

THE CABINET 7/05/19

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Catrin Elen Wager and Cemlyn Rees Williams

Also present:

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Annes Sion (Member Support Officer)

Item 6: Steffan Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal) and Amanda Murray (Project Manager)

Item 7: Huw Ynyr (Assistant Head - Information Technology)

Item 8: Sion Huws (Senior Solicitor)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
Apologies were received from Morwena Edwards.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Catrin Wager declared a personal interest in item 8 as the Coroner was a member of her family.

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 2 APRIL 2019

Attention had been drawn to the list of current Councillors at the previous meeting noting that errors could be seen, it was noted there was a need to update the list. The Chair signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2 April, 2019, as a true record.

6. PUBLIC TOILETS STRATEGY

The item was submitted by Cllr Catrin Wager

RESOLVED

To accept and adopt the Public Toilets Strategy.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting her thanks for becoming a part of the Cabinet's team. It was expressed that section 8 of Public Health Act (Wales) 2017 placed a statutory requirement on the Council to produce and publish a local toilets strategy. As part of the process to develop the strategy, it was emphasised that consultation exercises had been undertaken. It was emphasised that 1,200 responses had been received as part of the public consultation and that the main messages from the consultation had created clear objectives for the strategy.

It was noted that a consultation had been held on the objectives and consultation outcomes were noted. It was emphasised that the public had noted they were willing to contribute towards the cost of maintaining public toilets. It was added that work was being done to ensure that developments were being made so that the Council attained the standards of the objectives. Attention was drawn to the fact that the department had commenced work to upgrade some of the toilets.

It had been noted last year that there was a great risk of closing a high number of public toilets, but as a result of the department's work to collaborate with communities, it was stated that 63 public toilets were now available for the public. It was expressed that this meant that Gwynedd was the second county in Wales in terms of the highest number of public toilets and the third throughout Britain. The staff of the department and the Community councils were thanked for ensuring that so many toilets remained open.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the hard work of the department in producing the report. It was stated that the number of toilets had reduced substantially across the country but that encouraging work had been undertaken to secure toilets in the county.
- Support for the strategy was noted but attention was drawn to the Community Toilet Grant Scheme. It was stated that use of the grant was insufficient and that feedback had noted that the public, in general, were unaware of the scheme. It was stated that the scheme's website was not easy to use but it was added that the department were examining other methods to share the information.
- It was noted that a member of the public had contacted one Cabinet Member noting that sanitary bins were unavailable in public toilets across the county. It was noted there was a deficiency in provision across the county and that work would be undertaken in upcoming months.

- Community and Town Councils were thanked for being so willing to adapt and to maintain services.

7. COUNCIL PLAN - REQUEST FOR IT DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES TO SUPPORT Ffordd GWYNEDD

Submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

To approve an allocation of £341,046 (approximately £113,000 per annum for three years) from the Transformation Fund to meet the substantial increase in demand to develop computer systems to improve services across Gwynedd Council as a result of the findings of Ffordd Gwynedd exercises.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting there was a need to support the request for funding to meet the substantial increase in demand to develop computer systems to improve services across the Council as a result of the findings of Ffordd Gwynedd exercises. It was added that the Information Technology Development Unit was developing computer systems for all Council services and that, historically, the demand for the products of this unit was high. Following the success of Ffordd Gwynedd exercises across the Council, it was reiterated that demand was far greater than the capacity to deliver.

Very often, due to the nature of Ffordd Gwynedd of placing Gwynedd residents at the centre, it was noted that solutions for services were unique and needed to be suitably tailored in accordance with the findings of the Ffordd Gwynedd exercises. As a result of this, it was reiterated that the department had been pioneering and were often creating computer systems to correspond with the need for a suitably tailored service.

It was stated that a request for funding would not deliver the task completely but it would ensure that work was alleviated. It was added that a graduate apprentice post would be created during the summer. It was noted that this funding would be a boost to improve the Information Technology provision that was available for services.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the Council creating new computer systems and it was enquired whether or not it would be possible to sell services to companies and other councils.
- It was stated there was a need for the department to be enterprising and that it had an ambition to be at the forefront in terms of Information Technology.

8. CORONER'S PAY ARRANGEMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To authorise the Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Head of Finance Department, to agree on arrangements to pay a salary to the Senior Coroner, and a fee to the Assistant Coroner, in line with the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it was a technical report. It was noted that the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 included provision that senior coroners had the right to a salary, while assistant coroners had the right to a fee. As the 2009 Act brought about major changes in the structure of the service, it was stated that a new basis would be required for paying both senior and assistant coroners. National discussions were held, and a new pay guidance was published in Circulars 61 and 62.

It was stated that the majority of coroners were full time but it was noted that the Gwynedd and Anglesey area was served by a part time coroner. It was noted that the Circular stated that the basic salary of Part time Senior Coroners was £20,000 which included statutory 'out of hours' work, and then payments for every day worked. Following discussions with the Senior Coroner, an agreement was reached which would mean that the basis on which he would be paid would differ to the approach set out in the Circular. It was noted that the approach assessed the likely number of days expected to be worked each year by the Senior Coroner and converted that into an annual figure which also included the basic salary element. It was added that this would require a periodic review.

