

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 26 February 2019 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Hugh Evans, Leader and Lead Member for the Economy and Corporate Governance; Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Well-being and Independence; Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People; Brian Jones, Lead Member for Highways, Planning and Sustainable Travel; Richard Mainon, Lead Member for Developing Community Infrastructure; Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, and Mark Young, Lead Member for Corporate Standards

Observers: Councillors Mabon Ap Gwynfor, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Alan James, Peter Scott, Glenn Swingler, Rhys Thomas, Graham Timms and Emrys Wynne

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (JG); Corporate Directors: Communities (NS) and Economy and Public Realm (GB); Heads of Service: Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW), Finance/S.151 Officer (RW); Lead Business Partner – Organisational Development (AM); Framework Manager (TS) and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor Tony Thomas, Lead Member: Housing, Regulation and the Environment

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 22 January 2019 were submitted.

Matters Arising – Page 6, Item 4 Minutes (Matters Arising) – Cabinet 30 October 2018 (Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision) – Councillor Peter Scott thanked the Leader for the recent press release providing an update on the proposed gypsy and traveller sites and confirmed he was looking forward to the provision report meeting with the Corporate Director Communities the following week. In response to his request that the matter be referred to scrutiny it was confirmed that the issue would be considered by Communities Scrutiny Committee on 14 March 2019.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

5 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Councillor Mark Young presented the report recommending adoption of six employment policies which had been developed/revised in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions. The six policies covered the following –

- (1) Attendance at Work Procedure (revised policy)
- (2) Reasonable Adjustments Guidance (new policy)
- (3) Menopause Policy (new policy)
- (4) Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy (revised policy)
- (5) No Smoking Policy (revised policy)
- (6) Emergency Leave contained within the Time off Work Policy (revised wording)

Councillor Young summarised the process prior to policies being submitted to Cabinet for approval which included consultation via a Policy Working Group consisting of representatives from Human Resources, Legal and the Trade Unions before submission to the Local Joint Consultative Committee (LJCC) which included both Employer and Trade Union representatives. Feedback on the process had been positive from all parties and the LJCC had recommended the policies to Cabinet for adoption.

The Lead Business Partner – Organisational Development provided a brief summary of each policy, highlighting the proposed changes within existing policies and need for new policies together with the reasons therefore, which included legislative changes and clarity to ensure a correct and consistent approach.

Cabinet considered the report and noted that all policies had been subject to an individual Wellbeing Impact Assessment. Having been involved within the process Councillor Richard Mainon was keen for the policies to be adopted and he commended the process and paid tribute to the hard work of all those involved in bringing the policies forward. He added that the full impact of the policies had been accurately reflected in the Wellbeing Impact Assessments, including recognising any unintended consequences as a result, and he clarified the element with regard to the Attendance at Work Policy and potential loss of skills through ill health.

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *approves the employment policies as detailed within the report for adoption within the Council, and*
- (b) *confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessments (appended to the report) as part of its consideration.*

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 –

- the net revenue budget for 2018/19 was £194.418m (£189.252m in 2017/18)
- an overspend of £0.774m was forecast for service and corporate budgets
- detailed agreed savings and efficiencies worth £4.6m including those which had already been achieved with the assumption that all service efficiencies/savings would be delivered – any exceptions would be reported to Cabinet if required
- highlighted current risks and variances relating to individual service areas, and
- provided a general update on the Housing Revenue Account, Housing Capital Plan and the Capital Plan (including the Corporate Plan element).

