

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 15 December 2015 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Hugh Evans, Leader and Lead Member for the Economy; Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Care, Adult and Children's Services; Hugh Irving, Lead Member for Customers and Libraries; Huw Jones, Lead Member for Community Development; Barbara Smith, Lead Member for Modernisation and Housing; David Smith, Lead Member for Public Realm; Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance and Eryl Williams, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Education

Observers: Councillors Ray Bartley and Meirick Davies

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM); Corporate Directors: Economy and Public Realm (RM) and Communities (NS); Heads of Service: Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW) and Head of Finance, Assets and Housing (JG); Strategic Planning Team Manager (LG); Valuation and Estates Manager (GT); Chief Finance Officer (RW), and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 November 2015 were submitted.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.*

5 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 - 2015/16

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the report providing an update on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2012 – 17 as at the end of quarter 2 of 2015/16.

The performance report provided a summary position for each outcome in the Plan together with an analysis of key exceptions. All outcomes had been evaluated as acceptable or better and an explanation behind the status of each indicator had been included within the report with key issues elaborated upon further at the meeting. In terms of the Corporate Project Register there were no projects with a 'Red' status and only three projects with an 'Orange' acceptable status with all projects on track. Cabinet was advised that the Quarter 2 report had been considered by Performance Scrutiny Committee where issues relating to the new British Gas billing system and dog fouling byelaws had been raised.

During consideration of the report members discussed the following –

- Pupil attendance in school – latest annual figures (to April 2014) showed performance 0.1% below the acceptable level of 93.7%. Whilst this indicator was a priority for improvement it was not a particular area of concern
- Percentage of open cases of children on the child protection register who have an allocated social worker – in order to provide assurances on the removal of this indicator members were advised that the outcomes framework was changing in line with the requirements of the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the indicator was being replaced with a raft of indicators which could capture data in a more meaningful way – the service would likely continue to monitor this particular indicator pending the establishment of the new indicators
- Residents Survey – members were advised that the data was from the 2013 survey and results from the 2015 survey reflecting the latest views would be available for the next quarterly report. It was agreed that a comparative of the two survey results be included in that report
- Carbon Emissions – information could not be produced at present due to a major issue with the new British Gas billing system which they were working to resolve. The problem was not unique to Denbighshire with a number of local authorities affected and it was suggested that consideration be given to seeking support from the WLGA and LGA in raising the issue with Energy Ministers. In any event the Council was due to change its energy provider from April 2016. Reference was also made to the work of the Council in reducing its carbon emissions and the Head of Finance, Assets and Housing agreed to circulate a briefing note clarifying the current position with regard to the billing system issue and steps being undertaken in order to reduce the Council's carbon footprint
- Developing the Local Economy – the Leader highlighted changes to Welsh Government support and funding for new business and concerns over the proposed new model which he felt could impede business growth in Denbighshire. The Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm reported further upon the way Welsh Government support for businesses was changing and provided assurances that the Council was working closely with other business advice and support providers for the benefit of businesses locally.

Cabinet commended the positive nature of the performance report and discussed how best to convey that message to the public and generate positive publicity. Members advocated a drip feed approach to ensure a regular supply of information on the excellent performance and wider good work and investment in other areas and on major projects. It was also suggested that the success of previously completed projects, such as the Rhyl Harbour Development, be re-promoted.

Councillor Hugh Irving agreed to take the matter up with the Communications Team.

RESOLVED that Cabinet receives the report and notes the progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2012 – 17 as at the end of quarter 2 of 2015/16.

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 of £0.410m was forecast for service and corporate budgets
- 91% of agreed savings had been achieved to date (target £7.3m) and the majority of the remaining savings were projected to be achieved by 2016/17 at the latest
- highlighted 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).

Cabinet commended the West Rhyl Coastal Development scheme which was nearing completion and it was confirmed that work on the relief scheme across Rhyl Golf Course was also well underway which would provide greater protection for residents in East Rhyl. The Nova Development was also commended and members applauded the promotion and publicity generated in marketing the excellent facility for both residents and visitors alike. Members took the opportunity to congratulate and thank all staff involved with that project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the budgets set for 2015/16 and progress against the agreed budget strategy.

7 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was presented for consideration and members noted the following amendments –

- removal of Treasury Management Strategy item for January
- an additional item for February on the Rhyl Waterfront Development Project.

In terms of the Corporate Plan Projects progress report Cabinet had agreed to receive an initial report in January and then at regular intervals thereafter. The Chief Executive suggested a professional presentation to the media beforehand in order to raise awareness and generate positive publicity. Cabinet felt it was important to highlight previous successes as well as planned projects and to highlight other important projects outside of the Corporate Plan to show the Council's commitment and investment in the county.

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 Paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

8 21 - 26 WEST PARADE, RHYL (FORMER HONEY CLUB SITE)

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the confidential report seeking an alternative development route for 21 – 26 West Parade, Rhyl.

Cabinet was advised of the complexities and background to the current situation together with the financial implications and reasoning behind the report recommendations. The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services reported upon the legalities involved and responded to the issues raised by Chesham Estates (Rhyl) Ltd in their recent communication to Cabinet members.

Members considered the current situation and various options put forward in order to proceed with development of the site and raised questions regarding various aspects of the report and lessons learnt from the process. Assurances were given regarding Whitbread/Premier Inn Hotels Ltd's commitment to developing the site.

Cabinet was keen to secure the best development opportunity for the site as part of the overall regeneration of Rhyl and to avoid any undue delay within that process. Members were satisfied that the recommendations as detailed within the report were a reasonable and proportionate course of action given the circumstances and represented the best option for future development of the site. Consequently it was –

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *approve the termination of the existing Development Agreement with Chesham Estates (Rhyl) Ltd and authorize the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services to issue a termination notice;*
- (b) *approve the disposal of land situated at 21 – 16 West Parade (the site) and Crescent Road Car Park on a 125 year lease to Whitbread/Premier Inn Hotels Ltd on terms that offer the Council the best consideration reasonably obtainable based on the information in this report, and*
- (c) *such disposal terms are as approved by the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services and Head of Finance, Assets and Housing.*

The meeting concluded at 11.50 a.m.