

THE CABINET 16/07/19

Present-

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

Also present: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director) and Annes Sion (Member Support Officer)

Item 6: Catherine Roberts (Senior Operational Officer Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership)

Item 7: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department) and Bethan Griffith (Education Ancillary Services Manager)

Item 8: Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department) and Anwen Davies (Developing Rural Gwynedd Programme Manager)

Item 9: Arwel Wyn Owen (Assistant Head of Housing and Well-being)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
An apology was received from Cllr Cemlyn Williams and Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Item 7 - The cost of primary school dinners 2019/20

A declaration of interest was received from Councillors - Dyfrig Siencyn, Craig ab Iago, Nia Jeffreys, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas and Catrin Wager as they had children or grand children taking school dinners at primary schools. Also, Officers - Garem Jackson and Bethan Griffith as their children took school dinners at primary schools. It was not a prejudicial interest, so they were able to partake in the discussion

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 25 MAY

Attention was drawn to an error in the attendance list and it was agreed to amend it.

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 June 2019, as a true record.

6. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR BANGOR

Presented by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

Resolved

1. To approve the undertaking of the process of considering the introduction of a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for a designated area within the city of Bangor, as per the attached draft Proposed Order in appendix 1, and revoking the GWYNEDD COUNCIL ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES FOR THE AREAS OF BANGOR AND CAERNARFON ORDER 2004 (Current Order) to the extent that it applies to Bangor
2. To authorise the Head of Corporate Support to undertake a consultation process for a period of 28 days, with the matter to return to Cabinet in due course for decision whether a PSPO should be introduced in Bangor, as well as any associated delegations, and revoke of the Current Order.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was expressed that Bangor was a multicultural city with a Welsh feel. It was added that many developments were taking place within the city and that many empty houses had now been brought back into use.

It was explained that an order already existed for Bangor which provided the Police with enforcement powers. It was added that the Police had suggested that the existing Order could no longer provide them with sufficient powers and evidence was presented to support this. It was emphasised that it was the Council that had the right to create an order and, following discussions with the Police and having sought legal advice, the Council was eager to proceed with creating a new Order. It was reiterated that the next step would be to hold a public consultation on the matter before returning to Cabinet for a full decision.

The Senior Operational Officer Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership added that, following discussions with the Police that took place over six months, the Council considered that four of the six restrictions the Police had outlined were suitable for inclusion in the proposed Order. It was expressed that the main reason for creating the new Order was the effect on the lives of people living in the areas.

It was expressed that the Police were experienced in using different enforcement models across the region, and favoured a different model from the fixed penalty notice model. It was reiterated that this procedure would be closely monitored

and would ensure an improved atmosphere for individuals and residents. It was noted that the conditions added were reasonable.

Observations arising from the discussion

- A request was made for confirmation that the Order not be used to deal with moving homeless people. It was stated that this was one of the six conditions the Police had introduced, and that the Council had rejected it. It was stated that work was required to assist homeless people and it was noted that training was currently being undertaken with Police Officers to provide support.
- Attention was drawn to the crime map in the Bangor area, in which it noted a high cluster of offences in Maesgeirchen - it was noted that the Police had special plans for this area to reduce crime

7. PRIMARY SCHOOL MEAL PRICE SEPTEMBER 2019

The report was submitted by Garem Jackson

DECISION

It was resolved not to raise the income target for primary school meals in line with inflation. This means that the cost of primary school meals will not increase in September 2019.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that, because of a rise in inflation, the cost of primary school meals needed to be increased by 4.1% in order to reach the income target. It was added that, by not increasing the price, there would be a budget deficit of £82,220.

It was noted that Gwynedd, compared with other counties, was amongst those with the greatest price increases. It was outlined, following a rise in the cost of school meals in September 2017, that the percentage of school children receiving school meals had fallen from 50% to 46%. It was stated, consequently, that the Department was reluctant to increase the price again.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to statistics published by 'Save the Children' which noted that child poverty was on the rise, and specifically among low income working families. Consequently, it was emphasised that lower prices should be retained.
- It was asked, if the price did not increase, how could the financial shortcoming be addressed. It was noted that the Council had reserve funds for unexpected situations; thus, it would not be a problem and it would be possible to build it into next year's budget. It was added that this was a savings scheme and the Department would, therefore, be expected to find an alternative scheme to find the saving.
- Concern was noted about the fall in numbers following the price increase but it was noted that keeping the prices the same was positive.

