

THE CABINET 16/10/18

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn Dafydd Meurig, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Catrin Wager (Local Member for Item 7) and Gethin Glyn Williams (Local Member representing the Council on the Fire Authority for item 10).

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director) and Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director).

Item 7: Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Public Protection Service Manager)

Item 7 and 8: Catherine Roberts (Community Safety Delivery Manager)

Item 11: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department)

Item 12: Arwel Owen (Senior Housing and Well-being Manager)

Item 9-13: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

Item 12-15: Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from the following Cabinet Members - Cllr Craig ab Iago, Cllr W. Gareth Roberts and Cllr Ioan Thomas.

An apology was received from the following Local Members - Cllr Gareth A Roberts, Cllr Mair Rowlands and Cllr Elin Walker-Jones for item 7.

Apologies were received from the following Elected Members who served on the Fire Authority - Cllr Annwen Daniels, Cllr John B. Hughes and Cllr Dilwyn Lloyd for item 10.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 AND 18 SEPTEMBER

The Chair signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 and 18 September 2018, as a true record

6. A GROWTH DEAL FOR THE ECONOMY OF NORTH WALES: PROPOSITION DOCUMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

RESOLVED

Subject to the decision not committing the Council to financial investment at this stage and that the financial risks and benefits are considered in full when the final Deal is submitted to the Council for approval:

That the Cabinet endorse the Proposition Document to be approved for adoption by the Council as

1. A basis for a longer-term regional strategy for economic growth
2. The regional bid for the priority programmes and projects used to create the content of the Growth Deal at the Heads of Terms stage with the Governments.

Authorise the Leader to commit the Council to Heads of Terms with the Governments alongside the political and professional leaders from the nine other statutory partners represented on the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, and the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council, with the Proposition Document forming the boundaries for the Heads of Terms agreement.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the Proposition Document was the fruit of months of regional work across the north. It was added that the Plan was a partnership project that included six Local Authorities, two Universities and two Higher Education Colleges. It was reiterated that the private sector role was central to the Plan and a number of sessions had been held to discuss the Plan with them.

It was expressed that historically, there had been 15 to 20 Economic Plans across the region; however, as a result of the Growth Deal, there would only be a single Plan. It was emphasised that the vision and ambition in the scheme was clear, namely to disseminate growth projects and plans across the north Wales region. It was added that the Document provided a foundation to encourage further resources to invest in order to develop the north Wales economy for the coming years.

It was noted that 16 projects provided the basis to the plan, and this would ensure that the investment would be divided across the north. The projects were elaborated upon and it was noted that some would be site specific and some would be for the entire region.

It was explained that the Document had been submitted at the Education and Economy Scrutiny committee meeting and that the scrutinisers had approved it following a constructive discussion and challenging questions. It was added that sessions had been held for the private sector, which had shown enthusiasm towards the plan. It was expressed that the Proposition Document would be submitted before the Full Council before the end of the month; however, it was emphasised that the Council's support to the document would be sought at that time, and that the current decision would not lead to a financial commitment, and that a subsequent recommendation would be brought before the Council again, with more definite information regarding the cost. By supporting the Proposition Document, it would be possible to trigger the discussion regarding the Plan with the Westminster Government and Welsh Government, and that one strong voice would be discussing the economy for the north Wales region.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Support was expressed for the deal and the need to attract money and jobs to Gwynedd, but a question was raised in relation to how it would be possible to attract resources specifically to the south of the county. It was reiterated that the objective of the Deal was for projects to be disseminated across North Wales. It was added that there were some site-specific projects but it was expressed that projects such as the Transport Programme, the Pathway to Skills and Employment Programme and the Digital Connectivity Programme would be disseminated to all parts of the county. Specific investment would be made in various areas across the county and it was added that specific attention would be given to Meirionnydd.
- The importance of not committing any funding at present was discussed. It was confirmed that funding would not be committed with this current decision, and that work on expenditure profiling, income sources and potential joint-funding arrangements would continue prior to submitting a subsequent recommendation with more definite information about the cost. However, it was noted that initial discussions had been held with both Governments with a view to securing a deal that would be as close to self-funding as possible. It was added that there was an opportunity to attract income as a consequence of the Deal.
- It was noted that this level of investment was good news, and that good work was being undertaken by the Ambition Board across the region geographically and across sectors.
- It was reported that the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and had highlighted matters which reflected risks that would be addressed. It was reported they were supportive of proceeding with the bid.

