
DWYFOR AREA COMMITTEE, 26-03-12

Present: Councillor Robert J. Wright (Chairman);
Councillor E. Selwyn Griffiths (Vice-chairman).

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Margaret Griffith, Alwyn Gruffydd, John Gwilym Jones, Liz Saville Roberts, Glyn Roberts, Ieuan Roberts, Siôn Selwyn Roberts, Owain Williams and R.H. Wyn Williams.

Also present: Manon Ellis Williams, Chief Officer of Carers Outreach Service and Chair of Gwynedd Carers Partnership.

Officers: Dilwyn Williams (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Legal Services Manager), Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department), Dafydd Williams (Chief Engineer – Transportation and Street Care), Amlyn ab Iorwerth (Licensing Manager), Gareth Roberts (Senior Development Control Engineer - Transport), Meilir Hughes (Estates Manager), Morwena Edwards (Head of Provider and Leisure Department), Gwen Carrington (Head of Housing and Social Services Department) and Ioan Hughes (Committee Officer).

Apologies:- Councillors: Llinos Merks, Peter Read and W. Gareth Roberts.

Thank you

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and he noted that this could well be the last meeting of the Dwyfor Area Committee. He thanked all the officers for their advice throughout the previous four years and for the work of the Senior Planning Service Manager with the Dwyfor Area Planning Committee before the formation of the Planning Committee for the County.

Furthermore, he referred to the work of all the members and thanked them for their contribution to their communities.

Sympathy

Reference was made to the death of the father of Dilys Phillips, the Head of Democracy and Legal Department and condolences were extended to the family in their loss.

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 12 December 2011 as a true record.

3. 'CARING FOR CARERS'

a) Manon Ellis Williams, Chief Officer of Carers Outreach Service and Chair of Gwynedd Carers Partnership was welcomed to the committee and she gave a presentation on 'Caring for Carers.'

b) She explained that the purpose of the presentation was to raise awareness and draw the members' attention to important issues for the unpaid carers.

c) She noted that the role of the Gwynedd Carers Partnership was to promote collaboration so that duplication could be reduced and make the best use of the scarce resources that were available. A business plan had already been established and she explained that this aimed to ensure that the requirements of the County's carers were given due attention.

In addition, ensuring that carers were given fair play when gaining access to services was a definite target and it was explained that work was being undertaken to develop new plans, such as the 'Homeshare' plan that had been established in the Nefyn area which supported people suffering from dementia.

She added that there were plans to support young adults who were carers so that they did not miss out on opportunities.

d) She elaborated upon the following issues:

- Who cares?
- Why are carers important?
- Hidden carers.

In relation to these points, it was noted that the unpaid carers provided 96% of the hours of care in Wales and that this care was worth £7.7 billion. In Gwynedd there were 14,000 carers, and many did not realise that they were carers or were reluctant to ask for help.

It was emphasised that it was not possible for people who were ill, disabled or elderly to live independently without carers and that this emphasised the importance of unpaid carers in communities.

dd) In terms of the main messages that were obtained on a regular basis it was noted that carers requested:

- Choice;
- Control;
- Accurate information;
- Support;
- Recognition in various ways, noting that this did not mean recognition in terms of payment or publicity;
- Communication and engagement so that the carers were given the opportunity to voice their opinion and present ideas.

e) In response the members thanked her for the presentation and a reference was made to the incredible value of the service that was being provided by the carers.

f) Reference was made to the need to inform everyone of the service that was available and it was noted that Gwynedd Carers Partnership was working hard to do so with a very small budget. It was noted that the members had a special role and that they could present information to residents in their communities about the support that was available.

g) Manon Ellis Williams was thanked for the presentation and the Chairman noted that the work undertaken by the carers was to be admired.

4. LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (DWYFOR AREA)

4a) Received, for information, the minutes of the Licensing Sub-committee Dwyfor Area held on 23 November, 2011.

4b) Received, for information, the minutes of the Licensing Sub-committee Dwyfor Area held on 27 January.

5. DWYFOR MARKETS AND FAIRS CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE

a) The minutes of the meeting of the Dwyfor Markets and Fairs Consultative Sub-committee, held on 27 January 2012 were submitted by the Licensing Manager.

b) A member expressed concern about the reduction in the number of stalls at Cricieth Fair. He drew attention to the fact that a few years ago there had been close to 150 stalls in the fair but that the total had reduced to 50 in 2011. The member asked whether or not there was a specific reason for the reduction and whether or not enquiries had been made about this.

c) In response, the Manager stated that the reduction reflected the economic situation and that things such as the cost of fuel had an impact on the situation. He added that the reduction followed the national pattern and that there were steps being taken to advertise Cricieth Fair better in the future.

