
THE COUNCIL 12/5/11

Present: Councillor John Gwilym Jones (Chairman)
Councillor R. Leonard Jones (Vice-chairman)

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, E. T. Dogan, Dyfed Edwards, Dylan Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, Trevor Edwards, T. G. Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Alun Wyn Evans, Jean Forsyth, Seimon Glyn, Keith Greenly-Jones, Gwen Griffith, Margaret Griffith, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Gwenllïan, Christopher Hughes, Huw Price Hughes, Louise Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, O. P. Huws, Aeron M. Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Evie Morgan Jones, John Wynn Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, Penri Jones, P. G. Larsen, Dewi Lewis, Dewi Llewelyn, Dilwyn Lloyd, Keith Marshall, J Wynn Meredith, Llinos Merks, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, W. Roy Owen, W. Tudor Owen, Arwel Pierce, Peter Read, Dafydd Roberts, E. Caerwyn Roberts, Glyn Roberts, Ieuan Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Ann Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, J. W. Williams, Owain Williams, R. H. Wyn Williams and Robert J. Wright.

Also present: Harry Thomas (Chief Executive), Dilwyn O. Williams, Dafydd Lewis and Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Directors), Dilys Phillips (Monitoring Officer/Head of Democracy and Legal Department), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Legal Services Manager), Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager – Strategic Direction), Dewi Jones (Head of Education Department), Hefin Owen (Development Finance Manager), Tony Bate (Education Quality Improvement Officer), Guto Rhys (Support Service and System Development Manager), Gwenan Parry (Head of Customer Care Department), Dafydd Gibbard (Corporate Property Manager), Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department) and Eleri Parry (Committees Team Leader).

Apologies: Councillors J. Endaf Cooke, E. Selwyn Griffiths, Dai Rees Jones, Richard Lloyd Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, June Marshall, Sion Selwyn Roberts and Guto Rhys Tomos.

1 PRAYER

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor John Wynn Jones.

The prayer was followed with an announcement from Councillor W. Tudor Owen, the Chairman for 2010/11.

2 CHAIRMAN

Councillor John Gwilym Jones was elected as Chairman for 2011/2012.

Councillor John Gwilym Jones signed a declaration accepting the post of the Chairman of Gwynedd Council for 2011/12.

3 VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor R. Leonard Jones was elected as Vice-chairman for 2011/2012.

Councillor R. Leonard Jones signed a declaration accepting the post of the Vice-chairman of Gwynedd Council for 2011/2012.

4 MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Council meeting held on 3 March 2011 as a true record.

5 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Prior to the committee, a briefing note from the Monitoring Officer had been distributed to members regarding the item "Reorganisation of the Berwyn Catchment Area Schools".

It was explained that everyone who was a governor of a school affected by the proposals should declare their interest at the beginning of the meeting; however, under the Code of Conduct every member who represented the Council on a primary school governing body was entitled to participate in full in the discussion and vote.

In relation to members whose relatives were pupils or staff at a school in the catchment area, it was explained that a member would have a personal interest if a decision on the matter was likely to affect the welfare or the financial situation of the person with whom they had a close personal connection. That interest would prevent a member from participating in the discussion should it be reasonable for a member of the public to regard the interest significant enough to prejudice the members' judgement.

It was explained that the Council's Standards Committee was of the opinion that a parent, grandparent, grandchild, spouse, child, brother or sister relationship created too close a connection to allow dispensation in relation to specific schools. The committee had allowed dispensation for several members who had relatives in this category to participate in the general discussion and vote, but not in relation to the specific school with which they had a connection.

It was noted that it was intended to deal with the recommendations separately so as to enable members who had an interest in one school only to participate in the discussion on the other recommendations.

