

## **CABINET**

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at 10.55 a.m. on Tuesday 17 July 2007 in the Guide Hall, Prestatyn.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Policy, Communications and Improvement; P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health, Social Care & Wellbeing; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Customer Care and Citizen Engagement; 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 N Hugh Jones.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

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

### **APOLOGIES**

Councillor M A German, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Councillor R W Hughes, referring to the earlier 1:1 with Cabinet Members and senior officers, said it was encouraging to see a large turnout at that meeting. She asked Members to briefly list some of the items the public had discussed –

Councillor E W Williams - recycling, road conditions, bus shelters, fly tipping

Councillor J Thompson Hill - proposed planning, car parking charges, condition of Prestatyn High Street

Councillor P A Dobb – Rhyl residents discussed social enterprises throughout North Wales, new hostel and affordable housing in Rhyl whilst Prestatyn residents discussed the long awaited extra care units in Prestatyn and the need for investment in regenerating private homes

Councillor D Owens – deputation of Acting Head and Governors with pupils from Rhyl High School to discuss 16-19 education

Councillor G O Rowlands – public realms funding issues

Councillor S Roberts – Rhyl Going Forward, woodland walk required from Rhyl to Rhuddlan, Wales in Bloom, car parking charges, eco friendly turbine near the waterfalls in Dyserth

Councillor S A Davies – no queries

Councillor E C Edwards – no queries.

Councillor R W Hughes – parking meters not wanted by residents of Prestatyn, more informative articles wanted in County Voice, flooding.

Councillor E C Edwards informed Members of his meeting with Huw Irranca Davies MP, Wales Office Minister / Under Secretary of State for Wales the previous day, along with terrorism advisers to the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The importance of community safety had formed the main discussion. He had also informed the Minister of the good working collaboration between North Wales Police and Cheshire Police as a new initiative.

Councillor G O Rowlands said the Revenues Department were the second highest in Wales and the first in North Wales for the successful collection of Council Tax, with an average of 97.9% collected in year. He congratulated the staff and said prompt payment by the Council Taxpayers was of great benefit to the Authority in keeping financial management as efficient as possible.

Councillor S Roberts referred to the previous Saturday's Guardian and its definitive guide to the British seaside, in which Prestatyn had received 2 commendations. Mention had also been made of Landmark Wales and the Postcard over the River Dee which will do for the A550 what the Angel did for the A1.

## **223 URGENT MATTERS**

There were no Urgent Matters.

## **224 MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26 June 2007 were submitted.

Also Present: Remove the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources from the list of attendees. His apologies had been given.

Item 4 European Union Convergence Programme Action Plan for Denbighshire - Add "and identify match funding" to the Resolution.

Item 7 Modernising Education Update – The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said Cambridge Education's report would be published in September 2007 as they needed to develop their preliminary draft further, with consultation ongoing until the end of November 2007. This would ensure sufficient time for consultation and communication. He also confirmed that the Lifelong Learning Directorate had sufficient budget for this extra work.

Item 8 Proposal to Introduce a Charge for Post 16 Transport – Paragraph 6 amend to read "... impact on the 14-19 Learning Pathways Project ..."

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

## **225 CONVERGENCE PROGRAMME – THE NEXT STEPS**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' agreement of the initial priority areas for work for the Convergence Programme as detailed in Appendix 1. Councillor Hughes said approximately 500 projects would be required for the whole of Wales, whilst Denbighshire had approximately 100 projects. Some of the projects were general and would be implemented throughout the County. She hoped to host 2 or 3 events for the business and voluntary sector through the year to inform further on the Convergence Programme.

Referring to the Financial Controller Statement, Councillor G O Rowlands stressed the need for a block allocation bid to be made to the Capital Strategy Group by the end of November 2007 at the latest.

In regard to Priority 3 – Developing high quality strategic business sites and premises – Councillor E C Edwards stressed the need for these matters to be discussed in detail at the Area Elected Members Groups. Councillor Hughes agreed and suggested this could be a standard agenda item for the Area Elected Members Groups. Councillor S A Davies agreed and said it was important that the rural areas are named in a similar way as the urban areas were named in the appendix.

Councillor E W Williams referred to village life and said many villages had no shops. It was important that funding for structural funds became available and there were opportunities to regenerate.

The Principal Regeneration Manager informed Members that the Rural Development Plan was a different funding stream to the Convergence Programme. This had passed its first stage and was now being considered along with 17 other eligible areas in Wales. The Appendix to the report did not rule out the inclusion of rural areas and these were covered by the Convergence Programme.

**RESOLVED** that Members approve and further develop the initial priority areas for work as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, at the outset of the Convergence Programme.

## **226 WORKING TOGETHER AS THE WELSH PUBLIC SERVICE**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Members' consideration of the progress the Authority is making to meet the collaboration strand of the 'Making the Connections' agenda and request further information and/or action where required. Members were also asked to note the minutes of the Regional Partnership Board meeting which was held on the 15 June 2007 (at Appendix I) and the current position of the regional collaboration projects.

