

THE CABINET 27/07/21

Present -

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

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Sion (Democratic Team Leader).

Items 6 and 7: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department)

Item 8: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department) and Rhian Parry Jones (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer).

Item 10: Steffan Jones (Head of the Highways and Municipal Department), Geraint Brython Edwards (Solicitor) and Peter Simpson (Streetscene Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

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 6 JULY 2021

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6 July 2021, as a true record.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) 2021 - REQUEST FOR RESOURCES TO ENABLE REMOTE ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

It was agreed to use the £130,000 from the 'Recovery Arrangements Fund as a result of Covid19' to fund schemes to enable hybrid meetings and remote attendance at Council meetings in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it was a request for resources to enable remote attendance at meetings. It was highlighted that a report had been submitted to the Cabinet and the previous Full Council, outlining the new requirements as a result of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, specifically the need to ensure remote attendance at meetings to members and to ensure access to the public. The Cabinet and the Full Council adopted the interim arrangements and currently continue to hold virtual meetings.

It was explained that it will be a requirement to provide a hybrid provision in the future with some members in the Chamber and others attending remotely. It was stated that this was likely to be part of the new normal and consequently it would need to be simple and to run smoothly for Members and officers from wherever they connect.

The benefits of offering the provision included reducing the carbon footprint and ensuring a better use of individuals' time. It was noted that the financial support was required to upgrade the technology.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Support was shown to funding the plans in order not only to reduce the carbon footprint but to attract more variety of people to apply to be Councillors in next year's elections.
- The request for funding was supported as so many were used to using technology following last year. It was noted that the sum appeared to be high, however, the travel costs of councillors had been reduced as a result of using technology.
- The need for firm chairing was highlighted if hybrid meetings were to be held in order to ensure fairness.
- It was asked if the technology would only be in the chambers, it was noted that meeting rooms in the Council's main offices at Cae Penarlâg, Ffordd y Cob, Penrhyndeudraeth, Penrallt and the Headquarters would be upgraded, using the same technology at each location, this would facilitate remote access and give flexibility.

7. UNIT 2A SNOWDONIA BUSINESS PARK, PENRHYNDEUDRAETH

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

It was agreed to use the £83,000 from the 'Business Transformation Fund' to realise adaptations to Unit 2a, Snowdonia Business Park, Penrhyndeudraeth in order to facilitate contact between the Adults Department and the Health services and to create a 'Siop Gwynedd' to serve the area's residents.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it sought an investment of £83,000 from the Business Transformation fund to realise adaptations to the building in Penrhyndeudraeth. The need to adapt the building was expressed to facilitate contact between the Council and residents.

It was explained that prior to the pandemic, the number of staff based at the Galw Gwynedd office had reduced, and now only a maximum of 12 staff and a Team Leader would be based at the call centre at any one time. As a result of this change it was highlighted that there was an opportunity to make better use of the building that was in a convenient location for staff serving Eifionydd. It was noted that Siop Gwynedd would be established there together with an office base for staff from the Adults Department who work closely with the health service and would be within a reasonable distance to Ysbyty Alltwen.

The Head of the Corporate Support Department added that undertaking these adaptations would fill a gap in provision in the area and give care and health service staff an opportunity to work together at one location.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that making adaptations to the building would offer an opportunity for a better service to Gwynedd residents and would encourage better cooperation between the Adults Department and the Health sector.
- It was asked, as the offices would be integrated between Health and the Adults department, if the Health Board would contribute to the costs. It was explained that there were integrated Health Service locations in the field where the Council also worked from and therefore there would be no requirement for any contribution.

8. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032

The report was submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams

RESOLVED

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 was approved to enter a

period of public consultation in the 2021 autumn term.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it was a pleasure to present the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It was explained that the plan would come into force in September 2022, and would continue for 10 years. It was emphasised that the plan would set a clear vision and direction for the Council regarding Welsh in education.

It was highlighted that this was the second plan by the Education Department that re-visited the Welsh education provision over the last few weeks and it was highlighted that the Council led throughout Wales on the use of the Welsh language in education together with the immersion education system.

The Head of Department noted that there was an obvious interconnection between the vision for the immersion system and this ambitious plan. It was emphasised that the plan was ambitious and challenging and set specific targets. It was noted that the flexibility of the immersion system would enable the department to attain the targets.

