatyn, Meliden and Dyserth, and from Denbigh and Bodelwyddan.

There are 27 Catholic pupils currently transported from Prestatyn, Meliden and Dyserth and therefore school transport would have to continue to be provided along the existing route if this were the case in the future. A 45 seater coach operates on the Prestatyn/Dyserth route: it is possible that the operation of a smaller vehicle (eg 26 seater) could result in a financial saving, but equally it is possible that if a suitable vehicle could not be supplied locally, as it is at present, transport costs could remain similar to present levels. It could be possible that pupils who did not qualify for free transport on denominational grounds would qualify for a concessionary fare, currently £37.50 per term or £107.50 a year, subject to empty seats being available and subject to there being no public service transport running along the school route at convenient times for the start and finish of the school day (See Appendix 1, Transport Policy, for details of Concessionary Fares). However, the operation of a smaller vehicle would mean that empty seats would not be available.

On the Denbigh/Bodelwyddan route, the taxi which currently transports the pupils would continue on the basis that 3 out of the 4 transported children are Catholics.

If the change in policy is implemented, and consequently pupils in the Prestatyn area become ineligible for free transport to Blessed Edward Jones High School, or indeed have to pay a concessionary fare, it could be that parents would choose to arrange to transport their children to Blessed Edward Jones themselves. However, Members should also note that parents could choose to send them to their nearest school, ie Prestatyn High School, which is already overcrowded.

2.8.2 Pupils transported to (1) Ysgol Mair, Rhyl, from Prestatyn, Meliden, Rhuddlan, and St Asaph; (2) St Joseph's RC High School, Wrexham from Llandegla and Corwen and (3) St Mary's RC School, Wrexham from Llangollen

All the pupils currently transported are of the faith of the schools in question. If this continues, there would not be any changes resulting from an amended policy. (In addition, 5 pupils qualify for free transport to Ysgol Mair on special needs grounds, one on medical grounds and 2 as a direct result of the closure in 2004 of St Winefride's RC in St Asaph).

2.8.3 Pupils transported to Trelawnyd Church in Wales School (Voluntary Aided) from Rhyl, Rhuddlan and Dyserth and to Caerwys Church in Wales (Voluntary Aided) School from Bodfari

We currently arrange free transport for 13 children to Trelawnyd and Caerwys Church in Wales Schools. Confirmation has been received from the schools that a declaration of commitment to a faith based education is one of the criterion for admission. This commitment is reinforced by the decision to send children to a school further away than their local school. There is no other "test of faith" for these pupils, and as parents have already declared a commitment to the faith during the

admissions process, all the pupils would continue to qualify for free transport under the proposed amendment.

2.8.4 Pupils transported to St Brigid's from Ruthin

There are currently 2 Catholic pupils transported to St Brigid's on denominational grounds, and they would therefore continue to be entitled to free transport. (There are others who qualify for free transport on the distance criteria, ie nearest appropriate school.)

2.9 Comments from Diocesan Directors

The Diocesan RC Director of Schools and the Diocesan Director of Education, Church in Wales, have both expressed their concern about the proposed policy change, mainly on the grounds of the adverse effect on choice, diversity, and inclusivity, all of which are encouraged by the Welsh Assembly. There are children of other faiths attending both Roman Catholic and Church in Wales schools who would be disadvantaged if free transport was withdrawn. In respect of the Church in Wales, the ethos of the Church in terms of its broad, inclusive approach is extended to schools admissions – ie if parents declare a commitment to a faith based school, that is sufficient for admission. This general comment is supported by the specific examples referred to in paragraph 2.8.3 The Directors comment that our neighbouring authorities provide free transport and that any potential financial savings will be small compared to the loss of goodwill and excellent partnership working which currently exists.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Sections 509 to 509AC of the Education Act 1996
Transport Act 1985 Part V and the Transport Act 2000

Under Section 509 (4) of the Education Act 1996 the authority must have regard to parental wishes with regard to denominational religious education in considering whether it is necessary for free school transport to be provided.

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

Any potential cost reductions as a consequence of amending the policy have yet to be identified following detailed consultation with affected parties. Any savings would not be realized until September 2009/10 at the earliest. Based on current figures, the only possible savings identified for future years are associated with the Prestatyn/Blessed Edward Jones route if a smaller vehicle could be used. These savings could be in the region of £3,800 per year using current rates and would be realized after the pupils currently being transported have finished their statutory education – ie in 5 years' time. The consultation required prior to implementing any changes would entail significant officer time.

5 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the number of pupils currently benefiting from free transport under this provision shows that the present transport arrangements would, generally, have to continue to be provided if the policy were changed. The potential savings are small, whilst the loss of goodwill with our partners which would result from pursuing this issue would be significant. Detailed monitoring of the school transport budget will continue to ensure efficient use of resources. Members should note that the policy may need to be reviewed in the future if there are significant changes in provision.

I therefore recommend that the proposed change to the transport policy should not be pursued.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The financial impact of the content of this report is not felt to be significant.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Comments incorporated from:

Diocesan RC Director of Schools
Diocesan Director of Education, Church in Wales
Chief Executive
Acting Corporate Director, Lifelong Learning
Head of Strategy and Resources
Head of Transportation and Infrastructure
Corporate Management Accountant, Lifelong Learning

8 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

Education Strategic Plan
School Organisation Plan
Local Transport Plan

9 RECOMMENDATION

That, in the light of the analysis of current statistics, Cabinet rescinds its decision to amend the School and College Transport Policy in respect of eligibility for free transport to denominational schools and maintains the existing Policy.

TRANSPORT POLICY

The Authority is required to determine whether the provision of transport for pupils of statutory school age is necessary to facilitate the attendance at the designated school of the pupil concerned. If such transport is deemed necessary then the transport must be provided free of charge.

