

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in Conference Room 1, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday 19 July 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors 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 and J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management.

Observers: Councillors R E Barton, M LI Davies, G C Evans, N J Hughes, T R Hughes, N Hugh Jones, M M Jones, P W Owen and G J Pickering.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Business & Communications; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor R W Hughes, on behalf of Members, welcomed the delegation from Gliwicki, Poland to the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor R W Hughes informed the meeting of her attendance at the Rhyl Town Council meeting on 18.07.2005 and had been asked to pass on their grateful thanks to the staff involved in making the Big Buzz such a success in the short time available and also for the way staff rallied to clear and tidy the site on the promenade following departure of the unauthorised occupiers.

214 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

215 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 June 2005 were submitted.

Item 6 Procurement of a Replacement System for Social Services Electronic Client Record System: Councillor P A Dobb said the last sentence in the fourth paragraph should read: "the Corporate Director: Personal Services said should an extra post be required in ICT, it would have to be considered in the 2006-2007 budget round.

Item 9 Cabinet Forward Work Programme: Councillor P A Dobb said it was hoped that information from the Welsh Assembly Government would be available in time for a report to be provided for Cabinet on Improving Housing Stock in September 2005.

Item 12 Property: Health and Safety Implications: Councillor J Thompson Hill said the Improvement Notice had been received. Health and Safety arrangements were being put in place. The Corporate Director: Resources said the item was linked to the Capital Plan and the decision was that spending on DDA would be slowed down and advantage taken of any slippage.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 June 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

216 A VISION FOR DENBIGHSHIRE - A VISION FOR THE COUNTY

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' approval to recommend to full Council in July 2005 the process for agreeing a vision for the County of Denbighshire. She said there would also be an opportunity to review the community strategy and a letter would be sent to Chairs and Clerks of Town and Community Councils and the Authority's partners and school children would be invited to participate. It was hoped to have an interactive website from September.

Councillor P J Marfleet agreed it was crucial to engage Town and Community Councils directly. He stressed the importance of 'branding' for the County although it was possible a large sum would need to be allocated for this.

Councillor P A Dobb supported the need for a vision for the County.

Councillor E C Edwards also supported the need for a vision for the County and said the Community Strategy needed strengthening. He reminded Members that One Voice Wales would have a role but not all Community Councils in Denbighshire were members of the organisation. It was also important to take account of the Wales Spatial Plan and Objective 1 when preparing the vision. He said consultation events for Town and Community Councils were being held in the north and south of the County at the end of September 2005 and as early notice of the meetings was being given, it was hoped for a high attendance, to enable input into the Vision.

RESOLVED that Members approve for recommendation to full Council in July 2005 the process for agreeing a Vision for the County of Denbighshire.

217 CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Cabinet approval for the recommendations noted in the Corporate Communication Strategy Action Plan.

Following discussion, Members agreed to delete the sentence regarding surgeries being held by Councillors in paragraph 2.2 of the Annex.

Following a query from Councillor P A Dobb regarding the Citizens 500 Panel, discussion followed and Members agreed the demographic profile of the Panel needed to be addressed. Councillor E C Edwards said the Panel could prove an excellent tool for consultation on the Community Strategy and Vision for the County. The PR Manager said a lack of resources had led to the Panel not being as active as previously but it was hoped to have a more demographic spread across the County by October 2005 and other departments in the Authority would make use of the Panel for consultation. Councillor E C Edwards said the North Wales Police were looking for an outlet for consultation and would possibly be interested in using the Panel, which could help with costs.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree the Corporate Communications Strategy as set out in the Action Plan, as amended above.

218 MODERNISING EDUCATION IN DENBIGHSHIRE

Councillor D Owens presented the report for Members to note progress and developments since February 2005 and seeking approval to develop a new Modernising Education Programme for Denbighshire approach which would include a more detailed indicative timescale for progressing the programme. Authorisation was sought for the additional resource requirements for delivering the programme and the establishment of a core Programme Team.

The Programme Team would consist of 3 staff with input from specialist officers as and when required.

Councillor P J Marfleet welcomed the report and said he was pleased the whole community was to be consulted. He referred to paragraph 2.3 and said school clusters were not just about bilingual affinity but also an overlap of areas. He agreed with recommendation 8.3 which 'acknowledged' the additional resource requirements and suggested there was a need to absorb budget requirements from elsewhere.

Councillor P A Dobb endorsed the report and said the Local Health Board as one of the Authority's main partners should be involved in the consultation.

Councillor E C Edwards said schools and school places were a community issue and he supported Councillor Owens' report. He reminded Members of the recent tragic events in London and Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury's comments on the importance of communities.

Councillor R W Hughes said she had visited a number of schools with Councillor Owens and had been reminded of their important role in the communities. The Visioning Exercise would include communities.

