
THE COUNCIL, 5.12.13

Present: Councillor Dewi Owen (Vice-chairman in the chair).

Councillors: Lesley Day, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Thomas Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Jean Forsyth, Gwen Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Sian Gwennlian, Annwen Hughes, Chris Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron M. Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Charles W. Jones, Dyfrig Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, John Wynn Jones, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, June Marshall, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Christopher O'Neal, Michael Sol Owen, W. Roy Owen, William Tudor Owen, Peter Read, Caerwyn Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Angela Russell, Mike Stevens, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Hefin Williams, John Wyn Williams, Owain Williams, R. H. Wyn Williams, Robert J. Wright and Eurig Wyn.

Also present: Harry Thomas (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards, Iwan Trefor Jones and Dilwyn Williams (Corporate Directors), Dilys Phillips (Monitoring Officer / Head of Democracy and Legal Department), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department), Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager – Corporate Commissioning Service), Nia Elis-Williams (Senior Business Manager / Executive Support), Iwan Evans (Legal Services Manager), Nia Davies (Planning Manager – Policy) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Craig ab Iago, Stephen Churchman, Endaf Cooke, Anwen Davies, Edward Dogan, Gwynfor Edwards, Huw Edwards, Gweno Glyn, Simon Glyn, Jason Humphreys, Brian Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, Nigel Pickavance, John Pughe Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Paul Thomas, Gethin Glyn Williams and Mandy Williams-Davies.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Thomas Ellis.

1. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council, held on 19 September, 2013 as a true record.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Members had received a guidance note from the Monitoring Officer in advance regarding the following issues:-

Council Tax: Discretion to allow discounts (item 11 on the agenda)

It was explained that this item related to two categories of property, namely:-

- (a) second homes (holiday homes) which were empty but furnished; and
- (b) houses that had been empty and unfurnished for six months or more.

Members were advised to declare an interest in the item if they had a house in Gwynedd that fell into either of the two categories, and that they paid council tax on that house, and not non-domestic tax.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (item 12 on the agenda)

Any member who was affected by this scheme, or who had a close family member who was affected, was advised to declare a personal interest.

The Monitoring Officer was of the opinion that it would be fair for members to conclude that they could take part in the discussion because the Council had little discretion regarding the scheme and that the recent decision by the Welsh Government had meant that there would be no financial effect on anyone.

However, she emphasised that it was the responsibility of every member to decide for him/herself whether the interest was such as to prevent him/her from taking part in the discussion.

- (a) Councillor Sion Jones declared a personal interest in item 7 on the agenda – A question involving Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd – as he was a tenant of the housing association.

The member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and he participated fully in the discussion on the item.

- (b) Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Michael Sol Owen and John Wyn Williams declared a personal interest in item 7 on the agenda – A question involving Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd – as they were members on the Board of the housing association.

The members were of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and they participated fully in the discussion on the item.

- (c) Councillor Angela Russell declared a personal interest in item 7 on the agenda – A question involving Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd– as her daughter was a member on the Board of the housing association.

She was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and she participated fully in the discussion on the item.

- (ch) Councillors Thomas Ellis and Owain Williams declared a personal interest in item 11 on the agenda – Council Tax: Discretion to Allow Discounts – as they owned vacant houses.

The members were of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and they withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

- (d) Councillor Aeron M. Jones declared a personal interest in items 11 and 12 on the agenda – Council Tax: Discretion to Allow Discounts and Council Tax Reduction Scheme – as he had been granted a tax-free period by the Council.

The member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Condolences were expressed to the following:-

Councillor R.H. Wyn Williams and family as his sister had passed away recently. The family of the late Councillor T. Islwyn Morris, Penrhyndeudraeth who used to be Chairman of the former Gwynedd County Council.

It was also noted that the Council wished to express condolences to everyone else within the county's communities who had lost loved ones recently.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

(b) Speedy Recovery

The Chairman, Councillor Huw Edwards was wished a speedy recovery.