7. VOLUNTARY CODE FOR THE CONTROL OF TO LET SIGNS IN BANGOR

The item was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

RESOLVED

The Voluntary Code for the control of to let signs in Bangor was adopted and powers were delegated to the Senior Planning and Public Protection Service Manager to put arrangements in place to implement the Voluntary Code.

That the success of the Voluntary Code will be monitored and assessed before the end of March 2020 and the conclusions will be reported back to the Cabinet before September 2020.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that Bangor's population doubled during the year as a result of students moving into the city. Consequently, it was added that a number of houses were available to let. It was expressed that local residents felt that the signs were erected throughout the year and thus had a serious negative impact on specific areas and a negative impact on the image of the City and the University as a place to live, work and study.

It was expressed that local campaigns had been held to change this and following further work, the department was now in a position to adopt a Code for Estate Agents. It was added that the regulations had not been updated since 1992, and consequently they had not responded to the changes that had occurred to the type of accommodation being let or the advertisement methods. It was explained that consultation work had been undertaken, discussing the code with the agencies, which noted when it would be possible to advertise, the streets affected by the code and where on houses it would be possible to advertise. It was added that there would be no additional cost to the Council as a result of the Code but there would be a need to monitor the situation and the department would submit a report detailing the changes in September 2020.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The Local Member added that residents felt strongly about this item. It was noted that To Let signs could be seen on every house on some streets in Bangor and it was reiterated that it projected a wrong image of Bangor. It was explained that the houses where the signs could be seen were more often occupied than not, and that the signs were merely being used as advertisements. It was expressed that the houses with To Let signs displayed on them were twice as likely to have someone breaking into the house. She expressed that she hoped that the scheme would work as Bangor was an economic hub and there was a need to ensure that it did not appear as if every house in the city was To Let.
- It was noted that it was a good idea and that the way the department was dealing with the problem was very beneficial. Discussions were held on how the scheme would be monitored, and how it would ensure that the advertisements were bilingual. It was added that the monitoring would be undertaken by the department.

8. NORTH WALES STRATEGY FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To adopt a North Wales Strategy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) formally as one of the responsible authorities designated under legislation.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, placed a duty on every Local Authority, Health Board, Welsh Ambulance Trust and Fire and Rescue Services to enact this legislation. It was noted that the Government favoured a regional method in relation to the legislative requirements, and therefore this was the strategy for north Wales.

The strategy's vision was noted, namely for the people of north Wales to be able to live safe, equal, non-violent lives, in communities where there is no violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence. It was added that the nature of Welsh Government's act emphasised that society needed to be aware of what was acceptable in society.

Observations arising from the discussion

- A discussion was held on how awareness would be raised on this issue; it was noted that an action plan had been created which noted plans and training that would be held and the strategy would be included on the website.

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNDERTAKING THE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To accept the idea that the Cabinet sits in on the challenge sessions that the Chief Executive intends to hold and consent to the idea of inviting the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scrutiny Committees (including the Audit Committee) to these sessions.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the Cabinet, on 22 May this year,

had discussed the projections for the Council's financial position for the coming period. A Managerial Review had been commissioned to consider whether there was a need to further restrict the managerial function within the Council.

As part of the task of drawing-up a report, the Chief Executive would be holding appropriate challenging sessions with Heads of Department in order to challenge the relevant arrangements. It was added that in order to be as inclusive as possible, the Chief Executive was eager for the Cabinet Members, Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scrutiny Committees to be involved in the challenging sessions in order to ascertain their views before drawing-up his recommendations.

10. NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY CONSULTATION

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

The Cabinet identified the principles for responding to the public consultation by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and it was resolved that the Leader and the Chief Executive would draw up a full response to the consultation within the timeframe.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Fire Authority had attended the previous meeting of the Full Council to discuss their public consultation. It was added that due to the Authority's financial pressures, the context of the consultation was to increase the precept by 6%.

The Elected Member representing the Council on the Fire Authority noted that the authority was under financial pressure and that £1.9 million needed to be found if the service was to continue at the same level. It was added that unless the Authority would find the additional money, the service available would have to be reduced. It was reiterated that the consultation was triggering a discussion regarding the value of the service, and whether or not the public wished to see the same level of service or a reduced service in the future. It was noted that increasing the precept by 6% could mean an increase of 0.5% to Council Tax.