THE MINIMUM {STATUTORY} PROVISION

The Authority provides free transport

- a) where a child of under eight years of age resides over two miles from the nearest appropriate school.
- b) where a child of statutory school age, over eight years of age, resides over three miles from the nearest appropriate school.

EXTENSIONS BEYOND THE MINIMUM {STATUTORY} PROVISION

The Authority provides free transport for pupils of statutory school age.

- 1) to the nearest Voluntary Aided Denominational School provided that the religious education is that of the religion or denomination to which the parent of the pupil adheres (Section 509(4) of the 1996 Education Act) (under the criteria in (a) and (b) above)-
(The change in the policy of allowing any pupil free transport to a Voluntary Aided Denominational School, to that of only allowing those pupils whose parents are of that faith in question was approved by Cabinet in July 2003. Further discussions are taking place at Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet level and discussion on this policy change will also take place with denominational schools. Governors and Diocesan Directors. A reaffirmation or otherwise of the Cabinet decision will follow.
- 2) in respect of Welsh Medium Education only if the pupil is being educated wholly or mainly through the medium of Welsh whether in a designated Welsh Medium or Natural Welsh Medium School or in the Welsh stream of a Two Language Medium Primary or Secondary School (under the Minimum Statutory Provision criteria).
- 3) where the County considers the route to school to be hazardous.
- 4) where a child requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists.
- 5) where transport to an identified school is essential in a pupil's statement of Special Educational Needs. This would normally be on medical or educational grounds, and would be deemed essential in the context of other criteria identified in this policy.

The Authority has also provided free transport for pupils/students who are above statutory school age provided criteria are met {see Age Criteria and Course Criteria}.

EXTENSIONS BEYOND THE MINIMUM {STATUTORY} PROVISION: CONCESSIONARY FARES

The Authority may provide concessionary transport, at a cost, where a pupil does not qualify on the above criteria but can be placed on an existing contract transport route which has empty seats. In these circumstances:~

- 1} a charge will apply; this charge is currently £37.50 per term or £107.50 for the full academic year and will be subject to an annual review.
- 2} concessions may be withdrawn at short notice, with pro-rata rebate, when seats become unavailable. However, under the Transport Act 1985, concessionary fares cannot be made where public service transport runs along a school route at convenient times for the start and finish of the school day.

EXTENSIONS BEYOND THE MINIMUM {STATUTORY} PROVISION: TRAVELLING EXPENSES FOR PARENTS OF PUPILS PLACED BY A STATEMENT OF SEN IN SCHOOLS OUTSIDE DENBIGHSHIRE

Where pupils are placed in boarding schools more than 100 miles from home, the Authority will assist with travelling expenses for parents to attend the statutory Annual Review meeting, by the most cost effective way of:~

- 🚗 arranging transport or
- 🚗 making a cash payment {currently 13p per mile} or
- 🚗 Providing a ticket {or its cash equivalent} for one or both parents on public transport.

Such instances will also be given when a pupil who normally travels in a vehicle provided for a group, is unable to travel at the same time as the group because of his/her ill health. Medical certification will be required.

The Authority will not normally assist with travelling expenses for other functions or meetings.

DEFINITION OF CRITERIA

APPROPRIATE SCHOOL CRITERIA

An appropriate school is deemed to be the nearest school which provides education for the relevant age and ability of a pupil, the nearest Welsh Medium school {whether designated, natural or two language medium} or the nearest Voluntary Aided Denominational School. An appropriate school is

deemed to be the nearest school which, in the judgement of the Authority, provides a reasonable range of courses suitable to the abilities, aptitudes and requirements of an individual. (*See Extensions beyond the minimum (statutory) provision*)

The Authority is not responsible for the cost of transport:

- 1} where parental preference results in a pupil being placed in a school or facility other than the nearest appropriate school.
- 2} to schools maintained by other Authorities where admission to those schools is a result of parental preference; unless that school is the nearest school. The Authority will seek special arrangements with neighbouring Authorities for Denbighshire pupils whose nearest appropriate school is outside the County boundary.
- 3} of pupils who reside outside Denbighshire, but who receive their education in Denbighshire schools.

It should be noted, however, that the Authority has special arrangements with some neighbouring Authorities.

<u>Denominational School</u>	<u>Number of pupils Transported</u>	<u>Catholic Pupils Transported</u>	<u>Cost Per Annum</u>	<u>Potential Savings</u>
<u>Blessed Edward Jones R.C. Rhyl</u>				
Prestatyn	31	17)	
Meliden	8	3)	£3,800.00
Dyserth	4	4)	
Bodelwyddan	1	1)	
Denbigh	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>)	
	<u>47</u>	<u>27</u>		<u>£3,800.00</u>
<u>Ysgol Mair R.C., Rhyl</u>				
Prestatyn	12 (4 special needs)	12)	
Meliden	5	5)	£18,952
Rhuddlan	1 (medical grounds)	1)	
Rhyl	1 (special needs)	1		£3,325
St Asaph	<u>2</u> (result of closure of St Winifrides)	<u>2</u>		<u>£3,781</u>
	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>		<u>£26,058</u>
St Brigids *	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>£3,800</u>
* Other pupils are transported to St Brigids, on the grounds of 'nearest appropriate school' not denominational grounds				
<u>St Joseph's R.C. High School, Wrexham</u>				
Llandegla	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>		
Corwen	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>		<u>£7,980</u>
<u>St Mary's R.C. School, Wrexham</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>£5,320</u>
<u>Trelawnyd Church in Wales School (Flintshire)</u>		<u>Church in Wales – Pupils Transported</u>		
Rhyl, Rhuddlan, Dyserth	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>		<u>£5,605</u>
<u>Caerwys Church in Wales School (Flintshire)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>£2,850</u>
			TOTAL	<u>£75,553.00</u>
				<u>£3,800.00</u>