(c) Congratulations

(i) It was reported that the Property Service had been awarded the national Constructing Excellence in Wales award for the Ysgol yr Hendre development in Caernarfon. The Best Value category had been awarded on the basis that the development had offered value for money as well as economic benefits to the local area. It had been managed to ensure that 83% of labour carried out on the site had come from Wales and 71% of the suppliers had been located within 20 miles of the site.

Following success on a Welsh level, progression had been made into the British round and once again the development had been successful and had outclassed schemes from various parts of Scotland and England.

(ii) It was reported that Gwynedd Council had been awarded five awards in the prestigious Wales Care Awards 2013.

This year, the National Care Awards had been celebrating their 11th year with a special ceremony in Cardiff. The Social Care Awards recognised and celebrated the devotion from hardworking individuals in the social care field. Congratulations were extended to Selwyn Lloyd Jones, Gwen Hughes, Ann Lane, Jan Atherton and Andre and Shan Dyke from the Social Services Department.

(ch) General

Members were reminded that they were required to complete the questionnaire regarding Rhaeadr, the information bulletin for members. Electronic copies of the questionnaire were available in the latest edition of Rhaeadr.

4. QUESTIONS

Question by Councillor Sion Jones

"Gwynedd Councillors, and more importantly, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd's tenants, are becoming frustrated with the service and operation of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd. What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure improvements within the Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd housing association?"

Answer – Councillor John Wyn Williams, Cabinet Member for Planning

“The nature of the Council’s relationship with Gwynedd Community Homes is outlined in the transfer document and provides several paths for elected members to refer difficulties and frustrations.

Four members of the Council serve on Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd’s Board, as well as another eight members, namely four independent members and four from amongst the tenants, who have been nominated by the tenants themselves, and who receive support from the Tenants Federation, etc. Also, any elected member can refer or discuss issues directly with their fellow members.

Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd have established a dedicated telephone line to receive complaints from elected members. This service allows elected members direct access to the Customer Services Manager and an opportunity to highlight and seek a resolution of matters presented by members of the public.

There are also Quarterly Monitoring Meetings. Representatives from the Council meet quarterly with CCG to monitor progress against the 170 commitments highlighted in the original transfer document. I attend these meetings every six months so that there is a political input. Before each meeting all Council members are invited via e-mail to highlight any difficulties and the problems they have experienced. These issues are then discussed at the monitoring meeting and a response is then provided to the member. We usually explore about a half a dozen matters per quarter. We inform members that quarterly monitoring is in the pipeline and for them to raise any problems.

In addition, as part of the transfer agreement there is an Annual Report to the Council. Last year, it was submitted to the scrutiny committee with the intention that the scrutiny committee would have more time for a discussion and to ask questions and the matter was submitted before the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 15 October.

As well as the above arrangements, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd also have internal arrangements in terms of dealing with complaints and external arrangements in terms of monitoring performance.”

Supplementary question by Councillor Sion Jones

“Can you provide assurance that substantial improvements are being made in terms of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd as soon as possible?”

Answer – Councillor John Wyn Williams, Cabinet Member for Planning

“Bearing in mind how many houses are being improved every week there are problems of course as there are in every association. There are problems, and some of them should not occur, but I discuss the problems along with ways to resolve them on a regular basis with Ffrancon Williams, the Chief Executive, in the same way as every other Board member has the right to do so, of course. We cannot resolve each one, but I take this seriously and I will continue to do so until the end of the process.”

5. PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

A PowerPoint presentation was given by Councillor W. Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member for Environment, on the specific work fields that he had responsibility for, namely

Gwynedd Consultancy, the Highways and Municipal Department and the Transport and Street Care Unit in the Regulatory Department.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions or offer observations. During the discussion, the following main issues were highlighted:-

- (i) A reference was made to flaws in the bus networks. The Cabinet Member responded by stating that every effort was being made to ensure connections, but if the Council was to spend more on this, further cuts would have to be made elsewhere. He agreed that there was no point running one-way services, but he did not believe that this happened in general. He also noted that there was a need for people to use the buses, or the service would not be available. Once the bus review would be completed in Arfon and everything would be at the same level across the county, any shortcomings could then be considered. He added that he had asked the Communities Scrutiny Committee to examine the matrix that would be used to prioritise bus routes and he asked members to bring specific examples of flaws to his attention.

