
THE CABINET TUESDAY, 28 MARCH 2023

Present -

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Menna Jones, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan and Ioan Thomas.

Also present -

Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Huw Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Meinir Owen (Senior Projects Practitioner)

Item 9: Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Gwenllian Williams (Language Advisor).

Item 10: Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department) and Anwen Davies (ARFOR Regional Manager).

Item 11: Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Sian Pennant Jones (Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager) and Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Councillor Craig ab Iago and Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department).

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS YSGOL FELINWENDA

Councillor Beca Brown explained that the report on Ysgol Felinwenda which was included as Item 8 on the Agenda would not be submitted. She noted that there were further matters to consider and that there was a feeling in the community of a lack of discussion and engagement between the Council and the local communities. It was therefore resolved to defer the item to allow further engagement before the item was returned to the Cabinet in future. It was confirmed that there would be no discussion on the item today.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 were accepted as a true record.

6. PENYBERTH, PENRHOS CARE HOME – BUSINESS CASE

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

To approve the Strategic Business Case in Appendix A.

To authorise the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department to submit the Strategic Outline Business Case to the Welsh Government to seek £14.6million of funding from the Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) to create a public sector partnership development at the Penyberth site, Penrhos, in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and move forward to develop an Outline Business Case.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, adding that appendices B and C were exempt appendices for the attention of the Cabinet Members only. The member provided the background and context to the report, noting that Cyngor Gwynedd was already a residential care provider for the county's residents, and currently provided 50% of the residential provision for older people, with the independent sector providing the rest. It was added that this was an important part of the Council's responsibility towards the most vulnerable residents of the County.

It was added that the county's entire nursing homes provision was provided by the independent sector at present. It was noted that the Government's views on the need to externalise provisions nationally had shifted recently, as was stated in the White Paper on Rebalancing Care and Support. The paper set out the benefits of having a more balanced market.

The member explained that there was a shortage of residential beds in the Llŷn and Eifionydd Area since the closure of Penrhos Home at the beginning of December 2020, and added that there was no nursing beds provision in the Llŷn area. He noted that this Partnership would aim to offer a care home with nursing, to be built on the Penyberth site, Penrhos in order to provide 32 residential dementia beds, together with 25 nursing beds of which 15 would be prioritised for nursing dementia care.

The member talked about the enormous challenges with recruiting and retaining staff in the care field. He noted that this project would examine different practices to secure high-quality staff in the Llŷn area.

The Senior Projects Practitioner noted that the report was an executive summary of the business case which included the need for the change, and that the Plan adhered to several Strategies by the Government. It was noted that the vision was contained in the report for the site, as well as the Council's investment objectives.

The Corporate Director of Social Services added that the entire Penrhos scheme was special and exciting. He noted that the nursing provision addressed the need locally, particularly the dementia provision as there was a shortage of such a provision both in the area and county-wide. He added that it was a pioneering scheme – no other County Council in Wales ran a nursing home, and it was an initiative being carried out jointly with the Health Board.

They took the opportunity to give thanks for the joint-working with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board who had fully committed as a key partner, and also the Clwyd Alyn Housing Association.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Support was expressed for the Business Case submitted.
- It was noted that the running of a nursing home was revolutionary for the Council – it had never done this before, and it was an exciting development.
- The report and the proposal were welcomed. A member expressed discomfort that the independent sector provided all of the County's nursing homes provision. This feeling was echoed when considering the figures stated on page 25 of the Strategic Business Case (Appendix A) regarding the numbers who were on waiting lists for residential and nursing beds, and that the picture was incomplete because the Council did not have the figures for private nursing beds.
- It was believed that this was an exciting development, especially since it would not be a development seeking financial gain, but rather to benefit the community.
- It was noted that the report was an example of close joint-working between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Health Board, which was to be welcomed.
- A member expressed that clarity was needed about the service, emphasising that the provision was available to the residents of Meirionnydd as well as those of Llŷn and Eifionydd. The provision was truly needed, and the need in rural areas was obvious as residents had to travel far from their communities for the provision.
- In response to the above comment, it was believed that further considerations would be needed in future for developing the Scheme in other parts of the county such as Meirionnydd.
- The Senior Projects Practitioner was thanked for coordinating all the work and bringing this project together.