- (i) The following members declared a personal interest in the item "Reorganisation of the Berwyn Schools" for the reasons noted:
- Councillor Elwyn Edwards as his grandchildren attended Ysgol Bro Tegid, Bala;
 - Councillor Dylan Edwards because of a family connection with the schools in the town of Bala;
 - Councillor Pat Larsen due to a family relationship (through marriage) with the head teacher of Ysgol y Parc;
 - Councillor T. G. Ellis as his grand-daughters attended Ysgol Bro Tegid, Bala;
 - Councillor John Pughe Roberts as his daughter attended Ysgol Bro Tegid, Bala.

The members were of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the school(s) in question.

- (iii) Councillor Alan Jones Evans declared a personal interest in the Item "Reorganisation of Berwyn Schools" because he was a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol y Parc.

The member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and he participated fully in the discussion on the item.

- (iv) Councillor Aeron Maldwyn Jones stated that he was declaring a personal interest in the item "Appointment of a Member on the Standards Committee", because he had a connection with the committee.

The member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) Condolences were expressed to the family of Councillor J. R. Jones who had died suddenly at the end of March.

His friend, Councillor Keith Greenly-Jones, paid tribute to him, along with Councillor Stephen Churchman, Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group.

Condolences were expressed to Councillor Alan Jones Evans as his mother had passed away recently.

Then condolences were extended to everyone else who had lost loved ones recently and the meeting was invited to stand in silence as a mark of respect and sympathy.

- (ii) Best wishes were expressed to Councillor Dai Rees Jones who was in hospital after suffering a heart attack, along with Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams who was also in hospital because of heart problems.
- (iii) Councillor Linda Morgan was welcomed back to the Council following a period of ill health.
- (vi) Congratulations were expressed to Fflam, namely the "Formula 1 in Schools" team from Ysgol Botwnnog that would be competing in this competition's international final in September. Fflam was in first place amongst the north Wales teams and was second throughout Britain in the UK National final in London. They had earned a place to represent Wales in the World Championships in Malaysia and Singapore and they were wished every success.

Also, congratulations were expressed to the Under 14s team from Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen that was the current Eryri and Gwynedd champions and had managed to reach the Welsh Cup final. It was explained that the two teams from the school that had reached the final had been invited to represent Wales in a tournament that included the rest of the UK. The competition would be held in Pontypridd and they were wished every success.

Bangor City Football Club was congratulated on winning the Welsh League championship once again.

- (v) In accordance with Procedural Rule 15(1), the Chairman accepted a petition from Councillor Ioan Thomas, the member representing Menai ward, Caernarfon.

The member reported that the petition had been signed by residents who were unhappy with the condition of the road of Yr Hwylfa, England Road North, Caernarfon, and which requested the Council to undertake maintenance work in order to improve the road so that it was fit for purpose.

7 SCHOOLS REORGANISATION IN THE BERWYN CATCHMENT AREA

- (a) Submitted – the report of Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director, seeking the Council's approval to reorganise the schools in the Berwyn catchment area, following a statutory consultation.
- (b) The Chairman welcomed the public to the meeting, and it was explained that it was intended to discuss Ysgol y Parc first, followed by the remaining proposals.
- (c) A PowerPoint presentation was given by the Corporate Director, in order to set the context for the discussion on the proposals.

The reasons for reorganising the primary schools in the county were expanded upon, along with what had been achieved to date and the main issues causing concern when planning the education system in Gwynedd.

It was emphasised that the reorganisation Strategy needed to be implemented urgently across Gwynedd, that stable / long-term models for catchment areas needed to be proposed, and that there was a need to monitor the picture across the County and the experiences of all children in the County.

- (ch) A brief presentation was given by Councillor Liz Saville Roberts, Education Portfolio Leader.

It was explained that a serious financial situation faced the large and medium sized schools in the county. Particular reference was made to the situation of Ysgol yr Hendre, Caernarfon, Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Cymerau, Pwllheli, which were facing substantial cuts, despite an increase in pupil numbers.

It was emphasised that the proposals before the Council were far reaching for the children of the catchment area, and a key step towards solving the problems of schools in Gwynedd as a whole.

