

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 25 September 2007 in Conference Room 1, County Hall, Ruthin.

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; M A German, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families; S Roberts, Lead Member for Schools and Lifelong Learning; G O Rowlands, Lead Member for Finance and Procurement and J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Sustainable Development and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

Observers: Councillors J R Bartley; R E Barton; M LI Davies; G C Evans; K N Hawkins; N J Hughes; N Hugh Jones and M M Jones.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

Councillors R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Prosperity & European Programmes; D Owens, Lead Member and the Chief Executive.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor S A Davies chaired the meeting as Councillor R W Hughes, leader was in a meeting with pupils from Rhyl High School.

352 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

353 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 July 2007 were submitted.

A full report on agency figures, including Design Services figures, would be provided for the October Cabinet meeting.

Councillor E W Williams, referring to Councillor D Owens, said he felt aggrieved that no mention had been made of Councillor Owens' absence at the meeting and asked for a formal update on the current situation. He wished to record Cabinet's appreciation for the good work carried out by Councillor Owens whilst Lead Member for Schools and Lifelong Learning. Councillor S A Davies informed Members that Councillor D Owens was still a Cabinet Member but no formal assignment of a portfolio had been made. Councillor M A German wished Councillor Owens name to be included in the Apologies.

***RESOLVED** that, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.*

354 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. The latest figures showed that a surplus of £969k would be generated by the end of the financial year, which was £192k higher than the planned surplus. This was as a result of the negative Subsidy likely to be lower than originally

planned because of the impact of the leasing subsidy and better than anticipated income from garage rents for example.

Councillor Dobb referred to the achievements to the end of August 2007 on the major contracts and cited various examples, for example 186 properties were under major refurbishment with 152 completed, 2516 properties had their windows contract completed and 880 properties having heating contracts completed. A considerable backlog of work had been inherited when the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) had been brought into Housing Services. However, some of the works would be completed as part of the major improvement programme which would also help increase turn-around time.

Referring to the rural housing stock, Councillor E W Williams asked whether consideration had been given to rebuilding or replacing 3 bedroom houses with 2 bedroom houses and whether a task and finish group was required to give such issues consideration. He also referred to the fact that many older people did not wish to live in rural areas where public transport could on occasion be difficult. Responding, Councillor Dobb said no rebuilding was being undertaken, only refurbishment of Council properties and there was a need for the larger houses in many areas of the County. She agreed that older people's housing in rural areas needed to be considered. The Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing felt there was no need to establish a task and finish group and confirmed the Authority were unable to meet demand for 3 bedroom houses. She agreed sheltered housing could be difficult to let in some rural areas.

Councillor E C Edwards, referring to the backlog of work on properties, asked whether any monies would be released from the Housing Revenue Account to help finance the work to Council properties. Councillor Dobb said some of the work required was included the current year's business plan. The Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing confirmed that whilst the Housing Revenue Account funds were ringfenced for use on the Authority's own stock, some of that funding would be released to deal with the backlog.

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

355 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.

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.

356 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2006-2007

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 2006-2007 as detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources referred to current financial markets in general and to the fact that the Authority was limited to how much could be invested in any one place so as to spread any risk.

In response to a query from Councillor J Thompson Hill on whether borrowing rates for prudential borrowing would rise following the rise in borrowing rates in America, the Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said this could have an effect on any additional borrowing which the Authority may need. However, advice would be sought when required from Treasury Specialists.

The Principal Management Accountant discussed the annual change in capital financing requirements at Appendix 2 to the report and said that Members should pay particular attention to 2 pieces of information – the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream for the County Fund and HRA were 6.6% and 10.22% respectively, which meant, for example, for every £100 the Council currently spent, £6.60 was spent on debt and interest repayments and in the HRA it would be £10.22 for every £100. It was higher for the HRA due to the ongoing investment as per the Housing Stock Business Plan. The percentage for the HRA was likely to increase each year until the decent homes standard had been met, then fall back.

Members also needed to note the impact this had on Council Tax and housing rents. The Council was spending the equivalent of £10.78 of Band D Council Tax and the equivalent of £5.05 of the average housing rent to finance the costs of Prudential Borrowing.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Annual Treasury Report for 2006/07.

357 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

Councillor S Roberts joined the meeting and was welcomed as the new Lead Member for Schools and Lifelong Learning by Councillor S A Davies.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and the amendments.

358 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 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

359 CAPITAL PLAN

Councillor G O Rowlands, Lead Member for Finance and Procurement presented the report for Members to note the latest position on the 2007-2008 element of the Capital Plan. He informed Members that the Capital Strategy Group would be meeting later in the day to discuss 100% funded projects.

The Principal Management Accountant detailed the 3 projects which would be funded by a combination of the Welsh Assembly Government – Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks / Cadwyn Clwyd / LAGBI, namely Prestatyn Central Beach (Making Waves), Summerhouse and Gardens at Nantclwyd House and the Demolition of Wall near land train station. Fully funded projects costing under £1m were considered by the Corporate Executive Team and then subject to Capital Strategy Group agreement.

The Corporate Director: Environment confirmed that work on Bryn Tyner had been completed and a report would shortly be prepared for the Scrutiny Committee, which would detail the complexity of the work carried out.

An update was received from Councillor J Thompson Hill, informing Members that construction on Clawdd Offa School was 3 weeks ahead of schedule but external ground works were 1 week behind schedule. However, it was not expected that this would cause any difficulties. Office accommodation

moves would be completed in the near future. Land Registry queries had been resolved which would mean the farm disposal could go ahead.

The Corporate Director: Environment in response to a query from Councillor E W Williams, said he would arrange for an update on Community Capital proposals / projects to be provided for all Members. He also agreed to let all Members know the revised arrangements in regard to the Members' Capital Fund administration.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources informed Councillor M LI Davies (Observer) that the 3 projects detailed above had been included in the Cabinet Capital Plan report in June 2007. There is an opportunity for Members to bring forward suggested capital schemes, through the relevant Lead Member, as capital funding bids have been requested from services by the end of October for schemes to be included in the capital plan in the near future.

RESOLVED that Members note the latest position on the 2007-2008 element of the Capital Plan. The Corporate Director: Environment to arrange for an update on proposals / projects and revised arrangements for the Members' Capital Fund Administration.

The meeting concluded at 10.40 a.m.
