

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 18 February 2020 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's Services and Public Engagement; Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment; Richard Mainon, Lead Member for Corporate Services and Strategic Direction; Tony Thomas, Lead Member for Housing and Communities; Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, and Mark Young, Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities

Observers: Meirick Davies, Martyn Holland, Alan James, Gwyneth Kensler, Peter Scott, 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) and Finance and Property (SG), Service Manager – Client Services (KN); Team Manager – Business Support (BC) and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

TRIBUTE OF COUNCILLOR HUW JONES

Prior to the start of the meeting the Leader paid tribute to Councillor Huw Jones who had sadly passed away at the weekend. He referred to Councillor Jones as a dear friend, colleague and esteemed councillor who put Corwen at the heart of his work. Councillor Jones had been a Cabinet member from 2012 – 2017 and had been highly regarded amongst officers and members and would be sorely missed. Thoughts were with his family and community at this sad time. All present stood in silence as a mark of respect.

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declaration of interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 January 2020 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

At this point the Leader referred to his intention to vary the order of the agenda to accommodate the availability of officers attending the meeting.

5 FINANCE SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to commence a collaborative procurement process with Conwy County Borough Council for a core financial system for the Council.

The reasoning behind the collaborative process was explained given the similar legacy systems operated by both authorities and risks associated with existing solutions and unsupported software. The intention was to set up a framework which would allow either council to have their own solution or a shared solution, either hosted by a supplier or hosted on site by one or more of the councils. The framework would also allow for Wrexham and Flintshire local authorities to purchase their own core financial system in future if they wished. Details of the financial implications had been provided within the report which should result in the delivery of efficiencies to ensure the project was cost neutral over time; details had also been provided in terms of governance arrangements and project management.

Cabinet was satisfied with the contents of the report and had no questions to raise. Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill responded to a question from Councillor Martyn Holland confirming that existing solutions would be taken into account as part of the procurement process. The Head of Finance and Property added that a phased approach would be taken firstly to deliver a financial system for core functions with phase two involving a payroll and HR solution and potential all-encompassing system. Market testing had shown there to be existing solutions and the next stage involved going through the procurement process and considering the outcomes.

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *approves the commencement of the procurement for a core financial system as set out within the report, and*
- (b) *confirms it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1 to the report) as part of its consideration.*

6 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GROUP

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented the report seeking Cabinet's support of projects identified for inclusion in the 2020/21 Capital Plan as recommended by the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) and detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Thompson-Hill guided members through the report and explained the funding available for block allocations for on-going programmes of work. Reference was made to the work of the SIG in reviewing the bids for allocations and a

summary of their recommendations had been provided and elaborated upon further at the meeting which included the recommended funding source for each project together with the reasoning for supporting those specific projects and allocations.

Cabinet considered the recommendations detailed within the report.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts referred to the recent adverse weather conditions and thanked staff for their hard work in that regard. Given the storm damage to the highway infrastructure he queried whether there was a need to revisit the investment in that area to take account of remedial work required and ensure highway works were financed appropriately and due diligence observed. The Leader advised that the First Minister had called an emergency flood summit with local authorities (to be attended by Lead Member Councillor Brian Jones) and other agencies and it was expected that funding would be forthcoming to help deal with the aftermath. Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill also provided assurances that emergency remedial works would be funded as appropriate and explained the funding streams available, including the severe weather reserve, but confirmed there was likely to be a national grant scheme which could be accessed if a particular threshold was met. With regard to SIG's recommended allocation for highways, £1.750m had been allocated for capital expenditure to be prioritised as appropriate by the Highways Service and there may also be further opportunities to submit bids for remedial works pending the allocation of additional funding in year. Officers added that following the clean-up operations an assessment of the damage would be carried out – whilst it was recognised that damage would have been caused to the highway infrastructure it was too early to confirm the extent of the damage and adjust the capital allocations in that regard. Councillor Brian Jones advised that an assessment of the damage would be undertaken as soon as possible and work was ongoing in terms of planning and focusing resources. In light of the recent storm damage to the highway infrastructure and subsequent funding pressures to be met it was agreed to include in the resolution reference to the assessment of damage and identification of savings required.