Observations arising from the discussion

It was noted that the Council did not have much control over the matter as it was a matter for the Crown. As the post was on a joint basis between Gwynedd and Anglesey, it was added that Gwynedd Council's contribution was slightly higher as a result of population numbers.

9. MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Submitted by Dilwyn Williams.

DECISION

- a) Subject to (b), to agree with the Chief Executive's assessment that the managerial structure shown in Appendices 1 to 10 are fit for purpose.
- b) To agree to reduce the number of senior posts within the Council from 40 to 37 as noted in clauses 61, 62 and 64 of the report and save a minimum of £211,000 per annum.

- c) In noting the requirements in paragraph 95 of the report, to agree to create a new Housing and Property Department to enable us to place more focus on achieving our Housing Strategy and to ask the Chief Executive to reconsider the situation of Gwynedd Consultancy to see whether there is another way of delivering the objectives noted in the report in terms of the managerial structure and further efficiency savings.
- ch) Note the further minor changes intended to be implemented as outlined in clauses 76-88 of the report which includes moving building control to the Environment department so that it is closer to Planning.
- d) To delegate the power to the Head of Legal Services to modify the Council's Delegation Scheme to reflect the changes as they become operational.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the matter had been raised following a discussion that was held last year when considering service cutbacks. It was stated that the discussion had raised a question as to whether the managerial structure was correct. It was reiterated that the public often enquired how many managers and senior managers the Council had and whether or not the numbers were correct. It was stated that the Cabinet had commissioned the Chief Executive to review the managerial structure.

Attention was drawn to the process that was followed to review the current structure with Heads of Departments, where Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs had an opportunity to attend the challenge sessions. It was added that the Ffordd Gwynedd Programme had highlighted the need to be clearer regarding the roles of specific posts within the establishment, and highlighted a role for managers with a different and more mature emphasis. It was added that after the Chief Executive had seen the initial diagrams of departmental structures, he had concluded that a number of jobs had evolved over time to contain the title of "manager", and that they did not fulfil a manager's post as it had been described in the amended job description for managers. He elaborated by noting that challenge work had been undertaken and that the titles of many of these posts had now been changed, in accordance with the definition, to make it clear that these posts were not managers' posts. Consequently, it was added that the number of managers had now been reduced from 235 to 111.

The managerial structure of Senior Officers was examined further and it was enquired whether there were too many Senior Managers. Looking at the whole of Wales, it was stated that only five other Councils had fewer Head of Department and Director posts than Gwynedd's 12. It was added that the Council had 43 posts at Senior Manager level or above in 1996 and that the number had reduced to 40 by 2004. The question was raised whether or not the number continued to be too high and it was noted that this would be a matter of opinion.

Attention was drawn to some suggestions that had been made as a result of the review. It was suggested that it would be possible to remove four Senior Officers' posts specifically in the following departments: Environment, Highways and Municipal, Gwynedd Consultancy and Corporate Support. Concern was raised

regarding the Provider Service in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department noting that there was an intention to resolve the situation.

Attention was drawn to the Ffordd Gwynedd review that was currently being undertaken in the field of Planning and Building Control. Although there were no conclusions to this review yet, a suggestion was beginning to emerge that it would be beneficial for Gwynedd residents for these two services to be closer together. Although Gwynedd Consultancy was a separate unit as a result of its commercial nature, it was also suggested that it would be possible to transfer the department and all its functions to a section within the Environment Department with an Assistant Head.

With the priority the Cabinet wished to give to the Housing Strategy, the Chief Executive noted that he did not believe that sufficient focus could be placed if it was located within the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, which was already trying to give due attention to major issues facing the field of Care. On this basis, it was recommended that a Housing and Property Department should be established. It was added that there were other minor issues in various departments where they might sit better in different departments and that further discussions would be held on these with the relevant Heads of Department before taking action.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that they agreed with the majority of the report but some members stated that perhaps it would not be a wise idea to move the commercial Gwynedd Consultancy unit under the Environment Department, as it would be an excessive change in a very short period of time. As a result of the commercial element in the Consultancy unit, which had a turnover of approximately £4 million per annum, it was added that the mind-set in the Department needed to be different to the rest of the Council.
- If the Consultancy would not be moved under the Environment Department, it was enquired what would be the outcomes of not doing so. It was stated that the main change would entail ten departments instead of nine and that the number of Senior Officers, if the remaining recommendations in the report were implemented, would reduce to 37 instead of 36. It was added that keeping both departments separate would reduce the risk to the Council but the scale of the saving would reduce from £297,000 to approximately £221,000.
- It was noted that the Consultancy Department ensured that high-quality jobs were available in the Council that also generated profit for the Council. Concerns were noted over losing the expertise and profit should it be moved as a section under another department. It was reiterated that the department was currently leading on an important field, namely Climate Change, and the risk of replacing a good team was noted.
- It was stated that changing the structure within departments to three functions - Head of Department, Manager and Staff Member made it much clearer.
- Pride was expressed in creating a Housing and Property department which would emphasise the Council's ambition to provide everyone with a home.

- There was agreement on the idea of moving building control to the Environment department from the Consultancy Department.
- It was agreed to amend the recommendations in order to keep the Consultancy Department as a separate department but to ask the Chief Executive to reconsider the situation to see whether there was another way of delivering the objectives noted in the report in terms of the managerial structure and further efficiency savings.

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 14:15

CHAIRMAN