

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Town Hall, Rhyl at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 26 September 2006.

PRESENT

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Business, Communications and Personnel; 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; D Owens, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; G O Rowlands, Lead Member for Finance; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management and Councillor E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

Observers: Councillors R E Barton, M LI Davies, G C Evans, D Hannam, K N Hawkins and M M Jones.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

Financial Controller.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor R W Hughes welcomed Rachel Hartley from Oracle, who was participating in the shadowing process of senior officers within the Authority.

Councillor S A Davies referred to a letter of thanks received regarding the Authority's well run play strategy.

414 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

415 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 September 2006 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 September 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

416 LLANGOLLEN DESIGN GUIDE

Councillor E W Williams presented the report seeking Cabinet recommendation to Council to adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG) Llangollen Design Guide, as a material consideration for use in both development plan policies and determining development control applications.

RESOLVED the Llangollen Design Guide be recommended by Cabinet for adoption by the County Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, for use as a material consideration in both development plan policies and determining development control applications.

417 MODERNISING EDUCATION: PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillor D Owens presented the report for Members to note the progress made to date on the Modernising Education Programme, to endorse the approach taken and note the schedule proposed for the next stages of the Programme. He welcomed Philip Wells of Cambridge Education to the meeting.

Mr P Wells outlined the current position and future programme. The emphasis would be on discussions with schools and communities.

Councillor E W Williams referred to the Local Development Plan [LDP] Working Group which had met the previous day and to some areas in villages being made available for development. He suggested Education Officers should be invited to Community Council meetings to link the Modernising Education with the LDP.

In response to a query from Councillor P A Dobb, the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said more consultation with schools had been previously agreed by Cabinet, and the extension of the contract had been provided for in the funding allocated to the study.

The Corporate Director agreed the LDP process could be a vital part of the Modernising Education programme and he assured Members that this would be included in the programme. He also assured Members that each school would be treated on the same level.

Mr Wells informed Members that 46 of the 62 schools had attended or been represented at the first meetings now. The work now being carried out was in addition to that originally envisaged. He agreed that discussions could be held with some of the Community Council if this was requested.

Councillor E C Edwards referred to the County's Draft Economic Development Plan and said this was also of vital importance to communities and asked that Cambridge Education include the Plan in their proposals. Members agreed it was important all the documents be included as part of the Modernising Education Programme.

RESOLVED that Members note the progress made to date on the Modernising Education Programme, endorse the approach taken and note the schedule proposed for the next stages of the Programme.

418 101 CYMRU: PROPOSAL FOR SUBMISSION TO THE HOME OFFICE

Councillor S A Davies presented the report seeking Members' approval for participation in a Welsh Local Authority and Police partnership for the establishment of a single non emergency number throughout Wales.

The Head of ICT informed Members that the Authority had the managerial expertise to carry out the work as the Lead Authority, having set up the Call Centre. It was proposed to have 4 centres - North Wales, Gwent, Dyfed-Powys and Cardiff. Discussions had taken place with the North Wales Police and they had agreed the best location for the Contact Centre would be at their Divisional Headquarters in St Asaph. The accountable body for the scheme would be the Police, whilst the employing body was the Council who would be acting as the Lead Authority for North Wales, managing the new service. The proposal would be submitted to the Home Office by 06.10.2006 but if no funding was forthcoming the Authority would not be committed to providing the service. However, funding could be made available until 2010 but it was unclear about funding for the service thereafter.

Councillor E C Edwards informed Members that the Chief Constable had held discussions with the Home Office and the Police were also unclear regarding possible funding. He urged the Authority to carefully consider any proposed structures and not to agree to anything which could lead to financial difficulties for the Authority. By 2008, the funding for the service should have become clear.

As the employing Authority, Councillor J Thompson Hill asked for clarification regarding the staff employed after 2010 if the service was discontinued as this could have financial repercussions for the Authority. The Head of ICT said the agreement from the Home Office would, if the need arose, allow Denbighshire to give employees 3 months notice, which would be the required time to follow the full employment redundancy process. In the proposal, costs would be covered by the Home Office.

