

## **CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 28 October 2014 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Hugh Evans, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Development; Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Care, Adult and Children's Services; Huw Jones, Lead Member for Leisure, Youth, Tourism and Rural Development; Barbara Smith, Lead Member for Modernising and Performance; David Smith, Lead Member for Public Realm; Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance and Assets and Eryl Williams, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Education

**Observers:** Councillors Ray Bartley and Meirick Davies

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive (MM); Corporate Director Economic and Community Ambition (RM); Director of Social Services (NS); Heads of Service: Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW) and Finance and Assets (PM); Senior Engineer (IH); Commercial Development Team Manager (DM), and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Councillor Hugh Irving, Lead Member for Customers and Communities

#### **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

#### **3 URGENT MATTERS**

No urgent matters had been raised.

#### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 30 September 2014 were submitted.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.*

#### **5 AWARD DECISION FOR THE DENBIGHSHIRE HIGHWAYS AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTOR FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

Councillor David Smith presented the report seeking Cabinet's authorisation for officers to use the recently developed Denbighshire Highways and Civil Engineering Contractor Framework Agreement for works up to the value of £125k per contract.

The collaborative framework, led by Denbighshire, would include Flintshire County Council and Conwy County Borough Council and would provide comprehensive coverage for the majority of highway and civil engineering works required within those authorities. Benefits of the collaborative approach included considerable time saved by officers in procuring contractors and ensuring maximum value for money.

A list of successful contractors had been appended to the report and Cabinet was pleased to note that five of the twelve contractors were based in Denbighshire. In responding to questions the Senior Engineer confirmed that all the contractors were based in North Wales and the majority had regularly carried out work for Denbighshire for a number of years. He also elaborated upon the cost savings of the joint venture, particularly in terms of officer time, and detailed how the system would work in practice by providing fast, accurate estimates for work. Schedules of rates would initially be set for twelve months and then would likely be revised in line with retail prices indices. Cabinet was satisfied that the framework agreement would prove beneficial to the authority in terms of cost and efficiencies and it was –

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet authorise officers of the Authority to use the recently developed Denbighshire Highways and Civil Engineering Contractor Framework Agreement (works up to £125k per contract).

## 6 FINANCE REPORT

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the report detailing the latest financial position and progress against the agreed budget strategy. He provided a summary of the Council's financial position as follows –

- a net under spend on the revenue budget of £9k was forecast for service and corporate budgets
- savings of £7.1m were agreed as part of the budget and at this stage all were either achieved or in progress
- highlighted other key variances from budgets or savings targets relating to individual service areas, and
- a general update on the Housing Revenue Account, Housing Capital Plan and the Capital Plan (including the Corporate Plan element).

The only area of significant overspend related to Highways & Environmental Services, as indicated in previous reports, which covered school transport, reduction in income from parking, and concerns around design fees income from North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA). Councillor David Smith highlighted that those issues were largely outside the authority's control and although mitigation measures were being taken he was concerned it would not be enough to ensure a balanced budget at year end. Cabinet considered the actions to address the overspend and much discussion took place around car parking income. It was agreed to await the findings of the ongoing car parking review before considering whether to explore the option of outsourcing that provision. In terms of reduced income from NMWTRA Councillor David Smith advised that concerns had been raised in meetings with the Agency and in letters to Ministers. In response to concerns that the service may not be able to achieve a balanced

budget by year end the Head of Finance and Assets reported upon the different stages of financial management to be applied in those circumstances.

Cabinet also discussed the budget strategy and Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill explained that not all services had made the same level of cuts because the process had identified where potential savings could be best delivered with least impact. As education and social services had been largely protected other service areas had been subject to greater cuts. The Chief Executive advised of the level of cuts, in percentage terms, taken from individual services to date and explained the rationale behind the current budget process and scope for greater savings in particular areas whilst reflecting the priorities identified by members. Further details and the impact of the cuts would be provided to members in December's Budget Workshop. Members praised the innovative approaches taken in particular areas which had brought about savings whilst maintaining levels or generating improvements in service provision and delivery. The Leader felt that the budget process had been open and transparent, with all members having been provided with the relevant information, and the effect of cuts on residents had been limited.

In response to general questions assurances were given that there had been extensive communication about West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project and local members had been made fully aware of developments. In terms of treasury management most of the Council's investment balances were readily available.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the budgets set for 2014/15 and progress against the agreed budget strategy.

## **7 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Hugh Evans presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for consideration.

Cabinet noted that the budget recommendations would be considered at the next meeting prior to their submission to full Council. The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services advised that a process for members to put forward amendments and alternatives to the budget proposals would be submitted to full Council the following week for approval. The Head of Finance and Assets also highlighted a potential item on Commercial Partnership for November's meeting.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet's Forward Work Programme be noted.

## **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A 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 it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

## **8 LAND AT THE REAR OF THE FORMER YSBYTY H M STANLEY HOSPITAL, UPPER DENBIGH ROAD, ST. ASAPH**

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the confidential report recommending disposal of land situated at the rear of the former Ysbyty H M Stanley Hospital, Upper Denbigh Road, St. Asaph to a named party.

The recommended terms of disposal had been detailed within the report and included a percentage of the land value being paid to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) who owned a ransom strip along the boundary. Cabinet discussed the report and options for the land together with access points and the advice provided by the District Valuer in that regard. Councillor Eryl Williams was unhappy with the stance taken by BCUHB in retaining the ransom strip and asked that his views be recorded in the minutes. Reference was made to the time constraints for completing the transaction by 31 October 2014 and the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services advised of the circumstances surrounding call-in of the decision in accordance with the Council's constitution. Cabinet noted that the Chair of Communities Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts had agreed to allow the decision to be implemented in the event of a call-in.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the disposal of land at the rear of the former Ysbyty H M Stanley Hospital, Upper Denbigh Road, St. Asaph (as edged red on the plan attached to the report) on the terms of disposal as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report.

Councillor Eryl Williams abstained from voting on the above resolution.

## **9 DYSERTH - MELIDEN ROAD - LAND LOCATED OFF THE A547, ADJACENT TO VOEL COACHES**

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the confidential report recommending disposal and transfer of the land allocated for residential development on the terms as detailed within the report.

Cabinet was advised that the local member had been incorrectly referenced in the report and the comments should be attributed to Dyserth Councillor Peter Owen. Councillor Owen wished to see some form of benefit for local residents as a result of the land sale and Councillor Eryl Williams asked that future reports include reference to the Council's policies in terms of commuted sums and potential community benefits. Members carefully considered the proposals and the rationale behind retaining part of the land to add onto existing undeveloped Housing and Community Services land which could be developed for affordable social housing. It was noted that disposal of the remaining land would generate a substantial capital receipt for the authority and provide finance for capital projects.

Councillor Eryl Williams referred to the Council's plans to build affordable housing and the need to publicise the fact as a good news story. Councillor Thompson-Hill thought it would be a good opportunity to discuss the issue further at full Council when the buy-out of the housing subsidy was being considered.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approves the declaration of the land (as edged red in the plan attached to the report) as surplus to requirements with a view to disposing of 2.95 ha / 7.28 acres on the open market and to transfer the land extending to 0.7

*ha / 1.72 acres (as edged blue in the plan attached to the report) to Housing and Community Services.*

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.