Cabinet raised the following matters during debate –

- School Transport – reference was made to the projected overspend in the school transport budget and to previous discussions as to whether the budget would be best placed in Highways and Environmental Services (HES) or Education and Children's Services (ECS). The reasoning behind the decision to place the budget in HES was reiterated given that ECS carried out the assessment process to determine eligibility of a child for school transport but the commissioning arrangement for those eligible for school transport was undertaken in HES because of the expertise and skills set required for negotiating the school contracts. HES also provided a similar service for transport provision in other service areas including Community Support Services. School transport was an acknowledged budget pressure which needed to be resolved wherever it was located and it was agreed that any further review or discussion in that regard should be undertaken with officers outside of the meeting
- Council Funding – the Leader referred to the continuing service pressures facing local authorities and reported that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) continued to lobby the Welsh Government with a view to investing in core services and provision of a longer term financial plan to aid future planning. Whilst the Council was proud of its record in terms of investment in services such as education and social care and in transforming services and building resilience, the viability and sustainability of local services was under threat due to the prolonged and sustained cuts to local government funding. The work carried out by the WLGA on behalf of local authorities in Wales was acknowledged but Cabinet felt there would also be merit in issuing a statement highlighting the financial difficulties and to call for adequate funding provision to ensure the future sustainability of essential services. Reference was also made to the forthcoming UK Government spending review to determine the settlement for Wales following which the Welsh Government would determine the budget allocations for those devolved functions, including local government, at which point there may be further opportunity to influence budget decisions and lobby on behalf of residents

In responding to questions from non-Cabinet members regarding various overspends in service departments Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill advised that –

- all services would be expected to balance their own budgets in-service where possible and the measures to address the overspend relating to the SC2 project had been detailed within the report – the SC2 project was part of the major Rhyl Waterfront and Waterpark project worth over £20m and in that context the overspend was comparatively small
- an additional £750k had been allocated to Community Support Services for 2018/19 and together with £366k of the Sustainable Social Services Grant and the planned use of reserves, a break-even position had been projected
- the projected overspend in Education and Children’s Services could not be addressed in-service and therefore corporate underspends would be used in the current financial year – an additional base budget allocation of £1.5m had been approved for 2019/20 to address those pressures going forward
- confirmed the legacy tips pressure and Waste pressure relating to the transition to the new waste contracts were one off costs; Councillor Brian Jones clarified that additional bin emptying in Rhyl had been carried out in response to issues raised by the public/members during the prolonged hot weather last summer.

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *note the budgets set for 2018/19 and progress against the agreed budget strategy, and*
- (b) *issues a statement to call on both UK and Welsh Governments to recognise the difficulties of delivering statutory services in the current financial climate and ask that they act to ensure that essential services are funded such that they are sustainable for this and future generations.*

7 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was presented for consideration and it was noted that the following item would be added to the future work programme for March – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet’s Forward Work Programme be noted.

At this point in the proceedings Councillor Richard Mainon left the meeting.

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 item of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8 APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTORS TO THE NORTH WALES CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK 2

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the confidential report recommending the appointment of named contractors to the North Wales Construction Framework 2 (NWCF2) to be used for major construction works over £250k.

The first iteration of the NWCF agreement had expired in May 2018 and had proved extremely successful. The report detailed the merits of the collaborative approach across the six North Wales local authorities, led by Denbighshire, which included significant cost and time savings. The intention was to operate the second framework for a four year period from March 2019 (with a break clause to review after 2 and 3 years). The recommended contractors had been evaluated according to the scoring and weighting methodology detailed within the tender documents.

Cabinet agreed there were a suitable number of contractors in each Lot to provide competition and were pleased to note the increase in the number of local contractors across the region within the framework. In response to questions Councillor Thompson-Hill and officers elaborated upon the extensive engagement with the construction industry and lessons learnt exercise to ensure best practice for the second framework. Assurances were also provided in terms of monitoring and auditing individual projects and maximising the delivery of community benefits.

Cabinet congratulated officers on the success of the first framework and on the awards won in that regard together with the work undertaken to ensure even greater success and benefits for the second framework in terms of the local economy, employment opportunities and community benefits.

RESOLVED that the named contractors detailed in paragraph 3 of the report be appointed to the North Wales Schools and Public Buildings Contractor Framework.

The meeting concluded at 11.05 hrs.