
THE CABINET TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2019

Present -

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Dilwyn Morgan and Gareth Thomas Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Dilwyn Morgan a Gareth Thomas

Also present-

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

Item 5: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

Item 6: Alun Lloyd Williams (Learning and Development Officer)

Item 7: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department)

Items 8-10: Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager)

Items 6-11: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
No apologies were received.

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. APPLICATION FOR SERVICE TRANSFORMATION RESOURCE FOR THE CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr. Dilwyn Morgan

DECISION

To assign £34,382 from the Council Plan Fund to finance a transformation officer

post for a period of one year in the Children and Supporting Families Department to undertake a specific intervention in order to ensure that the Department's services are operating in the most efficient way possible.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the Children and Supporting Families Service was an ambitious department. It was expressed that they were eager to undertake a review of the department's work in order to ensure that they were working efficiently. It was added that receiving the resource would provide evidence in order to challenge not only the department's processes but the processes of regional and national partners as well. It was expressed that identifying collaboration opportunities across the Council and partners was a key part of the work, and that it was in keeping with the wider vision such as developing the Supporting Families Strategy. It was added that there would be financial benefits for the department following the review, but it was stressed that this was not the main objective of the department. Rather, it was to ensure that the department was working in the most efficient way possible.

The Head of Children and Supporting Families Department added that discussions had been held in order for the department to move towards working more efficiently, noting that historically the service had not made the most of the opportunities to realise efficiencies. It was added that a key part of the work would be to change the culture and to strengthen the Ffordd Gwynedd mindset, and in doing so offer the best service to the residents of Gwynedd. It was expressed that the department had gone through a full national inspection of its services last year, therefore, the department was aware that their processes were robust and effective. It was expressed that the request was for a Part Time (3 days a week) Officer, for a specific period who would not only undertake the review but would be a resource to realise the recommendations.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that a secondment to the post would be a good idea as staff understood the Ffordd Gwynedd mindset. It was added that a secondment would also offer an opportunity for officers to develop their skills.
- Reviewing processes was discussed, noting that if challenges were faced outside the Council's processes, it was important that the department challenged them.
- It was noted that the exercise would be valuable and that there would be implications beyond the Children field.

6. APPRENTICESHIPS - BID TO THE COUNCIL PLAN FUND

The report was submitted by Cllr. Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

- a) Approve the establishment of an apprenticeship scheme.
- b) Commit £300,000 from the Council Plan Fund in order to establish the

apprenticeships scheme to employ at least 20 new apprentices in 2019.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the scheme was simple, but innovative and progressive. The staff were thanked for their hard work in developing the scheme. The Cabinet Member elaborated on the political vision behind the scheme.

- I. Language - it was noted that the scheme would provide more opportunities to receive training and develop skills and expertise through the medium of Welsh. It was hoped that this would encourage an increase in the use of the language.
- II. Country - it was noted that the apprenticeship scheme was a national objective. In addition, it was expressed that it was an opportunity for Gwynedd Council to lead by example and show the scheme's potential to other councils and public bodies.
- III. People - it was explained that there was a definite link between this scheme and improving the lives of the residents of Gwynedd. The member elaborated by noting that this was not only for the twenty people receiving apprenticeships but the wider community as well. It was added that it would evoke a feeling of hope and confidence in the communities of Gwynedd.
- IV. Children - it was noted that the scheme would be an opportunity to challenge social stereotypes. It was noted that this would be a long journey but that it would be an opportunity for children to be able to aim for their ideal jobs.

It was expressed that departments could be a part of the scheme, and that heads would need to contact in order to see what opportunities were available in their services.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that the item was timely, given the situation with Wylfa. It was noted that having apprenticeships would certainly offer opportunities to young people to remain in the area and to use the Welsh language.
- It was stated that it must be borne in mind that funding was available for innovative schemes despite all the talk of savings. The importance of keeping young people in the area in order to have sustainable communities was highlighted.
- As well as the importance of giving opportunities to young people and investing in them.

7. BID FOR COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES TO TRANSFORM THE SCHOOLS SYSTEM

The item was submitted by Cllr. Gareth Thomas

RESOLVED

- a) To commit £103,492 from the Council Plan Fund for a two-year period to fund a Project Manager post, which would enable the Education Department to respond to, and implement individual projects to transform the schools system in a timely manner as they arise and in accordance with the adopted education principles.
- b) To review the situation when the initial two-year period ends, and/or if an increase is anticipated in the number of further individual projects that will need to be implemented to transform the schools system in light of adopting the education principles.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Education Department had several exciting schemes as part of the Council Plan. It was noted that the Department was responsible for high level projects which encompassed matters of transforming the system, strengthening leadership and modernising education. It was added that the department had adopted new Education Principles as the basis for fulfilling the department's vision.

It was noted that the department had non-capital schemes which would need to be addressed under the leadership of the Area Education Officers. It was added that the schemes were in keeping with the principles, namely:

- Setting up a formal federal arrangement between Ysgol Brynaerau and Ysgol Talysarn
- Change the admission ages of Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy and Ysgol Llanbedr
- The future of Cwm-y-Glo.

