

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 22 April 2008 in the Town Hall, Rhyl.

PRESENT

Councillors P A Dobb, Lead Member for Social Services; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Customer Care and Community Safety; H H Evans, Leader and Lead Member for Education; M A German, Lead Member for Environment; G M Kensler; Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Modernisation and Improvement; G O Rowlands, Lead Member for Regeneration and Housing; J A Smith, Lead Member for Business Management, Communications & Personnel and J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Finance.

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

The meeting was chaired by Councillor J A Smith.

ALSO PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

Councillor P J Marfleet

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor J A Smith welcomed Gareth W Jones, the new Head of School Improvement to his first Cabinet meeting.

947 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Items.

948 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 March 2008 were submitted.

Item 9 Housing Revenue Account Budget & Capital Plan 2007-2008 – Councillor G O Rowlands, having declared an interest in the item, was not required to leave the meeting during discussion of the item.

Item 3 Modernising Education – Councillor G M Kensler confirmed a meeting had been held on 19.03.2008 regarding Youth Support Services.

***RESOLVED** that, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.*

949 MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2007

Councillor H H Evans presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement to ratify the whole Partnership Agreement; the adoption of the School Development Strategy, (which includes a School/Authority Communication and Engagement Strategy) and the School Evaluation Model as Council Policy for working with our schools. Cabinet were also asked to agree to the Partnership Agreement Timetable and the School Development Strategy Implementation Schedule and that approval of any subsequent amendments to the Partnership Agreement including the addition of aspects related to Health & Safety, Human Resources and School Buildings/Premises be delegated to the Lead Member with responsibility for Education.

The Head of School Improvement circulated Appendix 2 and detailed the Statement of Information therein i.e. the Authority and school governing bodies have to enter into a partnership agreement with

the review arrangements to be carried out every 3 years. The protocol would allow schools to be categorized in relation to those who needed greatest support receiving the greatest help. It would also include school governor appointment and training. The Partnership was a good basis for promoting initiatives for school improvement. Four cluster meetings had been held and a positive response had been received from Headteachers. The agreement included opportunities for schools with special interests or needs to meet outside the clusters. In response to a query from Councillor G M Kensler, the Head of School Improvement said the programme could be adapted during the year.

Councillor G O Rowlands suggested that the Resolution be amended and that along with the Lead Member for Education, the Lead Member for Health and Safety, Human Resources and School Buildings/Premises should have delegated authority to approve any subsequent amendments.

Councillor E C Edwards suggested that the new Cabinet should discuss the detail of the Partnership Agreement as it was such an important document. Councillor H H Evans agreed and said it could be discussed by the new Council in an informal session to allow further open debate. Members agreed in light of the complexity of the document, that Full Council be given the opportunity to discuss Education.

Referring to the suggested amendment to the Resolution, the Chief Executive informed Cabinet that the Lead Member for Education was the correct person to approve any subsequent amendments to the Partnership Agreement and there was no need for the Lead Member for asset management or human resources to be involved.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to ratify the whole Partnership Agreement; the adoption of the School Development Strategy, (which includes a School/Authority Communication and Engagement Strategy) and the School Evaluation Model as Council Policy for working with our schools. Cabinet also agree the Partnership Agreement Timetable and the School Development Strategy Implementation Schedule and that approval of any subsequent amendments to the Partnership Agreement including the addition of aspects related to Health & Safety, Human Resources and School Buildings/Premises be delegated to the Lead Member with responsibility for Education.

It was further agreed that the Partnership Agreement and any other educational issues be discussed at a meeting of the Full Council, to be convened on an informal basis.

950 MODERNISING EDUCATION ACTION PLAN MONITORING

Councillor H H Evans presented the report seeking Members' consideration of the work undertaken to monitor the progress of the Modernising Education Agenda. He said 120 actions had been completed, with 42 actions not completed. These had been discussed by Modernising Education Board who had agreed amendments to the timescales for completion of those incomplete tasks. The Action Plan in response to the Estyn Inspection of Youth Support Services had been brought into the same format for planning, monitoring and reporting as the Local Authority Inspection.

