

THE CABINET 31/07/18

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Dilwyn Morgan, W. Gareth Roberts, Gareth Thomas and Ioan Thomas

Also present: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department)

Item 6: Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department)

Item 7: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department)

Item 8: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department), Aled Gibbard (Senior Operational Manager - Care Resources, Children and Supporting Families), Bleddyn Jones (Taxation Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Gareth Griffith and Councillor Craig ab Iago

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

The Leader declared that he had agreed to discuss two urgent items for urgent information.

1. Geraint Thomas was congratulated on winning the Tour de France, along with the Head of the team, Sir David Brailsford, who was born in Gwynedd. Both were thanked for their commitment to the country and pride was taken in their success.
2. The Finance Cabinet Member reported that the Council had experienced difficulties with its computer systems over the past week, but the department had managed to recover the systems in priority order. It was expressed that the emergency recovery plan had been key when restoring the main systems. It was added that the Council's IT Service was continuing with the work of recovering some systems and it would continue to improve the systems' resilience in the future. The Head of the Finance Department will commission an independent expert opinion on the architecture of the technology in order to see whether there were ways of avoiding a similar situation in the future.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JULY

The Chair signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 July 2018, as a true record.

6. REVIEW OF PUBLIC PROTECTION'S LEVEL OF RESOURCES

The item was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

RESOLVED

1. To accept the report
2. To approve the diversion of £70,000 of the department's existing income to increase staff resources in order to meet the food law enforcement requirements in accordance with the report. Allowing the Environment Department to:
 - Realise one of the proposed savings plan (involving income as a result of road closure arrangements) early, i.e. implement during 2018/19 rather than by 2019/20.
 - Harvest £70,000 of additional income from this saving plan departmentally, to implement a permanent budget transfer to fund two posts in the Food Law Enforcement service.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted by noting that the department was requesting for £70,000 to be diverted from the current income in order to address food law enforcement requirements following an audit from the Food Standards Agency. It was noted that the Welfare, Health and Safety Unit within the Public Protection service provided the food law enforcement service. It was expressed that the unit was responsible for the enforcement of food safety requirements at over 2000 food businesses in Gwynedd.

Following the Gwynedd Challenge exercise, it was noted that the Environment Department had received a financial cut, and it was added that the Public Protection Unit had attempted to work in alternative ways but now the department was under pressure to meet all the requirements, including new food inspection duties that were now in force. It was added that the Food Standards Agency was of the view that the Council needed to allocate more resources towards food

hygiene and food standards inspections. It was emphasised that the department was not requesting money, but rather, it was asking to divert money from within the Department in order to achieve the need.

Attention was drawn to the views of the Finance Officer which noted that the £70,000 was being harvested as a result of additional income that was already being received by changing how we raised 'income for road closure arrangements'.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the department had been under pressure as a result of the financial savings. It was noted that the resource was needed in order to meet the requirements.
- A discussion was held about the two types of work streams within the unit.

7. EMPLOYMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

To approve the annual report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the report was a collection of useful statistics about the Council. Gratitude was expressed to the staff and she added that it had been a difficult year but that the staff had done everything to ensure a service of the highest quality to the residents of Gwynedd. Attention was drawn to the age profile of the staff, noting that 64% of the staff were over 40 years old, and it was reiterated that the majority of the Corporate Management Group were over 50 years old.

It was noted that the number of sickness days amongst Council staff had reduced to 8.72 days a year. It was added that the Council was one of the local authorities with the fewest number of sickness days across Wales. It was explained that the Council was now a step closer to paying a Living Wage for those who were on Point 8, namely the Council's minimum wage. It was noted that the minimum wage within the Council would be higher than the Living Wage by April 2019.

It was expressed, as commonly seen in society, that the wage gap between women and men existed within the Council as well. It was added that the Council's Business Plan for the next five years looked at how the gap could be reduced and promote the number of women who reached high jobs within the organisation.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was added that Education Experts, who worked collaboratively

between Gwynedd and Anglesey, were now Gwynedd Council staff and that Anglesey Council purchased their service from the Council.

- It was noted that there were many useful facts within the report which would provide a foundation to the Council's improvements.
- In respect of the Council's age profile, it was asked whether an age profile could be carried out for the county also, so that the statistics could be compared.
- It was expressed that the number of jobs had increased and that a high number of people applied for jobs, but it was asked why a number of jobs were being re-advertised. It was noted that a high number of the jobs that were re-advertised were ones in the care field or were temporary posts. It was added that work was being done specifically on workforce development.
- A discussion was held on Leadership Management, and a question was asked about how the Managers' College would develop the leadership. It was noted that the Council focused on leading people rather than managing people and that the Managers' College supported managers to gain leadership skills

8. DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FROM COUNCIL TAX FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

The item was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan and Cllr Peredur Jenkins

RESOLVED

In accordance with the Council's powers under Section 12A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to allow full exception from paying Council Tax to young persons leaving care until they are 25 years old after considering other discounts, exceptions and/or Council Tax Reduction to which they are already entitled.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the member noted that it was a pleasure to submit this report, not only as a Cabinet Member but also as the Chair of the Corporate Parent Panel. It was noted that the report highlighted collaboration between departments. It was added that this report was submitted at the request of the Corporate Parent Panel and by offering this relief to young people who left care, it was an opportunity to assist them and educate them about broader financial matters.

It was added that the Finance Department was very supportive of the report, and added that it was estimated that allowing this relief would not cost more than £20,000 a year to the Council. It was explained that there was flexibility for financing the cost of the plan in the corporate budget.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was added that the Government made no reference to funding this scheme at present; however, the 22 counties in Wales were eager to reconcile this and place pressure on the Government to shoulder this burden.
- It was expressed that young people who were leaving care needed to be supported and that this scheme was fully supported.

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972. This paragraph is relevant as the report includes information about a specific individual. The report refers to matters relating to the employment of a member of staff, particularly the early retirement request that would not be resolved until the observations of the Cabinet members were received. Consequently, it was considered that the public interest of not disclosing the information outweighed the public interest of disclosing it.

10. COUNCIL SENIOR MANAGEMENT

The item was submitted by Dilwyn Williams.

RESOLVED

To accept the Chief Executive's proposal and the side-effects noted in the report.

DISCUSSION

A report was submitted, noting that in accordance with the Council's arrangements, the Chief Executive was entitled, subject to the requirements to consult with officers on a business case, to make decisions on applications for early retirement. It was added, as the matter related to a Senior Officer, that the Cabinet were also consulted regarding the application, before a decision was made.

It was noted that in May this year, the Cabinet had resolved that a review of the Council's managerial arrangements should be undertaken, and the arrangements for achieving this were in progress. In the meantime, the Chief Executive had received an application from one of the Heads of Department, asking for permission to retire early (without a reduction in his pension), to facilitate the Council's ability to achieve savings. Although there was a cost associated with approving the application, the cost would be reclaimed within 12 - 16 months at most, and the savings would be available to contribute towards the Council's financial deficit from the middle of the next financial year onwards.

The Head of Department was thanked for his service to the Council and it was noted that the Council would miss all of his experience in the field.

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 14:00

CHAIRMAN