Councillor E C Edwards queried whether the Contact Centre Collaboration Project was connected in any way with the SNEN 101 Project which had been proposed by the Home Office. The Chief Executive said the projects could be linked and if the SNEN 101 Project became viable it could be included. Councillor Edwards said the Wales Office Minister / Under Secretary of State for Wales had referred to this at the meeting the previous day but there was no funding available.

With reference to Councillor E W Williams' query as to why car parking had not been included, the Chief Executive said the projects had been completed. However, Councillor Williams suggested that working projects should be included as a reminder of good practice.

In response to a query from Councillor R E Barton (Observer) on Home Energy Conservation, Councillor P A Dobb said she would investigate the possibility of collaborating with Flintshire County Council on this issue.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the progress the Authority is making to meet the collaboration strand of the 'Making the Connections' agenda and note the minutes of the Regional Partnership Board meeting on 15.06.2007.

## **227 £200k SPEND TO SAVE BUDGET UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented the report for Members to note the position to date on the projects agreed for funding in 2006/07 through the Spend to Save budget, together with the list of further projects agreed by the Corporate Executive Team for support in 2007/08.

Councillor P A Dobb referred to the Keyring Initiative and said an £8k saving would be made the following year. She said the use of physiotherapy staff would commence in September. The Chief Executive said although such services should be provided by the NHS, it was important for the Authority to ensure staff on sick leave returned to work as quickly as possible.

With regard to energy usage, Councillor Thompson Hill informed Councillor N Hugh Jones (Observer) that a separate energy usage review was being carried out.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the position of projects agreed for funding in 2006-2007 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report and the projects agreed by the Corporate Executive Team for support in 2007-2008.

## **228 DRAFT EQUALITIES PLAN**

Councillor S A Davies presented Denbighshire's Draft Equalities Plan for Members to discuss and agree and recommend to Full Council for approval. The attached executive summary addressed the key areas for discussion (the full draft document could be accessed via the Denbighshire website, under the Equalities section). All consultation to date would be included in the report to Council on 31 July.

Councillor R W Hughes praised the inclusion of an Executive Summary and details as to where the full report could be accessed and recommended that this practice could be adopted for similar reports.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommend to Council the Draft Equalities Plan and its Action Plan.*

**229 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN REPORT 2007-2008**

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) for the current financial year. Councillor Dobb reported that the windows contract work was due to be completed in October and the heating works were also near completion.

Councillor R W Hughes asked Councillor Dobb to pass on messages of praise from residents to the windows installation company on both their work and their conduct.

***RESOLVED** that Members note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) for the current financial year.*

**230 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN 2007-2008 AND SUMMARY CAPITAL PLAN 2007-2008 TO 2009-2010**

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report for Members to note the budget performance figures for the 2007/08 financial year as detailed in Appendix 1 and note the summary capital plan performance for 2007/08 financial year as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

In response to query from Councillor J Thompson Hill regarding the Pay and Grading Review pressures, the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said some equal pay grievances had been received and responded to.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning agreed to discuss Ysgol Brynhyfryd's Schools Delegated Budget and the year start and end figures with Councillor E W Williams.

Councillor R W Hughes thanked the Principal Management Accountant on production of Appendix 3 to the report which clearly set out expenditure by Directorate, Council Priority and additional prudential borrowing, adding that the document was very useful.

***RESOLVED** that Members note the budget performance figures for 2007/08 as detailed in Appendix 1 and the summary capital plan performance figures for 2007/08 financial year as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.*

**231 ROUTINE REPORTING ON PERSONNEL**

Councillor S A Davies presented the report for Members to note the report on the staff headcount. A revised Appendix E was circulated at the meeting.

Agency figures were provided at Appendix E and it was important for Members to see the difference between staff and agency staff employed. Councillor Davies referred to the fact that some Directorate figures of corporate sickness absence were higher than the same period the previous year and suggested that at the next Cabinet meeting, Members provide details of any problems emerging, as every day lost was a financial cost to the Authority.

A request was made by Councillor R W Hughes for inclusion of figures for Denbighshire funded and grant funded posts in the starters and leavers section.

Councillor P A Dobb, referring to the level of agency staff employed by Social Services and Housing, said agency staff were employed for short term posts.

Referring to the Environment Directorate, Councillor E W Williams said listing staff on long term sickness absence would reduce the figures. He felt it was important that provision of figures did not create too much extra work, although Members needed to be aware of the trends.

The Chief Executive confirmed that agency staff could by law only be employed for less than a year. If they were employed for longer than a year, they became part of the Authority's staff and stopped workers being on short term contracts continually. Councillor R W Hughes said it was important for the workforce to have stability.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the information in the report and agree to provide details of any problems emerging in regard to sickness absence.