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Finance and Personnel

DATE: 21 December 2004

SUBJECT: Revenue Budget 2004/05

1 DECISION SOUGHT

That in the light of the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the attached appendices, Members consider any actions necessary to reduce the balance of overspendings on services.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategies for the current financial year and avoid budget pressures in 2005/06 when the budgetary position is expected to be very tight.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Local Authorities are required under section 151 of the Local Government Act (1972) to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

The projections undertaken at the end of November 2004 show a potential gross overspend at year end of £0.368m (£0.520m at the end of October 2004). This is a net reduction, attributable to reductions in projected budget overspends in all areas, with the exception of the Lifelong Learning Directorate, where the predicted overspend has increased by a further £0.043m. It should be noted that the review of behavioural support expenditure within the Lifelong Learning is ongoing and the risk remains that further budget pressures may be identified. The review of capital financing charges and investment income returns is expected to identify budget savings.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

Measures to offset the impact of the anticipated budget pressures must be identified. This requires urgent action as the ability to generate sufficient cost savings diminishes with the passage of time in the current financial year.

6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Lead Cabinet Members will be required to consult with Heads of Service to agree necessary remedial action to prevent overspends in 2004/05.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council.

8 RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the figures in the appendices and consider remedial actions to align projected spending levels with approved budgets.

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004**

Directorate	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Net Expenditure (Previous Report) £000s
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Lifelong Learning (excluding schools delegated)	28,087	-9,474	18,613	28,208	-9,070	19,138	121	404	525	483
Environment	29,025	-7,821	21,204	29,130	-8,005	21,125	105	-184	-79	0
Personal Services	47,332	-20,141	27,191	47,125	-20,039	27,086	-207	102	-105	6
Chief Executive	3,370	-876	2,494	3,527	-982	2,545	157	-106	51	61
Resources	7,596	-2,244	5,352	7,843	-2,515	5,328	247	-271	-24	-30
Corporate, Miscellaneous & Benefits	18,803	-15,343	3,460	18,811	-15,351	3,460	8	-8	0	0
Total All Services	134,213	-55,899	78,314	134,644	-55,962	78,682	431	-63	368	520
Capital Financing Charges/Investment Income			10,790			10,790			0	0
Precepts & Levies			4,737			4,737			0	0
			93,841			94,209			368	520

Note:

The Management Accounting rules of the Council require debtor account entries to be reversed in respect of amounts outstanding for more 30 days after the due date. In the event that debts cannot be collected, services will be required to meet the cost of the debt write-off. This may impact on the actual outturn achieved by services at the year end.

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
LIFELONG LEARNING
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Net Expenditure (Previous Report) £000s
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Individual Schools Budget	47,544	-5,036	42,508	48,044	-5,536	42,508	500	-500	0	0
School Funds Held Centrally	15,687	-4,256	11,431	15,767	-3,944	11,823	80	312	392	364
Non school Funding	1,219	-817	402	1,219	-817	402	0	0	0	0
Leisure Services	6,553	-3,387	3,166	6,594	-3,295	3,299	41	92	133	119
Culture	2,923	-317	2,606	2,923	-317	2,606	0	0	0	0
Countryside	1,108	-658	450	1,108	-658	450	0	0	0	0
Youth	597	-39	558	597	-39	558	0	0	0	0
	28,087	-9,474	18,613	28,208	-9,070	19,138	121	404	525	483
Total Lifelong Learning	75,631	-14,510	61,121	76,252	-14,606	61,646	621	-96	525	483

Notes:

Comments	Current Month £ 000s	Previous Month £ 000s
Education: School Funds Held Centrally		
School Transport: Additional costs arising from contract retendering.	44	44
	44	44
Special Educational Needs: Shortfall of income due to reduction in out of county placements in special schools. The position within this area has worsened in the last month due to a further loss of income (£12k) caused by pupils moving back into county, along with additional expenditure (£16k) on pupils now having to be educated out of county A review of behavioural support expenditure is being conducted and to date has shown an estimated adverse outturn variance of circa £81k. This had been anticipated and management action is being taken during the second half of the year to minimise the overspend and maximise and retain underspends in other areas e.g. free school meals and vacancy management. The review will be going on to cover a further assessment of the LSA budgets (held outside the area of Behavioural Support) to ensure that pressures are being quantified and compensating action is being taken to manage any adverse variances.	348	320
	81	
	-81	
	348	320
Culture and Leisure: Effect of closure at Rhyl Leisure Centre for refurbishment. Long term staff sickness & reduced income at Denbigh Leisure Centre. Withdrawal of funding for security at Ffrith Beach. Topslicing to fund ICT infrastructure upgrades & improvements. Restriction of community access to Ruthin Leisure Centre for early morning swims. Backdated gas invoice relating to Ruthin Leisure Centre Increased staffing costs & reduced income at Royal International Pavilion Impact of reduced revenue at Pavilion Theatre. Reduction in Cymorth funding. Miscellaneous savings achieved through management actions.	80	80
	0	17
	16	16
	0	19
	0	3
	15	0
	21	0
	28	7
	0	10
	-27	-33
	133	119
	525	483

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
ENVIRONMENT
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Net Expenditure (Previous Report)
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Development Services - (Note 1)	7,694	-3,257	4,437	7,553	-3,116	4,437	-141	141	0	0
Transport & Infrastructure - (Note 2)	8,035	-2,483	5,552	8,210	-2,658	5,552	175	-175	0	0
Planning & Public Protection - (Note 3 & 4)	3,720	-1,462	2,258	3,804	-1,596	2,208	84	-134	-50	0
Environmental Services - (Note 4)	8,438	-591	7,847	8,433	-606	7,827	-5	-15	-20	0
Director & Support - (Note 4)	1,138	-28	1,110	1,130	-29	1,101	-8	-1	-9	0
Total Environment	29,025	-7,821	21,204	29,130	-8,005	21,125	105	-184	-79	0

Notes:

1. Restructuring within the service and a review of its operations indicate that income and expenditure will be reduced.
2. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) - increased expenditure and income due to the implementation and associated running costs.
3. Projected increased Building/Development Control income as well as additional DEFRA grant for Trading Standards.
4. Savings as a result of the delay in recruitment.