The member suggested that a partnership could be established with Cricieth Town Council in an effort to promote the fair.

ch) Another member said that the weekly market in Pwllheli was very valuable as it attracted people to the town and therefore it was beneficial to the local shops.

The Manager confirmed that Pwllheli and Mold markets were considered to be the best in north Wales. The member believed that this should be underlined when advertising Pwllheli market.

d) The Manager explained that the Council's Highways Department did not support the idea of holding Pwllheli Sunday Market on additional bank holidays. However, they were willing to consider the possibility of extending the season.

RESOLVED:

a) To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Dwyfor Markets and Fairs Consultative Sub-committee, held on 27 January 2012 so that:

- **the current fees for market stalls, (namely: £1:00 per front foot for each stall between June and August, and 50p per front foot on every other occasion, with casual traders paying three times these amounts), are frozen for 2012;**
- **the fees for stalls at Cricieth Fair, namely £5 for the first three front metres, and £5 for every additional metre, are frozen for 2012;**
- **to abolish the current procedure in Porthmadog Market where traders are required to sign and pay for the season in its entirety;**
- **that a new procedure is introduced in Porthmadog Market, namely that traders sign for the entire season in order to secure their pitch, but that they will not be required to pay when they are not present during April, November and December;**

- **that a condition which prohibits having stalls sell hot drinks at the Pwllheli Sunday Market remains in force;**
- **that Pwllheli Fair is held in the rear part of the car park on Cardiff Road in 2012.**

Further to the minutes of the Sub-committee, it was resolved:

- i) That discussions are to be held with Cricieth Town Council regarding the possibility of collaborating in order to promote the local fair.**
- ii) That discussions are to be held with the Council's Transportation Unit regarding the possibility of extending the Sunday Market season in Pwllheli.**

*At the end of the discussion the Chairman referred to the retirement of the Licensing Manager, Amlyn ab Iorwerth.

He was thanked for his service and wished well in the future.

6. STOPPING UP ORDER (Part of an unclassified road within Porthmadog Industrial Estate)

a) Submitted – the report of the Head of Regulatory Department by the Senior Development Control Engineer – Transport outlining the proposal to apply through the Magistrates' Court to stop up a specific part of the unclassified road as it was no longer required as a public highway.

b) The background of the application was outlined and it was noted that the Town Council and the local member did not object the proposal. It was also confirmed that Welsh Water and Wales & West Utilities had no objections.

c) The local member confirmed that the Town Council had considered the matter and that the proposal was completely acceptable.

RESOLVED to support the proposal to make an application to the Magistrates' Court to stop up that length of unclassified road at the Gelert warehouse site on the grounds that it is no longer required as a public highway.

7. LAND ON NEFYN BUSINESS PARK

a) Submitted – the report of the Corporate Property Manager by the Estates Manager seeking the authority to sell land in Nefyn Business Park.

b) Members were reminded that the Area Committee had resolved on 21 December 2009 that the Council was selling part of the site in question. However, the prospective buyer did not proceed with the purchase and confirmation had been received that they had no further interest in the site.

c) It was noted that an application to buy the site had been received by a local company and the land in question was the last plot owned by the Council. It was explained that the total size of the site was 8,800 square metres.

ch) It was noted that the applicant's proposal would secure employment and would create an opportunity for a local company to expand.

d) It was confirmed that it was not intended to sell for less than the market price.

dd) It was confirmed that the application was supported by the local member, and other members noted that they welcomed the development.

RESOLVED that land on the Nefyn Business Park extending to 8,800 square metres or thereabouts be sold on terms and conditions to be determined by the Corporate Property Manager in consultation with the Economy and Community Development Service.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROVIDER AND LEISURE DEPARTMENT

a) Submitted – the annual report of the Head of Provider and Leisure Department and specific reference was made to strategic considerations.

b) She explained that she had considered the work that was being undertaken by the Department and that she was of the opinion that it was possible to work more effectively by gaining a clear understanding of what the Department was trying to achieve.