7. ONE-OFF BIDS 2023-24

The report was submitted by the Corporate Director, Geraint Owen.

DECISION

To approve the one-off bids of £2,119,300 for 2023/24, to be financed from the Transformation Fund.

To approve a capital bid to the value of £447,000 to be financed from capital funds.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, explaining that the one-off bids were available to deliver one-off or fixed-term work, and they were in addition to the permanent revenue and capital bids. It was proposed that the bids stated in the report be funded from the transformation fund, except for the bid relating to the Crematorium. It was noted that the upgrading and refurbishing of the cremator at Bangor Crematorium would be funded from a capital budget.

The members' attention was drawn to the appendices which listed and detailed the bids, and the decision sought was reiterated.

No further observations were received.

9. GWYNEDD LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2023

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Jones

DECISION

To approve the decision to hold a public consultation on the draft Language Strategy.

To delegate responsibility to the Head of Corporate Support Department, in consultation with the Corporate Support Cabinet Member, to prepare and undertake the consultation process.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that this draft Strategy was a follow-on to the current strategy which reflected the Council's commitment to promote the language across the county and met the statutory requirements within the Welsh Language Standards. It was noted that the vision was to create an inclusive Strategy for the next 10 years which would increase use of the Welsh language in various contexts in Gwynedd.

It was reported that the Council was implementing schemes in several fields that affected the community and the Welsh language or which sought to preserve and promote the Welsh language. These schemes were listed which included the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the Gwynedd Housing Action Plan, the Local Development Plan, the Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, and the Our Area Regeneration Plans. It was added that the main emphasis of the consultation document was on identifying new opportunities that were available.

Reference was made to the contents of the Strategy which referred to the areas of action noted in the report, such as increasing the number of speakers and increasing use of the Welsh language in various organisations.

It was added that the Strategy would be reviewed regularly, and details were provided on the next steps of entering a period of public consultation at the beginning of April, subject to the Cabinet's approval. It was added that it was imperative that we received the opinions of Gwynedd residents on the new opportunities available to promote the Welsh language. It was noted that an analysis of the consultation results would be

presented to the Language Committee in June, in order to receive its comments and input on the final strategy which would be returned to the Cabinet in the autumn.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The Language team were thanked for their work and wished well with the consultation.
- It was added that the Welsh language and promotion of the language was one of the Council's main priorities.
- Members expressed pride that Gwynedd was once again leading with the Welsh language, and that the ideas presented here were progressive.
- It was believed that the draft Strategy set a clear vision for increasing the number of speakers and use of the Language, which was something to be proud of.
- The Officers present were thanked for their work and expertise in the field.

10. GWYNEDD CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

- To agree that Cyngor Gwynedd leads on a grant application and programme to develop innovative plans in the circular economy field of work.
- To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department and the Head of Finance Department to accept a Circular Economy grant offer from the Welsh Government and to establish appropriate arrangements for delivering the programme in Gwynedd.
- To agree that partnership agreements be put in place for all partners, outlining procedures for the individual projects.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, stating that the Cabinet's approval was required to receive a Welsh Government grant from their Circular Economy fund, which was a commitment of almost £6 million. It was noted that this was the result of over three years of work by the Economy and Community Department to develop the Circular Economy in Gwynedd and prepare an application to be submitted to the Welsh Government to fund a package of schemes. The Officers of the Department were thanked for their work.

Details were provided of some of the schemes which included developing Llyfrgell y Pethau in partnership with the Council's Libraries Service and developing a Green Shed for Antur Waunfawr to increase recycling and recreating. It was noted that Antur Waunfawr now collected 11 tonnes of clothing every week across the County which meant less waste and more support for residents with costs of living. This would also give rise to employment opportunities and would expand the re-use and re-purposing of materials such as furniture.

It was noted that this Plan was innovative and contributed to the priorities in the Council Plan such as supporting the Supporting People programme, the Climate and Nature

Emergency Plan as well as collaboration with the Economy and Community Department and the Environment Department.