It was explained that the model was in keeping with the view of the Gwynedd Primary Headteachers' Forum, namely that schools with fewer than 20 pupils were unsustainable, that the reorganisation process was lengthy and burdensome and that there was a need to proceed with haste to reorganise the county's schools.

She noted further that 162 children attended the four rural schools in Penllyn and that she was certain that many other counties would have centralised all of these children in one large school in the town of Bala. Instead of doing so, the proposals protected rural education with a network of schools around the town of Bala and provided a confident future to schools, headteachers and teachers. It was also explained that the Lifelong Learning School in Bala safeguarded and strengthened local secondary education for the children of the catchment area.

A proposal to close Ysgol y Parc by 31 August 2012, and to provide places to children in the catchment area at Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, after completing upgrading works at Ysgol O M Edwards and issuing statutory notices in accordance with Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to that end, was proposed and seconded.

- (d) An amendment was proposed by the local member representing Llandderfel not to close Ysgol y Parc and for the school to collaborate with Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn and Ysgol y Berwyn, or to be part of federal arrangements in the area, and it was seconded.

The member reported that he had received 48 letters in the last two days, arguing in favour of keeping Ysgol y Parc open and pressing on the Council not to close the school. Also, some individuals called on the Council to be enlightened and advanced and establish federal arrangements for the area. He read out a selection of the letters.

- (dd) The member representing Bala noted that there was no justification for the closure of Ysgol y Parc. He emphasised that the financial saving from closing the school would be small and that the saving was incommensurate with the harm done to the community.

Many other members agreed that the saving would be minimal and that it was incommensurate.

Reference was made to a number of documents that strengthened the argument in favour of keeping the school open.

It was noted that language and community impact assessments commissioned by the Council were in favour of keeping the school open and that the Council's Three Year Plan noted the importance of sustaining rural areas. The report of the Welsh Language Board, that analysed the current situation of the Welsh language in Bala, noted that closing rural schools was a threat to the language and that the latest ESTYN report had noted that the area was one of the strongholds of the Welsh language and culture and that the quality of the school's education was high.

Reference was also made to the importance of the constructive contributions of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, and the numerous petitions and letters.

He expressed his gratitude for the local and national support for keeping Ysgol y Parc open.

To close, the local member reported that there had been an oversight in terms of the original proposal and that he was concerned about the arrangements should the school close at the end of August 2012, without sufficient resources being available in order to complete the work on Ysgol O M Edwards.

In response, the Corporate Director explained that the children would move to Ysgol O M Edwards after the work would be completed.

- (e) Another member referred to another Council document, entitled "Living in Gwynedd", that outlined the problems of living in the countryside and offered a solution to those problems. He expressed concern that the document had not been considered when reorganising the schools in the catchment area.

It was reported further that he was a member of the Snowdonia National Park Authority and that the Authority's policy noted that schools were vital to communities and that it supported keeping prosperous schools open wherever possible. The member noted that there was no justification for the closure of Ysgol y Parc.

To close, reference was made to the marvellous contribution of many of the Council's members to the nation's life for many years. He noted that their contribution would be forgotten and pointless should they vote to close Ysgol y Parc. He referred to the oppression of a nation in Llanwddyn, Tryweryn and Penyberth and he noted that closing Ysgol y Parc was in the same league. He pressed on members to consider the significance of the proposal before them.

- (f) The member representing Llanuwchllyn reported that he had given detailed attention to the arguments and as he had faith in the education system, he did not believe that closing Ysgol y Parc would have a negative effect on the children's education. However, he noted that he had other concerns regarding the closure of the school.

It was explained that he was concerned that after school activities would end and that the children would be deprived of opportunities because of inconvenience.