Councillor Evans reported that the leadership shown by Members and officers was now well respected and that Estyn were supporting the Authority and its work on school improvements. Councillor G M Kensler congratulated Councillor Evans and colleagues and said there was respect in and out of the County for the work done on Education.

The Interim Corporate Director: Education, referring to the Pupil Referral Unit, said the quality of support for pupils with behavioural problems in mainstream education was good and there would be room for some growth as more funding had been made available.

RESOLVED that Cabinet, having considered the progress to date against tasks, request that the Modernising Education Board reviews progress against those tasks identified as "Red" or "Amber" in Appendix 2 in advance of the next monthly monitoring report.

951 A PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE – DENBIGHSHIRE'S FOCUSED AGENDA

Councillor H H Evans presented the report seeking Members' agreement to the programme of change branded "Denbighshire's Focused Agenda" which was outlined in Appendix I. Members were asked

to recommend the programme management arrangements to the new Council at its meeting on the 20 May 2008. He said some of the processes and focuses in the Council needed to change and it was not just a question of restructuring the Authority. Issues of concern should be considered and dealt with before they became high risk.

The Chief Executive said Education had benefited from a programme of improvement and the establishment of a Project Board, therefore the new Council's Corporate Priorities would each have a project board established to ensure progress on priorities.

Councillor E C Edwards said he found the report interesting, particularly the "Great Idea – if only we knew how to manage it?" He also referred to the 'middle managers' conference', and asked how many middle managers were employed by the Authority. He questioned whether the Authority had the capacity to carry out all the work and supported the need for a restructure.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to the programme of change branded "Denbighshire's Focussed Agenda" as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. Members recommend the programme management arrangements to the new Council at its meeting on the 20 May 2008.

952 FORMAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICES (CESI)

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to enter into a formal agreement with the Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust for integrating community equipment services. The Welsh Assembly Government had agreed to fund £0.5m, subject to the formal partnership agreement. Integration of services would only cover the basic necessities of daily living, the specialist equipment would still be available and finance by the Authority's Occupational Therapy.

Councillor G M Kensler supported the partnership agreement, and said the single inventory with unified stock was a good idea. The service would become more effective.

Councillor E C Edwards asked the Corporate Director: Social Services to pass on, from a client of the service, thanks and congratulations to Denbighshire's staff for the excellent service provided.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Section 33 agreement.

953 CONWY & DENBIGHSHIRE ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' approval to continue and further develop the Conwy & Denbighshire Adult Mental Health & Social Care Partnership beyond July 2009. The Partnership had won awards and it was important to continue and build on the work to ensure the provision of a seamless service. A full business case with cost analysis would be provided during the course of the year.

The Head of Adult Services stressed the importance of the business case in relation to pooled budgets and work would be progressed on this over the next 5 months or so.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the continuation of the further development of the Conwy & Denbighshire Adult Mental Health & Social Care Partnership beyond July 2009.

954 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB)

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report seeking Members' agreement to establish a joint Safeguarding Children Board in partnership with Conwy Local Safeguarding Children Board and to appoint the Lead Member for Children and Family Services as a member of the Board. The Conwy and Denbighshire Safeguarding Children Board would report to Denbighshire Cabinet on an annual basis. The Welsh Assembly Government had given their agreement to the establishment of a joint Board.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to establish a joint Safeguarding Children Board in partnership with Conwy Local Safeguarding Children Board and to appoint the Lead Member for Children and Family

Services as a member of the Board. The Conwy and Denbighshire Safeguarding Children Board to report to the Denbighshire Cabinet on an annual basis.

955 FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK GROUP

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report seeking Cabinet approval of the actions outlined in the Affordable Housing Solutions action plan and to consider the further recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Group (AHTG), and seek a further report to the new Cabinet on their implementation subject to budget procedures. She went on to thank the officers and Members who had been involved with the Task Group and for their hard work.

Councillor G M Kensler referred to the review of potentially surplus land and also the need to look at affordable housing needs whilst at the same time looking corporately at other needs. The Head of Housing Services said various sites would be considered to see if they could be declared surplus to requirements. The Asset Management Group would be giving consideration to selling land at less than best consideration for affordable housing.