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
PERSONAL SERVICES
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Net Expenditure (Previous Report)
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Children Services	8,630	-1,646	6,984	8,978	-1,658	7,320	348	-12	336	379
Adult Services	30,990	-12,264	18,726	30,428	-11,999	18,429	-562	265	-297	-296
Business Support & Development	1,494	-117	1,377	1,402	-117	1,285	-92	0	-92	-68
	41,114	-14,027	27,087	40,808	-13,774	27,034	-306	253	-53	15
Non HRA Housing	6,218	-6,114	104	6,317	-6,265	52	99	-151	-52	-9
Total Personal Services	47,332	-20,141	27,191	47,125	-20,039	27,086	-207	102	-105	6

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
PERSONAL SERVICES
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004

Notes:

This includes a projected underspend on Supporting People of £250k. Further detailed work is currently being undertaken on the Supporting People budget. This underspend is likely to increase as projects are reviewed or remodelled in anticipation of next year's budget requirements.

Children and Families:

The main pressure areas within the service are both the residential and fostering specialist placement budgets which will show a combined overspend of approximately £833k.

Older People:

The reduction in the underspend on Older People relates mainly to a small increase in client numbers and an increased level of payments in the last two months because of back payments to care providers.

Learning Disabilities:

A detailed review of this budget has highlighted an anticipated overspend of £294k. The three main areas of increased activity and therefore cost are within Family Support, Work Opportunities and Residential Placements. These continue to be budget pressures.

Mental Illness:

Predicted overspend of £166k due to residential placements - the cost of placements continues to exceed the budget available.

Other Information:

The latest outturn report reflects the correct budget allocation after all virements have been implemented supporting the restructuring of adult services.

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES, CORPORATE & MISCELLANEOUS
POSITION AS AT END NOVEMBER 2004

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Net Expenditure (Previous Report)
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Chief Executive's Department	3,370	-876	2,494	3,527	-982	2,545	157	-106	51	61
Resources Directorate:										
Finance	4,046	-1,731	2,315	4,291	-1,976	2,315	245	-245	0	0
Audit	416	-41	375	416	-41	375	0	0	0	0
I.T	2,059	-339	1,720	2,066	-346	1,720	7	-7	0	0
Personnel	1,075	-133	942	1,070	-152	918	-5	-19	-24	-30
	7,596	-2,244	5,352	7,843	-2,515	5,328	247	-271	-24	-30
Corporate & Miscellaneous	3,498	-58	3,440	3,506	-66	3,440	8	-8	0	0
Benefits	15,305	-15,285	20	15,305	-15,285	20	0	0	0	0
	18,803	-15,343	3,460	18,811	-15,351	3,460	8	-8	0	0
Total Chief Executive's, Resources, Corporate & Misc. and Benefits	29,769	-18,463	11,306	30,181	-18,848	11,333	412	-385	27	31

REPORT TO CABINET

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

DATE: 21 December 2004

SUBJECT: Housing Revenue Account Budget 2004/05

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the current financial year.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategies for the current financial year.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Housing Act 1985, Part II.

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

The projections undertaken at the end of November 2004 show a potential net under-spend at year end of £210k (Appendix 1). This represents an improvement of £209k compared to that forecast one month ago.

A comprehensive review of the Provision for Bad and Doubtful Debts has been undertaken. The Provision is now actually higher than the arrears currently owed by tenants. There is a 'best practice' formula for calculating the level of provision required. This shows that the Provision is over-funded by £286,612 and can be transferred back into the HRA.

Expenditure pressures continue on gas boiler maintenance (£180k) and legal costs associated with disrepair claims (£80k). Last month, the receipt of Climate Energy Grant (£200k) was used to fund the potential overspend in the repairs budget. In view of the revised financial position, this has now been 'released' to fund additional repairs expenditure.

Also included within the budgets, for this year, was £60,000 for the stock transfer ballot. As this will not happen before April 2005, the allocation has been removed from the budget for this year.

Rental income has increased because voids are lower this year and sales have been slower than originally forecast.

Debt charge costs are forecast to be £33k lower than originally estimated, but this has no financial gain to the Council, as the HRA subsidy payment (to WAG) is increased by a similar amount.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The continued improvement if the overall budgetary position is welcomed, but it remains essential for the management of expenditure and income to be maintained effectively.

6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Lead Cabinet Members will be required to consult with Heads of Service to agree necessary remedial action to prevent overspends in 2004/05.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council.

8 RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the figures in Appendix 1.

Housing Revenue Account ~ 2004/05

<u>2003/04</u>		<u>2004/05</u>		
<u>Actual</u>		<u>Revised</u>	<u>Forecast</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<u>£</u>		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>to Budget</u>
				<u>£</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
930,338	Supervision & Management - General	971,469	959,647	-11,822
206,524	Supervision & Management - Special	202,511	184,200	-18,311
145,969	Welfare Services	134,265	115,822	-18,443
78,922	Homelessness	83,222	79,201	-4,021
415,317	Rents	430,012	404,610	-25,402
2,605,253	Repairs and Maintenance	2,536,060	2,794,234	258,174
4,382,323	Total - Management and Maintenance	4,357,539	4,537,714	180,175
5,099,232	Rent Rebates	57,489	57,489	0
1,408,151	Debt Charges	1,118,204	1,085,131	-33,073
0	C.E.R.A.	0	0	0
0	Subsidy	2,518,943	2,552,753	33,810
100,000	Provision for Bad Debts	50,000	-286,612	-336,612
10,989,706	Total Expenditure	8,102,175	7,946,475	-155,700
<u>INCOME</u>				
8,547,660	Rents (net of voids)	8,293,676	8,352,650	58,974
86,944	Garages	92,500	88,050	-4,450
14,572	Interest (R.T.B. mortgages)	15,000	15,000	0
2,701,299	Subsidy	0	0	0
0	Other Income	0	0	0
11,350,475	Total Income	8,401,176	8,455,700	54,524
360,769	Surplus / Deficit (-) for the Year	299,001	509,225	210,224
301,301	Balance as at start of year	662,070	662,070	0
662,070	Balance as at end of year	961,071	1,171,295	210,224