Councillor N Hugh Jones, Chair of Lifelong Learning Scrutiny also welcomed the report which would look at education in the County in a democratic way and include community consultation.

Councillor M M Jones said it was a shambles and a shame the way the report was presented in February 2005, which contained mention of pupils, teachers parents and communities. The Authority could not afford to make such mistakes again. She queried whether the timing for this report was correct and suggested that every school should be fairly looked at.

Councillor T R Hughes said he supported Councillor M M Jones' comments and that the costs of the consultation could mean cuts in the Lifelong Learning budget. He suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should be approached for funding to pay for the consultation.

Councillor D Owens stressed that every school would be included in the report and it was hoped that an overlap of pupils between schools could be taken into account.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning agreed to make available the information mentioned at paragraph 2 of Annex A for the public and also to discuss classroom provision at Ysgol Bro Famau with Councillor R E Barton. The Corporate Director said the presentation by Carmarthenshire officers had included an element of parental choice and this would also be taken into account if at all possible. With regard to costs, he said it could be possible that Tim Data could provide help for some of the statistical information. He confirmed that maintenance of schools would continue to be a priority.

Councillor M LI Davies supported Councillor T R Hughes' comments regarding costs and asked whether any information was available from other Counties who had or were carrying out similar consultation.

Councillor G C Evans asked officers to ensure that maintenance of all schools for the next 3 years continued to be to a good standard.

Councillor D Owens said the Authority would write to the Welsh Assembly Government requesting funding for the consultation. He also referred to the Authority's work with the Denbighshire Schools Forum who were being helpful in the process leading to the consultation. He also confirmed that local consultation would take place.

RESOLVED that Members:

- [a] *note progress and developments since February 2005.*
- [b] *approve the development of a new approach called the Modernising Education Programme for Denbighshire which will include more detailed indicative timescales for taking the matter forward*
- [c] *acknowledge the additional resource requirements for delivering the Programme and authorise the establishment of a core Programme Team at a cost of £90k per year for 3 years*

219 FINAL REVENUE ACCOUNTS 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the final revenue outturn position for 2004-2005 for both service and corporate budgets and seeking Cabinet recommendation to Council the treatment of reserves as detailed in the report. He reported that £481k has been contributed to balances. This would potentially reduce the need to add £0.5m per annum for the next 2 years with the aim of

bringing general balances to £4.2m by 31.03.08 although this would still be below the Wales Audit Office recommended level.

With regard to specific reserves of £688k, Councillor Marfleet said some items had to be included, for example winter maintenance funding, but may not all be needed. £565k was being written back from reserves and related to the resolution of capital funding commutation adjustments. Other funds in specific reserves will be considered and released in future if at all possible.

Councillor Marfleet thanked the Financial Controller and his team for their hard work in preparing all the budget reports.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the final revenue outturn position for the year ended 31.03.2004 for both service and corporate budgets and recommend to Council the establishment of reserves and carrying forward of earmarked balances as detailed in paragraphs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.8 of the report.

220 FINAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS 2004-2005

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the final outturn of capital expenditure in respect of 2004-2005 and approve the relevant statutory determinations. He informed Members that determinations 2 and 3 did not apply as credit arrangements were not entered into or transferred during the year.

The Chief Executive informed Members that determinations for following years would be made under the Local Government Act 2003.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the final figures in respect of the Capital Plan for 2004-2005 and approve the statutory determinations detailed in the report.

221 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. The current potential overspends totalled £752k which was up from the £483k in the last report. He said it was essential that services planned their spending at an early stage in the financial year and that savings were made. It was important to anticipate such items as fuel price increases for example. Councillor Marfleet suggested low level detail was not required for the reports and stressed the need for accurate reporting.

The Chief Executive agreed the monthly reports needed to be more robust and reliable and a realistic assessment of the outturn would be reported in September 2005. He also agreed with the Lead Member that there would be no monies available from central funds to ease pressures, as had happened in the past.

Councillor P A Dobb reminded Members that social care adjustments could not be made overnight but cutbacks could be possible when the position was known in September 2005.

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

222 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 work was on schedule with the capital schemes and work had commenced on window installation in houses in Corwen.

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

At this juncture (11.30 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

223 LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS GROWTH INCENTIVE GRANT SCHEME

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report seeking Cabinet approval of the recommendations relating to the use of the remaining Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme resources provided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Councillor Marfleet said £50k had already been agreed towards the customer care centre costs which meant £171k was available towards business growth in the County. It was essential that business growth was managed and targets achieved otherwise the Authority could be subject to clawback of grant. He urged Lead Members and senior officers to ensure staffing, subject to time limited funding, do not become permanent staff.