Councillor H H Evans said a strong link was required between affordable housing and local need and the local need should be emphasised. Affordable housing should be linked to the Local Development Plan and the development of infrastructure, affordable housing targets and funding from developers as part of the planning permission process, known as a Section 106 agreement. The Housing Strategy Officer confirmed that the local connections policy would be reviewed and an update would be provided for Members in relation to affordable housing in the Local Development Plan. The Chief Executive informed Members that some Authorities had tariffs for developments instead of the Section 106 Agreement and this could also be considered as an option.

Councillor M A German suggested consideration be given to small parcels of land being used for recycling purposes.

Councillor E C Edwards queried the 20 low cost home ownership units completed without the use of public funding. The Housing Strategy Officer confirmed some 40 units had been completed since the policy was introduced. Councillor Edwards queried the commuted sum funding and if this was unused whether it would be possible to use the funding for other projects.

Councillor Edwards referred to the units for people with substance and alcohol misuse issues and asked whether any funding had been accessed via the Community Safety team. The Housing Strategy Officer said the Welsh Assembly Government had provided some funding streams for developments.

Councillor Edwards referred to the long awaited garage site review and reminded officers of the need to consult with Local Members on those land issues. The Head of Housing Services confirmed that the garage review would include discussions with Local Members across the County. In response to Councillor Edwards' query on the definition of affordable housing, the Head of Housing Services said this was someone who could not afford to operate in the market, with property for sale at 3 x gross income or for rent at 3 x net income.

Councillor R E Barton (Observer) asked when clear planning guidelines on self build in rural areas would be available. The Head of Housing Services said this could be discussed by the Task Group and a report could be presented to Cabinet or Council or the Affordable Housing Task Group if it was re-established.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the actions outlined in the Affordable Housing Solutions action plan and further recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Group (AHTG), and seek a further report to the new Cabinet on their implementation subject to budget procedures.

956 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN REPORT 2007-2008

Councillor G O Rowlands presented the report for Members to note the latest provisional outturn position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the past financial year.

RESOLVED that Members note the provisional outturn position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the past financial year.

957 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN AND SUMMARY CAPITAL PLAN 2007-2008

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to note the revenue projected outturn figures for the 2007/2008 financial year as detailed in Appendix 1 and note the summary capital plan performance for 2007/2008 financial year as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3. Members were also asked to note the current position on the vacancy control procedure. He went on to detail the forecast overall overspend of £678k in Lifelong Learning, the projected underspend of £819k in Social Services and Housing and £175k in the Environment Directorates.

RESOLVED that Members note the projected outturn figures for 2007/2008 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and note the summary capital plan performance figures for the 2007-2008 financial year as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report. Members also note the progress to date in connection with the vacancy control procedure.

11.25 a.m. Councillor R E Barton and Councillor G M Kensler left the meeting at this juncture.

958 DRAFT RACE EQUALITIES UPDATE

Councillor J A Smith presented the report seeking Members' recommendation of the Denbighshire's Draft Equalities Scheme to Council. Members were asked to consider the progress the Authority is making to meet obligations in respect of the various equality strands.

11.27 a.m. Councillor G M Kensler joined the meeting at this juncture.

The Strategic Policy Officer confirmed that some targets had been set by the Welsh Assembly Government or the Equality and Human Rights Commission but most were set by the Authority itself.

11.29 a.m. Councillor K N Hawkins and Councillor M M Jones left the meeting at this juncture.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommend the Draft Race Equalities Scheme to Full Council. Members also considered the progress the Authority is making to meet obligations in respect of the various equality strands.

At this juncture (11.30 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

11.45 a.m. Councillor M M Jones joined the meeting at this juncture.

959 MONITORING THE ACTIONS AGREED BY CABINET

Councillor J A Smith presented the report seeking Members' consideration on the progress the Authority is making against the actions which have been agreed by Cabinet since the 12 September 2006 and the update on the actions agreed since 1 January 2006 (Appendix I refers).

