

---

## DWYFOR AREA COMMITTEE 18-03-13

---

**Present:** Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chairman)  
Councillor John Brynmor Hughes (Vice-chairman)

**Councillors:** Stephen W. Churchman, Anwen Davies, Aled Evans, Gweno Glyn Simon Glyn, E. Selwyn Griffiths, Jason Humphreys, Michael Sol Owen, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Liz Saville Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Angela Ann Russell, Eirwyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Owain Williams, R.H. Wyn Williams and Robert J. Wright.

**Also present:** Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department), Dafydd P. Lewis (Corporate Director), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Chief Engineer – Transportation and Street Care), Eluned Williams (Senior Ancillary Services Officer, Education Department), Llinos Roberts (Public and Community Transport Officer), Bethan Rowlands (Transport Co-ordinator), Rhian Williams (Transport Officer), Janet Roberts (Senior Manager Delivery and Change Support), Darren H. Griffiths (Strategic Planning Manager) and Ioan Hughes (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**Others invited to the meeting:** Councillor Paul Thomas (Cabinet Member – Healthy Gwynedd), Sarah Green and Howard Tolley from the 'Just Solutions Leisure Consultants' company.

**Apologies:** Councillor Peter Read

### 1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

### 2. DWYFOR AREA PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND EDUCATION TRANSPORT SERVICES

a) Submitted – the report of the Head of Regulatory Department, and maps were distributed displaying Dwyfor school bus routes before and after the retendering process. In addition, written information was submitted to the members outlining the changes in the Dwyfor Area education services in 2013.

These involved some changes in the services for Coleg Meirion Dwyfor and the following schools:

- Ysgol Sarn Bach;
- Ysgol Botwnnog;
- Ysgol Pentreuchaf;
- Ysgol Eifionydd;
- Ysgol Nefyn.

b) The Head of Department noted that he understood the concern of parents, teachers and members, but in respect of public transport and education

transport he felt that it was fair to say that the level of changes was much lower than many had feared.

c) It was explained that confirmation was needed from some companies whether or not they wished to receive proposals, but based on the available information it could be said that 69% of public services would remain with the same providers, with 100% of tenders, if they were accepted in their current form, going to local companies.

In terms of education transport, it was noted that 55% of bus contracts that had been tendered would remain with the same providers, as well as 100% of tenders from the education service, if they were accepted in their current form, going to local companies.

Reference was also made to some changes such as bus services being replaced by taxis etc.

The Head of Department explained that the information conveyed in the maps referred to proposed contracts if they were accepted by the local companies. He added that they reflected a very small element of changes bearing in mind the number of contracts, number of children and number of schools.

It was noted that discussions would be held with the Education Department regarding a method of resolving any problems which would arise from the changes. Similarly, discussions would be held in relation to the start date of some contracts.

ch) Members expressed concern regarding the strict timetable and it was emphasised that parents should be given the full information relating to all the changes in good time.

d) Members were also discontented that any changes were being introduced to the education transport during a school year and it was noted that this contravened the Assembly's national guidelines. Members were of the opinion that postponing all changes would provide an opportunity to consult with the schools, parents and pupils.

dd) In response, it was noted that the scale of the changes should be considered. For example, it was explained that the changes could mean as little as a different company providing the service, or the bus journey time changing by a few minutes.

In situations where the changes would be more substantial, it was explained that discussions could be held with the Education Department to agree on ways of resolving the problems until the end of the school year.

e) In response to an enquiry, it was noted that information could not currently be provided regarding the number of children who could be walking part of the journey or the whole journey to school. It was added that this was dependent of many things including the size of buses that companies would choose to use and the possibility of being able to use the empty seats scheme.

