

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 12 April 2007 in the Cabinet Room, Level III, County Hall, Ruthin.

PRESENT

Councillors P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health, Social Care & Wellbeing; M A German, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families, R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Prosperity & European Programmes; D Owens, Lead Member for Schools and Lifelong Learning; G O Rowlands, Lead Member for Finance and Procurement; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Sustainable Development and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

Observers: Councillors R E Barton, G C Evans and T R Hughes.

ALSO PRESENT

Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources; Senior Solicitor and the Financial Controller.

APOLOGIES

Councillor S A Davies, Lead Member for Policy, Communications and Improvement; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Customer Care and Citizen Engagement, Chief Executive and the County Clerk.

1153 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent matters.

1154 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

1155 CAPITAL PLAN 2007-2008 AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CAPITAL STRATEGY GROUP

Councillor G O Rowlands and Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to note the recommendations of the Capital Strategy Group for projects to be included in the 2007/08 Capital Plan, details of the 2007/08 Capital Plan and outlined new procedures for how Members may progress capital projects. Cabinet Members were asked to recommend all three aspects for Council approval.

Councillor Rowlands referred Members to the revisions presented to Cabinet on 27.03.2007. He informed Members that if the purchase of the building in Rhyl was successful, this would lead to reduced running costs which could help to fund prudential borrowing.

Councillor P A Dobb detailed the importance of the purchase of the building not only to improve the service but as an invest to save measure. The purchase costs could be paid for by the Social Services and Housing Directorate through prudential borrowing, but she hoped for funds from the Capital programme until funds were available from any of the potential Social Service capital receipts coming forward. She highlighted various properties where best facilities were currently not being provided. She advised that, that morning, Social Services and Housing Scrutiny had recommended including the purchase of the new building in the Capital Plan and selling the current building.

Councillor J Thompson Hill referred to the necessary change of use consent that would be required and that any necessary planning consent could take up to 3 months and therefore any offer made would be subject to planning consents being received. No decision on disposal of the current property could be made until office moves had been completed to Brighton Road, Rhyl. He also reminded Members that there would be costs for property maintenance for any vacant properties.

The Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing stressed the importance of being able to relocate the service from its current location and urged Members to grasp the opportunity whilst at the same time it allowed another building to become available as a possible capital receipt.

Members discussed possible receipts for the current building and were reminded by the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources that capital receipts generally went into one budget and then decisions were made on the use of the overall funds available. However, it was possible for Council to decide that the receipt for the current building could be offset against the purchase of the new building.

In response to Councillor R W Hughes' question as to whether the purchase could be funded from the Capital Plan and the need for flexibility in the Plan, the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said the Capital Plan funding had already been allocated.

Councillor E W Williams agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources and said although there was a contingency fund in place, using such funds at the start of the financial year was not the way forward. He stressed the importance of service delivery and felt that it was not necessarily a question of disposing of property but rather trying to make the best use of them.

Members agreed to support the purchase of the new building in principle, with initial funding from prudential borrowing. However, Councillor Dobb expressed concern that if prudential borrowing was used it would mean that the Directorate's efficiency savings could be non-existent.

Members agreed to the purchase of the new property by prudential borrowing, subject to necessary planning consents. Members also agreed with Councillor E W Williams' suggestion that the Recommendation be amended to reflect the fact that the purchase was to be by prudential borrowing and that steps be taken to ensure there would be no detriment to the revenue budget of the service and service provision.

The Head of Development Services informed Members that a report was being prepared on the County's asset portfolio and it was likely that surplus office accommodation would become available with Members being asked to consider the report in the Autumn. He emphasised the need for Members to see the complete portfolio before making any decisions on possible disposal of such assets.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said clarity on capital receipts and agreement on budget provision for maintenance of unoccupied buildings was required. The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources agreed a corporate approach to the disposal of surplus assets and associated maintenance costs was required. It was agreed that the Action Plan be revised to include a report by Property Services within 3 months on where any empty properties are located and how their maintenance was to be funded.

Discussion followed on Bryn Tyner, Corwen, Riverside Park, Llangollen and the Pavilion Theatre Sound Desk with Members agreeing to the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (a) *recommend to Council the proposed allocations of capital funding as shown in Appendix 1 columns 6,7,8 and 9 of the report (with the exception of those subject to Delegated Decisions)*
- (b) *recommend to Council the Capital Plan for 2007/08 as shown in Appendix 5 (summarised in appendix 4)*

- (c) *recommend to Council the additional procedure for Member input into the submission of capital bids, as outlined in Appendix 3*
- (ch) *approve the funding of £50k for the HR / Payroll System upgrade as shown in Appendix 1*
- (d) *note the proposed projects to be supported when capital receipts are in place, as shown in Appendix 1 column 10*
- (dd) *recommend to Council the purchase of the Toc H building through prudential borrowing, subject to the conditions shown in paragraph 2.23 and to ensure no detriment to the future Service Revenue Budget*
- (e) *recommend to Council the proposed projects at Riverside Park and Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl subject to the conditions shown in paragraphs 2.25 and 2.26*
- (f) *recommend to Council the Community Capital Fund allocation shown in Appendix 2 is funded through cashflow*

The meeting concluded at 3.25 p.m.