It was agreed Charge for Post 16 Transport be added to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme later in the year.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the progress the Authority is making against the actions which have been agreed by Cabinet since the 12 September 2006.

960 ROUTINE REPORTING ON PERSONNEL

Councillor J A Smith presented the report for Members to note the information on the staff headcount. He referred to the target for 2007-2008 average of 9 days lost per employee with the actual figure being 11.59 average days lost per employee. He confirmed that back to work interviews were conducted.

The Chief Executive, responding to a query from Councillor E C Edwards, said most staff resigned to take up better positions with neighbouring Authorities. He also confirmed that exit interviews were conducted but it was not compulsory.

Councillor H H Evans commented that sickness absence levels were unacceptable and asked what had been done to manage sickness absence. The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources responded that an extensive absence management framework had been developed for use by all Directorates.

RESOLVED that Members note the information in the report.

SINGLE STATUS STATEMENTS:

STATEMENT BY COUNCILLOR J A SMITH, LEAD MEMBER FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS AND PERSONNEL

As you will be aware, staff were informed in the week commencing Monday 7th April of their proposed salaries as a result of the development of the new Pay & Grading Review.

There has been a lot of high level press coverage and political intervention since then. Much of the coverage has been misleading and the purpose of this update is to put across a more balanced position.

The proposals that were released on the 7th April were the culmination of three years of negotiations with all three trade unions – GMB, T&G, and Unison. The spirit of cooperation with all three unions was greatly appreciated by all. The latter stages of the discussions were assisted by ACAS. Whilst the unions were not entirely happy with every last detail, it was accepted by all three of them that the proposals were the best deal that could be negotiated locally. In the Local Joint Consultative Committee on 14 January, all the unions supported the recommendation of the proposals to full council on 22 January, which it then approved.

The subsequent decision by the branch executive of Unison to reject the proposals is disappointing. On a more positive note discussions with Unison and the other unions are continuing.

We therefore wish to make clear our determination to introduce a pay and grading system that appropriately rewards staff in a fair and equitable way. As part of the process, the proposals have been tested for equality purposes by specialist consultants.

Staff are the greatest asset within the authority. Good service delivery depends upon having a well motivated and well trained workforce. This pay and grading system however has to be developed within the parameters inherent within the Equal Pay Act and subsequent agreements. In particular there has to be a harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment. Denbighshire County Council continues to be one of the authorities most advanced in Wales in introducing a new pay system.

In conclusion, I think it is important not to underestimate the complications associated with Single Status. Over the coming weeks it is essential that we listen to what staff are saying, ensure that a full and accurate picture is presented to staff and ensure that every effort is made to support and advise staff who are potentially adversely affected.

STATEMENT BY I R MILLER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The next key stages for the authority are to greatly increase the level of understanding of the proposals and to continue discussions with the Unions.

Understanding has not been helped by some errors in the information that has been issued to individual members of staff and some weaknesses in other aspects of communication. Despite the huge efforts made to communicate with staff and managers, through over 50 roadshows earlier in the year, as well as a series of briefing notes over a long period, it is plain that more needs to be done.

Job descriptions are central to the evaluation process. For many hundreds of staff, generic job descriptions were used by the joint union-management evaluation panel. Staff will have access to the job description that was used to evaluate their post, whether it was a generic one or unique.

In some cases, there has been a lack of understanding of the scoring methodology. We have already published the scoring system on the intranet and will make this more widely available for staff and managers.

In addition to further meetings with service managers and headteachers, staff will be offered individual meetings in “surgeries” that will be held throughout the county so that they can have any detailed questions answered. The surgeries will start in the week of 12 May.

In view of the number of issues that have been identified and the further meetings that are being arranged, the period for formal appeals to be submitted will be extended to the end of September 2008 (rather than early July 2008 as previously indicated). This extra time will, we hope, mean that many of the concerns can be addressed on the basis of further information and full understanding by staff of how their posts have been evaluated, and should reduce the number of formal appeals that have to be considered.

One element of the proposals has clearly not been widely understood, even though it was a prominent feature of the negotiations with the unions and therefore well known to them. Many staff will not get an increment on 1 April 2008, because the agreed date for transfer to the new salary will be 31 March 2008.