When planning the matrix, the need to take tourism into account was emphasised as some buses were full in summer, but empty in winter. The Cabinet Member responded that this was the intention of the matrix.

Concern was expressed that all cutbacks on public transport would isolate the most vulnerable people within society and it was emphasised that the Council had a duty to ensure that those people could reach the services. In response, the Cabinet Member referred to some community transport schemes that were already operating in the county, such as 'O Ddrws i Ddrws', along with schemes to combine the school and public bus services, noting that there would be a need for more schemes of this type in future.

In order to facilitate access, it was noted that any minibuses used for community transport purposes should have a low-floor.

- (ii) Although this Council had reached the recycling target, it was noted that other neighbouring councils had performed slightly better, and it was enquired whether or not there was a scheme in place to examine what those councils did and the lessons that could be learnt from them? The Cabinet Member responded that this Council's performance by March this year was 51.52%, compared with the target of 52%. He noted that people who recycled did so extremely well, but that others ignored it entirely, and this was very disappointing. The Council had guaranteed 7,500 tonnes of food to GwyrAD each year, and were paying for that amount of food, but currently only 4,500 tonnes were being collected, with 25% of all food still going into the green bins. This meant that the Council were paying GwyrAD for the other 3,000 tonnes as well as paying for it to be sent to landfill, and as recycling targets increased, the Council's landfill allowance was decreasing.
- (iii) A concern was expressed regarding the intention to change to a system of collecting the green bins every three weeks and it was enquired what was wrong with the old system of emptying the bins on a weekly basis. It was also noted that arrangements to collect the various bins / boxes were now very complex.
- (iv) It was enquired how could spending £237,000 on toilets in Morfa Bychan be justified while other toilets across the county were in a poor condition. In response, the Cabinet Member explained that this scheme had been financed through grant

funding and that officers had been very resourceful in securing this grant. He further noted that although the number of Council toilets had now reduced from 94 in 2008 to 78, 36 community toilets had been established across the county as a result of receiving a grant from the Government to pay businesses for allowing the public to use their toilets.

It was noted that the fact money was scarce was accepted, but some of the toilets did not require much more than a fresh coat of paint. It was also noted that toilets should be open all year round. In response, the Cabinet Member explained that there were several costs involved with keeping toilets open and the aim was to keep those that were mostly used open for a longer time.

It was noted that Gwynedd relied heavily on tourism, but that it did not provide suitable toilets for visitors to the area. In response, the Cabinet Member noted that Gwynedd had a greater toilet provision than nearly every other county. The Chairman added that the parish councils should be congratulated for taking over the toilets and running them.

- (v) It was enquired what had happened to the £80,000 earmarked for dog fouling bins. In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the wardens targeted different areas, but that this was a task for the entire community, and not Gwynedd Council alone. He also noted that a lack of bins was not the problem but the attitude of some people, and it was impossible to get sufficient officers to pursue this minority.

It was agreed that members would receive electronic / hard copies of the Cabinet Member's presentation.

The Cabinet Member for Environment was thanked for his presentation.

6. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 – 2017/18

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources noting the position in relation to the substantial grant reduction that would affect the Council in 2014/15 and to approve the high level strategy to deal with the new financial scenario it was faced with.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or offer observations. During the discussion, the following main issues were highlighted:-

- (i) In response to an enquiry regarding the reliability of the figures at the end of the financial projections in the table in paragraph 3 of the report, Dilwyn Williams, Corporate Director responded that the figures were reliable, to the extent that the professional ability of the Finance Department's staff along with his own professional ability allowed it. He reminded members that the Council had adopted this table in February, and there had been a belief at the time, based on robust information that had been available at the time, that the Government grant to the Council would have an extra £500,000 in 2014/15. However, eight months later, the grant had been decreasing to an equivalent of £8.3m. This had demonstrated that the position could radically change and the strategy for the next four years, that would be submitted to the Council in March, would be very different and much worse, not only as the grant would be much lower than what had been presumed in February, but also because there were presumptions here regarding pay rises. From past experiences, the officers were doing their best to comprehend what was likely to happen in future, but one could never obtain a 100% guarantee as there were factors beyond the Council's control.