8. ARFOR INNOVATION FUND

Presented by Cllr Gareth Thomas

DECISION

As Gwynedd Council acts as the lead body for the Arfor Programme, targeting Welsh Government's Arfor Innovation Fund resources on behalf of Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Councils, it was resolved:

- I. That the Cabinet would support a package of Gwynedd Arfor Programme projects, and would delegate the decision to approve bids for the expenditure in Gwynedd to the Head of Economy and Community Department in consultation with the Head of Finance Department
- II. That the Cabinet would authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department in consultation with the Head of Legal Services to agree and complete a contract between appropriate authorities.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it was an exciting programme that would, hopefully, prove the western counties' ability to collectively conduct work in the economy field.

The Head of Economy and Community Department added that Gwynedd Council had agreed to act as lead authority within the scheme and that a budget of £2 million would be available for the plan over a two year period. It was added that projects had been prioritised for the proposed activity in Gwynedd to develop the economy, which, in turn, would support the language. It was stated that it was over the short-term and that the long-term difference was, therefore, unclear. It was emphasised that, since the plans were innovative, the four counties would compare the effect of the plans and additional funding could be sought for further development.

It was mentioned that the fund was for innovation and it would, therefore, give Gwynedd and the partnership the opportunity to try out different and new schemes. It was noted that the opportunity for Gwynedd to take the role of lead body was a credit to the Council's commitment, financial management and language use.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that this was an exciting scheme, but a question was asked whether social enterprises would be able to apply for enterprise funding. It was noted that it would be possible to apply but that the budget was small and every application would have to be assessed as there was only enough for three enterprises.
- It was emphasised that it was high time for schemes to be created across

the western part of Wales, and although the budget was small, they were exciting schemes.

- It was noted that the budget was very small and that it was important to use it carefully, ensuring the impact of the intervention was clearly measured.

9. HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-21

Presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

To approve the Housing Strategy in order to recommend it to the Full Council for adoption.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting the need for the Cabinet to approve the Housing Strategy in order to recommend it to the Full Council for adoption. It was noted that the strategy outlined the change afoot in the field, with developments in the Housing and Property Department. It was emphasised that the next phase for the Housing field would be exciting.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that this was one of the priority fields for the Cabinet and that this was one step along that road

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Presented by Cllr Gareth Thomas

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and attention drawn to a couple of projects. The North Wales Growth Vision was mentioned, and it was noted that Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn was now Chairman of the Ambition Board.

It was noted that work was being done on developing the High Value Jobs Creation scheme. It was stated that competitions had been held at the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre as part of an international competition for the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. Local primary and secondary school pupils were given the opportunity to watch competitors and build and fly model airships

and planes. The Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig Programme was mentioned, and it was stated that exciting work was under way as part of the Leader trials. The wonderful and innovative scheme at the Glynllifon College Farm was emphasised.

It was stated that the Council had agreed to a timetable with DCMS for submitting the Gwynedd Slate nomination to UNESCO in November and that it would be presented to the Cabinet in October.

It was noted, when looking at the Department's savings, that five schemes in 2019/20 had been delivered, or were on track to be delivered on time, and the savings schemes were outlined.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that many companies had difficulty appointing Welsh-speaking staff, despite their high salaries. The need to raise young people's awareness and of the work opportunities available in Gwynedd, and draw their attention to this, was emphasised.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

Presented by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, drawing attention to some plans in the Finance Department. It was stated that the work of rolling out the use of the electronic document and records management system was reaching a close. Of all the Council's services, only five teams had not migrated to the new system.

It was stated that the Internal Audit Service had increased its income at the beginning of 2019/20 by focusing its resources on completing an audit of the Town and Community Council accounts. It was outlined that human error in the Salaries Service in March had led to classroom assistants missing £30 from their salaries. It was noted that the salaries had since been set to the correct level.