Therefore, it was believed that the focus should be on doing the right things as well as doing things right and making the best use of the workforce. She drew specific attention to the preventative health agenda and she referred to the work that had been undertaken to submit a more appropriate managerial structure within the Department so that better use could be made of resources, ensure savings and promote a healthy lifestyle for Gwynedd residents.

c) She added that there had been a tendency to give a county response to issues rather than working in accordance with the requirements of the areas. With this in mind, an Area Manager had been appointed and it was noted that Olwen Ellis Jones would be responsible for the Dwyfor area. This manager would be responsible for the operational issues of all the services within the Department.

ch) In response to observations made by members it was noted:

- That the work of staff from Tan y Marian Home, Pwllheli in Pant yr Eithin Home, Harlech, that would close on 31 March, was part of the plan to help residents settle in and that travelling expenses would be the only additional costs;
- Members would be given information regarding the structure after all the appointments had been made;
- The intention was to simplify management structures so that front line managers operated effectively and that they made decisions rather than delegate issues up the structure;
- That an effective system would be in place in terms of development issues so that local needs could be discussed and that services could be provided when needed.

d) Members gave thanks for the successful work that had been made in relation to the financial situation of the canteen in Ysgol Eifionydd, Porthmadog. It was noted that the losses that had been made had now been replaced by profit and this was appreciated.

dd) A member referred specifically to developing a Food Charter for Gwynedd and the way in which this was referred to as part of the work to promote fresh local food. In response he asked how this could be reconciled with the recent reports regarding supplying bread for schools and residential homes in Gwynedd.

e) In response, the Head of Department noted that a food tender lasted for three years and that it could be extended for about a year if it was suitable. The food tender had come

to an end recently and the procurement procedure under European rules had been followed.

Although the tender had not been successful for one local bakery, it was noted that the contract in its entirety showed that the service of a number of local suppliers, who could supply fresh food, had been secured and an increase was seen in the number of food suppliers from Gwynedd.

It was further explained that Procurement rules had to be followed. As part of the process, consideration was given to quality and price.

f) Consequently, another member expressed concern that small local businesses could suffer and that large companies could have a detrimental impact in the long-term.

g) It was suggested that a report could be provided regarding the relevant policy in order to ensure that local companies would not suffer and that the term 'local' would be defined in full.

RESOLVED:

a) To accept the report;

b) That a report regarding the policies associated with the vision of promoting local fresh food and the formal definition of "local" is submitted to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

a) Submitted - the annual report of the Head of Housing and Social Services Department, noting that she would be focussing mainly on issues involving housing and performance.

b) She referred to the substantial and regular increase in the work of the Department, and that the work of introducing savings schemes had been successful. It was noted that a number of new expectations and challenges had to be faced and that there were times when Gwynedd's size and the County's population density made it difficult to ensure the continuation of service. In addition, it was noted that there was a need to continue to invest in order to ensure progression and an appropriate workforce.

c) In response to observations and questions by members it was noted:

- That an investment was needed to improve residential provision on the Tan y Marian site, Pwllheli and Frondeg, Caernarfon;
- That there was a need to improve the standard of the buildings of homes in order to rationalise revenue costs as there was a link between the suitability of accommodation and the cost of support packages;
- That identifying appropriate accommodation for older people and people with additional needs was considered to be one of the Department's priorities;
- That regular work was undertaken regarding the Empty Homes Initiative and that one of the targets was to bring houses back into use, as required;
- That various issues, such as stock shortage, the work of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd to upgrade houses and the type of homelessness contributed to the increase in the number of homelessness applications, from 95 to 105 in the Dwyfor Area;
- That consideration needed to be given to the type of accommodation that was needed and where there was demand in order to respond to homelessness issues;

- That there was a decrease of £1.3 million in the Supporting People funding from now until 2017 and this would certainly have a substantial impact on the field of learning disabilities;
- That developments on the Hafod y Gest site in Porthmadog, in accordance with the Council's decision, had been refused until a review would be undertaken so that an appropriate provision could be arranged for the needs and aspirations of the community;
- That arrangements to deal with the review was being considered and that a connection was expected to be made with the local members before looking at decisions regarding Hafod y Gest;
- That the work involving community developments, such as telecare, enablement, review of day care and work with the third sector in relation to carers would continue across the County;

RESOLVED to accept the report.

10. AREA FORUMS

a) Submitted - the report of Dilwyn Williams, Corporate Director.

b) He outlined the work that had been undertaken thus far in relation to the idea of creating area forums as part of the proposal to ensure that a structured methodology existed so that citizens could voice their opinion in order to solve problems in their area.

c) He referred specifically to the observations made by Gwynedd residents in the MORI survey, namely that 29% wished to have a greater say in the decisions which affected their local area and a further 59% indicated that they too would like a greater say, depending on the matter in question.

The Corporate Director added that the idea had developed in England and by now the forums received finance, and he noted that this would be the intention in Gwynedd in due course.

ch) The Corporate Director elaborated on the following issues:

- The principle of establishing area forums;
- How the forums would work;
- Should the forums replace the Area Committees.

d) In terms of introducing the area forums to replace the area committees, the Corporate Director noted that some of the work undertaken by the area committees would be transferred to the Cabinet or the portfolio leaders as part of the new managerial system that would come into force in the new Council. In addition, the portfolio leaders would be expected to hold surgeries so that members could challenge what was taking place within their service.