Councillor P A Dobb expressed her concern about the shops which were closing in Ruthin and Denbigh for example, as a result of high business rates. She asked whether it was possible for the funding to be allocated directly to businesses and not to employing STVEIs or other staff. Councillor Marfleet said it was important to provide the environment and investment in helping thriving businesses to improve and not to help failing businesses. He said some businesses received rural rate relief and it was proposed to extend the STVEI activity to St Asaph and Rhuddlan to help further enterprises.

Councillor E C Edwards said it was difficult for small businesses to compete and it was essential to have 'feet on the streets', particularly in the smaller towns. He queried whether they had made best use of some of the grant scheme by allocating £50k to the customer care centre costs. The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said as the grant was unhypothecated there was no restriction on its allocation by the Authority.

The Head of Development Services suggested the Authority could offer help with form filling for rural rate relief and the Authority's role was to bring businesses together.

Councillor E C Edwards stressed all areas should have a share and reminded Members that both Rhyl and Prestatyn/Meliden had received extra monies in the form of £60k funding from the North Hoyle Windfarm Community Fund. He said the Wales Spatial Plan was also crucial to Denbighshire. The Head of Development Services said it was more likely that business growth would be north of the A55. In response to a query from Councillor M A German regarding an officer to cover Prestatyn, the Head of Development Services said it was difficult to secure officers for temporary 3 year posts and when secured, the post holders would not always stay the full term.

Councillor R E Barton informed the meeting that the scheme was 2005-2006 and not 2006-2006 as stated in Appendix 1. He also asked that information on rural rate relief be provided to new Councillors as part of their induction as this would help them when dealing with constituency problems.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- [a] *allocate the LABGI resources to drive up business start-ups and developments alongside increases in business rate collection*
- [b] *enhance the property and inspectorate function within revenues.*
- [c] *provide resources for the continuation of the existing rural business partnership activities*
- [ch] *provide additional resources for business growth development in Rhyl through the appointment of an officer*
- [d] *provide additional resources for the appointment of a senior officer to drive forward business development in Prestatyn and provide appropriate project costs.*

224 DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE [SPG] ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement to the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing in Residential Developments and recommend its approval by Council for the purposes of seeking an element of affordable housing in schemes seeking planning permission. Councillor Dobb said over 2000 were on the Authority's waiting lists, of which 1400 were single/family and 500 were older people.

Councillor M A German supported the report and thanked officers for their work on the document.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing in Residential Schemes and recommend its approval by Full Council.

225 ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT PROGRESS

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report to inform Cabinet of e-government progress over the year 2004-2005 and seeking approval for the continuation of e-government development resulting in more efficient business processes and improved customer service.

The Head of ICT said the Authority was electronically linked to both Flintshire and Gwynedd County Councils and shared information whenever possible.

Councillor P J Marfleet supported the report and said the use of technology should be maximised. Denbighshire was amongst the top 4 authorities in Wales. The public should be encouraged to use the internet to communicate with the Council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the information in the report and approve the progression of the e-government initiative in 2005/2006 for further website development, Corporate Customer Service Centre phases and Business Process Analysis.

226 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report for Members to note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

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

227 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 5 and 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

228 COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

Councillors E C Edwards, R W Hughes, D Owens, M LI Davies, R E Barton and the Chief Executive and County Clerk declared an interest in selected items in the report.

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking approval for applications for financial support from the allocation for Community Capital Projects. Councillor R W Hughes left the meeting whilst the Prestatyn and Meliden Safety Groups project was discussed and the Chair was taken by Councillor J Thompson Hill for that item.

Members discussed the projects and agreed the applications listed in Annex A except for the Bedford Street Residents/Friends Assoc, Rhyl - move to Annex B; Cyffylliog Community Centre - defer application until another site identified and the Oaktree Partnership Steering Group, Rhyl - defer, applicants to find other funding avenues.

Members also discussed the application by the Clwyd Coast Credit Union and it was agreed that any capital receipts received should be included in the Community Capital Projects Budget.

It was also agreed to implement a suggestion from the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning to show the application scoring against each item which could help with prioritisation of the applications if required.

With regard to delegation of decisions involving sums of less than £10k to officers, Members agreed this should be after consultation with the local Members.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the provision of support from the allocation for Community Capital projects for

- (a) the applications listed in Annex A except for:
Bedford Street Residents/Friends assoc, Rhyl - move to Annex B
Cyffylliog Community Centre - defer application until another site identified
Oaktree Partnership Steering Group, Rhyl - defer - applicants to find other funding avenues
- (b) the applications listed in Annex B for implementation in 2006/2007 subject to sufficient resources being made available in the capital plan for that year for this purpose and the conditions attached to each project being satisfied as appropriate.

