

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in Parish Church Hall, High Street, Prestatyn on Tuesday 21 June 2005 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; R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Regeneration; M A German, Lead Member for Children and Young People; 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 and S Frobisher.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

None.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor R W Hughes, on behalf of Members, welcomed Huw W Griffiths, Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning to Denbighshire and his first Cabinet meeting.

127 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

128 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 May 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26 April 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

129 MANAGING SCHOOL PLACES: MEMBER STATEMENT

Councillor D Owens stated: "Cabinet Members will be aware that in the light of the wide ranging concerns associated with the Managing School Places Review, the consultation proposed in the report to Cabinet on 22 February 2005 was withdrawn.

Since then, Members and officers of the Council have been actively working on how better to understand the issues involved and seek the views of a wide range of local stakeholders and other interested parties. The Leader and I have undertaken a series of meetings with schools, the wider community and held a series of seminars to discuss the issues with other Members of the Council.

Feedback from these activities has convinced a working group, established to review the initial proposals, that a fresh approach is required to examine in more detail the whole agenda for Modernising Education in Denbighshire. The approach will recognise the need to move on from the original Review and be based on a holistic approach which sees schools in the context of their local communities and appreciates the need fully to consult with local stakeholders at all stages of the process. In addition, the new approach will position the future of our education provision within the context of changes to the local, regional and national strategic picture.

Full details of the new approach, together with details of how we intend to consult on all the issues and the timescale for action, will be presented to Cabinet in July. I believe that we have learnt a great deal from the process of the last few months and I would wish to advise you that the report on the Managing School Places Review has now been formally withdrawn.”

Councillors P J Marfleet and S A Davies gave their support to the statement and it was suggested that the local development plan should be involved as part of future deliberations on modernising education in the County.

Councillor E W Williams whilst supporting the report, asked that all Members be involved in the preparation of the future report. Modernising education in Denbighshire would be an ongoing process. Councillor D Owens said the next report would deal with the first consultation process and all Councillors would have an opportunity to input.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the statement.

130 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS

Councillor E C Edwards presented the report seeking Cabinet approval for the recommendations noted in this report relating to the future community engagement in Denbighshire. He said that affordable homes, the local development plan and the spatial plan would all play an important part in future discussions.

Councillor S A Davies said he supported the report and was particularly pleased to see that consultation with Town and Community Councils was included.

Councillor E C Edwards, in response to a query from Councillor E W Williams, said it was important for business people to be involved as included in paragraph 8.5 of the Recommendations to the report. The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources agreed and said it was opportune to make Members aware of this opportunity to develop businesses in the County. Councillor Williams suggested both the Finance and Economic Development departments should be included in such a development to attract inward investment into the Authority.

Councillor P J Marfleet expressed his support but queried whether it was in the Authority's best interests to support four separate Area Partnership Steering Groups as this duplicated effort and work overlapped. Councillor Edwards explained that Steering Groups would be used in a different way and it was a way of involving communities. Councillor E W Williams said collaborative working was essential and Area Partnerships was a form of consultation. Community Councils needed more support.

Councillor J Thompson Hill supported the report, particularly the involvement of Town and Community Councils and it was important for the Authority to focus its attention on these issues. He said interim arrangements had to be in place until the future of the Area Partnerships was decided.

Councillor E C Edwards said the Southern Area Partnership had achieved a good turnout at its recent meeting and both the Spatial and Local Development Plans had been discussed. It was important to consult also with the public.

Councillor R W Hughes said it was important to engage with the community, through Area Partnerships at this time. It could be opportune to join the Area Partnership with the Visioning when consultations commence in the Autumn.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree:

[a] Area Elected Member groups to continue

[b] Town and Community Councils to be consulted about future community engagement via a workshop session in July 2005

- [c] *consult with Community Strategy partners and Area Partnership Steering Groups on the future role of Area Partnership Steering Groups*
- [ch] *continue to support the Area Partnership Steering Groups until the findings from the Community Strategy Evaluation referred to above are available*
- [d] *to evaluate the opportunity provided by the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) to appoint development staff to increase the Business Rates base by attracting inward investment into each area of the Authority.*

131 HEALTH CHALLENGE DENBIGHSHIRE

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' approval in principle of the 3 year action plan which would demonstrate how the Local Authority would continue to integrate and mainstream the health improvement activity required to underpin and sustain the momentum of Health Challenge Wales. Members were also asked to agree the concept of Denbighshire County Council as a Health Improvement Agency with the implications for leadership that accompanies the concept.