- (ii) It was asked whether or not there was an intention to use balances and reserves for 2014/15, and if so, what would be the percentage? In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources noted that reducing spending on the anticipated scale meant reducing the workforce. This meant redundancies and redundancy payments, and in order to fund this, balances would have to be used or more cutbacks introduced. As the second option did not make economic sense, it was essential to have sufficient balances to carry over the Council, therefore, they should not be used excessively. If they had to, he added that the intention was to use £1.5m of the balances, but he warned that using balances achieved nothing apart from delaying the task of having to make a difficult decision for a year.

In response to a further enquiry, the Corporate Director explained that £1.5m subtracted 20% of the balances.

Given the reduction in the settlement, it was asked whether or not 20% was slightly low? The Corporate Director responded that in his professional opinion and that of the Head of Finance Department, the Council was faced with a tempestuous journey, and if too much of the balances were to be used, no money would be available to settle the redundancy payments that would have to be paid. Therefore, he strongly recommended that one should not digress too far away from the £1.5m or more cutbacks on services would have to be introduced, and while balances were available, this could be used in order to ultimately protect services.

It was noted that it was also a difficult time for Gwynedd residents, and in March the Council would be faced again with increasing Council Tax, rather than using balances.

The Leader noted that councils left no stone unturned when looking for savings, but this Council had avoided this with careful planning year on year, taking on a long-term aspect. This placed Gwynedd in a better position to manage its Council Tax level. In terms of balances' levels, this Council followed the advice and guidance of the Wales Audit Office and the Government's Minister for Local Government and Business had stated that she was satisfied with the balances' levels and financial strategy of Gwynedd Council.

RESOLVED

- (a) **To establish a new savings programme for the four year period to come which is based on trying to have the least possible effect on the outcomes for the people of Gwynedd and to be implemented from around the end of 2014/15 onwards.**
- (b) **In order to buy the necessary time to enable us to draw up a new considered and sensible programme of savings, that we use the remainder of our current savings programme along with several other steps, including using an element of balances (say around £1.5m) to formulate a balanced budget in 2014/15.**

7. REVISED STRATEGIC PLAN

Submitted – the report of the Leader which offered specific suggestions for revising the contents of the Strategic Plan for the remainder of 2013-14 in light of the new challenges that faced the Council. Referring to the suggestion to delete priority AMG 3 – Responding to the Threat of Climate Change, and the three associated projects, he noted that several members had expressed their concerns that this could create a perception that this field

did not receive a high level consideration from the Council, therefore, he recommended that this priority should not be deleted from the Strategic Plan.

He apologised that the Cabinet had not asked for the opinion of all members prior to formulating the final proposals and he confirmed that this would be part of the process next year.

RESOLVED to agree to the suggestions below with regards to revising the contents of the Strategic Plan for 2013/14 and adopting the revised Strategic Plan.

Priority	GOF3 – PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS
Change	<i>Delete the delivery proposal: We will also develop proposals in order to establish the nature of Adult Protection in Gwynedd through a review.</i>
Reason for the Change	Because of the challenging financial situation, this project did not reach the high category in the Cabinet's re-prioritisation list. Overview of adult protection work is greeted in the Safeguarding Children and Adults Strategic Panel.

Priority	ECON1 – STRENGTHENING BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND KEEPING THE BENEFIT LOCAL
Change	Delete the 'Growing Indigenous Businesses Project' and its associated Measures.
Reason for the Change	Because of the challenging financial situation, this project did not reach the high category in the Cabinet's re-prioritisation list. Work for 2013/14 is close to being completed and to achieving the proposals noted in the Strategic Plan for the year, but the funds and capacity are not sufficient for the project to continue in 2014-17.

