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## THE COUNCIL, 1.05.14

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**Present:** Councillor Dewi Owen (Chairman);  
Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Vice-chairman).

**Councillors:** Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Lesley Day, Eddie Dogan, Gwynfor Edwards, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Thomas Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Jean Forsyth, Gweno Glyn, Simon Glyn, Gwen Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Sian Gwenllian, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Peredur Jenkins, 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, Dafydd Meurig, Linda Morgan, Michael Sol Owen, W.Roy Owen, William Tudor Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Peter Read, Caerwyn Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Hefin Williams, John Wyn Williams, Owain Williams, R.H.Wyn Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies, Robert J.Wright and Eurig Wyn.

**Also present:** Harry Thomas (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards, Iwan Trefor Jones and Dilwyn Williams (Corporate Directors), Dilys Phillips (Head of Democracy and Legal Department / Monitoring Officer), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department), Dewi Jones (Head of Education Department), Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department), Alwyn Evans Jones (Head of Human Resources Department), Arwel E. Jones (Senior Manager – Corporate Commissioning Service), Geraint Owen (Senior Human Resources Manager), Iwan Evans (Legal Services Manager), Darren Griffiths (Strategic Planning Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**Apologies:** Councillors Endaf Cooke, Aled Evans, Aeron Jones, Brian Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, June Marshall, Chris O'Neal and Gruffydd Williams.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Selwyn Griffiths.

It was noted that the Chairman's Charity Concert, held in Galeri during March, had raised £2,000 for the Alzheimer's Society, and Councillor Huw Edwards, the 2013/14 Chairman presented a cheque to Carol Anne Jones and Sian Evans who were representing the Society.

This was followed by a speech from Councillor Huw Edwards.

### 1. CHAIRMAN

Councillor Dewi Owen was elected Chairman for 2014/15.

Councillor Dewi Owen signed the declaration accepting the post of the Chairman of Gwynedd Council for 2014/15.

### 2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

Two names were proposed and seconded for the post of vice-chairman, namely Councillor Dilwyn Morgan and Councillor Dilwyn Lloyd.

In accordance with Procedural Rule 22(6), the following vote was recorded.

**In favour of Councillor Dilwyn Morgan: (44)** Councillors Lesley Day, Eddie Dogan, Gwynfor Edwards, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Jean Forsyth, Gwen Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Sian Gwenllian, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Peredur Jenkins, Anne Lloyd Jones, Charles W.Jones, Dyfrig Jones, Elin Walker Jones, John Wynn Jones, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, Michael Sol Owen, William Tudor Owen, Caerwyn Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Hefin Williams, John Wyn Williams, R.H.Wyn Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies and Eurig Wyn.

**In favour of Councillor Dilwyn Lloyd: (16)** Councillors Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Thomas Ellis, Gweno Glyn, Alwyn Gruffydd, Louise Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, Nigel Pickavance, Peter Read, Angela Russell, Mike Stevens, Owain Williams and Robert J.Wright.

**Abstentions: (3)** Councillors Eric Merfyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams and W.Roy Owen.

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan was elected Vice-chairman for 2014/15.

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan signed the declaration accepting the post of Vice-Chairman of Gwynedd Council for 2014/15.

### 3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council, held on 6 March, 2014 as a true record.

### 4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

The Legal Services Manager declared a personal interest in item 14 on the agenda – Appointment of Monitoring Officer – as the report referred to him, and withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion on the item.

### 5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### (a) Condolences

Condolences were expressed to the following:-

Councillor Nigel Pickavance on the death of his father.

Councillor Dilwyn Lloyd on the death of his father-in-law.

The family of Mr Ceredig Davies, former Personnel Officer with Gwynedd County Council.

The family of former Councillor David Francis Jones.

It was also noted that the Council wished to remember others within the county's communities who had lost loved ones recently.

The Council members stood as a mark of respect.

(b) Best Wishes

Best wishes were extended to:-

Eisteddfod yr Urdd Meirionnydd and the county's youth who were competing.

Children from Gwynedd who were visiting Cape Town, South Africa with the '*Only Kids Aloud*' choir.

Mari Davies from Caernarfon, a member of Gwynedd's Swimming Squad, on being chosen to compete in the freestyle event in the European Youth Championships in the Netherlands in July, the only swimmer from Gwynedd to be picked for this squad.

(c) Congratulations

The following were congratulated:-

Councillor Jean Forsyth was congratulated for being nominated as Bangor City Mayor.

