

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Monsanto Suite, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen on Tuesday 12 September 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Observers: Councillors R E Barton; M LI Davies; G C Evans; M M Jones and G M Kensler.

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resource and the County Clerk.

APOLOGIES

Councillors E C Edwards, Lead Member for Communities and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor R W Hughes welcomed Councillor G O Rowlands to the meeting, in his new role as Lead Member for Finance and referred to his past 2 years' experience as Resources Scrutiny Chair. Councillor Rowlands thanked Members for their good wishes and took the opportunity to thank Councillor P J Marfleet, for his hard work as Lead Member for Finance and Personnel over the past two and a half years.

She also took the opportunity to welcome Daniel Sykes, Head Boy and Emily Davies, Head Girl, of Ysgol Dinas Bran to the meeting.

Paul Murphy, the new Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, was also welcomed to his first Cabinet meeting by Councillor S Roberts.

The Corporate Director: Environment referred to the refurbishment of the toilet blocks in Rhyl which had been opened by Councillor S Roberts, along with the Town Mayor, Rhyl. He paid tribute to Karen Tyler, Building Cleaning Services Manager and the team who had officially been voted the best in Britain after winning the Association of Public Service Excellence Service Team of the Year Award. The team had won the Cleansing Award as well as the overall Service Team of the Year award at the national ceremony in London. Councillor S Roberts also passed her congratulations to the team as this had such a positive impact on tourism.

The Principal Revenues Manager informed Members that his department had won the Direct Debit Quality Award and are shortlisted for the IRRV Excellence in Debt Management Award. The Leader asked that a letter of congratulation to the departments.

Councillor S Roberts referred to the Library and Information Service which had recently been praised by Alun Pugh AM, Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport. Denbighshire had eight libraries and one mobile library, but a lot of work took place in the community. One of the most successful outreach projects was the Bookstart scheme, where Librarians go out to communities and hold reading sessions for mothers and children in disadvantaged communities. The response from the groups had been overwhelmingly positive.

342 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

343 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

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

Accuracy / Matters Arising: Item 3 Single Education Plan 2006-2008 - Councillor R E Barton referred to Ysgol Bro Fammau and whether there would be an impact on surplus places following refurbishment. He asked that reference to Dyffryn Ial and Llandegla schools be deleted.

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

344 WORKING TOGETHER AS THE WELSH PUBLIC SERVICE

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report for Members to consider the progress the Authority was making to meet the collaboration strand of the 'Making the Connections' agenda and request further information and/or action where required. Members were asked to note the minutes of the second Regional Partnership Board meeting attached to the report.

Councillor Hughes informed Members that the two Regional Coordinators for North Wales (for the North Wales Partnership Board and Social Services Improvement Agency), appointed by the WLGA, were based in Denbighshire. She suggested the way forward was for Members to work collectively with other Executive Members in North Wales.

In response to a query from Councillor R E Barton regarding decriminalised parking and school transport funding, the Chief Executive agreed that school transport had received approval for funding whilst owing to a technicality, decriminalised parking had not received funding approval.

The Chief Executive said Denbighshire was unique in Wales in reporting the Regional Partnership Board minutes to Cabinet. Welsh versions of the minutes would be available in due course.

Daniel Sykes, Head Boy Ysgol Dinas Bran asked how the 'Making the Connections' agenda would influence the future of school transport in the Llangollen area as many children attending the school lived outside the County. He asked whether potential savings from collaborative work and economies of scale would be reinvested in front line services such as education. Councillor D Owens responded that school transport was the subject of cross-border working and a report on the issue would be available in the next few months. Many of the pupils attended the school because of parental choice. He outlined funding which had been made available to Ysgol Dinas Bran, namely the new classroom block which would be available for school use during the day, £750k provided for the new dining facilities and the MUGA leisure area. Councillor Hughes said every Member was aware of a backlog of work on school buildings and that in many cases the standard of buildings was unacceptable. However, Members were all committed to improving the situation. Councillor Owens said a rolling programme of school building improvements had been established and the programme operated a priority system. Councillor S A Davies said discussions on school transport had taken place with one of the transport operators and timings of buses had been adjusted to allow children on service buses.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the progress the Authority is making to meet the collaboration strand of the 'Making the Connections' agenda and note the minutes of the second Regional Partnership Board meeting which was held on the 16 June 2006 in Ynys Mon.