Councillor P A Dobb felt that 2½ years was not long enough for the public to become used to using the 101 number for non-emergency calls.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said the 101 service was potentially a significant development and this was the time to discuss the principles of the scheme. The funding issues were yet to be resolved. He referred to Recommendation 9.3 and that the wording 'no financial risk to the Authority' was possibly difficult to achieve. He anticipated the Home Office would pay the costs to 2010. However, it was very important that the other Local Authority partners agreed how additional costs would be shared. He suggested that Recommendation 9.3 be amended to read "...as long as the financial risk to the Authority is minimised".

The Chief Executive informed Members that this was the first significant collaboration that Denbighshire would lead and the model agreement should be applied to any other similar collaborative agreements. He urged Members to adopt the amendment suggested by the Deputy Chief Executive / Financial Controller.

Members were by the Corporate Director: Environment to be aware of the proposal, as this would have an impact on delivery of front line services and could lead to greater demand on the Authority's own services.

Councillor E C Edwards said that each Authority should share any burdens regarding the provision of the proposed service. He emphasised that North Wales was very different to Cardiff for example, and consideration would have to be given to Welsh Language provision.

Councillor R W Hughes agreed all Authorities should consider and agree the guidelines to collaborative working to ensure all had an equal part to play.

In response to a query from Councillor D Hannam, the Head of ICT informed Members that peak call times, for example, had been monitored in the Cardiff pilot study and this information was being made available to the four proposed centres.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *Cabinet approve the submission to the Home Office of a proposal for the establishment of an all Wales Local Authority and Police partnership for the provision of a national Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN) based upon the principles set-out in the report;*
- (b) *Subject to the full agreement with the Home Office of the funding principles and substantial agreement with the Home Office to the other service principles as set-out in this report, Denbighshire County Council commits itself as a partner in establishing the 101 Cymru service, and*
- (c) *Cabinet approve the recommendation that Denbighshire County Council becomes the lead authority for the employment of staff and operational management of the North Wales SNEN Contact Centre as long as the financial risk to the Authority is minimised, including any risk associated with termination of service.*

419 EXTRA CARE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF LLYS NANT SITE, PRESTATYN

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report updating Members on the financial implications of the proposed development of a 61 unit extra care housing facility on the site of Llys Nant residential home for the elderly in Prestatyn.

Financial modelling showed that the scheme was viable and could be funded through Prudential Borrowing in its entirety. The exact tenure of all the units still has to be determined as well as details on

the financial involvement of the LHB. We are applying for Social Housing Grant in partnership with Wales and West Housing Association, should we success prudential borrowing will not proceed.

Councillor J Thompson Hill asked about the proposed arrangement with Wales and West Housing Association. Councillor Dobb confirmed the housing association would take on the properties if they were successful in accessing the Social Housing Grant.

Councillor E W Williams asked whether the development would be for residents of Prestatyn and district. Councillor Dobb said the units would be covered by a Section 106 agreement which should discourage people from elsewhere applying for a property. Councillor Williams expressed his support for the proposal but again said he felt it was in the wrong location and should have been located in the Ffrith.

RESOLVED that Members note progress on financial modelling for the proposed development of extra care housing in Prestatyn as agreed in Cabinet in July 2006 and the variables, and information required, to finalise the model and take the project to detailed project planning stage.

420 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING – LICENCE CONDITIONS

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to approve the proposed Additional Licensing Conditions and Standards as outlined in Appendices 2, 3 and the revised Appendix 4 attached to the report / circulated at the meeting and for those Conditions and Standards to be adopted by the Council as their local standards. Agreement was also sought that the Lead Member for Health and Well-being be given delegated power to make any subsequent minor changes to the Conditions and Standards once adopted.

Environment Scrutiny comments had been incorporated but no comments had been received from private landlords.