Whilst not wishing to dwell too heavily today on any one particular group of staff, much publicity has been given to nursery nurses and may be their position typifies some of the complexities surrounding Single Status. In their particular case, their grading has increased significantly. However harmonisation means that this group will no longer be paid for school holidays, when they do not work. This is one of the factors that results in an overall reduction.

However no member of staff will suffer any reduction in pay for three years under the protection arrangements that form part of the proposals. In many cases, the annual increases in pay will mean that protection will cease to be paid during the three year period as pay in the new grade catches up with and exceeds the old salary.

The majority of staff will see an increase in salary over time. These proposals add over £3m to the annual paybill by year 6 and add a total of £13m to paybill costs across the 6 years.

The financial position requires further emphasis because it has been misunderstood or misrepresented by some commentators. The Assembly Government started providing some funding through the standard spending assessment in 2005-06 and rising each year since then to a total of about £1.5m a year now. However the Assembly only funds 80% of SSA – approximately £1.2m. The balance has to come from local taxpayers.

By year 6 (2013-14) the proposals could cost £3m a year. In other words local taxpayers will be subsidising the single status proposals to the tune of £1.8m a year.

The funding received from WAG in previous years has been put into a reserve to cover any potential back pay claims. It has not been wasted on consultants and foreign trips as has been alleged. This second element, back pay compensation, remains under discussion.

In total we have had about £4.5m from WAG since 2005-06. Together with the £1.5m a year running into the future, we will have received about £10m from WAG by 2013-14. However our spend only on the increased paybill as a result of single status – not counting any compensation for past unequal pay – will be £13m by then. And every year thereafter the council will be spending £1.8m more than WAG has provided. So we’ve not only spent or plan to spend every penny that WAG has allocated but we will be going a long way beyond it.

We will issue a statement to set these details out so that staff, unions, press and others can understand the cost of the proposals.

Members thanked Councillor Smith and the Chief Executive for the update and said they were pleased that the appeal period had been extended. The Chief Executive agreed to provide Members with copies of the information provided. Councillor H H Evans reminded colleagues of the need to be sympathetic with staff and negotiations with the Unions.

961 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor J A Smith presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

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

962 URGENT ITEMS

There were no Urgent Items.

PART II

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

963 RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT CONTRACT

Councillor M A German presented the report seeking Cabinet approval for the retrospective award of a contract for a local bus service as detailed in the report.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet approves the award of the contract in retrospect to the lowest available tenderer, representing the most economically advantageous use of funding available.*

964 ACQUISITION OF LAND

Councillor M A German presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to acquire the site named in the report. He informed Members the Authority had been successful in gaining funding via the regional Capital Access Fund.

Members discussed various issues regarding the acquisition of the proposed site and its proposed use. The Chief Executive cautioned that Members should only agree to the acquisition of the site if they were certain the value of the site was more than the value of the grant funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet approves the purchase the land detailed in the report, subject to the final terms of the transaction being approved by the Lead Member for Environment and the County Clerk, and the purchase being within the funding allocated for the project by the WAG.*

965 CAPITAL PLAN 2007-2008 TO 2010-2011

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to note the latest position on the 2007/08 element of the Capital Plan.

12.25 p.m. Councillor G O Rowlands left the meeting at this juncture.

The Community Learning Centres were progressing well – the build at Prestatyn High School and Ysgol Dinas Bran were due for completion in June 2008; the build at Ysgol Brynhyfryd was completed with ICT equipment installation imminent for the opening in May 2008. The Scala, Prestatyn had an overrun of 8 weeks due to bad weather and the complexity of the project whilst the Craft Centre, Ruthin was facing a 16 week delay as a result of inclement weather and roof engineering difficulties but the Centre was still expected to open in the summer of 2008.

Councillor J Thompson Hill sought Members' agreement to the recommendation from the Capital Strategy Group for the unallocated £10k remaining in the Members' fund being used to replace Members' laptops for the current year only.

12.33 p.m. Councillor G M Kensler left the meeting at this juncture.