Priority	ECON1 - STRENGTHENING BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND KEEPING THE BENEFIT LOCAL
Change	Delete the work of developing proposals for town centres and in the field of business succession.
Reason for the Change	The financial situation did not allow for extending resources to develop these activities. The work of developing proposals for supporting traditional businesses through difficult times will continue through the attention to e-business and e-commerce, the Gwynedd Buy Local Card and the This is Where Things Happen project.

Priority	AMG1 - PROMOTING AN APPROPRIATE
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	SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE
Change	Change the ambition of the 'Vacant Properties Back Into Use Project' in relation to the number of empty properties bought back into use during 2013-14 from 95 to 54. An additional clause has been included stating that money will be allocated to bring 10 additional vacant housing units back into use in the first quarter of 2014-15.
Reason for the Change	The ambition has been modified to reflect the level of resources allocated to the project. The additional clause has been included as the preparatory work will happen during the next few months but the units can not be brought back into use during 2013-14 due to the conditions of the grant that allow owners up to 6 months to make improvements and the grant is paid on completion of the work.

Priority	CC2 – REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION
Change	Delete the result: <i>More vulnerable individuals and communities receiving appropriate support to move forward.</i> Delete the delivery proposal: <i>Set the foundations for establishing a coordinated system to provide support for vulnerable individuals and communities, along with appropriate social plans to help people make ends meet.</i>
Reason for the Change	Reducing the effects of poverty and deprivation remains a priority. However, there is a need to place more emphasis this year on responding to the welfare reform agenda due to the immediate impact of these changes on some of the county's residents.

Priority	CC4 - PROMOTING COMMUNITY PRIDE AND RESPONSIBILITY
Change	Delete the following delivery proposal: <i>Pilot community pride in areas in order to learn what works.</i>
Reason for the Change	The Delivery Panel decided that the delivery proposal should be deleted from the Strategic Plan. As the emphasis of the project now is to identify methods to reduce demand and public dependency on the Council's services by promoting social activities rather than the environmental component within the community pride pilot.

Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams noted that he had abstained his vote as he could not support the proposal until he knew what were Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's plans in relation to the funding they had received from the Welsh Government to assist the Council with home care. In response, the Leader noted that he was sure the Cabinet Member could raise the matter with the Health Board.

8. COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS

Submitted – a report by the Cabinet Member for Resources requesting a formal ratification for 2014/15 and thereafter of previous decisions not to allow any discounts for second homes and to disallow discount on empty properties.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions or offer observations. During the discussion, the following main issues were highlighted:-

- (i) It was asked how many second homes were there in Gwynedd, and in how many second homes one half of a married couple claims to reside there permanently as a single person? The Head of Finance promised to discuss the matter with the member.
- (ii) It was noted that the problem involved people buying houses, registering them as a business and therefore paying no Council Tax. The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that he fully recognised the problem and that parts 4.5 and 4.6 of the report referred to the political pressures placed on the Government to control / prevent the transfer of second homes to commercial holiday lets.

It was noted that there were people letting houses of this type for short periods of time and living in them tax-free for the rest of the year, and a suggestion was made to establish a group to examine this in detail. In response, the Chief Executive noted that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had already been planned to scrutinise this field.

- (iii) It was noted that the contents of the report was accurate, but what had not been included in it was a cause for concern, not only in this area, but in other areas of the Council's work. Reference was made to the latest decisions regarding caravan sites, e.g. permitting people to live in them all year round, and a concern was expressed that this was creating villages full of English people in the countryside. The results of the Census had been published this year but it did not seem that anything was being done. Support was expressed to the recommendation in the report, but this was a small step, and there was a need to be aware of the picture in its entirety.

It was noted that a great number of members were concerned with regards to planning issues and it was suggested that they should come together as a cross-party group or workshop to discuss the matter.

- (iv) A concern was expressed regarding what type of message would charging a 'premium' on second homes give to visitors and it was suggested that implementing such a policy would do more harm than good. It was also suggested that such a policy could penalise the wrong people, including some local people, e.g. someone who rented a house while renovating an empty house to move into.

On the contrary, if a person could afford two houses, it was suggested that he/she could afford to pay two Council Tax bills as well.