Councillor Selwyn Griffiths on recently becoming a grandfather again.

Pupils from Ysgol Pont-y-Gof, Botwnnog who had been to the Assembly and had been successful with their presentation following the school's enterprise to create retail products.

## 6. QUESTIONS

### **A question by Councillor Sion Jones**

"How seriously does the Cabinet Member for Planning take the growth in housing throughout the new Local Development Plan, together with working with the Government to ensure a reduction in the numbers of additional houses?"

### **Councillor John W. Williams, Cabinet Member for Planning, answered**

*(The Cabinet Member's written answer was distributed to members in the group meetings on the morning of the Council meeting.)*

"I take it seriously, and I hope that all other Council members take it seriously as the Local Development Plan belongs to everyone, and it is important that everyone contributes to the process from the start to the end. The Joint Planning Policy Committee with Anglesey Council is a cross-party body with Labour members from Gwynedd serving on it, and the Chair is the Leader of Labour's Anglesey Group. The final decisions on the numbers of houses are not made during the process of preparing the Local Development Plan, but rather, towards the end. The projections regarding the initial housing allocations are made with the best evidence that is available at the time. As we gather evidence and undertake further research, the plan proceeds, and if the evidence changes, then the housing figures can change. The Welsh Government are in discussions with us and are constantly challenging us. If they are of the opinion that the figures are too high, they challenge us, and I would also hope that they would challenge us if the figures were too low. They have

challenged in some places across North Wales, but as far as I am aware, they haven't queried that they are too high in any location. If our evidence proves that fewer houses are needed, then we will advocate that. In the past, members' attendance at the seminars which were arranged on the preparation of the Local Development Plan, including housing matters, was not particularly good, and I hope that everyone will be present during the next series. This is the opportunity to contribute to, and influence the Local Development Plan, and I would urge everyone to be present and to argue their case. But we must bear in mind that the evidence to support the arguments must be completely sound."

#### **A supplementary question by Councillor Sion Jones**

"A letter from a Plaid Cymru Councillor to Plaid Cymru members states that "it's totally obvious what's happening here isn't it. If we proceed with this plan to build thousands of additional houses without knowing exactly what the local demand is, we will be risking both seats in the next elections". Is this a political game from Plaid Cymru?"

#### **Councillor John W. Williams, Cabinet Member for Planning, answered**

"The only political game is being played by Councillor Sion Jones. I am not aware of the letter to which he refers and I am not going to respond to his supplementary question apart from saying that if the member is serious about the Welsh language, he should speak to the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, about the new TAN 20, which is weaker than the original, and does not give any rights to the Welsh language. The Government is trying to use the language as a political game, and the only loser will be the Welsh language."

### **7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12, Part 4, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. This paragraph applies because the report contains information relating to specific individuals and those individuals have a right to privacy. There is no public interest that calls for disclosing personal information regarding individuals or for them to be identified. Consequently, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.**

### **8. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair of the Chief Officers Appointment Committee presented the committee's recommendation made at their meeting held on 29 April, for the Council to appoint a candidate as Chief Executive.

He also noted that the committee was of the view that the candidate should be invited to make the same presentation to the Full Council as he made to the committee, and that 10 minutes of questions should be allowed at the end.

The Chair of the Chief Officers Appointments Committee proposed that the candidate should be invited to make a presentation, and he was seconded.

The candidate was invited to make a presentation, and he responded to a series of questions from members.

**RESOLVED to appoint Mr Dilwyn Williams as Chief Executive, in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Officers Appointment Committee.**

## 9. RE-OPENING OF MEETING TO PRESS AND PUBLIC<<

**RESOLVED to re-open the meeting to the press and public.>>**

## 10. PRESENTATION BY COUNCIL LEADER

A presentation was made by Councillor Dyfed Edwards, Council Leader, detailing his responsibilities internally within the Council, as well as locally, regionally and nationally, and addressing these in the context of the opportunities and threats facing the Council.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions or make observations.

The Leader was challenged that he and his party should have faced the financial difficulties sooner, when resources were available and the challenges less severe. In response, the Leader noted that, in looking objectively at past years, there had been successes in all fields. The fact that the Council was still in existence was itself a success. It was surprising that we, and our communities, still existed, that the Welsh language was still alive and that the Welsh language continued to be the main language of this county and the language of this Council. This was contrary to the trends and contrary to the natural flow. There was now a better understanding of what was needed. The financial crisis had forced the Council to look at itself and its activities, and to ask whether those led to making a difference. Although he accepted some of the member's observations, he was also optimistic about what could be done in order to make a difference for the future.