345 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BEECHAM REVIEW "BEYOND BOUNDARIES" ON DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' consideration of the implications of the Beecham Review "Beyond Boundaries" on how Denbighshire County Council would meet the needs of its citizens in the future. At Appendix I to the report was a summary of the Council's position in relation to the recommendations made by Sir Jeremy Beecham for local authorities and the leaders of all public sector organisations in Wales. The Executive were also asked to consider and agree to an all Member Conference to focus on new ideas for future service delivery. The "Beyond Boundaries" document could be viewed on the Assembly's website.

Councillor Hughes said people were now aware that the County wanted to involve partners in its decision making process. The Authority was now producing a briefing for MPs and AMs and Members. It was good that the Authority was working with differing layers of Government.

Councillor P A Dobb, referring to the Enhance Challenge recommendation on page 2 of the Appendix, said the Welsh Assembly Government should provide information to Authorities sooner. The Chief Executive agreed and said information in-year was required.

Emily Davies, Head Girl, Ysgol Dinas Bran referred to the Authority becoming more responsive to the needs of the community and asked how the Authority would engage and communicate with young people in Llangollen. Councillor Hughes said an All Schools Council Forum was being established and consultation with schools had already taken place on the County's Vision. She said it was for Schools Councils to take the opportunity to become part of the Authority's decision making. The Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing said further work had been carried out since the initial consultation on the Participation Strategy for Children and Young People and the document, with its Action Plan, was due to be published in October 2006. Organisations were being asked to appoint Champions and Estyn had suggested the development of forums on an area basis, leading to one forum for the whole Authority. Councillor M A German said young people's voices were important and urged them to use the opportunities they were given to input their views through the Frameworks Partnerships and schools councils.

RESOLVED that Members note the implications of the Beecham Review "Beyond Boundaries" on how Denbighshire County Council would meet the needs of its citizens in the future. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the Council's position in relation to the recommendations made by Sir Jeremy Beecham for local authorities and the leaders of all public sector organisations in Wales. The Executive agree to hold an all Member Conference which focuses on new ideas for future service delivery.

346 MONITORING THE ACTIONS AGREED BY CABINET

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report for Members to consider the progress the Authority was making against the actions which had been agreed by Cabinet since 01.01.2006 and request further information and/or action where required.

This was the first report to check progress of Cabinet Action Plans and 63% of the 76 actions had been completed, the rest were ongoing. Members noted and agreed that when completed, the Action Plans would be removed from the system.

RESOLVED that Members noted the progress the Authority is making against the actions which have been agreed by Cabinet since the 1 January 2006 and agree that when completed, the Action Plans would be removed from the system.

347 MONITORING THE AUTHORITY'S KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Councillor S A Davies presented the report for Members to consider the performance of the Authority during April, May and June 2006 against key performance indicator targets (Appendix I to the report). Members were asked to consider whether it would be appropriate for the 2005-2006 education indicators to be reported at the end of Quarter 2 after the verified figures had been published. He asked Members to consider whether the indicators were needed / relevant / achievable and whether some would require further consideration.

Members commented on various indicators:

Councillor M A German said some improvements had been achieved and there was a huge commitment by the Service to improve and deliver services. The Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing said if performance on percentage of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place was sustained, the Authority would be close to the comparator.

Councillor P A Dobb, referring to the clients supported in the community during the year, said work was being carried out on the information system and the figures would improve during the course of the year. With reference to the number of working days between homeless presentation and discharge of duty for households found to be statutory homeless, the Authority was having difficulties finding rental properties which could lead to a backlog.

The Corporate Director: Environment said further information on affordable housing would be available at the year end. Turning to inspections of food premises, he said much work had already been done and externalisation of inspections would give a higher of inspections carried out. In regard to waste figures, he said the composting figures were higher than later in the year and would balance out over the seasons. Recycling figures had suffered as a consequence of SITA's inadequate performance at the start of the year but had now been resolved. The inadequate performance would be discussed by Scrutiny Committee.

The community safety figures were heavily dependent on statistics provided by the Police who were in the process of revising their data collection. The Corporate Director: Environment assured Members there was no huge increase in crime levels and the Authority was low compared to the rest of the UK. He said the North Wales Police were more efficient than many forces in collecting information.

Councillor D Owens said the capital expenditure on the schools building portfolio was on target. The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning informed Members that 92 schools maintenance contracts had been completed at a cost of £740k and the department was working closely with the Environment Directorate. Members discussed in general the timing of works on schools buildings and the need for flexibility wherever possible in carrying out work during term time as well as school holidays. The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning urged the Ysgol Dinas Bran representatives to consider maintenance issues and if possible to lobby MPs, AMs and the Welsh Assembly Government for more adequate funding.