Councillor Dobb urged Members to take leaflets promoting health to garages or hairdressers for example, promoting the scheme. It was important that the Authority helped the community to enjoy a healthy, happy life.

Councillor E W Williams said it was important to educate the secondary schools pupils to eat healthily. This also had an impact on the number of pupils who went into the town centres at lunchtimes to the takeaways and who contributed to the litter problem by throwing away the takeaway packaging. Some of the primary schools in rural areas had fruit purchased by teachers for sale in the school instead of sweets. Councillor S Roberts agreed and said it was important that 'junk food' was not sold at school breaktimes, even when fundraising.

Councillor P J Marfleet said income from vending machines was a way of raising revenue, it was important that healthy items were included in such machines.

A vending policy for the County report would be discussed by Scrutiny Committee after relevant consultations had taken place.

Councillor R W Hughes said Health Challenge Denbighshire was important and the action plan was comprehensive and it was Members who would deliver and champion some of the items contained in the action plan.

Members agreed it was essential to plan events as early as possible in order to promote healthier lifestyles for the public.

RESOLVED *that Members agree the Local Authority Action Plan for Health Challenge Denbighshire.*

132 PROCUREMENT OF A REPLACEMENT SYSTEM FOR SOCIAL SERVICES ELECTRONIC CLIENT RECORD SYSTEM, CARE.COMM

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to enter into a contract with in4tek for the provision of an electronic client record system that meets the needs of the service, replacing Care.comm and also seeking approval to enter into a collateral agreement with Conwy and Flintshire Councils to formalise collaborative working arrangements.

Councillor P J Marfleet supported the report and said it was necessary to invest more in ICT to achieve efficiency savings in coming years. However, he said the Authority needed to ensure that partners did not default which could lead to costs being incurred and no gain. He said all costs, including development costs, needed to be considered for possible opportunities to capitalise the costs.

The Corporate Director: Personal Services said that both Legal and ICT procurement advice had been taken to mitigate any risks to the Authority. An intense process had been followed with in4tek

and the authority's project team before procurement could take place and all costs that the team were aware of had been covered. The contract covered issues which could arise in the future and how those issues would be dealt with. The County Clerk confirmed that Authority had taken all reasonable steps in regard to the procurement of the contract and its contents.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources referred to the Financial Controller Statement and the potential for further direct costs arising as additional posts in ICT and Personal Services could be required to administer the system. The Corporate Director: Personal Services said additional staffing costs would not be incurred as staff had been seconded from elsewhere in the department. The Head of ICT said two of his staff currently supported the Care.comm system and would take on the work of the new system. Priorities would have to be juggled and support would be required for 16 extra computer servers in the computer room which had not been covered. In response, the Corporate Director: Personal Services said should an extra post be required in ICT, it would have to be funded by Personal Services.

In response to a query from Councillor E W Williams, the Corporate Director: Personal Services said Wrexham County Borough Council were not part of the agreement as they had decided to follow a different route.

Councillor E C Edwards congratulated the Corporate Director: Personal Services and her staff for achieving a partnership with the two other neighbouring Authorities.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:

- [a] a letter of intent, issued by the County Clerk, being sent to in4tek to allow the planning of implementing PARIS to commence prior to final contract signing.
- [b] entering into a contract with in4tek, subject to the final approval of the County Clerk.
- [c] entering into a collateral agreement with Conwy and Flintshire Councils to provide financial protection in the event of one of the other Authorities defaulting on the contract and the loss of discount that would result.
- [ch] that Denbighshire continues to collaborate with Conwy and Flintshire Councils in the implementation and future development of PARIS.

133 REVENUE BUDGET 2005-2006

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the appendices to the report and consider any actions necessary to bring the Directorates' projected spending in line with available budgets.

Councillor Marfleet stressed the need for efficiency savings to be delivered early in the financial year. As an example, the previous year there had been a discrepancy of over 30% in Lifelong Learning projected outturn during the year. A realistic delivery had to be achieved. He referred Members to page 4 of the appendix and said an efficiency savings progress report would be included as part of the monthly revenue budget report. He particularly liked the clarity of the format used to show the progress of the efficiency savings by Lifelong Learning and said, along with the Financial Controller, they would provide a standard format for all Directorates to follow which would incorporate the best format from each Directorate.