It was noted that all of the above projects needed to follow a complete statutory process, which was heavy on project resource, no matter how small the change intended to be implemented was. It was noted that it was a period of significant change within the education department and it was possible that other non-capital opportunities would arise. In order to allow the Department to respond and follow the principles, it was explained that additional resources would need to be secured.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the money would ensure that projects would be completed and would ensure that the education system progressed.

8. REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 - END OF NOVEMBER 2018 REVIEW

The item was submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

- To accept the report on the end of November 2018 review of the Revenue Budget and consider the latest financial position in respect of the budgets of

every department/service.

- To ask the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, together with the Head of Department, to get to the root of the Provider service overspend and take steps to reduce the overspend, and to report to the Cabinet on the response plan.
- Due to an increase in the overspend on a number of budget headings by the Children and Supporting Families Department since the last review, to consider the situation when receiving the Cabinet Member's performance report (29/01/19 Cabinet) with a view to attempt to reduce the overspend by the end of the financial year.
- Due to the level of overspend on pupils' transport by the Education Department, to consider the situation when receiving the Cabinet Member's report (29/01/19 Cabinet).
- To allow the Environment Department to allocate (£60k) of the department's underspend to conduct a review by commissioning research by the University and employing extra officers to collect evidence in the Public Transport field following a number of issues over recent years.
- Harvest (£2,984k) of the net underspend on Corporate budgets,
 - with (£700k) associated with the Council Tax premium to be allocated to a specific fund to be considered for the Housing Strategy.
 - (£435k) relating to capital costs to be transferred to the capital programme's financing fund.
 - with the remainder of (£1,849k) to be transferred to the Supporting the Financial Strategy Fund to assist with inevitable one-off pressures on the Council's budgets.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that the department detailed the latest review of the revenue budget, along with the projections for the end of the financial year. It was expressed that it was a mixed picture with acceptable financial control in a number of the Council's departments. It was added that significant overspend was anticipated in the Education Department, Children and Supporting Families Department and Highways and Municipal Department.

It was reported that five departments, together with the Corporate budgets, would underspend, but the other five departments would overspend. It was noted that the Adults, Health and Well-being department was overspending as a result of overspend in the Provider service and a slippage in the savings schemes. It was added that there would be a reduction in the overspend as a result of using grant funding.

It was noted that overspend in the Children and Supporting Families Department was getting worse. However, a grant received from Welsh Government recently had reduced the overspend slightly. It was explained that school taxi and bus transport continued to cause an overspend in the Education Department. In

looking at the Economy Department, it was noted that a slippage in the savings scheme in the Leisure field and a reduction in income projections were the reasons for the overspend. It was reported that the Highways and Municipal Department had started steps to reduce the overspend in the Waste field.

It was noted when looking at the corporate budgets that the projections were favourable, and that 2018/19 was the first year of collecting the Council Tax Premium. It was added that the projections of harvesting this additional tax were higher, but that back-dating the property transfers from the Council Tax list to the Business Tax list was reducing the income.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the budgetary procedures of the Finance Department was the reason for the acceptable financial position, on the whole, and the Department was thanked for its hard work.

9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

The report was submitted by Cllr. Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

To accept the report on the end of November review (30 November 2018 position) of the capital programme, and approve the revised financing as shown in part 4 of the report, that is:

- £9,000 increase in the use of borrowing
☐
- £3,502,000 increase in the use of grants and contributions
- £30,000 increase in the use of capital receipts
☐
- £488,000 increase in the use of revenue contributions
☐
- £220,000 increase in the use of renewal funds and others

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that its main purpose was to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. It was noted that the analysis in the report noted a capital programme worth £51m for the next three years.

It was added that the report detailed the sources, mainly grants that had been attracted, to fund the net increase of over £4m since the last review.

It was noted that the Council had definite schemes in place in order to invest approximately £28.5 million this year, £6.9 million of which was funded via grants.

10. SAVINGS OVERVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT ON REALISING SAVINGS SCHEMES

The report was 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, which outlined the progress on realising the Council's savings schemes annually, was submitted. Attention was drawn to the appendix which showed that over 95% of the savings for 2015/16 - 2017/18 had been realised. It was added that some slippage had been seen with 15 schemes, seven of which were from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, where the challenge of delivering some schemes continued. It was added that four schemes were in the Highways and Municipal Department, where the Cabinet had agreed to postpone implementing the 'Recycling Centres' scheme. It was noted that one scheme, namely 'End to End' was being slipped by the Children and Supporting Families Department.

It was noted that the Council had schemes worth over £2.5 million in savings in the 2018/19 Financial Strategy. It was added that 64% of the schemes had been realised, with seven on track to be delivered on time, and five slipping.

It was noted that one of the slippages was the 'End to End' Scheme has and that a review of the scheme had been held by the Children and Supporting Families Department, with Finance and the Research and Information officers, in which the predictions of the original model were revisited.