It was explained that the settlement that had been announced during the past weeks meant a reduction to the Council and this could mean that the Council would need to find a financial deficit of up to £13 million during 2019/20. It was emphasised that any cuts would make a huge difference to the level of service available to the residents of Gwynedd.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the work carried out by the Fire Authority was excellent; however, it was felt that the Authority needed to carry out further work to look for efficiency savings.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

The item was submitted by Cllr Gareth Thomas

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that all matters had already been the subject of discussions and had been scrutinised at the Departmental Performance Challenging meetings. He added that the department had started to implement the Council's Plan.

Attention was drawn to the financial situation, noting that a slippage had occurred in the implementation of the scheme to charge a fee for care before the free breakfast session in 2017/18 and that it was anticipated that the care fee income target would be achieved in full by 2018/19. It was added that £3,738,010 had been realised from the 'Schools Efficiency Savings' scheme that was to save £4.3m. It was reiterated that the Cabinet had already agreed to defer the implementation of Secondary Schools savings of £298,990 from the 2017/18 financial year to 2019/20. It was added that the schools were fully aware of the amended timing of the cut.

It was noted that the Transport Field was complex, as the department continued to overspend in the field. It was noted that there were various reasons why children received transport to schools and it was added that they were valid reasons. It was expressed that the department had commissioned work to give detailed attention to the overspend and initial recommendations and actions were in place. It was reiterated that additional work needed to be done and to look at the transport provision on a trans-departmental level.

The summer results were discussed and it was noted that a national drop had been seen in the foundation phase results. It was added that good performance could be seen in Key Stages 2 and 3 on the whole. However, it was noted that substantial changes had been made to the pattern and results of English GCSEs, with a reduction of 12.1% seen. This was due to changes of 20 marks to the marking thresholds. He added that discussions had been held with Qualifications Wales regarding this issue.

Matters arising from the discussion:

- A discussion was held on the English GCSE results - noting that all Headteachers in Gwynedd, Welsh Authorities and GwE had contacted Qualifications Wales regarding the issue. It was added that a response had been received, noting that the 20 mark difference had not made a difference to the young people. It was added that the matter would be escalated to Welsh Government, noting that the situation was unfair and unfortunately made it difficult for schools and the department to compare

one year to the next.

- Attention was drawn to the fact that the current offer for developing leadership was not fit for purpose and reiterated that the department was working with GwE to develop a training plan. It was added that many of the leadership posts within schools were new ones within the past 10 years.
- Attention was drawn to Ysgol Tywyn as they had won the Daily Post Award for the Best School in the Community and for the praise given to the ethos of increasing the use of Welsh within the school.
- Work continued to encourage schools to fly the National Flag outside the schools.

12. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, LEISURE AND CULTURE

The item was submitted by Morwena Edwards and Iwan Trefor Jones

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

To approve re-profiling the leisure facilities' savings for the sum of £157k as these savings will not be achieved in 2018-19 as the Byw'n lach company is not in operation until 1 April 2019.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that all matters had been discussed at the performance meetings. It was added that the main element when looking at the housing field was the proposal of bringing the Housing Strategy to the Cabinet. It was added that the scheme was behind schedule and it was hoped that it would be discussed in the coming months. It was expressed that obtaining a clear understanding was needed of areas' needs, ensuring that the strategy outlined the main priority for the Housing Field. It was acknowledged that there was a need to specifically look in more detail at the Homelessness field.

Attention was drawn to the Libraries and Information Service, emphasising that a new-look Library had opened in Bala. It was expressed that a positive response had been received to the new Library. It was noted that Libraries had been trialling self-service machines and that this released staff's time. It was expressed that the service had been gathering information about the enquiries they received in libraries and it had shown that half the people who come to the Libraries do not go there to borrow a book. It was explained that libraries were now basically used as a 'one-stop-shop'.

It was noted that the percentage of 11 year old children who had attained the National Curriculum Standard for swimming increased annually and that exceptional work had been achieved in the catchment area of Bro Dysynni

centre. It was added that the Cabinet was required to approve the re-profiling of leisure facilities savings as they would not be achieved in 2018-19 as the Byw'n lach Company would not be operational until April 2019.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the average number of calendar days taken to issue a disabled facilities grant indicator that was noted as 170 days. It was added that the number of days was too long and it was added that there was a need to take a more detailed look at the number of days, adding that the department was eager to find a simpler way of working.
- A discussion was held on the number of Library visits, noting that the figure needed to be reviewed. It was added that collaboration was needed with local communities in order to see the continuation of the Library provision.

13. REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 - END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

- . To accept the report on the end of August 2018 review of the Revenue Budget and consider the latest financial situation regarding the budgets of each department/service.
- To ask the Cabinet Members for Children, Education and Highways and Municipal services to ensure that the departments have a clear implementation plan to reduce the financial deficit and to discuss those plans with me so that I can be confident that they are reasonable.
- Reimburse the Economy and Community Department £40k which is the income loss resulting from the closure of the Arfon swimming pool over the summer.
- Harvest (£1,904) of the net underspend on Corporate budgets with (£40k) to be used to reimburse the Economy and Community Department for the income loss while the Arfon swimming pool was closed. With the remainder (£1,864) to be transferred to the Supporting the Financial Strategy Reserve to support the inevitable one-off pressure on the Council's budget.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that the report detailed the latest review of the Council's revenue budget, along with the projections for the end of the financial year. It was added that since 2015, the Council had faced a challenging period with savings of £27 million made during the period.

It was reiterated that the budgets at the end of August showed a mixed picture with acceptable financial control in a number of departments. It was added that

the projections by the end of March indicated that five departments would be overspending and five departments would be underspending. As a result of overspending, it was noted that some departments would have to take firm action to ensure control of their budgets by 31 March 2019, namely the Education Department, Children and Supporting Families Department and Highways and Municipal Department. It was noted that the Cabinet Member for Education had made his comments regarding the underspend in the performance report.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that the department's budget was very challenging. He added that the budget was not practical, specifically when considering profound and complex cases. He elaborated by noting that overspending in Children Departments was a National and Regional problem. He expressed that the department was seeking a resolution and that a detailed report would be prepared to face the challenges in order to move forward.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal Department noted that there had been an increase in operational costs and that overspending associated with sickness continued to cause problems. It was added that the department had taken steps to seek a resolution but that there was further work to do. He added that income had been lost on the commercial waste side as a result of external competition and business closures. He noted that he hoped that it would be possible to operate within the current budget by the end of the financial year.

14. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 - END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

To accept the report on the end of August review (as at 31 August 2018) of the capital programme, and approve the revised financing as shown in part 4 of the report, namely:

- £8,444,000 in various sources to fund actual slippages from 2017/18
- £10,000 increase in the use of borrowing
- £10,988,000 increase in the use of grants and contributions
- £789,000 increase in the use of capital receipts
- £187,000 increase in the use of revenue contributions
- £4,859,000 increase in the use of renewal and other reserves.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that the report included an analysis per Department of the three-year capital programme for 2018/19 - 2020/21 which stood at £47.022m. It was added that there had been a net increase of approximately £25.277m since the opening budget and it was reiterated that £8.444m of this was due to slippages from 2017/18. It was expressed that the main reason for the slippages was the late receipt of grants during the year to the

Adults, Health and Well-being Department and Highways and Municipal Department.

It was noted that firm plans were in place to invest approximately £28.6m in 2018/19, with 34% of it funded by attracting specific grants. The departments' staff were thanked for their hard work.

15. SAVINGS OVERVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT OF REALISING SAVINGS SCHEME

Submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

To accept the report and note the encouraging progress towards realising the savings schemes during 2018/19 and previous years.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that 95%, namely £23m of the £24m for 2015/16 - 2017/18 had now been realised. It was added that some slippage had been seen with some of the schemes, with a number of them from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, where the challenge of delivering some schemes continued. It was also noted that there had been some slippages in the Highways and Municipal Department, and on 11 September 2018, the Cabinet had approved some alternative schemes and deferred action on the Recycling Centre schemes.

It was expressed that when looking at departmental schemes for 2018/19, it was noted that of the 26 schemes, 11 had already been realised in full or in part, and it was encouraging that only two schemes were anticipated to slip. The schemes where slippage would be seen, namely the End to End scheme and Leisure Scheme, were elaborated upon. In relation to the remainder of the schemes, it was noted that the projections of realising the schemes were generally promising.

Staff were thanked for their hard work in identifying savings, adding that the departments had taken ownership of the savings schemes. A discussion was held on the financial situation of other Local Authorities, noting that Gwynedd had room to take pride in its efforts to identify savings.

16. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To approve the Forward Work Programme included with the meeting papers.

DISCUSSION

The forward work programme was submitted.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.30 pm

CHAIRMAN