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

134 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2005 / 2006

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2005-2006.

Councillor Dobb said the report had been revised and in future would include income in the Council Fund that properly should have been within the HRA. The Head of Housing Services said amendments would be made to Appendix 2 to ensure the correct figures were used.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account for 2005-2006.

135 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor S A Davies presented the report for Members to note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and said he was the Lead Member for Corporate Communications Strategy and not Councillor D Owens.

Councillor E C Edwards said the Area Partnerships report would be included at a future date.

Councillor P A Dobb said it was hoped that a report on Improved Housing Stock would be included in July 2005 and that the second Emergency Duty Team report be removed.

Members agreed the Work Programme was being improved. They did not want to make it too cumbersome but at the same time the action or delivery of the item should be included when possible.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, Cabinet note the contents of the Forward Work Programme.

136 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 paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

Item 12 discussed first because of its relevance to the Capital Plan.

137 CAPITAL PLAN 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the latest projected position in the 2005/06 element of the capital plan and to consider the proposal to include additional spend of about £1m into the plan and agree the temporary hold on uncommitted block allocations until further capital receipts were generated. No substantial slippage was forecast. He confirmed that the capital programme had to be considered in conjunction with the revenue that was required to sustain it. He also asked Members to note that the schemes detailed in Recommendation 8.2 referred to paragraph 2.7 and not 2.8 of the report.

Councillor Marfleet said the Authority expected a substantial capital receipt in the near future and would hope to reinstate the block allocations at that time. He said that Members were reluctant to release assets for sale, to increase available funds. The CCTV unit in Rhyl would have an impact on funding and further funding would also have to be allocated for school transport software.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources confirmed it would not currently be possible to fund the block allocations in total. He informed Members that the extra funding had to be allocated for the new school at Prestatyn and the urgent Health and Safety works reported in Agenda Item 12. He emphasised the need to maintain revenue reserves in line with good accounting practice.

The Chief Executive said consideration would be given in the next report whether any underspend could be used in a temporary manner from block allocations, pending achievement of capital receipts.

Councillor E W Williams asked how the additional funding for the Prestatyn school site would be financed.

After discussion, it was agreed that funding would come from an assumption of slippage, until capital receipts were available. The overall Capital Plan would be regularly reviewed.

RESOLVED that Cabinet

[a] note the position of the 2005/06 element of the Council's agreed 3 Year Capital Plan

[b] agree including costs of the additional schemes as detailed in 2.7 of the report within the plan for 2005/06

[c] as a result of [b] above, agree to reduce the uncommitted element of the block allocations within the generally funded schemes until such time as further resources are available from the generation of capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets.

138 PROPERTY: HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to identify the current position with maintenance budgets for the Council's property portfolio, and to highlight increasing pressures on the budget arising from Health and Safety requirements. He said it was essential that funding from additional sources be provided for the Health and Safety requirements which would ensure that funding would still be available for schools maintenance. He also informed Members that an Improvement Notice had been served on the Authority which had implications on the building maintenance services revenue budget.

In response to a query from Councillor S A Davies, the Chief Executive explained that by allocating funding where possible out of the capital plan, the schools maintenance budget would be unaffected. He confirmed an Improvement Notice had been received and the Authority had one year to make improvements which would require separate costings.

The Corporate Director: Environment, in response to a comment by Councillor P J Marfleet, said Members had been earlier made aware that some health and safety issues needed to be carried out and that officers were aware of the need to anticipate such needs as soon as possible so they could be incorporated into the budget.

Councillor E W Williams said Central Government imposed many requirements on Local Authorities and would not allocate any additional funding to cover such requirements. Councillor Thompson Hill agreed and said it was important for the Authority and the WLGA to approach the Welsh Assembly Government asking for funding to meet such requirements.

Councillor Thompson Hill confirmed the list attached to the report was up to date and was a pared down list of the surveyors' reports. With regard to health and safety issues at schools, the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said he had arranged to meet with the Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

RESOLVED that Members note the proposed schedule of capitalised and planned maintenance works for 2005-2006 and recommend additional capital and revenue resources are made available to meet the three items of health and safety expenditure as set out in the report. Members also note the service of an Improvement Notice on the Authority which will have implications on the building maintenance services revenue budget.

The meeting concluded at 1.10 p.m.