It was explained further that parents would be able to express concerns if they were of the opinion that their children were required to walk along dangerous roads. At that time, they could apply for a risk assessment to be undertaken.

f) Members expressed concern regarding the intention to introduce changes on 1 April 2013. This was underlined by a member who referred to the intention to terminate the afternoon service for Ysgol Sarn Bach. He referred to local residents' wishes to hold a public meeting and also referred to congestion along the roads in question during the summer. He emphasised that there was no time for these matters to be addressed properly.

g) In response to further enquiries, the following was noted:-

- that it was the post code that was used in relation to those eligible for education transport. This meant that the journey was measured from the house to the school;
- that the situation regarding pupils from outside the Efailnewydd catchment area, who currently travelled to Ysgol Pentreuchaf, had been considered in full and that the service had contacted all parents. Should changes there be considered fundamental, the Education Department would have to be contacted in order to have an acceptable temporary arrangement;
- that the assessment had not been completed but that further details regarding the companies who would receive proposals and the use which could be made of the empty seats scheme were expected to be available within a few days.

ng) Members emphasised that priority must be given to the safety of children and it was agreed, by a nearly unanimous vote, to express their wish to postpone any changes to education transport in the Dwyfor Area until September 2013.

It was noted that this would allow time for a full consultation to be undertaken.

### **3. THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 - 2017**

a) It was intended to hold an interactive session on the Council's Strategic Plan and the Senior Manager Delivery and Change Support along with the Strategic Planning Manager were present to lead the discussion.

b) Some members expressed concern as they had not received copies of the consultation document noting the Council's draft priorities for 2013-2017. They emphasised that a copy of the document should have been sent to them with the meeting agenda.

c) Officers and other members noted that a session had already been held for all Council members to consider the document and that having an item in the Area Committees created another opportunity for them to voice their opinions. Additionally, copies of the document were available to be distributed at the meeting.

ch) However, some members noted that they had insufficient information to discuss the matter which was considered to be very important.

d) It was noted that the timetable was tight, but it was agreed that a further meeting should be arranged on 27 March to consider the document thoroughly.

#### 4. LEISURE SERVICES SUFFICIENCY REVIEW

a) The context was noted by the Cabinet Member – Healthy Gwynedd, Councillor Paul Thomas.

He explained that the 'Just Solutions' company was currently undertaking a review on behalf of the Healthy Gwynedd Department, assessing leisure opportunities within Gwynedd with the intention of planning for the future. He added that the Department was seeking to take a much more proactive approach in order to have a positive impact on the health of the population. However, he noted that there was a need to respond to the challenging financial situation which existed and that it was intended to try to combine this with the need to protect and improve the health of the population.

He added that the 'Just Solutions' company representatives were present to provide information regarding the work and to listen to the opinions and ideas of members.

b) The company representatives outlined the background of the review and it was noted that the work would deal with how the Council operated in the leisure field, the policies which existed etc. Furthermore, significant attention would be given to what was suitable for various communities, what already existed there and how they could be protected and improved.

c) It was added that discussions had started with various establishments associated with the leisure field. The first report was expected to be presented in April, with a further report provided in May.

ch) In response to initial observations by members it was noted that the intention was to work with the communities rather than putting too much pressure on them. The representatives emphasised that facilities were very important and that the aim of the work was to find solutions which would not lead to the closure of centres. Consideration would be given to any financial losses and how they could be overcome, extending opportunities and attracting people to use the centres.

dd) Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide observations and the following main points were made:

- that opportunities needed to be created for many groups within the community, such as children and older people, with activities being provided for them in convenient places, including village halls;
- that outdoor activities needed to be targeted rather than restricting the activities to leisure centres;
- that marketing was very important and that additional activities should be created in order to ensure that this happened effectively;
- that there was a need to be ambitious and to take full advantage of the nature of the area and extend the activities in question to include things such as: walking trips, mountaineering, diving and windsurfing;
- that a lack of enterprise was obvious, and that unique things, such as the coastal path, needed to be marketed.

dd) The company representatives fully supported the observations and they noted that better resources and better services would lead to financial savings.

e) The Chair thanked the representatives and the Cabinet Member for attending the meeting and wished them well with the work.

The meeting commenced at 5.15pm and concluded at 8.05pm.