## **232 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

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

## **233 URGENT ITEMS:**

There were no Urgent Items.

At this juncture (12 noon) the meeting adjourned for 15 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 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **PART II**

### **234 COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROJECTS 2007-2008**

Members declared interests in various projects:

Councillor E W Williams – Antur Cae Cymro Village Shop Association, Clocaenog Playground Project, Pwllglas Village Hall

Councillor J Thompson Hill – Prestatyn Athletic Junior Football Club, Prestatyn Town Football Club, Prestatyn Tennis Club

Councillor G O Rowlands – Rhuddlan Town Council

Councillor S Roberts – Rhyl Town Council War Memorial Garden, Rhyl Town Council Community Centre

Councillor S A Davies – Llangollen Partnership, Llangollen Town Council, Llangollen Railway Trust Ltd, ECTARC, Llangollen Sports Club

Councillor E C Edwards – Llanfwrog Community Association

Councillor R W Hughes – Meliden Residents Action Group, Prestatyn Athletic Junior Football Club, Meliden Bowling Club, ECTARC

The Principal Regeneration Manager presented the report seeking Members' approval of the applications for community capital projects and to decommit unused contributions where there was no prospect of delivery in the immediate future.

Councillor R W Hughes said all the projects had been scored using the criteria at Annex A to the report. Individual projects would not be discussed but she was prepared to take comments on the criteria.

In response to a query from Councillor E W Williams, the Chief Executive said funding would be used to consolidate through either completion or extension of projects. Members were reminded a review of project progress would be carried out in 6 months.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree:-

- a) *to withdraw the unused contributions to Canolfan Bro Gwerfyl in Bettws Gwerfil Goch, Gwasg Gee in Denbigh and the Wellington Centre in Rhyl approved previously;*
- b) *to approve the revised scoring methodology in Annex A;*
- c) *to approve applications scoring 18 or above in Annex B – detailed below;*
- d) *to approve applications scoring 18 or above in Annex C subject to any outstanding matters being resolved by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007, with any funds which cannot be taken up by that date being re-allocated to applications scoring less than 18 with the re-allocation process to be the subject of a further report to Cabinet should this eventuality arise, detailed below, and*
- e) *to approve an additional contribution of £2,000 to Canolfan Addysg Bro Cinmeirch for the provision of a play area*

*Henllan Football Club - towards improvement/development of Top Park*

*Llanfwrog Community Association - towards completion of lighting, heating, painting, flooring, first-floor and balcony*

*Llanferres Community Council - towards the Llanferres Community/ School Multi-Use Games Area*

*Rhyl Town Council - for the War Memorial Garden Refurbishment*

*Meliden Residents Action Group - for environmental improvements*

*Corwen War Memorial Park - for the provision of new playground equipment*

*Antur Cae Cymro Village Shop Association - for a mobile kitchen*

*Prestatyn Athletic Junior Football Club - for changing room and toilet facilities.*

*Gwyddelwern Community Centre Working Group - towards a new community centre (conditional approval subject to match funding)*

*ECTARC, Llangollen - towards entrance repair and modification and landscaping the former playground (conditional approval subject to match funding)*

## **235 CAPITAL PLAN**

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report for Members to note the latest position on the 2007/2008 element of the Capital Plan and to note the final position for 2006-2007. Members were asked to agree the review of 2006-2007 was presented as a separate Part I report to Full Council. Councillor Rowlands thanked Finance and other departments for their hard work in achieving the many successful projects.

On the Community Learning Centres project, the Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said the draft contract was still being reviewed by the Council's legal advisers but no problems were anticipated.

Councillor G O Rowlands, referring to the Ryder Cup Golf Challenge at Rhyl, said the issue had been discussed by the Capital Strategy Group. He expressed the Group's concern about the quality of the information and said further information and detail was required before any recommendation could be made regarding the capital and revenue funding which would be required for the project. It was hoped the issue would be discussed at Full Council on 31.07.2007.

Councillor R W Hughes said she had not been informed prior to the meeting that the project was to be raised, it had not met the criteria for funding from the Community Block Allocations and it was likely the project would need revenue funding. It was important that each potential project followed the agreed

process to ensure equality throughout. The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning agreed with the Leader that the process should be followed.

The Corporate Director: Environment felt it was important to have good news highlighted in the list of projects achieved as staff were working extremely hard to achieve the projects whilst at the same time carrying out their other duties. Members were pleased to see the positives highlighted in the report and agreed it was important that every Denbighshire Member was made aware of the Council's achievements.

Councillor R W Hughes referred to recent criticism in the press by some Councillors and said she did not want to see officers criticised in this way for what could be teething problems on a few projects which had taken a long time to develop.

***RESOLVED*** that Members note the latest position on the 2007/2008 element of the Capital Plan and note the final position of the 2006-2007 Capital Plan.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.

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