

THE CABINET 8/03/22

Present:

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

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Siôn (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department), Dafydd L Edwards (Director of the Pension Fund) and Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager).

Item 7: Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

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

Item 9: Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
An apology was received from Cllr Craig ab Iago.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest was received for Item 6: Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022-2030 - 2029-2030 from Cllr Dafydd Meurig as he was the Chair of Partneriaeth Ogwen and Cllr Catrin Wager as she was employed by Partneriaeth Ogwen, and both were prejudicial interests as the Partnership was named as a part of the report and they left the meeting for 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 15 FEBRUARY 2022

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 as a true record.

6. CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN 2022/23 - 2029/30

The item was presented by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

RESOLVED

The Cabinet's approval was received to adopt and implement the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022-2030.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that a notice of motion had been submitted to the Council back in March 2019, outlining the risks deriving from the impacts of climate change. It was expressed that some delay had occurred with the climate change plan due to the pandemic. Despite this, it was explained that the plan was the end product of much hard work and the first step in response to climate change within the Council. The hope of achieving a net-zero Council by 2030 was noted. It was emphasised that the steps to be seen in the Plan were easy, but that there was a major challenge ahead of the Council.

The Head of Environment Department added that this was a cross-departmental plan but that it was currently being hosted in the Environment Department, which could offer guidance when needed.

The Climate Change Programme Manager noted that this was a corporate plan and that every member of staff needed to take ownership of the plan and act on it. It was expressed that the aim was clear, i.e. to be a net-zero Council by 2030 and it was explained that this was a national timetable set by the Welsh Government. It was explained that the plan highlighted that the work would extend way beyond 2030, but that it provided a firm foundation for the Council in terms of the work to be done. It was emphasised that there was further work to be done to prioritise the expenditure as well as short-term plans.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the need for the educational element of this plan; it was explained that getting children and young people involved with the plan and learning about climate change was an essential part of the plan.
- The element of supporting communities to plan and provide local solutions to local needs was highlighted, and to encourage residents to participate in engagement work.
- It was noted that the Welsh Government's decision not to fund the Llanbedr Bypass scheme did not contribute to this plan as the construction of the road would reduce carbon emissions.
- Support was expressed for the report, noting that there had been very good work, specifically from Cllr Catrin Wager to move the plan forward

and it was expressed that it would be good to see this developing over the next few years.

- Gratitude was expressed for the report, asking whether the Pension Fund invested responsibly. It was stated that a presentation had been given to Cabinet Members two years ago about responsible investment, explaining what the Pension Fund did. At that time, it was stated that the Pension Fund should deal appropriately and independently with the investments, as this was not within the Cabinet's decision-making powers. It was noted that the Pension Board had been operating separately but there may be an opportunity to include a reference to the work of the Pension Fund in this plan. It was explained that a great deal had happened with green investments and that a draft version of a Responsible Investment Policy had been submitted to the Pension Board for pre-scrutiny prior to submission to the Pension Committee next week.
- The team was congratulated on its work in creating the document and it was noted that it was important that the document was live, it was expressed that the field was so broad that the Plan had managed to capture everything.

7. RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOMES FEES FOR 2022/23

The item was presented by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

RESOLVED

To agree upon the standard fees for independent residential and nursing homes for 2022/23, and implement them in accordance with the Council's terms and conditions at the following level:

Residential	£627
Residential EMI	£695
Nursing	£731
Nursing EMI	£774

A request was made for a further report on the matter to consider the propriety of a review of the fee level for the year.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that it was a technical report that was submitted annually. It was explained that the report set standard fee costs for 2022/23, but that a further report was needed on the matter in order to consider the appropriateness of the review of the fee levels for a year. It was explained that the favoured option was option 3 within the following table:

	2021/22	2022/23		
	Fee	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Residential	£586	£615	£627	£671

Residential EMI	£651	£681	£695	£768
Nursing	£684	£716	£731	£756
Nursing EMI	£722	£757	£774	£880

It was explained that more time was needed to ensure that the department was live to all of the implications of increasing the fees to correspond with option 3, including ensuring that it was not only affordable for this year but for financial years to come. It was also expressed that the Cabinet should agree on option 2 for the time being, and gave time for further work to be done to see whether it would be possible to bring a report back to the Cabinet with a request to increase the fee to option 3 after the election period.

8. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032

The report was submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams.

RESOLVED

To approve the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032, before the Authority submits it to the Welsh Government for approval.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that this Strategy had been introduced back in July, where the Cabinet agreed for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to enter a period of public consultation. It was expressed that a number of people had responded to the consultation and that adaptations, where possible, had been incorporated in the strategy.

It was emphasised that the plan was key to the future of the Welsh language and it was noted that the plan was more than just words on paper. The Cabinet Member took advantage of the opportunity to note what the department was doing and had done in terms of the Plan. It was expressed that the Cabinet was aware that they had agreed to invest over £1 million in new language centres in Bangor and Tywyn, as well as to improve the educational provision in Ysgol Eifionydd. It was added that the department was to invest an additional £1.1 million to improve the learning environment at the other centres across the county and invest £1.8 million to increase the capacity of some schools to support communities where the Welsh language was significant.

It was also added that the department had commissioned a company to create a virtual world for learners who were part of the Immersion plan. It was explained that by using technology, it would be possible for pupils to use the Welsh language in the home as well. It was noted that this plan was a key part of the department's innovative Information Technology Plan which had been approved by the Cabinet, and also highlighted that Gwynedd led the way in terms of the Welsh language.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The department was congratulated on leading Wales in terms of the Welsh language plans. It was highlighted in terms of the language centres that other counties needed to follow Gwynedd Council's lead, as children were the future of the Welsh language.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting the work that the department had undertaken over recent months. It was explained that the Cabinet Member had noted that he was satisfied with the progress in the projects led by the department.

It was explained that the report focused on the plans that were seen as an improvement priority within the Council's Plan and attention was drawn to various plans. In terms of the Gwynedd Lack of Suitable Homes plan, it was expressed that this work was being done via the Housing Action Plan.

It was highlighted that the number of homeless people had increased over 51% since pre-pandemic times and that 700 were currently homeless. It was stated that the demand on the service continued to be consistently high. It was noted that the department had been able to increase the team's capacity as well as increase the capacity of the prevention team. It was added that the number of homeless units had increased over the year, and it was explained that once the plans were completed over the next months, 38 units could be seen across the county.

It was noted in terms of the Housing and Lands purchasing plan that a plan was in place to purchase 15 houses over the coming months, as well as lands in various locations in order to develop. It was explained that from implementing over the next six years, the Council would have over 100 houses. It was expressed that the help to buy plan had been highlighted and it was noted that 12 families were currently being assisted.

It was reiterated that the department had allocated 142 grants over the past year, and had attracted £3 million towards empty houses plans. It was expressed that there were 40 applications at the moment for the First Time Buyers Scheme. The main risks of the department, specifically the side effects of the pandemic and Brexit on delivering projects within time and on budget were highlighted. It was also expressed that the side effects of climate change continued to be a risk within the department.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 2pm

CHAIRMAN