Consequently, there would be a need to consider the responsibilities of the area committees. The Corporate Director suggested that representing the area would be the main responsibility and that area forums could be considered as an effective way of doing so.

dd) He noted that the intention at present, in accordance with the decision of the Full Council, was to seek the opinion of the area committees.

e) The members considered the possibilities, the following main points were noted and it was apparent that there was a difference of opinion:

- Introducing area forums would undermine the role of the local members;
- That there was doubt about the power of the forums;
- That the existing arrangement gave individuals an opportunity to turn to their local councillors as required and that there was no need to change;
- That there was no information about the method of providing the forums with finance;
- Membership of area forums should be restricted to local members;
- That the Community Councils already functioned as local forums;
- Individuals would join the forums according to their wish and that specific leadership could not be ensured;
- That several challenges existed and that the forums could be beneficial as more people could voice their opinion;
- That there was a need to consider the size of the forums and that the catchment areas of secondary schools could be an idea to consider;
- The forums would create a way of collaborating and would voice local opinion, with local councillors leading activities;
- That the principle of establishing area forums was acceptable and that they could be trialled in some areas.

f) In response to the observations, the Corporate Director noted that they had to be effective and that holding surgeries for portfolio leaders as well as area committees could mean that work would be duplicated and this would be completely ineffective.

He added that the intention was for senior officers to offer support to members in order to gain an understanding of the needs of the local people and being able to voice an opinion through the procedures into the Council.

He noted that the procedure was already a success in England and suggested that the forums could be trialled in some areas in Gwynedd.

g) He explained that officers had considered the size of the forums and that the catchment areas of secondary schools did not correspond with the areas of elected members. He added that regeneration areas did correspond with the areas but that their size could be excessive. Therefore, should the principle of establishing the area forums be accepted, the size of the areas would be one of the issues that would need to be addressed further.

ng) The Corporate Director further explained that the forums would be held in a totally informal manner, and he noted that such an arrangement had been effective in working groups etc. and that the opinion voiced in forums could have an impact on the Cabinet's decisions.

h) In order to convey the opinion of the Dwyfor Area Committee, it was resolved, by majority vote:

- i) to support the principle of establishing area forums;
- ii) should they be introduced, the forums should be run in addition to the area committees;
- iii) that the forums should be trialled in parts of Gwynedd.

11. CAFÉ PAVEMENT FACILITIES - MARKET SQUARE, PWLLHELI

a) Submitted - the report of the Head of Regulatory Department.

b) The Chief Engineer – Transportation and Street Care provided details on the work that had been undertaken since September 2011 when this Committee decided to defer an appeal on behalf of Cuisine to Eat Bistro, 4, Market Square, Pwllheli against the Council's decision to refuse permission for a pavement licence to place café facilities on the public highway.

In accordance with the Committee's wish in September 2011, further legal advice was sought on the relevant legislation and regulations. Legal opinion from a Leading Counsel was received and it was noted:

'The powers to grant permission for pavement café facilities, in relation to any income producing activity, is affectively vetoed by the provisions that owners and occupiers of adjoining premises must give their consent.'

This guidance was in accordance with the advice provided by the Council's Legal Department.

c) Furthermore, it was noted that Pwllheli Town Council had confirmed its objection to the application, and that approving another café site, outside 3 Market Square would not be practical.

d) The local member expressed his dissatisfaction and he drew attention to the fact that there was no objection from the owners or those who used the property of 3 Market Square. However, the officers explained that the consent of the owners of every property as well as those who used them on a daily basis had to be sought.

As Pwllheli Town Council had confirmed its objection, the situation meant that the Council would be acting in breach of Legislation should the application be approved. Furthermore, the Legal Service Manager noted that he would have to call the case into the Council should the Committee choose to approve the application.

dd) Some members emphasised that placing the café facilities on the site would be beneficial to the town in general as it would attract people to the shopping area. In addition, disappointment was expressed that the Town Council was opposing the proposal and it was suggested that further discussions could be held so that a compromise could be reached.

e) The proposal to defer the issue in order to hold further discussions was seconded, but the proposal fell.

RESOLVED to refuse consent to place café pavement facilities near 4 Market Square, Pwllheli and for the appeal made on behalf of Cuisine to Eat Bistro to be refused.

The meeting commenced at 5.15pm and concluded at 8.00pm.