Councilor R W Hughes reported that economic prosperity targets had been achieved.

It was hoped that the new indicator for visits to outdoor sports facilities figure would rise in the last two periods. Councillor S Roberts also reported that the number participating in healthy living initiatives figure would rise by the year end.

Councillor J Thompson Hill reported that the capital receipts achieved from property sales were on target.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said Revenues had again achieved an excellent performance. In regard to sickness absence, further work was required as would the ongoing discussions on Single Status.

The Strategic Policy Unit Manager asked Members to consider the Beecham Review and focus on themes and asked Members to consider whether the indicators listed were the most appropriate. More work was required on economic growth and there were no indicators for Highways, whilst Education figures were annual indicators. She said the officers would meet with Members to verify or modify indicators.

RESOLVED that Members:

- (a) *agree to receive a report outlining Education's Performance in 2005/06 when the verified data is available;*
- (b) *agree the indicators to be reported in the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report, and*
- (c) *note the Corporate Quarterly Performance report and consider with the Strategic Policy Unit Manager those issues which require further discussion and/or remedial action.*

348 DELEGATIONS AND AUTHORISATON TO OFFICERS

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' approval to delegate duties to the Chief Executive, who would then delegate downwards to the relevant officers.

Councillor G M Kensler congratulated the Housing Environmental Health team on their work.

RESOLVED that Members approve the scheme of delegations to the Chief Executive as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

349 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2006 / 2007

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 the current financial year. A further housing improvement contract was to be awarded which would allow more works to be carried out.

In response to a query from Councillor M LI Davies regarding grass and hedge cutting adjacent to Council properties, Councillor R W Hughes asked officers to provide a written response to Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the latest financial forecast position [revenue and capital] of the Housing Revenue Account for the current financial year.

350 REVENUE BUDGET 2006-2007

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the report asking Members to note the budget performance figures for the 2006/2007 financial year as detailed in the appendices attached to the report.

He referred to the schools budget and said there was every indication that school budget balances would continue to reduce and the Authority would need to focus on building up the budgets. He stressed the need to ensure that loss of income from closure of leisure centres when refurbishments were carried out were factored into budgets at an early date.

Turning to the Supporting People Budget, the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said the Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing and her team deserved recognition for managing the budget and said Members needed to be aware of changes which would be made over the coming years which would adversely affect this budget. He also referred to the Environment Directorate who were doing very well at containing their budget.

The Corporate Services budget had reported a projected overspend on the Translation Service budget due to the demand on the service and the need to use external providers.

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

351 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

352 URGENT ITEMS:

There were no Urgent Items.

At this juncture (11.25 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 paragraphs 20 and 21 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

353 HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' approval, in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 25.4c, of the awarding of the contract for major improvements to the tenderer who submitted the "most economically advantageous tender". The Authority's intent to award was based on the Quality Questionnaire (20% of overall scoring) and tender price (80% of overall scoring). Contracts based on such predetermined evaluation criteria must be reported to Cabinet where the contract value exceeded £250,000.

Councillor Dobb confirmed that references had been obtained and the tenderer had an excellent record of carrying out similar works and a performance bond would also be arranged.

Members discussed the possible use of local labour / companies. The Project Team Leader for the Housing Refurbishment Project confirmed that the company awarded the tender would be taking on apprentices and using local sub-contractors for some of the works. The Corporate Director: Environment informed Members that local firms had been presented early on with a level playing field, however under Contract Procurement Rules it was unlikely that many local firms would qualify to tender for such contracts as they were not large enough. He took the opportunity to pay tribute to both Environment and Housing Services staff for their hard work in getting the Authority to the position of being able to let such a high value contract.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 25.4c, Cabinet approves the awarding of the contract for major improvements to the tenderer who submitted the "most economically advantageous tender", namely Mansell Construction Services Ltd, Roman House, Bridge Lane, Frodsham, WA6 7JE. The Authority's intent to award is based on the Quality Questionnaire (20% of overall scoring) and tender price (80% of overall scoring).

354 REVIEW OF AUTHORITY PROCEDURES REGARDING RENT COLLECTION FOR LEASED BUILDINGS

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the report for Members on the administration of rental units and seeking agreement to the Action Plan detailed in Section 8. He apologised to the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management who had not been fully involved in the consultation process. Councillor Thompson Hill expressed concern over the lack of communication/consultation involving relevant officers in Property Services and Economic Development.

Members discussed the issue in detail and

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the content of the report and approves the action plan attached to the report. It was agreed a further report be presented to Cabinet in January 2007.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.