RESOLVED

- (a) That Gwynedd Council, for 2014/15, allows **NO** discount under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to the two classes of second homes (classes A and B), as defined in the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) (Wales) 1998.
- (b) That Gwynedd Council, for 2014/15, allows **NO** discount in respect of empty homes (class C).

9. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014/15

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Poverty Prevention, a report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Resources asking the Council to adopt a Local Scheme for providing assistance towards paying Council Tax from April 2014 onwards.

Further to the contents of the report, the Head of Finance Department explained that a letter had been received from the Welsh Government on 3 December stating that the regulations approved by the Assembly on 26 November would be updated, in terms of figures, by regulations to be discussed by the Assembly on 28 January, 2014. As the local scheme would have to be adopted by 31 January, it would be very difficult for the Council to see the final figures before reaching a decision on the matter, and although there was a level of risk associated with this, the substance of the scheme was the same as last year based on the regulations that had been adopted on 26 November, which were to be updated again by the regulations that would follow in January. Therefore, it was hoped that submitting the matter to this meeting would save on having to convene a special meeting of the Council in January.

RESOLVED

- (a) To note the ‘Council Tax Reduction and Prescribed Requirements Regulations (Wales) 2013’ for 2014/15.
- (b) Subject to the outcome of the current consultation, to adopt the provisions within the Regulations above in respect of its Scheme for the 2014/15 financial year as the Council’s local scheme from 01/04/2014, with the following conditions regarding the discretionary elements being consistent with arrangements in 2013/14.
- (c) To apply a 100% disregard for war disablement pensions, war widows’ pensions and war widowers’ pensions, for both pensioners and working age claimants.
- (ch) Not to increase the extended reduction periods for pensioners and working age claimants be applied from the standard four weeks in the Prescribed Scheme.
- (d) Not to increase the backdate period for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard three months contained within the Prescribed Scheme.
- (dd) Where appropriate, that the Council delegates powers for the Head of Finance Department, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Poverty Prevention, to make minor amendments to the scheme following the consultation and the January 2014 regulations updating the figures, on condition that it will not change the substance of the scheme.

10. JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – REVISED TIMETABLE IN THE DELIVERY AGREEMENT

Submitted – a report by the Cabinet Member for Planning outlining the revised timetable for the Delivery Agreement of the Joint Local Development Plan, in order to obtain the Council's approval before its submission to the Welsh Government.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions or make observations. During the discussion the following main matters were highlighted:-

- (i) In response to an enquiry regarding what type of influence the councillors had within the scheme, the Cabinet Member referred to a series of seminars that had been arranged for members explaining that the input of councillors at those seminars were being forwarded to the Joint Planning Policy Committee, which had representatives from each political group. He also emphasised that the full Council would determine the contents of the final Scheme, and not the Cabinet, as the post-Public Inquiry Plan would be submitted to the full Council for it to be adopted or not.

Disappointment was expressed that so few members had attended the seminar in Ganllwyd and the Cabinet Member reiterated this observation by emphasising that this was the members' opportunity to influence the policy.

- (ii) In response to an enquiry, should a county or community councillor submit observations against including land within the plan during the observation submission period after the series of seminars, the Cabinet Member confirmed that his/her observations would be taken into account in reaching a decision on the adequacy of the site.
- (iii) It was noted that what was happening in Anglesey was affecting Gwynedd, and a concern was expressed in relation to the thousands of houses that were in the pipeline there. It was noted that Wylfa B was on the horizon, and rather than offering employment for local people, this would attract thousands of people from outside the area to move there. In response, the Cabinet Member noted that this concern had been noted by the Council.
- (iv) Referring to the timetable of the plan, concern was expressed that a lack of guidance in terms of the size of wind turbines for another two years would lead to great chaos in the areas. In response, the Cabinet Member noted that Gwynedd was in a fortunate position as its Unitary Development Plan was only a few years old and that it included clear policies to deal with this type of development.

RESOLVED to approve the following revised timetable for the Delivery Agreement.