Councillor Bobby Feeley referred to the Queens Market Development and queried the confirmation of external funding. It was explained that the buildings had been purchased with the assistance of Welsh Government (£2.5m) and European (£2.5m) funding. Whilst the Welsh Government funding had been received, the European funding had been confirmed subject to the Council achieving key stages of development and timescales had been set for that purpose. A detailed report on the development would be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts welcomed the additional funding recommended for school capital maintenance which was an increase on the previous year.

Lead Members responded to issues raised by non-Cabinet members as follows –

- Councillor Martyn Holland was pleased to note the funding allocated for bridge repairs given their importance, particularly for rural communities, and asked that the issue be raised in the forthcoming meeting with Welsh Government. In response to his concerns regarding potholes, Councillor Brian Jones advised that work was ongoing to find a more permanent solution and in addition to the

forthcoming annual visits to Member Area Groups to discuss road maintenance, a members' workshop was also being arranged on highway matters

- Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts advised Ysgol Llanfair DC (new school) would open shortly and would be able to accept more pupils – it was not full to capacity
- Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill explained the terms of prudential borrowing referred to in the report advising that £100k for highways had been set aside as part of the 2020/21 Corporate Plan allocation which would allow £1.750m of capital expenditure, and the programme of replacement of LED lanterns would involve taking out a Salix loan for up to £200k over six years which would be self-funding with savings from the energy costs accrued over the term.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the projects detailed in Appendix 1 to the report for inclusion in the 2020/21 Capital Plan be supported and recommended to full Council, and*
- (b) *Cabinet requests that officers in the Highways Service carry out an assessment of damage caused to the network by the recent storms in order that the extent of further funding can be identified.*

7 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 2019/20 was £198.538m (£194.418m in 2018/19)
- an overspend of £1.614m was forecast for service and corporate budgets
- highlighted current risks and assumptions relating to individual service areas
- detailed required savings and efficiencies of £5.672m with an approved allocation of £616k from the Savings Achievement Contingency to offset known non-achievement savings (approximately 11% of the total savings identified)
- provided a general update on the Capital Plan, Housing Revenue Account and Housing Capital Plan.

Cabinet was also asked to approve the revised guidance relating to Business Rate Relief criteria and to approve the write off of Business Rates totalling £57k.

Councillor Mark Young referred to the additional costs arising from the recent storm damage in the county, including flooding incidents, both in terms of remedial and flood defence works and asked that those costs be identified within the regular finance reports to Cabinet in future as a known risk. The Head of Finance and Property advised that in addition to pressures within the Highways Service, there would also be impacts on other service areas, such as leisure and social services, and an assessment of those wider impacts would also need to be undertaken. It was agreed that the impact of the storm damage be included as part of Cabinet's regular finance report in future.

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *note the budgets set for 2019/20 and progress against the agreed budget strategy;*
- (b) *approve the revised guidance relating to Business Rate Relief criteria to be published on the Council's website and that the transparent scoring matrix is introduced with immediate effect as detailed in Appendix 6 and Section 6.2 of the report, and*
- (c) *approve the write-off of Business Rates as detailed in Appendix 7 and Section 6.3 of the report.*

8 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet forward work programme was presented for consideration and members noted that the North Wales Growth Bid Governance Agreement 2 scheduled for April would likely be delayed and would be considered by Partnerships Scrutiny Committee prior Cabinet. It was also noted that the Queens Market Development would feature as a future Cabinet agenda item.

RESOLVED that Cabinet's forward work programme be noted.

9 PROCUREMENT OF CARE AND SUPPORT IN EXTRA CARE HOUSING SCHEME FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND COMPLEX DISABILITY

Councillor Bobby Feeley presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to undertake the procurement process for the tendering of care and support for the Extra Care Housing Scheme, Awel y Dyffryn, Denbigh.

Awel y Dyffryn Extra Care Housing Scheme had been developed by the Council in partnership with Grŵp Cynefin Housing Group and it was anticipated that the scheme would be ready for 1 September 2020. It was proposed to undertake two tender exercises for the procurement of care and support services to 66 older people units and 8 complex disability units situated on the site to provide care provision 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year in line with the Denbighshire Regional Domiciliary Care Contract and other governing requirements. Two separate tenders would be run through the respective frameworks for the two elements of support within the scheme with the outcome of each tender being brought back to Cabinet for final approval. Reference to the estimated tender costs and further details of the contract had been included within the report.