Councillor P A Dobb expressed concern regarding the letting of the units in the Ruthin Craft Centre and hoped that the Authority was working towards having all the units let in readiness for the opening of the Centre.

Councillor Dobb and Councillor Edwards both expressed concern regarding the potential capital receipts at Llys Nant, Prestatyn and Awelon, Ruthin. The Financial Controller confirmed that any receipts from the sales would need to be ring fenced to part fund the extra care housing schemes on these two sites.

Councillor Dobb expressed her concern regarding the amount of funding allocated to Denbighshire, in particular how much funding could be allocated towards highways maintenance in rural areas. Councillor M A German, referring to the Members' fund, suggested that this should be administered in a different, simpler way in future so as to ensure that works were carried out promptly from the allocated monies. The Corporate Director: Environment agreed there was an enormous shortfall in highways funding and the County was in a standstill position regarding highway maintenance. He informed Members that funding was not targeted to the north or south of the County.

12.50 p.m. Councillor M M Jones left the meeting at this juncture.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the latest position on the 2007/08 element of the Capital Plan. It was further resolved that the unallocated £10k remaining in the Members' priority fund, as at 31 March 2008, be used to replace Members' laptops for the current year.

966 PROPOSALS FOR A SINGLE HEAD OF HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Corporate Director: Environment presented the report seeking Members' agreement for the creation of a single Head of Service post responsible for Infrastructure Services for Conwy County Borough Council and Highways Services for Denbighshire County Council. He reminded Members that a radical approach would be required to meet the review of local service delivery recommendations of the Beecham Report. A joint committee structure would be established to manage the activity.

The Corporate Director: Environment assured Members that the joint service would be transparent and that the Denbighshire County Council budget would only be spent in Denbighshire. Any risks identified would be considered by Scrutiny Committee, as the project moved forward. Reports would be brought to Cabinet as appropriate.

The Chief Executive said there would also be risks should the proposal not be adopted, especially when trying to recruit at current salary levels. A report would be presented to the June 2008 Cabinet on joint working.

The extra Strategic Business Manager post was queried by Councillor J Thompson Hill. The Corporate Director: Environment informed Members that collaborative projects needed a single point of contact across both Authorities.

Councillor H H Evans expressed his support for the proposal and agreed that whilst it was radical, risks must be highlighted. It was important for the smaller Authorities to have an effective way of working. The Corporate Director: Environment said if Cabinet supported the proposal in principle, Scrutiny Committees in both Authorities would consider the issue.

Councillor M A German expressed his support for the proposal, whilst Councillor E C Edwards said the new Council would need to agree the proposal.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree:

- 1 The principle of a joint Head of Service post covering Infrastructure Services

- 2 *The development of a job description and person specification and an appropriate salary scale for the new Head of Service and advice on recruitment is commissioned via an appropriate consultancy.*
- 3 *That work commences on development of an agreement on the constitution and powers of a joint Committee under the Local Government Act 1972.*
- 4 *That consultation takes place with Scrutiny after the local government elections.*
- 5 *That a paper setting out full details of the proposal is considered by Cabinet by early July 2008.*

MEMBERS' AND OFFICER STATEMENTS

Councillor J A Smith thanked all Cabinet Members for their work during the past 6 months and also the officers and translator.

Councillor H H Evans also thanked all officers for supporting the Cabinet during the term of the Council. He went on to thank Cabinet Members for their hard work over the past 5 months on what had been a large agenda.

The Chief Executive thanked current and previous Cabinet Members for their work, with only 4 Members on Cabinet from the start of the Council term. He wished Members well in the forthcoming elections.

Councillor M A German thanked Cabinet colleagues and officers for the past 4 years and said it had been a privilege to be part of the Cabinet, especially for the past 5 months. He said the Cabinet had felt confident in its work on various projects and moving them forward.

Councillor E C Edwards also thanked colleagues and officers for their help and support and said the new Cabinet had made good progress for the Authority.

Councillors J Thompson Hill and P A Dobb also expressed their thanks to Members and officers, saying they had all worked well together.

The meeting concluded at 1.15 p.m.