The ARFOR Regional Manager expressed that they had worked very closely with the Welsh Government over the past few years. It was added that the Plan built on smaller work and schemes that had been implemented in the past and was an opportunity to develop them on a larger scale. It was noted that the Welsh Government was looking to create 80 re-use and re-purposing hubs in Wales, and the Council could now contribute to 27 of those in Gwynedd. It was noted that it was an opportunity to put Gwynedd at the forefront of this field, and an opportunity to work with third-sector partners enabling them to develop further.

It was noted that there were many new projects covering the areas and communities of the County. It was believed that this was an opportunity to make a difference and to work closely with the Welsh Government on these priorities over the next two years.

Observations arising from the discussion

- An investment of this size was welcomed, and members expressed their full support to the Plan.
- The importance of the Circular Economy principles was emphasised, such as repairing, borrowing and re-using as a normal part of life.
- A member wished to see a further re-framing of second-hand or recycled goods, so that they were not perceived as inferior items, especially in light of the cost-of-living crisis.
- There were many exciting things in the report, and members acknowledged the importance of changing behaviours and trying to encourage more recycling.
- A comment was made that we must be cautious with regard to the sustainability of these projects, bearing in mind that the funding could end, therefore it was believed that we must try to ensure how these projects can be sustainable in future.
- In response, it was noted that the ARFOR Regional Manager was working on this with the partners. It was noted that much of the funding was capital funding for implementing the next stage, and that close collaboration was intended over the next phase to ensure sustainability.

11.GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON ESTABLISHING A STATUTORY LICENSING SCHEME IN WALES FOR HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To support Cyngor Gwynedd's response to the Visit Wales consultation on establishing a statutory licensing scheme in Wales for holiday accommodation.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented noting that the Welsh Government had announced a consultation on establishing a statutory licensing scheme for visitor accommodation providers in Wales back in December 2022. It was noted that the consultation sought feedback on the possible options for introducing a statutory licensing scheme for all types of visitor accommodation, which would make a licence mandatory, with the aim of raising standards in the Tourism industry.

It was noted that this matter had been addressed in the Housing and Holiday Homes review, and one of the recommendations at the time was that better regulation of holiday lets was required in Gwynedd and throughout Wales.

It was expressed that there was a proposal here that the entire accommodation sector in Wales be regulated, and it was noted that there was a copy of the questionnaire attached to the report which asked people's opinions e.g., should the Scheme be a national one? It was explained that the feedback had already been submitted to Visit Wales to meet the deadline.

It was noted that the Council supported the principle of establishing a statutory licensing procedure, but it would be a major Scheme to implement which would require further resources and investment from the Welsh Government to administer. It was also emphasised that the Scheme should be a national scheme and streamlined so as to have a flexible system. It was added that some from the Private Sector had voiced concerns about the Scheme amid considerations such as Covid, the cost-of-living crisis and the financial pressure that businesses already faced, which highlighted the need for the system to be as simple as possible.

To close, it was noted that the Council supported this intervention which was part of a wider package by the Welsh Government to address the area of Housing regulation, transform the planning system and introduce a tourism levy.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Members expressed support to the response, noting that it conveyed the Council's feeling.
- It was believed that this system would help to monitor the establishments that offered holiday lets.
- It was unclear as to what extent the Council could control the numbers of establishments through a licensing system, but the system could enable the Council to manage the quality and safety of those establishments, which was essential.
- It was added that the purpose of the system was not to set a limit on numbers, but rather to raise the establishments' Health and Safety standards at a national level and to create consistency in order to ensure visitors' safety.
- It was agreed that ensuring standards was fundamental, but there was concern around capacity and the need for financial support to realise this.
- It was stated that Towns relied on the Tourism sector and visitor accommodation providers and that they were an important part of the economy. It was believed that this response was in line with the Council's Sustainable Visitor Economy strategy, as ensuring standards was important.
- Reference was made to a very similar scheme that currently existed in Northern Ireland, where individuals would be heavily fined if they let their property without

being registered. It was confirmed that the fine was over £2,000 as well as possible imprisonment.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 1.50pm.

CHAIR