Councillor M A German said he was pleased to support the report and in particular the disposal of refuse conditions. In response to a question from Councillor E W Williams regarding future recycling collections in West Rhyl, the Corporate Director: Environment said different strategies would be adopted in parts of West Rhyl for example to ensure that large properties incorporating 10 flats would not have streets full of wheelie bins. In the Communities First areas, various community bodies would be consulted. He thanked the Principal Environmental Health Officer – Housing Enforcement and team, the North Wales Police and various other Council departments for their hard work in producing the licence conditions documents. It was important that private landlord understood that the Authority expected high standards and that this was an integral part of transforming West Rhyl in particular. Both Councillors D Hannam and S Roberts expressed their support for the new licence conditions which would not only help West Rhyl but also parts of the east of Rhyl.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer – Housing Enforcement informed Members that Denbighshire was the first Authority to bring such regulations to Cabinet and detailed the needs of different areas in North Wales which meant that the system had to evolve over time.

RESOLVED that Members:

- (a) *approve the Conditions and Standards as outlined in Appendices 2, 3 and revised 4 to the report/circulated at the meeting, including the amendments outlined under Section 6.1 and 6.2 of the report as recommended by Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive Officer;*
- (b) *adopt the Conditions and Standards as the Council's local standards which will be applied to properties subject to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Mandatory Licensing Regime, and*
- (c) *agree the Lead Member for Health and Well-being have delegated power to make any subsequent minor changes to the Conditions and Standards.*

421 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. The outturn projection at the end of August showed a net surplus at the year end of £688k was shown against a budgeted surplus of £333k.

It was possible that minor adjustments to the leasing subsidy estimates would be required once clarification on the leasing scheme was received from the Welsh Assembly Government as a formal Direction.

Following the review of Right To Buy sales completed in July, the forecast sales for the year have been revised downward from 48 to 44. The Housing Stock Business Plan has been amended to account for the change and the Plan remains viable.

In response to Councillor E C Edwards' query regarding the garage survey, the Head of Housing Services confirmed that the survey had commenced and should be completed with a report being presented to Cabinet in November 2006.

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

At this juncture (11.25 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

422 REVENUE BUDGET 2006-2007

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report for Members to note the latest revenue budget performance figures for the 2006/07 financial year as detailed in the appendices attached to the report. Members were asked to note that the date of the report should be 26.09.2006 and that the information in the report was to end August 2006. Councillor Rowlands referred to the achievement by the Children's Services who were forecasting a balanced budget and the general Social Services projected underspend. He asked Members to note that equal pay provision would be a pressure on the Authority as HM Treasury had blocked capitalisation of equal pay provision, whilst appeals for Council Tax revaluation were still being received and would have an impact.

Councillor Rowlands said Resources officers would be organising a budget awayday in November 2006 for all Members and this would be another opportunity for Members to express their opinions as well as in Cabinet or Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor E W Williams reminded Members that the car parking would be an issue. He also referred to the pressures on healthy school meal provision. Carmarthenshire, for example, had improved the quality of school meals, costs had increased but the take-up was lower. However, he said the Council should continue to strive to improve school meals. Referring to the seminar to be held, he suggested detail be provided so that all Members would understand the impact and implications of say increases in car park charges.

Councillor Rowlands agreed the need for simplification of the budget. He also congratulated the Principal Management Accountant and team on the recent finance seminar which those attending had found most useful.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning outlined various issues regarding surpluses in schools budgets. In referring to school meals provision, he said joint service working was required. Councillor D Owens said no extra funding had been made available in Wales as had in England for the provision of more healthy school meals.