Report to CABINET
Report by DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / CORPORATE DIRECTOR:
RESOURCES
Date 21 December 2004
Subject COUNCIL TAX BASE

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To agree the Council Tax Base for 2005-2006.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 Legislative Background

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base)(Wales) Regulations 1995 No 2561 as amended, required the County Council to calculate the tax base for each and every community within its billing area annually. The Assembly have only recently passed secondary Legislation in respect of calculations being a "local choice" function. A decision has been sought from Council at its meeting on 14 December 2004, and this paper is prepared in advance of that decision being known.

2.2 Calculation Process

The Council Tax base is a measure of the tax raising capacity of an area and is calculated having regard to the following issues:-

(a) The number of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band expressed at the Band D equivalent (e.g. a property in band H is, for tax liability purposes, equivalent to double band D).

Less: the sum of

(b) The number of chargeable dwellings estimated to be

- (1) Exempt by virtue of the Exempt Dwellings Order
- (2) In receipt of a disabled reduction under the Disabilities Regulations
- (3) In receipt of a single person discount
- (4) In receipt of a status discount
- (5) Prescribed/non prescribed dwellings

2.3 In accordance with the principles set out in 2.1 above, the Council Tax base for the 2005/2006 financial year is as follows:-

Community Area	Tax Base 2005/2006	(Comparative figures) Tax Base - 2004/2005
Aberwheeler	177	141
Betws GG	153	125
Bodelwyddan	721	713
Bodfari	181	159
Bryneglwys	156	133
Cefn Meiriadog	206	175
Clocaenog	103	88
Corwen	922	816
Cyffylliog	217	178
Cynwyd	230	201
Denbigh	3099	3,017
Derwen	207	188
Dyserth	1123	1,047
Efenechtyd	282	255
Gwyddelwern	209	180
Henllan	352	317
Llanarmon Yn Ial	555	473
Llanbedr D C	444	408
Llandelga	259	237
Llandrillo	265	230
Llandyrnog	443	406
Llanelidan	148	128
Llanfair D C	544	473
Llanferres	384	330
Llangollen	1546	1,381
Llangynhafal	312	271
Llanrhaeadr Y C	490	428
Llantysilio	238	196
Llanynys	317	280
Nantglyn	147	123
Prestatyn	7230	6,979
Rhuddlan	1709	1,646
Rhyl	8587	8,717
Ruthin	2142	2,009
St. Asaph	1331	1,240
Trefnant	608	570
Tremeirchion	596	519
Total	36633	34777

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

The Local Authorities Executive Arrangements (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2004 SI 3093.

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

There are no cost implications arising from this report.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

It is essential, as part of the budget setting process, that the Tax Base is set in a timely and correct manner.

6 CONSULTATION

All Members have been sent details of the proposed Tax Base for 2005-2006. In view of the movements arising from the Council Tax Revaluation exercise, additional information has also been sent to all Members outlining movements by Town / Community Councils by tax band.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

There is no impact on Corporate policies

8 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :-

8.1 a) The calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2005/2006 be approved and

(b) In accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base)(Wales) Regulations 1995 No 2561 as amended, the amount calculated as the Tax Base for each Community area for the year 2005/2006 shall be:-

Community Area Tax Base 2005/2006

Aberwheeler	177
Betws GG	153
Bodelwyddan	721
Bodfari	181
Bryneglwys	156
Cefn Meiriadog	206
Clocaenog	103
Corwen	922
Cyffylliog	217
Cynwyd	230
Denbigh	3,099
Derwen	207

Dyserth	1,123
Efenechtyd	282
Gwyddelwern	209
Henllan	352
Llanarmon Yn Ial	555
Llanbedr D C	444
Llandelga	259
Llandrillo	265
Llandyrnog	443
Llanelidan	148
Llanfair D C	544
Llanferres	384
Llangollen	1,546
Llangynhafal	312
Llanrhaeadr Y C	490
Llantysilio	238
Llanynys	317
Nantglyn	147
Prestatyn	7,230
Rhuddlan	1,709
Rhyl	8,587
Ruthin	2,142
St. Asaph	1,331
Trefnant	608
Tremeirchion	596

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR R W HUGHES, LEADER

DATE: 21 December 2004

SUBJECT: DELEGATIONS

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To consider suggested amendments (attached at Appendix 1) to the existing Cabinet Delegations.

That Following Council's decision on the 14 December 2004 to assign the calculation of the Council Tax Base to the Cabinet for the Cabinet to delegate this function to the Chief Executive in respect of 2006-07 onwards

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The Legal framework governing executive arrangements allows decisions to be made at Cabinet or to be delegated to a sub-Committee of Cabinet, individual portfolio holders and Officers. The objective of delegation is to enable decisions to be taken at a level most appropriate to the circumstances. Experience to date has shown that it is neither necessary nor practicable for the Cabinet to take every executive decision and consequently the Cabinet has authorised considerable delegation as appears from the Appendix. However as I have previously indicated to Members it is important to keep under review how we work to ensure that we meet the best value objective of continuous improvement. I have therefore considered in the light of experience to date what further refinements could be made having regard to:-

- Decisions already taken for example with regard to appointments set out at paragraph (c) of the General Delegations
- The scope for driving down operational decisions to Officers where we already have a clear policy framework agreed by Members or where once such a framework was in place delegation to Officers would reduce the burden on Members
- Establishing a satisfactory consultative mechanism – see for example items (f), (ff) under Lead Member for Environment.