229 CAPITAL PLAN 2005-2006

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the latest projected position in the 2005/06 element of the capital plan. He said £5.9m expenditure was uncommitted whilst £6.178m was uncommitted. He stressed the need to carry out schools maintenance schemes as quickly as possible, particularly with the onset of the summer holiday period.

The Chief Executive apologised for an out of date figure supplied in the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the position of the 2005/06 element of the Council's agreed 3 Year Capital Plan

230 COMMISSIONING PROJECT ALPHA

Councillor D Owens presented the report seeking Members' approval to proceed with commissioning the project and approval of the outline milestone plan and timescales as detailed in the Annex to the report. Authorisation was sought for officers to embark on formal consultation with stakeholders during September 2005 in preparation to publish Statutory Notices in October 2005. Members were also requested to delegate to the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning the authority to take decisions on critical matters which would place the project at risk, including approval of the consultation plan and granting final consent to proceed with purchasing the site. Such decisions would be reported to Cabinet as part of a regular report on the project's progress. It was imperative that these works commenced immediately.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said Project Alpha would be the first new school build in Denbighshire and he thanked colleagues for their support. In response to a query from Councillor E C Edwards, he confirmed that David Evans would be the project manager.

Councillor P J Marfleet said thinking ahead and good planning on a new build by another Authority had led to energy savings, lower running costs and a building fit for purpose.

RESOLVED that Members

- [a] approve the outline milestone plan and implicit timescales for Project Alpha included at Annex A

- [b] *authorise officers to proceed with commissioning the project*
- [c] *authorise officers to prepare, and embark on, formal consultation with stakeholders during September 2005 in preparation to publish Statutory Notices in October 2005*
- [ch] *delegate to the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning the authority to take urgent decisions on critical matters which would place the project at risk including approval of the content and structure of consultation documents and consultation plan and granting final consent to proceed with purchasing the site. Such decisions would be reported to Cabinet as part of a regular report on project progress.*

231 PRESTATYN: FFRITH BEACH

1Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report seeking Members' consideration of the recommendations of the Ffrith Beach Working Group and to make budget provision for the site. Members received a written representation from Ms S Drew of the Prestatyn and District Environmental Association.

Councillor Thompson Hill said security was previously paid for by the Culture and Leisure Department and the Authority's insurers say minimum security cover must be provided.

Councillor M A German said another local group had been formed who would have an interest in the development of the Ffrith Beach, namely the Ffrith Residents and Tower Gardens Association. Councillor German also proposed that car parking charges be removed for all time from the car park at the Ffrith Beach.

After discussion, Members agreed the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors should vire the required funding.

RESOLVED *that Members agree chemical toilets be provided by the funfair operator; and that officers market the site for a lease term of 25 years.*

Members further agree the Corporate Executive Team identify from existing budgets funding for the clearance and marketing, abortive marketing costs, additional security of unauthorised camp and for daily mobile security patrol.

232 SCALA CINEMA AND ARTS CENTRE

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report seeking Members' agreement to submit an application to the Welsh Assembly Government for Physical Regeneration Fund [PRF] implementation grant for the Scala Cinema and Arts Centre project, and to make grant applications to the WDA, Arts Council of Wales and other appropriate funding bodies. Members received a written representation from Ms S Drew of the Friends of the Scala, Prestatyn.

Councillor Thompson Hill said a firm offer of funding amounting to £20k had been made by Prestatyn Town Council. It was important to proceed with the project as quickly as possible as it would help with regeneration of the High Street and as the County's second largest town it was essential that it had its own 'town hall' in the centre. Councillor M A German agreed the project would help revitalise Prestatyn and also be a focal point in the town.

Councillor P A Dobb said she would be pleased to see the Scala Centre and that it would also be of benefit to older people as it was located in the heart of the town. She was not supportive of the increase in funding that would be required by the Authority.

Councillor P J Marfleet agreed the centre should be progressed but a significant amount of money and a large revenue stream would be required. He suggested officers and Members should consider various options with regard to the centre, dependent upon the outcome of grant applications.

Councillor E C Edwards agreed the Scala Centre project should be pursued and guidance provided by the Corporate Directors regarding the funding. He also said the CCTV would need relocating.

Councillor M LI Davies said he supported the report but could not support an annual grant whilst Bodelwyddan Castle Trust and Clwyd Leisure Ltd were facing cuts in the amounts of grants they received.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to

[a] *submit an application to the Welsh Assembly Government for Physical Regeneration Fund [PRF] implementation grant for the Scala Cinema and Arts Centre project, and to make grant applications to the WDA, Arts Council of Wales and other appropriate funding bodies.*

[b] *review the future of the Scala project when the results of the major funding applications are known.*

The meeting concluded at 1.35 p.m.
