

## **CABINET**

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Town Hall, Rhyl on Tuesday 21 March 2006 at 10.00 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 J R Bartley; M LI Davies; G C Evans; D Hannam; K N Hawkins; C L Hughes; G A Jones and D A J Thomas.

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources, Legal Services Manager and the Financial Controller.

## **APOLOGIES**

County Clerk.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Councillor R W Hughes welcomed the Head of Sixth Form and 3 members of Prestatyn School Council to the meeting.

Councillor S Roberts reported that the Heather and Hillforts Project has won a medal in the Europa Nostra European Cultural Heritage Awards, which is recognition on a European scale of the value of the project.

### **1 URGENT MATTERS**

There were no Urgent Matters.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 February 2006 were submitted.

Announcement: Councillor R W Hughes reported that Denbighshire had not been successful in the Excellence Wales Awards this year but participating in the event would prove to be a good benchmark for the future.

Item 3 Monitoring the Authority's Key Performance Indicators:

Homelessness [page 4] - Councillor P A Dobb asked that "lowest" be deleted from the last line of the paragraph.

Item 5 Accountability Arrangements - Local Health Board: Councillor P A Dobb referred to the provision of out of hours prescriptions raised by Councillor M LI Davies, and advised that out of hours chemists were on a rota so pharmacy provision would not always be in Prestatyn or Colwyn Bay.

Item 6 Response to the Current Consultation on the Local Government Pension Scheme:

The Chief Executive referred to officers of the Fire Service being able to retain the right to retire at age 50 and the anomaly that Local Government employees would not be able to have the same rights.

Councillor P J Marfleet said that the sixth paragraph should read "... Between teachers and other local government employees, and asked as to how ...."

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the above, the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 February 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

## **PRESENTATION: NORTH WALES SECONDARY CARE REVIEW**

Members received a presentation from Andrew Butters, Project Director, North East Wales NHS Trust. Mr Butters was accompanied by Mr Gren Kershaw, Chief Executive of the Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust. [A copy of the presentation slide has been sent to all Members.]

Mr Butters' presentation, entitled "Designed for North Wales" covered the Consultation Document, with the formal consultation process beginning in April 2006. A national review on secondary care services was taking place and a service fit for the next 20 years was required. The reasons for changes to the present service provision, the service vision, information on both acute and satellite sites were given. The Reasons for Change were two fold - an evolutionary change which highlighted population projections and NHS challenges. Mr Butters said the over 65 population would increase by 40% over the next 20 years which would lead to more demands on the Health Service.

It was important to manage long term conditions in the community whenever possible and to reduce hospital admissions and lengths of hospital stays. These could be achieved through local diagnostic and followup clinics or centralising some specialist services. Five options had been put forward and it was felt that North Wales would be best served by consolidating specialist services on 3 major sites, namely Bangor, Bodelwyddan and Wrexham.

Councillor P A Dobb referred to a meeting of the Local Health Board she had attended along with the Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing where concern had been registered regarding the need for further significant work on the implications of the proposals for primary care, social care, financial strategy and the

sequencing of the implementation. The document did not outline the consequences to the Authority on service provision and what it would mean to the community in the number of beds lost for example. Mr Butters said he had attended the same meeting and had taken on board the concerns raised.

Councillor E C Edwards said his Ward had one of the best community hospitals in Wales - Ruthin - and he was concerned regarding the future of all community hospitals. He was pleased the Authority had been included in the consultation at an early stage and supported the Lead Member and Corporate Director in their work on this issue.

Mr Kershaw informed Members that a significant thrust of the secondary care for the next 20 years was the main hospitals. It was possible community hospitals could be affected by the secondary care review and the Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust were considering provision at community hospitals.

Councillor S A Davies echoed the concerns expressed for community hospitals and also the financial issues which would have an effect on the services the Local Authority would possibly have to provide as a result of this Review. Councillor R W Hughes said a letter had been sent to Dr Brian Gibbons, the Minister for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Assembly outlining concerns regarding service provision and financial issues. It was essential that the consultation addressed the 'end use' of the services.

Councillor D Hannam outlined her concerns regarding access to services and sites and felt that the NHS was not providing adequate services for the elderly in its current format, particularly in regard to district nursing provision. Mr Kershaw responded that waiting times were shorter and were being targeted to come down even further. He was not aware of any cuts in district nursing services. In response to a query from Councillor M LI Davies, Mr Kershaw said it was hoped to take on extra land adjacent to Glan Clwyd Hospital but the land could not all be used for car parking and travel plans / public transport provision were under consideration.

Councillor R W Hughes thanked Mr Butters and Mr Kershaw for the presentation and the opportunity for discussing the Review.