Stage in the preparation process		Revised timetable
1.	Preparation and publication of the final Delivery Agreement (<i>Regulation 5-10</i>)	January to November 2011
2.	Review and develop the evidence base	July 2010 - October 2012
3.	Participation Pre-deposit – prepare the pre-deposit documents that will outline the key objectives and preferred strategy (<i>Regulation 14</i>). This will not be a full draft of the Joint LDP	January 2011 - October 2012

4.	Pre-deposit Consultation – a period of 6 weeks (<i>Regulation 15</i>). Formal consultation on the pre-deposit documents and the sustainability appraisal report	May - June 2013
5.	Participation – further develop the evidence base and prepare the Deposit Joint LDP (full draft plan) which is based on the evidence base, including the response to the pre-deposit documents	July 2013 - March 2014
6.	Placing the Joint LDP and associated documents on deposit – consultation period of 6 weeks (<i>Regulation 17</i>)	May - June 2014
7.	Consideration of comments about the Deposit Joint LDP (<i>Regulations 18 & 19</i>)	July 2014 - January 2015
8.	Publish comments on alternative sites, consulting upon them – a period of 6 weeks (<i>Regulations 20 & 21</i>)	September - October 2014
9.	Submitting the Joint LDP to the Assembly Government for Examination (<i>Regulation 22</i>)	February 2015
10.	Independent Public Examination (<i>Regulation 23</i>)	June 2015
11.	Publication of the Inspector's Report (<i>Regulation 24</i>)	March 2016
12.	Adoption of the Joint LDP (<i>Regulation 25</i>)	May 2016
13.	Monitoring and Reviewing	Annual report

11. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GWYNEDD CORPORATE PARENT PANEL

The Lead Member for Children and Young People submitted the 2012/13 annual report together with the work programme of the Corporate Parent Panel for 2013/14.

She emphasised the role and responsibilities of members as corporate parents and encouraged them to attend the training session that had been arranged at Porthmadog Rugby Club on 8 January, 2014. She also noted that it was intended to hold further training sessions during the Area Forums. She then thanked the Services Scrutiny Committee for giving detailed attention to the annual review noting that the points raised would be referred to the attention of the Panel.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions or make observations. During the discussion the following main issues were highlighted:-

- (i) In response to an enquiry regarding the implications of the pilot scheme to allow young people to remain with their foster parents after they are 18 years old, Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director noted that this was a voluntary scheme, and

that it was a matter of talking to the child, adapting, examining the impact of doing so and undertaking a review of this change.

- (ii) Reference was made to the observation in the report that it was difficult for young people who had left care to contact the Service after office hours, and it was enquired how things could be made easier for them. In response, the Lead Member for Children and Young People explained that steps had been taken since this point had been raised and she confirmed that 24 hour support was now available for these young people.
- (iii) It was noted that the Government in England had earmarked £50m in order to allow young people to remain with their foster parents until they are 21 years old and it was enquired what would happen in Wales. The Corporate Director responded that she did not believe there was an intention for Wales to follow the same route as England, and that she would raise this at the professional groups.

It was noted that it was not wished to see England separating from Wales on this as there was a real need to look after young people between 18 and 21 years old and it was enquired whether or not it would be possible to raise this with the Welsh Local Government Association. In response, the Corporate Director referred to the post care services being offered by the Council to these young people.

A request was made for a report on this to the Services Scrutiny Committee. The Lead Member for Children and Young People responded that the issue could be discussed at the next meeting of the Corporate Parent Panel, with thought given to where should lobbying take place on a national level and returning with a report to the Services Scrutiny Committee.

- (iv) Some members noted that they had not received information regarding the training in January. The Lead Member for Children and Young People noted that she would investigate this.

RESOLVED to approve the annual report and the attached work programme.

12. THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

As a result of receiving a notice that Councillor John Brynmor Hughes was no longer an individual member and that he had moved to the Independent Group, the Leader submitted a report recommending the allocation of seats on the Council's committees and external bodies.