Furthermore, it was noted that there had not been agreement that all of Parc's children would attend Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn. He explained that the town of Bala was closer to several homes in the Parc catchment area and that sending the children to Bala rather than Llanuwchllyn would be much more convenient for many families. Concern was expressed that dispersing the children between Llanuwchllyn and Bala would lead to loss of identity, and would be a detrimental factor to the cultural future of Parc.

It was noted that a prosperous Cylch Meithrin supplied Ysgol y Parc and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn at present and that closing the school would threaten the future of the Cylch Meithrin and the employment of three nursery assistants.

He added that there was an obvious divide between town and country and between small schools and larger schools and that the solidarity of Gwynedd was under threat.

- (ff) Another member noted that the arguments before the Council summed up what was happening across Meirionnydd and that she was concerned that it would lead to the closure of many schools and that it would ruin a number of communities.
- (g) Others expressed that they had experienced sadness and destruction when Ysgol Rhydyclafdy had closed in recent years.
- (ng) Many members expressed concern that the Council had ignored the observations made during the consultation, along with the petitions and letters, and that it did not listen to the voice of the local community.

- (h) Many members noted that they challenged the notion that closing a school killed a community and reference was made to many prosperous communities where the school had been closed for many years.
- (i) The member representing Gerlan reported that the village school had closed there many years ago; nevertheless, the community was lively and prosperous.

It was explained that the campaign of the Parc residents to keep the school open was evidence that there was a lively community there where people were willing to come together. The member was confident that the community would thrive, whether the school was open or not.

It was emphasised that the Council had commissioned a language impact assessment because it was concerned about the situation of the language. The report noted clearly that the proposed arrangements would strengthen the Welsh language and would improve the linguistic opportunities in the classroom and on the playground.

Further reference was made to the inequality of the situation where a third of the county's schools were protected against cuts, whilst the remainder of the schools suffered serious cuts, and that the situation was detrimental to the education of the county's children. Based on equality, he pressed on members to support the original proposal.

He emphasised that many of the medium and larger sized schools were located in Welsh communities also.

- (l) The Leader thanked the local members representing the Penllyn area for their praiseworthy work for their community. Particular tribute was paid to Councillor Elwyn Edwards who had been consistent in his opinion and had acted effectively in a dignified and noble manner.

He also thanked the Education Leader for her tireless work in moving the agenda forward for the benefit of the children and young people of Gwynedd.

Members were reminded that the Council had resolved without objection that the current system of providing primary education in Gwynedd was unsustainable and unfit for purpose. It was reported that all documentation noted that the education system needed to be reorganised in order to ensure the best possible standards for each child in the county.

It was noted that there was evidence that the standard of education in Wales was the lowest in Britain.

Reference was made to the high standard of education in Finland. It was noted that the standard was to be mainly attributed to extensive investment in information technology, bridging between primary and secondary ages and the appointment of school leaders that drove the agenda forward locally. It was emphasised that Gwynedd needed to achieve in the same way by reorganising the current system. He pressed on members to support the original proposal in order to ensure that each child across the county achieved his/her full potential.

The Senior Leader – Development added that a good education and strong economy went hand in hand. Although the standard of education was good in the context of ESTYN, he emphasised that it was not good in the international context. He was of the opinion that the Welsh economy was vulnerable and that it affected the standard of education and he pressed on members to move on creatively and support the original proposal.

- (ll) A member referred to recent ESTYN reports. The reports noted that the standard of education in Ysgol y Parc was good, whilst the standard of education in Ysgol O M Edwards was excellent. The member noted that it was easier to maintain standards in a larger sized school; therefore, the children who would be transferring would certainly receive an excellent education.