In terms of Information Technology, it was stated that incidents of loss of service had led to the Service upgrading its data centres in order to strengthen the service's resilience. It was noted that both data centres would be able to recover services almost immediately.

Staff were thanked for closing the accounts despite the additional pressure from closing the accounts of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board as well. It was also emphasised that the Department had achieved its savings for 2019/20.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the performance of the Taxation Service, stating that a high number of enquiries had been received because of charging a tax premium on empty houses and second homes. Nevertheless, it was noted that a self-service system would soon be available for ratepayers, and that this would enable some straightforward enquiries and amendments to be made online, which would reduce the number of calls.
- Appreciation was expressed that the Benefits Service had reduced the number of days taken to process new benefits applications, but what was the Council's position compared to other counties. It was noted that it currently stood at the centre, but the Service endeavoured to continually improve.

12. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Presented by Cllr Gareth Griffith

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it had been a busy period for the department. Attention was drawn to the main points. One of these was the Scam Awareness Session. It was noted that it shared information with individuals on how not to be defrauded and some of it was broadcast on 'Y Byd ar Bedwar'.

It was noted that a 'Caring for our Environment' session had been held with Councillors, and it had been successful. In future, the Cabinet Member noted that he would accompany the Public Protection Service on their food hygiene inspections and would attend licensing meetings. He added that the report was comprehensive and summarised a busy and interesting period.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The graphs shown were discussed and it was noted that some of the graphs did not contain any data. It was noted, in relation to the said graph, that a number of visits were determined by the FSA and that the numbers for the year were yet to be confirmed. The need to look at the graphs and ensure that they conveyed what the Department wished them to achieve was mentioned.

13. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND MUNICIPAL AND GWYNEDD CONSULTANCY

Presented by Cllr Catrin Wager

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the environmental plans for the Highways Department were proceeding well, and the scheme to replace street lights with LED continued. This would use less energy and would prevent light pollution. It was expressed that the reduction in the percentage of urban waste sent to landfill had fallen from 38% to 19%. It was highlighted that changes would be made to the refuse collection system. It would be rolled out in Dwyfor on 1 July and in Arfon before the year's end.

Looking at recycling, the percentage remained stable at 63% with a target of 64% set for March 2020. It was emphasised that the Council recycled responsibly and within the UK.

In terms of savings for the Highways Department, it was noted the Closure of Public Toilets Scheme in the County was slipping and the Service was seeking an alternative scheme to deliver the remaining savings. Nevertheless, it was noted that a scheme to modernise the County's Closed Circuit Television Service to a digital system was underspending, consequently this could be used to address the shortfall.

In terms of savings scheme for the Highways Department, it was noted that they had been delivered or were on track. Concern was raised, however, about the intention to increase the street enforcement income. Further attention would be required along with a discussion on how to measure street cleanliness.

It was stated that savings for Gwynedd Consultancy were on target. Although income targets showed a shortfall, it was explained that this was normal for the Department during quarter 1. It was noted that the Member was satisfied with the Building Control service, and that feedback also showed customer satisfaction

14. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT'S, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Presented by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and it was noted that some schemes would be highlighted. He noted that the Project to Re-design Care Services continued and

that this would be discussed further at next week's Cabinet. He added that he had visited that Learning Disabilities Service and that he had had insight into the heroic work being undertaken in the field.

It was noted that measures relating to 'What Matters' to the individual must be considered, as it varied from client to client and was impossible to measure. It was stated that one problem had arisen with measuring the impact of DementiaGo, adding that we perhaps needed to set aside the performance figures and focus on instilling confidence in staff, as they worked so hard and did their best for individuals.

Financially, it was stated that it was a challenging period and that projections showed a risk of substantial overspending by the end of the financial year if savings were not made. He expressed that the Department was endeavouring to deal with this.

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Presented by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

In accordance with Section 14.13 of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet will share its Forward Work Programme for the subsequent period of six months with the public. The Forward Work Programme will be published on the Council's website.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.40 pm

CHAIRMAN