RESOLVED to adopt seat allocation on the Council's committees in accordance with the table below:-

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Individual Member
Corporate	9	4	3	1	1	
Communities	9	4	3	1	1	
Services	9	4	4	1		

Audit	9	5	3	1		0

OTHER COMMITTEES

	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Individual Member
Democratic Services	7	4	3	1		
Planning	7	3	3	1	1	
Central Licensing	7	4	4	0		
Language	8	4	3			
Appointment of Principal Officers	7	4	2	1	1	
Employment Appeals	4	1	1	1		

Number of seats	76	37	28	8	4	1	154
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	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Individual Member
Pensions	3	2	1		1	
SACRE	3	2	2			
Local Consultative Joint Committee	6	2	2	1		
Special Educational Needs Joint Committee	4	2	1			
Joint Planning Policy Committee	4 (3 seats and one substitute)	2	1	1		0

Total seats	96	47	36	10	5	0	194
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13. NOTICE OF MOTION

- (a) A response was submitted by the Government's Business Team in response to Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams' notice of motion to the last meeting calling for a Medical University in North Wales.
- (b) In accordance with Procedural Rule 17, it was reported that a notice of motion had been submitted, along with a procedural motion, in accordance with Procedural Rule 17(12), by Councillor Dilwyn Morgan, requesting that the following proposal be discussed at the full Council instead of being referred to a committee.

RESOLVED to discuss the motion at this meeting.

The following proposal was proposed and seconded:-

“Gwynedd Council objects to the bedroom tax implemented by the Westminster Government. We note the impact that this harmful policy has on many residents of Gwynedd, hitting the most needy in our communities. We also note the good work that is ongoing within the county to assist tenants who are faced with difficulties as a result of the bedroom tax. We ask the Council to encourage our partners, the social landlords, to make every effort to assist and support tenants to ensure that nobody will lose their home as a result of the implications of the bedroom tax. We press for the devolution of the welfare field to Wales in order to ensure that policies are implemented in accordance with the aspirations and requirements of the people of Wales.”

A member enquired whether or not she could propose the following notice of motion to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as an amendment, referring to social housing landlords in Gwynedd rather than Rhondda Cynon Taf:-

“This Council deplores the injustice of the bedroom tax. As a consequence, this Council is seriously concerned about its effect on the health and well-being of the people who have fallen victim to this iniquitous condemn government housing benefit change. In an effort to mitigate against the worst effect of the bedroom tax regulations, this Council will commit to making official representation to social housing landlords operating in Rhondda Cynon Taf to not evict tenants for rent arrears which accrue as a consequence of the bedroom tax. This Council further commits to making representations to the Welsh Assembly Government to issue guidance to stop those same evictions until the bedroom tax is abolished.

She explained that adopting this motion would demonstrate that everyone collaborated across the political division to ensure that people are not forced to leave their homes as a result of the bedroom tax.

Although he fully agreed with the message of Rhondda Cynon Taf's motion, the proposer of the original motion noted that he believed that it would be possible, through his motion, to support work being undertaken by members of parliament and assembly members, particularly in north Wales, in holding the discussion regarding this issue.

It was noted that nobody objected to the original motion as such, but that it needed strengthening, and a suggestion was made to change the reference to *'encouraging our partners'* to read as *'we insist that our partners'*.

The proposer of the original motion agreed to amend the motion on these grounds with the Council's consent.

A vote was taken on the amended motion, and it was carried.

RESOLVED to accept the motion below:-

“Gwynedd Council objects to the bedroom tax implemented by the Westminster Government. We note the impact that this harmful policy has on many residents of Gwynedd, hitting the most needy in our communities. We also note the good work that is ongoing within the county to assist tenants who are faced with difficulties as a result of the bedroom tax. We insist that our partners, the social landlords, make every effort to assist and support tenants to ensure that nobody will lose their home as a result of the implications of the bedroom tax. We press for the devolution of the welfare field to Wales in order to ensure that policies are implemented in accordance with the aspirations and requirements of the people of Wales.”

The Chairman noted that a meeting of the full Council would not be held on 23 January, 2014 as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2014/15 had been submitted to this meeting. The next meeting of the full Council would be held on 6 March.

Everyone was wished a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.45pm.