Councillor P A Dobb said she would be disappointed if cuts were made to provision of healthy school meals and asked about the costs of current school meal and more healthy school meal provision. Ysgol Llanbedr, for example, had an increase in the take up rate as more healthy school meals were being provided. The Corporate Director: Environment said the whole budget would need thorough discussion, the cost of providing healthy meals, the number on the school roll and the take up element when better, healthier options were provided. It was important to educate pupils on the benefits of healthy eating. The Department would be unable to sustain a significant loss in school meal provision.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning informed Members that Price Waterhouse Coopers would be making a presentation to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Schools Budget Forum. It would also be advantageous if school governors received more training on schools budgets.

RESOLVED that Members note the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the appendix to the report and that an awayday would be held in November as part of the budget preparation process to ensure maximum Member awareness.

423 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the annual report on the performance of the treasury management function in accordance with the Authority's Treasury Policy Statement. The report detailed previous expectations of the economic climate, the resultant strategy agreed, the actual interest rate performance and the actions undertaken by Council in response. Members were asked to approve the treasury activities undertaken in 2005-2006 as detailed in the appendix to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Annual Treasury Report for 2005/06.

424 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

Councillor S A Davies presented the report seeking Cabinet's views on the type of pension scheme to be offered to existing scheme members and new entrants from 01.04.2008; two tier health retirement, and contribution levels. He said the consultation document had been received and the implications of the proposals discussed on 14.09.2006. Response to the consultation was required by 26.09.2006.

Councillor Davies said various options had been considered and it was recommended the preferred Option B with increased employee contributions be supported.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the document was for consultation only as pension schemes were not a devolved function. Different proposals were made for Local Authority staff, as opposed to other public sector staff. Central Government appears to again be treating Local Government staff in a different way to their own staff. Members should be reminded that all public sector pensions were paid for by taxes of one form or another. If less favourable conditions were applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme, it could lead to a detrimental effect on recruitment and retention for Local Authorities.

RESOLVED that Cabinet support:-

- (a) Option B with increased Employees' Contribution;
- (b) the two tier ill health scheme, and
- (c) a single contribution rate for all employees regardless of grade but this to be increased on current levels.

425 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

426 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 20 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

427 CAPITAL PLAN 2006-2007

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report for Members to note the latest position on the 2006-2007 element of the Capital Plan. Following the discussion at Council the funding for the Scala had been transferred out of the project to a separate reserve. He also asked for comments on the revised presentation of the plan.

Members were asked to note that Aberwheeler Nurseries had not been included in the Plan and provision of new portakabins for the Nurseries would need to be included. He indicated that he wished to review the current capital block allocations and also draw revenue and capital budgets closer together.

Councillor S Roberts reminded Members that a decision on the Scala project had been deferred to the November 2006 Council meeting.

Councillor E W Williams, referring to Project Alpha costs, said it was also important for funding to be made available for small projects in schools, such as less than £10k required to provide a better access to a primary school. Councillor P A Dobb also commented on the provision of capital for the smaller schools.

Councillor E C Edwards asked whether the provision of leased portakabins for Aberwheeler Nurseries was covered by the Government directive that portakabin use would cease by 2010. Councillor P A Dobb said it was imperative for health and safety reasons that portakabins were provided for this site.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said use of portakabins was an issue and many schools were allowing pupil numbers to reach over-capacity. Schools should comply wherever possible with the schools admissions policy. He said he would be available to discuss particular school buildings with any Members. The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning informed Members that no decision had been made regarding the possible provision of a National Centre for Sensory Impairment at Ysgol Glan Clwyd. The Chief Executive agreed serious questions had to be addressed regarding the project, before its possible inclusion in the Capital Plan.

In regard to Project Alpha, the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said costs were in line with other school build of a similar size in the UK. He stressed the importance of schools being safe for pupils to attend and said continual expansion could not take place - it was important that projected pupil numbers were taken into account. Rationalisation of systems was important.

Councillor E W Williams again said the new Prestatyn school should have been located on the Llys Nant site with the extra care development being located at the Ffrith but Prestatyn Councillors had not favoured this option.

RESOLVED that Members note the latest position on the 2006-2007 element of the Capital Plan.

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.