The Proposals in the Appendix are put forward with the above points in mind and should enable decisions to be taken more speedily whilst not sacrificing Member involvement or the robustness of the actual decisions.

Council Tax base - As Council has assigned the function of the calculation of the Council tax base to Cabinet, it is necessary to determine how this should be carried out. The alternatives are the whole Cabinet, the lead Member for Finance or the Chief Executive. As this is a technical issue and as there are no discretionary issues involved, the recommendation is that this should be

delegated to the Chief Executive. This would accord with the general spirit of this paper.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Local Government Act 2000

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

Eliminating procedural steps that neither add to nor achieve robustness of decision making reduces the cost of Member and Officer time and increases efficiency.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

This is an efficiency improving exercise rather than a cost saving exercise.

6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

These proposals arise from discussions between Cabinet Members and CET.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The proposals reflect the desire to achieve more efficient ways of working whilst protecting the integrity of the Council's decision making processes.

8 RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet approves the proposals for changes to the existing delegations as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

That Cabinet agrees to the delegating of the calculation of the Council Tax Base to the Chief Executive in respect of 2006-07 onwards.

EXISTING DELEGATION	PROPOSALS [N/C = No change D/O = Delegate to officers]
<p>1. TO CABINET MEMBERS</p> <p>(A) General Delegations</p> <p><u>None of these delegations affects existing delegations to Officers.</u></p> <p>General delegations, to each Cabinet Member in respect of his or her portfolio (Note: if there is uncertainty about whether a matter lies wholly within a Cabinet Member's portfolio, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive).</p> <p>(a) To determine the response to any consultation document or inspection document which relates solely to the Cabinet Member's portfolio.</p>	N/C
<p>(b) To determine whether to publish any consultation document which relates solely to the Cabinet Member's Portfolio.</p>	N/C
<p>(c) To make appointments to external bodies whose remit lies wholly within the Cabinet Member's portfolio in respect of vacancies that occur between an initial appointment and the next ordinary election of Councillors. This delegation does not include appointments to joint committees with other local authorities under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	N/C – this has recently been considered by Cabinet.
<p>(ch) To submit nominations in response to requests e.g. from the Welsh Local Government Association for bodies whose remit lies wholly within the</p>	N/C – this has been refined following the increase in the Leader's delegation.

<p>Cabinet Member's portfolio. This delegation does not include the appointments specifically delegated to the Leader.</p>	
<p>(d) In accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 25, to award a contract following tendering procedures.</p>	<p>D/O - awarding of contracts based on price under CPR 25.3 (b)</p> <p>- awarding of contracts based on pre-determined evaluation criteria under CPR 25.4 (a) if the contract value is less than £50k and under CPR 25.4 (b) if the value is between £50k and £100k (NB the contact value under CPR 25.4 (c) will be amended to £100k to £250k)</p>
<p>(dd) To determine whether repayment of a grant may be waived, subject to the agreement of the Lead Member for Finance and Personnel where the amount of repayment waived in an individual case exceeds £10,000.</p> <p>(e) To write off individual debts in excess of £1,000, subject to the agreement of the Lead Member for Finance and Personnel. This delegation does not apply where the individual debt to be written off exceeds £20,000.</p>	<p>D/O - subject to a policy for such determinations having been established</p> <p>D/O - subject to a policy for such writing off having been established</p>
<p>(f) To determine the content of any plan, strategy or other policy document which relates solely to the Cabinet Member's portfolio. This does not include plans and strategies that form part of the policy framework as defined in article 4.2 of the Constitution.</p>	<p>N/C</p>
<p>(ff) To determine whether to publish any statutory notices (other than in respect of closure of schools) and to take action on advertised</p>	<p>D/O – subject to such determination being in accordance with an approved plan or policy</p>

<p>proposals in the light of any representations received.</p>	
<p>(g) To authorise the making of compulsory purchase orders in respect of land up to the value of £50,000 subject to the agreement of the Lead Member for Finance and Personnel and the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management.</p>	<p>N/C – this item should be reconsidered as part of the review of the Asset Management function.</p>
<p>(ng) To approve submission of bids for grant funding and to accept any grant offered, subject to any funding requirement from the Council being contained within existing budgets. Where such a funding requirement cannot be afforded from existing budgets, the consent of the Lead Member for Finance and Personnel must be obtained before a bid is made or a grant offer accepted.</p>	<p>D/O – and amend “Lead Member for Finance and Personnel” to “Chief Finance Officer”.</p>
<p>(h) In accordance with any policy adopted by the Cabinet on grants, to determine grants to other bodies or individuals (including determining parameters or criteria for decisions by Officers on such grants).</p>	<p>D/O</p>
<p>(i) To approve fees and charges, including any subsidies and concessions, in accordance with the Policy adopted by Cabinet on the setting of Fees and Charges. Decisions on these matters are subject to the agreement of the Lead Member for Finance and Personnel.</p> <p>(The delegation does not include fees and charges that are set by the Planning and Licensing Committees, or Housing Rents which will be set by reference to the Housing Rents Setting Policy).</p>	<p>D/O – and amend “Lead Member for Finance and Personnel” to “Chief Finance Officer”</p>

<p>(j) Agreeing attendance by Councillors at conferences, seminars etc. in the UK where the subject of the event lies wholly within the Cabinet Member's portfolio.</p>	<p>D/O - subject to there being budget provision.</p>
<p>(B) Specific Delegations</p> <p>Leader</p> <p>(a) The power to take any decision:</p> <p>(i) only if the need to take the decision is urgent; and</p> <p>(ii) for a decision that is the responsibility of the whole Cabinet, a quorate Cabinet meeting cannot reasonably be convened by the time by which a decision must be taken; or</p> <p>(iii) for a decision that is the responsibility of an individual Cabinet Member, that Member is not available for whatever reason and is not expected to be available by the time by which a decision must be taken.</p>	<p>N/C</p>
<p>(b) Approving visits outside the UK by Members of the Council for which the council has paid or will pay, other than visits undertaken by the Leader.</p>	<p>N/C</p>
<p>(c) To make appointments to joint committees appointed under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	<p>N/C</p>