- (m) In response to concerns regarding the situation should the funding not be available from the Assembly, the Corporate Director explained that the bid for resources had been submitted to the Assembly in December 2010 and that confirmation regarding the situation was expected by July. Should the bid be refused, it was explained that the Council Board would need to decide whether or not it would fund the development from the Council's financial strategy.
- (n) In response to an enquiry regarding community use of the building should the school close, the Corporate Property Manager reported that discussions were already in progress with the community in Parc regarding the future of the building. It was explained that a formal offer had been made in a letter by the Corporate Property Unit in February and that the proposal included transferring the ownership of the entire site to the Community Council and then on a lease to the Management Committee. He noted that the offer included permanent revenue support towards the running costs, etc. It was noted that no response had been received to the offer thus far. Should a decision be made to close the school, it was explained that the discussions would need to be extended in more detail over the coming weeks.
- (o) In terms of the transport needs and alterations to Ysgol O M Edwards, a member was of the opinion that the report was inaccurate as it did not include details regarding the projected pupil numbers for the future.
- (p) In response to a request for better clarity, the Director explained that there would not be space for the children of Parc in Ysgol O M Edwards until the alterations would be completed. He explained that it was intended to invest £1.3m in the rural schools, namely £100,000 in Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, £250,000 in Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and £900,000 in Ysgol O M Edwards in order to ensure that they were fit for purpose and had suitable facilities for educating the children. He emphasised that substantial investment was being made in rural schools as well as in the Lifelong Learning Campus in Bala.
- (r) Another member noted that she sympathised with the people of Parc and the local members representing the Penllyn area; however, she emphasised that the current situation was unsustainable because pupil numbers had reduced, that there were too many buildings and that education standards were falling. The saving was small because of the wish to maintain the three rural schools in the area. The member also explained that the scheme created a new Lifelong Learning campus in Bala and that the developments offered hope to the children and communities of Bala and Penllyn for the future.
- (rh) To close, the Education Leader noted that disregarding the evidence and following the heart would be a great injustice to all children in the county.

It was explained that Ysgol y Parc collaborated with Ysgol O M Edwards at the moment and that the amendment would not result in much change. Furthermore, it was explained that federalisation would result in a saving of £3,000 only and it was emphasised that federalisation would not address empty spaces. It was noted that the Wales Audit Office was critical that the Council spent £2m per annum on empty spaces. It was also emphasised that federalisation would not reduce the striking inequality in the expenditure per head at the two schools.

Furthermore, she expressed concern that supporting the amendment would show lack of political will to change and that it would endanger the bid for capital funding from the Assembly. She pressed on members to support the original proposal.

In accordance with procedural rule 19(6), the following vote was registered on the amendment made by Councillor Elwyn Edwards not to close Ysgol y Parc and for the school to collaborate with Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn and Ysgol y Berwyn, or to be part of federal arrangements in the area.

In favour: (26) Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Dylan Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, T. G. Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Jean Forsyth, Simon Glyn, Alwyn Gruffydd, Christopher Hughes, Louise Hughes, O. P. Huws, Aeron M. Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, W. Penri Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, J. Wynn Meredith, Llinos Merks, Peter Read, Dafydd W. Roberts, Ann Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, Owain Williams and Robert J. Wright.

Against: (38) Councillors: E. T. Dogan, Dyfed Edwards, Huw Edwards, Trefor Edwards, Alun Wyn Evans, Gwen Griffith, Margaret Griffith, Siân Gwenllïan, Huw Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Jones, Evie Morgan Jones, John Gwilym Jones, John Wynn Jones, R. Leonard Jones, Dewi Lewis, Dewi Llewelyn, Keith Marshall, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, W. Roy Owen, W Tudor Owen, Arwel Pierce, E. Caerwyn Roberts, Glyn Roberts, Ieuan Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, J. W. Williams, and R. H. Wyn Williams

Abstaining (0)

The Chairman reported that the amendment had failed.

A vote was taken on the original proposal to close Ysgol y Parc by 31 August 2012, and to provide places to children in the catchment area at Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, after completing upgrading works at Ysgol O M Edwards and issuing statutory notices in accordance with Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to that end, and it was passed.

Then, a vote was taken on the remaining proposals.