The Leader was thanked for the presentation.

## 11. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

The Cabinet Member for Customer Care presented the Chief Executive's report recommending that the Council appointed Iwan Evans as its next Monitoring Officer following the retirement of the current incumbent.

The recommendation was proposed by the Cabinet Member and was seconded.

There was some discussion on the principle that members made the decision, and a suggestion that this should have been a matter for the Chief Officers Appointment Committee. In response, the Chief Executive noted that this did not relate to the post of a chief officer, but rather the function of monitoring officer. This did not fall into the remit of the Appointment Committee, and only the Council could designate the function of the monitoring officer. He also referred to the engagement with members over the past few months regarding this matter.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that the matter should be referred to the Chief Officers Appointment Committee.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.

**RESOLVED to appoint Iwan Evans as the Council's next Monitoring Officer, with effect from 1 September 2014.**

## 12. THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Council Leader presented his report jointly with the Head of the Strategic and Improvement Department, recommending that the Council adopted a specific Strategic Plan for the coming year.

The Leader further noted that there were some data gaps in the Plan, relating to the 2013/14 final performance, as the information was not yet available. He noted that those additional facts could be submitted to the Council's next meeting.

The recommendation was proposed by the Leader and was seconded.

**RESOLVED to adopt the Strategic Plan including the submission of the additional facts at the Council's next meeting.**

### **13. THE FUTURE OF THE AREA FORUMS**

Submitted - report by the Cabinet Member for Customer Care recommending that the Council should continue with the operation of area forums.

The recommendation was proposed by the Cabinet Member and was seconded.

General support was expressed for the continuation of the area forums. On the matter of whether they should be open to the public, the Cabinet Member noted that it was a matter for each forum to decide upon its own arrangements.

Councillor Louise Hughes requested for her dissatisfaction with the fact that the Meirionnydd Area Forum was not open to the press and public be recorded.

**RESOLVED to continue with the operation of the area forums.**

### **14. THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE**

The Leader presented the report of the Head of Democracy Services reviewing the Council's political balance.

The recommendation was proposed by the Leader and was seconded.

In response to an observation, the Head of Democracy and Legal Department / Monitoring Officer explained that the only legal statutory rules regarding the allocation of chairpersonships was that the chairpersonships of the three scrutiny committees must be allocated on the basis of political balance, and that the chairpersons of the Audit Committee and the Democratic Services Committee were not to be members of a political group represented in the Cabinet. There were no rules regarding the allocation of vice-chairpersonships.

It was suggested that the chairpersonships and vice-chairpersonships of all the committees (with the exception of the statutory ones) should be on the basis of political balance, and an amendment was proposed and seconded that the Business Groups could investigate the possibilities and report back to the next Council meeting.

During the ensuing discussion the following observations were noted:-

- There was a risk that the minority groups on the Council would lose out if the arrangements changed as currently it was possibly for anyone to be considered for these posts with no political consideration.

- The posts of chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Council should be free from any political consideration.
- The chairpersons and vice-chairpersons should not be elected on any grounds apart from merit and competency.
- That there was a need to appoint women to the Cabinet.

**A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.**

**RESOLVED**

- (a) To adopt seat allocation on the Council's committees in accordance with the table below and in accordance with what was adopted for 5 December, 2013:-

**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			
Chief Officers Appointment	7	4	2	1	1	
Employment Appeals	4	1	1	1		

<b>Number of seats</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>154</b>
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	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Individual Member
Pensions	3	2	1		1	
SACRE	3	2	2			

<b>Local Consultative Joint Committee</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Special Educational Needs Joint Committee</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>			
<b>Joint Planning Policy Committee</b>	<b>4 (3 seats and one substitute)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>

<b>Total seats</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>194</b>
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- (b) Delegate the power to the Head of Democratic Services to make appointments to the committees on the basis of political balance and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.
- (c) Allocate the chairpersonships of scrutiny committees on the basis of political balance as follows:-

**Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Plaid Cymru**  
**Communities Scrutiny Committee – Independent**  
**Services Scrutiny Committee – Llais Gwynedd**

#### **15. CHAIR OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

It was reported that the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee needed to be elected for 2014/15.

**RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Lesley Day as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee for 2014/15.

**The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 4.30pm**