<p>(ch) The functions of making appointments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the North Wales Fire Authority; - the joint committee under Schedule 2 to the Police Act 1996 which appoints Councillors to the North Wales Police Authority, including any nomination that may be requested by that Committee; - the Council of the Welsh Local Government Association and the General Assembly of the Local Government Association - the Coordinating Committee of the WLGA. 	<p>N/C</p>
<p>Deputy Leader</p> <p>(a) In the absence of the Leader the Deputy Leader has the power to take any decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) only if the need to take the decision is urgent; and (ii) for a decision that is the responsibility of the whole Cabinet, a quorate Cabinet meeting cannot reasonably be convened by the time by which a decision must be taken; or (iii) for a decision that is the responsibility of an individual Cabinet Member, that Member is not available for whatever reason and is not expected to be available by the time by which a decision must be taken. 	<p>N/C</p>

<p>Lead Member for Property and Asset Management</p> <p>(a) To determine, subject to planning permission, whether to grant consent for the installation of telecommunications equipment on the Council's property.</p>	<p>It is suggested that all of these delegations are considered as part of the review of the Asset Management function.</p>
<p>(b) Disposals of freehold interest in land where the estimated market value is between £30k and £200k, with the power to approve sale at less than market value where the undervalue does not exceed £100k. This delegation does not include the power to approve an undervalue for sales in the Lead Member's electoral division</p>	
<p>(c) Purchase of land to enable disposal on more favourable terms, the purchase to be funded by receipt from the disposal</p>	
<p>(ch) Purchases of land, if funding is available in the capital programme</p>	
<p>(d) Acquisitions of land by lease between £50k and £100k a year, if funding is available</p>	
<p>(dd) Agreeing the use of resources that form part of the Environment Directorate's allocation in the capital plan for property and asset maintenance, health and safety, Disability Discrimination Act and the agricultural estate.</p>	
<p>(e) Granting leases in the range of £50k to £100k a year, and all decisions to approve a rebate from leases in the range up to £100k a year so long as the relevant directorate funds the rebate as a grant. This delegation does not include the power to approve rebates on leases in the Lead Member's electoral division.</p>	

<p>The foregoing delegations do not include decisions on purchase or disposal of land and buildings relating to the housing stock.</p>	
<p>In respect of the agricultural estate only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) granting tenancies, following interviews conducted by and a recommendation from officers (ii) notices to quit, following advice from officers. 	
<p>Lead Member for Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To approve the issue for consultation of supplementary planning guidance in the context of the Unitary Development Plan. (b) To make Article 4 directions for the removal of permitted development rights. 	<p>N/C</p> <p>N/C – one would expect this particular function to lie with its more natural home, the Planning Committee, but the Assembly decided otherwise! This is not a function that I would expect the Cabinet to agree to delegate to officers since it involves the removal of rights/imposition of restrictions on the development of land.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) To authorise the making of road traffic regulation orders and to determine residents' parking schemes, disabled parking spaces, parking orders, waiting restrictions, weight limits, speed limits, bus and other priority lanes and traffic calming measures. 	<p>D/O</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ch) To determine applications for licences under section 115E of the Highways Act 1980 to use the 	

highway for the provision of facilities for refreshments.	
(d) To declare industrial and commercial improvement areas	N/C – for the same reasons as in (b) above
(dd) To designate areas as conservation areas or as local nature reserves and to amend the boundaries of such areas.	
(e) To designate town schemes and to amend the boundaries of town schemes.	
(f) Jointly with the Lead Members for Health and Well-being and Finance and Personnel to allocate to appropriate schemes to supplement Social Housing Grant commuted sums from Section 106 Planning Agreements relating to Affordable Housing.	D/O - subject to the establishment of criteria for allocation of such sums and to consultation with the local member (s).
(ff) Jointly with the Lead Members for Children and Young people and Promoting Denbighshire, agreeing use of sums from section 106 planning agreements in respect of open space and play facilities.	
Lead Member for Health and Well-being	
(a) To approve implementation and terms of schemes for registration of houses in multiple occupation.	N/C
(b) To approve variations to tenancy agreements.	N/C
(c) To approve fee increase, within budgetary resources, for residential and nursing home provision.	D/O

(ch) Jointly with the Lead Members for the Environment and Finance and Personnel to allocate to appropriate schemes to supplement Social Housing Grant commuted sums from Section 106 Planning Agreements relating to Affordable Housing.	See (f) and (ff) under Lead Member for Environment
Lead Member for Children and Young People	
(a) To appoint the Local Authority Member of the Fostering Panel.	N/C
(b) To appoint the Local Authority Member for the Adoption Panel.	N/C
(c) Jointly with the Lead members for Environment and Promoting Denbighshire, agreeing use of sums from section 106 planning agreements in respect of open space and play facilities.	As in (f) and (ff) under Lead Member for Environment
Lead Member for Lifelong Learning	
(a) To decide all matters relating to appointments etc. of school governors.	N/C – separates the decision making from the administration of the governor function.
(b) To suspend delegation from schools in circumstances defined in legislation.	D/O
(c) To adjust designated areas for school admissions.	D/O – but we would need to demonstrate wider consultation.
(ch) To set dates of school terms and holidays	D/O – but we would need to demonstrate wider consultation.