The Secondary Education Officer guided members through the presentation and outlined the strategy's outcomes. Attention was drawn to the steps that will be taken to deliver the strategy with the stakeholders and this included defining the language categories of schools, re-introduction of the language charter and establishing a Language Forum to ensure clear accountability and to keep an eye on the targets. The timetable for the formal consultation period was highlighted.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that there was exceptionally good work in the county and he recognised that good work was undertaken by the county's schools.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that immersion occurred in Gwynedd schools as 100% of the education was conducted through the medium of Welsh and it was highlighted that the Council led on this throughout Wales. It was emphasised that it was essential for every child to receive education through the medium of Welsh.
- It was stated that exceptional work was being done via the schools, however, it was asked if support was available for parents who were anxious to home-school their children. It was explained that there had been an increase in the number of children who are home-schooled, however, the strategic plan looked specifically at schools as this was the department's remit as well as where the department's power lay. It was explained that parents had a choice to receive a support pack if they were eager to promote the Welsh language when educating from home.
- It was asked if it was mandatory for schools to use the strategy, it was noted that there was now a need for schools to show that they move forward and develop their language designations.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTH WALES REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD 2020/21

The report was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig.

RESOLVED

Work and progress made in 2020/21 was noted in the areas of work that were brought forward regionally through the North Wales Regional Partnership Board.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it was a statutory requirement to present an annual report to the Government on the work of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board in accordance with the Social Services Act. It was explained that this year had been different, however, the commitment of staff across the region had been exceptional. It was highlighted that the year had been challenging as a result of Covid-19. It was noted that the board focused on people, patients, staff and to ensure that seamless support was maintained. It was emphasised that everyone aimed towards the same goal namely to make a difference to individuals. It was explained that there was a need to look to recovery following Covid-19.

It was noted that the Government allocated a portion of their funding via the Regional Boards and the partners agreed jointly on the funding.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was highlighted that there were a number of regional boards now, and concern was noted regarding what will be the role of Local Councillors in matters that affect the residents of their county. It was emphasised that there was not much full information within the reports and the need was noted for additional information about projects with expenditure of over £19 million.
- It was emphasised that good work was being done at the Regional Board, concern was highlighted about regionalising some services as there were major differences across the county. It was explained that the action had to occur at a local level and not regionally.

10. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER : DOG CONTROL

The report was submitted by Cllr Catrin Wager.

RESOLVED

It was approved to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to dog control throughout the county, in accordance with the draft Proposed Order appended, on the basis that they were satisfied that the test under section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 had been met.

One-off costs of £30,500 were approved to introduce a PSPO, together with £67,620 from this year's additional one-off revenue budget from the Transformation Fund. In addition, the priority was confirmed as the implementation would address the priorities of Gwynedd residents and prejudicing a 'bid' for £75,620 from the additional permanent revenue in the 2022/23 budget.

The Head of Highways and Municipal Department was authorised to undertake and introduce the PSPO.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and it was noted that back in May the Cabinet agreed to have a statutory consultation on the process of introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order in relation to dog control. It was further explained that the consultation had closed and over 1300 responses had been received. Every person who had taken time to respond and be part of the consultation were thanked. Attention was drawn to the main observations from the consultation and these included 95% who were in favour of banning dogs from children's play areas, 93% were in favour of banning dogs from playing fields and 99% were in favour that dog owners should clean up after their dogs when they defecate in a public place, and to dispose of the faeces in a responsible way.

It was explained that this report was a request to proceed to introduce the PSPO, however, it was explained that the department was eager to go a step further. It was highlighted that the consultation had noted that 80% of the responders were of the opinion that dog fouling was a problem within their communities and it was explained that this evidenced what the majority of Councillors heard at a grass-roots level. The need to act was emphasised and it was explained that the report sought additional resources to improve signage, provide more bins and to appoint two officers who would be employed to get to the root of the problem. It was explained that these were the suggestions of residents and therefore the consultation has assisted in drawing-up the work programme.

The Streetscene Manager noted that dog fouling was a national problem and a great deal of work would be undertaken to raise awareness specifically in October.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Support was expressed for the report and it was highlighted that the problem had increased during lockdown. It was highlighted that the report indicated that 10 councillors had responded to the consultation, it was noted that they hoped that the numbers were higher but had not clicked the councillor box.
- It was emphasised that this was the problem of irresponsible owners and not the dogs or the Council, but individuals who do not clean up after their animals.
- It was asked how the department would catch these individuals, it was explained that the officer would go out to the communities beyond usual work hours, the importance of a change in attitude was also emphasised via campaigns with organisations such as Keep Wales Tidy. It was

explained that it would be difficult, however, it was noted that the department was confident that it would be successful via additional resources that would use a combination of different techniques.

- In response to a question about using cameras, it was stated that personal cameras had been used in some cases and it was possible to install cameras if individuals took their dogs to the same place every time.
- It was noted that this bid for funding was a priority as the action would address the priorities of Gwynedd residents and the 'bid' had been pre-awarded for £75,620 from an additional permanent revenue budget in the 2022/23 budget.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.30 pm

CHAIRMAN