Cabinet supported the scheme in providing health and social care provision in the area and considered the detail of the proposed procurement process.

Officers responded to questions and comments from members as follows –

- given the extra work involved for local doctors Councillor Mark Young sought assurances regarding appropriate consultation and it was confirmed that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board attended the project's Service Delivery Group and doctors surgeries were also involved as part of that process

- it was anticipated that the Older People care provider would be appointed by May/June and the Complex Disability provider appointed by July/August
- there was a mixed market of provision in Denbigh and the scheme would first look to service Denbigh and the surrounding areas with further work ongoing with regards to the general health and social care offer in the area
- assurances were given that the ability to provide social care services through the medium of Welsh was a priority issue and formed part of the contract requirements which would be evaluated through the tender process. However there were challenges around recruitment and work was ongoing with the social care workforce development unit to support Welsh language service provision
- in relation to staff opportunities, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts confirmed that all council staff had the opportunity to learn Welsh and to improve and develop their Welsh language skills and funding was provided for that purpose. Problems with recruitment were not confined to Denbighshire with neighbouring authorities also experiencing difficulties in that respect
- with regard to the sufficiency of staffing levels at night Grŵp Cynefin would provide a concierge type service with a person on site to provide housing management support 24/7 in addition to the care team on site. Care was planned and delivered in accordance with the identified need at the time and consequently the number of staff required would fluctuate to accommodate those changing needs.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the undertaking of the procurement process for care and support as detailed within the report with the outcome of each tender to be brought back to Cabinet for final approval.

At this juncture (11.15 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for a refreshment break.

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 would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

10 APPROVAL FOR THE NORTH WALES SUPPORTED LIVING AGREEMENT

Councillor Bobby Feeley presented the confidential report regarding the outcome of the procurement exercise for the North Wales Supported Living (Framework) Agreement and recommended acceptance and rejection of tenders.

The procurement exercise had been led by Denbighshire County Council on behalf of the six North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and involved a third procurement exercise to provide opportunities for new providers wishing to provide Supported Living Services across the North Wales Region and for existing approved providers of Domiciliary Care Services providers to also provide Supported Living Services. Details of the procurement process had been provided resulting in a recommendation to accept the tenders of 35 suppliers and to reject the tenders of 6 suppliers for the reasons detailed within the report.

Cabinet considered the procurement exercise and outcome of that process. Officers responded to questions regarding the recommended rejection of tenders which did not meet qualification and quality requirements following evaluation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *approve the acceptance of the tenders of the 35 suppliers and to reject the tenders of 6 suppliers for the reasons detailed and as stipulated within the Framework Agreement Award Recommendation Report (Appendix 1 to the report), and*
- (b) *confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the original Commissioning Form (Appendix 2 to the report), the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 3 to the report) and the Data Processing Impact Assessment for the Domiciliary Care tender (Appendix 4 to the report). This tender forms part of that original work stream.*

11 SUB-REGIONAL CONTRACT (DCC/CCBC) - SHARED LIVES SERVICES

Councillor Bobby Feeley presented the confidential report seeking Cabinet approval to award one contract for the provision of Shared Lives Services across Conwy and Denbighshire to the successful provider following a tendering exercise.

The service enabled a range of citizens who had been assessed in need of support to live independent lives, reducing admission to hospital or residential care and supporting informal carers by providing regular respite. Eligible adults were offered long/short term placements in the homes of a self-employed Shared Lives carer specifically trained and recruited and supported by the Shared Lives provider. Details of the financial considerations and basis of the contract had been provided together with procurement process and outcomes.

Cabinet considered the recent procurement exercise and outcome of that process together with the report recommendations and reasons therefore and it was –

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) *agree to the award of the contract for the provision of Shared Lives Services to the named provider as detailed within the report for a period of seven years with the option to extend for a further three year period, and*
- (b) *confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment No. 688 (Appendix 3 to the report) as part of its consideration.*

The meeting concluded at 11.40 hrs.