<p>Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire</p> <p>Jointly with the Lead Members for Environment and Children and Young people, agreeing use of sums from section 106 planning agreements in respect of open space and play facilities.</p>	<p>Same as in (f) and (ff) above under Lead Member for Environment.</p>
<p>Lead Member for Communities</p> <p>(a) To declare areas as Noise Abatement Zones</p> <p>(b) To give consent to the operation of loudspeakers under Schedule 2 to the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993.</p>	<p>N/C</p> <p>D/O – such decisions would normally turn on a technical assessment. The Council has twenty one days to determine an application.</p>
<p>(c) Decisions on consents under section 31(2) of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 to authorisations under section 30 of that Act (dispersal of groups and removal of persons under 16 to their place of residence).</p>	<p>D/O – speed is of the essence here.</p>
<p>Lead Member for Business and Communications</p> <p>Jointly with the Chief Executive decisions on use of the supplementary credit approvals for e-government. This delegation shall cease to have effect after 30th September 2004.</p>	<p>This item could usefully be deleted as its “shelf life” has expired.</p>
<p>Lead Member for Finance and Personnel</p> <p>(a) To determine the amount of Hardship Relief, if any, to taxpayers to a limit of £20,000.</p>	<p>D/O – subject to a policy having been established for granting such relief</p>
<p>(b) Jointly with the Lead Members for Environment and Health and Well-being to allocate to appropriate schemes to supplement Social Housing Grant commuted sums from Section 106</p>	<p>As in (b) and (ff) above under Lead Member for Environment.</p>

Planning Agreements relating to Affordable Housing.	
(c) The power to approve sale of land where the estimated market value is up to £200k, the sale is to be at an undervalue up to £100k and the land is in the electoral division of the lead member for Property and Asset Management.	Consider as part of the review of Asset Management arrangement.
(ch) The power to approve rebates on leases in the range up to £100k and the lease is in respect of land in the electoral division of the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management.	
(d) Approving visits by the Leader outside the UK for which the Council has paid or will pay.	N/C

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE: 21 DECEMBER 2004

SUBJECT: PFI BUILDING: NAMING AND OFFICIAL OPENING

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the suggested name for the new PFI office building and to agree arrangements for the opening ceremony.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 The name of the building needs to be confirmed in order that it can be incorporated in letterheadings, publications and site signage. After inviting and considering all suggestions at its meeting on 10 May 2004, the PFI Working Group (which includes Member, officer and staff representatives) unanimously recommended the name "Neuadd y Sir" / " County Hall". A meeting of the Group Leaders of this present Council has endorsed this.

- 2.2 I have also discussed with the Group Leaders the opening ceremony. With their support I suggested that the former Chair of the PFI Working Group, Mr Rhys Webb OBE be invited to open the building together with two of our care leavers who have reached University. There should also be the opportunity for cross-County involvement possibly through inviting school choirs etc.

3. POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Section III Local Government Act 1972 (Subsidiary powers of Local Authorities).

4. COST IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These are for a plaque and refreshments etc. - between £800 and £1,200.

5. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER'S STATEMENT

- 5.1 Financial implications resulting from this matter are contained in existing budget.

6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

6.1 Suggestions for naming the building have been invited by various means including the Denbighshire electronic noticeboard and the 'Art in the Courtyard' Intranet database. Members of the PFI Working Group also contributed ideas for consideration and I consulted the Group Leaders on both the naming and the opening arrangements and received general support and no contrary views. The previous council indicated on 18th May that it preferred the name Gwynfa but, as explained to the Cabinet on 25th May, this is an executive decision for the Cabinet to take.

6.2 Mr Webb has indicated that he would be honoured to undertake the opening if he were invited to do so.

7. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

7.1 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet approve the name 'Neuadd y Sir' / 'County Hall' as the official name for the new offices.

8.2 That Cabinet agree the opening arrangements as outlined above.

**CABINET, ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND DELEGATED DECISION
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

AGENDA ITEM NO: 10

MONTH	RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE	CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT	LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE	PERSONAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE
January 2005	<p>Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C</p> <p>Budget 2005-2005 Update - C</p> <p>Progress Against ACiW - C</p> <p>Progress Report Against Service Review Timetable - C</p> <p>Customer Service Centre: Customer Relations Management – C</p>			<p>Managing School Places - C</p> <p>Youth Services Best Value - Progress Report Options Appraisal - C</p> <p>Rhyl Open Space Audit Plan - A</p> <p>Heather and Hillforts Development - D</p> <p>Prestatyn Hillside Local Nature Reserve Designation - D</p> <p>Local Biodiversity Action Plan HAPS + SAPS - D</p> <p>Culture and Leisure Charges - D</p> <p>Royal International Pavilion Phase I - A</p>	<p>Joint Review Action Plan Exceptions Report - C</p> <p>Housing Stock Transfer - Outcome of Tenants' Vote - C</p> <p>Affordable Housing - C</p>
February 2005	<p>Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C</p> <p>Final Budget 2005-2006 Proposals - C</p> <p>Corporate Quarterly</p>	<p>Public Transport Tender Exercise - C / D</p> <p>Bodelwyddan Depot Contract – C [S Kent]</p>		<p>Denbigh Museum Designation Feasibility - A</p> <p>Prestatyn Hillside Local Nature Reserve Designation - D</p>	<p>Extra Care Housing Developments in Prestatyn - C</p> <p>Commissioning Strategy for Older People - C</p> <p>Integrated Mental Health</p>

KEY: C ~ CABINET
A ~ ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
D ~ DELEGATED DECISION

	Performance Report - C				Service – C Payment for Skills - Fostering – C
March 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C	Deposit LD Plan - Approval of Charges - C		Urdd Eisteddfod Staging / Proposals / Programme - C Scala Development Study Progress Report - A	
April 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C Progress Against ACiW - C Progress Report Against Service Review Timetable - C				
May 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C Corporate Quarterly Performance Report - C			Youth Services Best Value Final Report - C	
June 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				
July 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				

KEY: C ~ CABINET
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August 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				
September 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				
October 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C	Approve Deposit LD Plan for Public Consultation - D			
November 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C	Approve Deposit LD Plan for Public Consultation - C			
December 2005	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				
January 2006	Monthly Budget Monitoring Report: Revenue and Capital - C				

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