### **3 BEYOND AREA PARTNERSHIPS**

Councillor E C Edwards presented the report seeking approval to the recommendations identified in the report relating to the future support of Area Partnerships and their Steering Groups and the endorsement of future community engagement.

Councillor Edwards informed Members that the Area Plans [Community strategy documents] would remain in place but they would be revised and added to. In response to a query from Councillor P J Marfleet regarding the Council's Constitution, the Deputy Chief Executive: Corporate Director: Resources said the Area Partnerships could continue if they so wished but they would not be supported by the Authority.

Councillor D A J Thomas stated that the only consultation in Rhyl had been with the Elected Members' Group and not the Town Council and that there was no Terms of Reference for the cluster meetings. He then referred to the future distribution of monies from the North Hoyle Fund which had previously been the responsibility of the Area Partnership.

Councillor Edwards said all the Town and Community Councils had been given the opportunity to participate in the consultation proceedings and meetings had been convened in the north and south of the County to which any Town or Community Council could attend. However, Rhyl had not attended either of the meetings.

The Deputy Chief Executive: Corporate Director: Resources said discussions were being held with Npower regarding the distribution of the North Hoyle Community Fund.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree and recommend to Council on the 4 April 2006:-

- [1] *That the Authority ceases to provide officer support from the Strategic Policy Unit to the Area Partnerships, their forums and Steering Groups*
- [2] *That the reference to Area Partnerships in the Council's Constitution is amended to refer to Area Elected Members' Groups and these Members' Groups adopt the role of monitoring progress against the respective Area Plans*
- [3] *The Strategic Policy Unit establishes 'cluster meetings' with Town and Community Councils to discuss service delivery and act as an interface with Clerks and Chairs*
- [4] *The Area Elected Members Groups engage with Town and Community Councils to discuss service delivery with support of the Strategic Policy Unit at regular intervals as determined by the Elected Members Groups.*

#### **4 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) (revenue and capital) for 2005-2006, which showed a potential net underspend of £268k at the year end against the revised budget. Members were asked to approve an extension to the current central heating contract of two years in line with Contract Procedure Rules.

With regard to the central heating contract, Councillor Dobb said the company was local to the Authority and local people were employed, as were apprentices. Councillor M A German said a good relationship had been established between the contractors and householders.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the latest financial forecast position [revenue and capital] of the Housing Revenue Account for 2005-2006 and the rolling forward of the capital plan to the next financial year. Cabinet also agree to award the contract extension for 2 years as per the original contract, in compliance with CPR 10.1(d).

## 5 REVENUE BUDGET 2005-2006

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report asking Members to note the budget performance figures for the current financial year.

The potential underspend currently totalled £592k and he congratulated officers for their hard work, particularly those in Social Services for making savings in administration. However, the Supporting People Grant had been cut by 10% this year by the Westminster Government was again likely to be reduced in the coming year. An additional grant of £88k towards the funding requirement of the PARIS project had been received.

Other potential but unquantifiable pressures were the impact of the Single Status Pay Review and appeals against the recent Council Tax revaluations.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the appendices to the report.

### QUESTIONS FROM PRESTATYN HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL

Tom Beech, Chair of School Council: raised concerns regarding the onsite security following recent arson attacks at Prestatyn and Rhyl High Schools.

Councillor J Thompson Hill responded to the questions and said the security of pupils and staff was paramount and the Authority was in the process of spending £200k to improve security at various school sites, which included Prestatyn and Rhyl High Schools. Work was ongoing with both the Police and Fire Authorities. He reminded the pupils that budgets had to be balanced and it was not always possible to fund all the work required.

Councillor P J Marfleet said the Authority had recently to fund £100k insurance excess as a result of 4 fires in schools the previous year. Upgrades had been carried out to the sprinkler systems.

Councillor E C Edwards said he was a firm believer in CCTV and its benefits and said the Joint Action Group would consider these issues. He thanked the Corporate Director: Environment and his staff for their work on schools maintenance and the replacement of CCTV cameras.

Shaun Evans, School Head Boy: raised concerns regarding the poor condition of school toilets, not only at Prestatyn High School.

Councillor D Owens said the Council was aware of the need to improve school toilets. He said the quality of school buildings was one of the main

priorities set by the Authority and £200k had been spent over the last year. This issue would be considered as part of the capital funding 2006-2007 discussions later in the day, where school buildings including toilets would be considered for further funding. Councillor R W Hughes said school toilets were the highest priority for young people in schools.

Sarah Shepherd, School Head Girl: asked for information on the latest position regarding the proposed All Weather Pitch at Prestatyn, which was the largest secondary school in the County.