It was explained that realising nearly £27m in savings since April 2015 had been a challenging time for the Council, and staff and all Cabinet Members were thanked for their work.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Thanks were expressed for the work, and it was added that it was a good thing that the Council was acting efficiently. It was added that the Council was facing having to realise more savings, but that the welfare of the people of Gwynedd needed to be ensured in making these decisions.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that this was the Cabinet Member's second performance report. Attention was drawn to the departments' projects, with emphasis on some specific projects. When looking at the project of promoting the use of the Welsh language within the Council's services, it was noted that she took pride in the fact that the Council's internal proceedings were held through the medium of Welsh. It was added that the Council ensured that support was available in order to provide the best service to the residents of Gwynedd. It was noted that there was support for officers and manager also to develop their linguistic skills further, as there was a specific Learning and Development Officer for the Welsh language. The Health, Safety and Well-being Service was thanked for its hard work in ensuring that the IOSH course materials were now available through the medium of Welsh.

It was noted that there had been an increase of 4% in the Council's revenue and capital expenditure, and it was stressed that it was important to strike a balance between ensuring the best value for money and the benefit of spending with local companies. Attention was drawn to the 'Reducing the Pay Gap between Women and Men' scheme, which sought to increase the number of women within leadership in the Council. It was noted that any element of the work conditions within the Council that were a barrier to women applying for leadership posts needed to be eliminated.

Attention was drawn to the Self-service development on the Council website which gave residents access to information 24 hours a day. It was noted that the numbers of self-service accounts continued to increase and 36,197 accounts had now been created. It was noted that there had been two 'information breaches' between July and the end of October where information had been sent to the wrong address or stolen/lost. It was noted that there were reasons for this, and that arrangements had since been tightened in order to ensure it would not happen again.

It was noted that the Cabinet Member was satisfied with the progress of the Legal Service and the Member congratulated the Service for once more succeeding in maintaining the LEXCEL standard. This was the recognised standard of the Law Society for "Excellence in legal practice management and client care".

Matters arising from the discussion:

- Attention was drawn to the deficiencies that had been highlighted in the programmed inspections of the Highways and Municipal Department, and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal noted that he would discuss the data with the department.
- The Gwynedd App was discussed, and a question was asked about the numbers using the app. 386 had downloaded it to date, but it was added that it had not yet been fully launched.

12. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The item was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it had been written following the department's performance challenge meetings which included Scrutiny Committee members as part of the panel. The Council Plan projects were discussed, and attention was drawn first of all to the Businesses receiving support to Prosper scheme. It was noted that some businesses had difficulties contacting the Council, it was expressed that Denbighshire County Council now had one member of staff to deal with any enquiries regarding economic development from businesses. It was noted that the Cabinet Member was eager to move ahead to develop a similar scheme in Gwynedd.

The scheme to Create High Value Jobs was discussed, and it was noted that the work of developing the Llanbedr site was continuing. It was noted that the National Park would make a statement shortly giving an update on the planning to build a new road in Llanbedr. The owners of Llanbedr Airfield had expressed that an increase had been seen in the number of enquiries from aerospace businesses in relation to temporary locations and establishing themselves within the development site. It was added that construction work was continuing in order to develop the site further.

Attention was drawn to the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig programme, noting that a Drone School had been run with over 25 young people attending activities over six weekends which had been successful. It was added that, following a successful bid to Welsh Government to establish a public WiFi provision in rural communities, arrangements were in place to install the equipment in seven communities.

It was noted that the UK Government had now confirmed that the Welsh Slate nomination would be the next to be submitted from Britain to the World Heritage Committee.

The Maritime and Country Parks Service was discussed, and that the work of dredging the Victoria Dock marina basin had been completed successfully. It was noted that it was timely to look at the future of Hafan, Pwllheli and a Project Board had been set up. The Tourism, Marketing and Events Service was continuing with the work of creating a tourism Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website. It was added that a new version of the website was about to be released to the sector for its input, with the intention of going live within the next few months.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the lack of business space which continued to be an obstacle for companies who were keen to locate themselves in the county. It was noted that discussions about the Asset Plan for the next ten years were in the pipeline and that it may be possible to provide business space. It was added that businesses wanted buildings rather than units.

13. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

The item was submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it outlined what had happened in the Finance Department, and noting that the Cabinet Member was happy with the department's performance overall, but that appropriate steps had been taken to improve performance where appropriate.

In looking at the Total value of various debts over six months old, it was noted that the Health Board was responsible for a substantial proportion of those debts, and following the performance meeting, discussions had been held with relevant officers from the Health Board in order to resolve the problem.

It was noted that the Internal Audit Service, as part of adding value and attracting additional income, had been offering an audit service to 67 Town and Community Councils. It was added that, in a recent national review, the Wales Audit Office had shown the Gwynedd report format as 'good practice'.

The Information Technology (IT) Service was discussed, noting that a new IT Strategy was under discussion, and would be submitted to the Cabinet in May. It was added that work had been done together with the Education Department in order to develop a new IT strategy for schools also. It was explained that the schools' internet connection had improved and was substantially quicker.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The staff of the Department were thanked for doing their work so effectively.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.30pm.

CHAIR