Councillor S Roberts explained that it had taken 3 years to obtain the necessary planning permission as it had been necessary to ensure adequate provision of a drainage scheme for the project with a hydro cell beneath the pitch which would hold the water draining away to ensure its gradual release into the drainage scheme. Funding of the scheme was not yet in place and a variety of funding avenues were actively being pursued.

Both the Chief Executive and Councillor R W Hughes thanked the school representatives for attending and for their confident manner and questions and asked them to relay the information to their School Council.

## **6 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme. He informed the meeting that the Part I Cabinet papers were available on the website prior to meetings.

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

## **7 URGENT ITEMS**

There were no Part I Urgent Items.

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

## **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 20 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **PART II**

## **8 PRIORITISATION OF CAPITAL SCHEMES FOR 2006-2007 CAPITAL PLAN**

The Chief Executive presented the report seeking Members' approval to the allocation of £3m to capital projects highlighted in column 6 of Appendix 1 for

inclusion in the 2006-2007 Capital Plan. Members were also asked to recommend to Council the proposals of how the balance of £1m should be spent, as shown in column 7 of Appendix 1 to the report.

Members were advised that further opportunities would be available for assessment of projects later in the year. Members would also be able to promote or demote projects or give different allocations to those in the appendices, which would mean an increase / decrease for some projects.

Councillor P J Marfleet said although Members had been encouraged to contact the Principal Management Accountant, he had not received any requests for information or comments. He complimented the Principal Management Accountant and staff on their work.

Councillor E W Williams said it was important to ensure that the projects on the list could not be funded from other sources, for example Objective 1.

Members discussed in detail a number of projects including Aberwheeler, school toilets, the Denbigh ICC and the Bedford Street Youth Centre.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning referred to the County's Asset Management Plans for schools and the priorities contained therein and suggested refurbishment of school toilets should be considered as one issue in line with the Asset Management Plans. He reminded Members of the health and safety issues which needed to be addressed. The Corporate Director: Environment agreed and said the safety of pupils when in the Authority's care was the priority. Members agreed school councils should be asked to consider improvements to the management of school toilets. The Chief Executive suggested the formation of a small task group of Members and young people to consider the issue of school toilets.

Councillor E C Edwards welcomed the prioritisation list which followed most of the Council's priorities. He suggested the monies for school projects should be put together with the Corporate Director of Lifelong Learning then making a decision on the priorities. Councillor Edwards also suggested the CCTV and school security projects should be put together.

Members discussed prioritisation of the list and agreed that items included on the current list which were not completed would be first on the next list.

***RESOLVED*** that Members approve the allocation of £3m to capital projects highlighted in column 6 of Appendix 1 for inclusion in the 2006-2007 Capital Plan. Members also agree to recommend to Council the proposals of how the balance of £1m should be spent, as shown in column 7 of Appendix 1 to the report. It was further agreed that Councillor D Owens lead a Task Group of interested Cabinet Members, relevant officers and school council representatives to consider school toilet provision.

## **9 CAPITAL PLAN 2005-2006**

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the latest projected position on the 2005-2006 element of the Capital Plan.

Members discussed the current projects, including the School Buildings Improvement Grant and the indications that the future annual allocations would be less than in previous years.

Capacity to deliver the various projects was of general concern and it was noted that capacity was stretched not only in Local Authorities but also in the private sector. The Corporate Director: Environment stressed the need to look collectively at multi-year programmes and the need for project management methodology to be consistently used. He said the culture of annual funding mechanisms should be changed and that the capacity issue could be improved by collaboration. He also stressed the need to report any slippage effectively and quickly.

***RESOLVED** that Members note the position of the 2005-2006 element of the Council's agreed 3 year Capital Plan.*

## **10 EXTENDING CONTRACT EXPIRY DATE BY 12 MONTHS TO 31.03.2007 FOR THE SEASHELLS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROJECT**

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking to extend the Seashells Supported Accommodation project contract due to expire on 31.03.2006 to 31.03.2007 or until a Strategic Relevance decision had been made, whichever is sooner.

***RESOLVED** that Members agree to extend the Seashells Supported Accommodation project contract due to expire on 31.03.2006 to 31.03.2007 or until a Strategic Relevance decision had been made, whichever is sooner.*

## **11 WRITE OFF OF DEBT**

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report seeking approval to write off a debt for rental charges for a retail unit in the Children's Village and to ask the Corporate Director: Resources to identify any weaknesses in existing procedures, reporting back to Cabinet within 3 months on any revised proposals.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree to write off a debt for the sum specified in the report for rental charges for a retail unit in the Children's Village and ask the Corporate Director: Resources to identify any weaknesses in existing procedures, reporting back to Cabinet within 3 months on any revised proposals.*

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.