RESOLVED

- (i) In order to facilitate the establishment of the proposed Lifelong Learning Campus, to approve the proposal to close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Bro Tegid on 31 August 2015 and to issue statutory notices to that effect in accordance with Section 29 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.**
- (ii) To approve the proposal to establish a Community School on the sites of Ysgol y Berwyn and Ysgol Beuno Sant to admit pupils within the 3-19 age range as part of the establishment of a new Lifelong Learning Campus in the town of Bala, to open on 1 September 2015, and to issue statutory notices to that effect in accordance with Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.**
- (iii) To approve the proposal to close Ysgol y Parc by 31 August 2012, and to provide places to children in the catchment area at Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, after completing upgrading works at Ysgol O M Edwards and issuing statutory notices in accordance with Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to that end.**
- (iv) To issue the Statutory Notices referred to in (i), (ii) and (iii) above when the capital funding package has been confirmed.**

12 THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department on the allocation of seats and chairpersonships / vice-chairpersonships of committees as a result of a change in the Council's political balance.

The Head of Democracy and Legal Department reported that the Council's political balance had changed following the death of Councillor J. R. Jones and after Councillor Alan Jones Evans had joined the Plaid Cymru Group.

It was explained that the number of Plaid Cymru Group seats had increased, but that the leaders of the political groups favoured adhering to the existing allocation and to discuss the situation further in July.

Also, should the Council favour adhering to the current allocation, it was explained that the proposal would require unanimous support as it was not in accordance with the Council's political balance.

Furthermore, due to changes to the Liberal Democrats Group, it was reported that the Chairpersonship of the Environment Scrutiny Committee was vacant and that the Business Group had agreed to exchange the chairpersonship and vice-chairpersonship.

RESOLVED

(i) to note that the current Constitution of the Council is as follows:-

Plaid Cymru	37
Independent	16
Llais Gwynedd	13
Liberal Democrats	4
Labour	4
Vacant Seat	1

(ii) not to change the allocation of seats on the Council's committees and to keep the seats on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, Central Licensing Committee and Pensions Committee vacant until the result of the by-election in the Arllechwedd Ward is known and to consider the matter further at the Full Council meeting on 14 July;

(iii) that the group leaders of Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats discuss the exchange of the chairpersonship and vice-chairpersonship of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and not make any further change to the allocation of the chairpersonships / vice-chairpersonships, and to consider the matter further at the Full Council meeting on 14 July.

13 REVIEW OF THE SUBSTITUTION SCHEME FOR COMMITTEES

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department regarding the review of the substitution scheme for committees.

The Head of Democracy and Legal Department reported that the Council, at its annual meeting on 13 May 2010, had established the principle of appointing substitutes for committees.

It was explained that the response of the political groups in terms of nominating substitutes had been poor, and little use had been made of the substitution scheme for committees, except for the Planning Committee. The majority of the Leaders of the political groups and the Principal Scrutiny Committee were of the opinion that the procedure should be restricted to the Planning Committee only.

RESOLVED

(i) to adopt the substitution scheme for committees which is restricted to the Planning Committee only and that the scheme is implemented immediately;

(ii) to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the appropriate changes to procedural rule 30 – Appointing Substitutes to Committees and Sub-committees.

14 APPOINTMENT TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Submitted - the report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department noting that one councillor from Gwynedd Council needed to be elected to replace Councillor Stephen Churchman who had become a member of the Council Board.

It was reported that all Council members, except for Board members, had been invited to

serve on the Standards Committee. Three members had expressed an interest; the leaders of the political groups had met to consider the applications and it had been agreed that it should be recommended to the Council that Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams should be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams to serve on the Standards Committee for the remainder of this Council's term.

15 THE COUNCIL'S THREE YEAR PLAN

- (i) Submitted – the report of the Head of Strategic and Improvement Department, along with the Three Year Plan, for the Council's approval.
- (ii) The Council Leader set out the background and context of the report.

The importance of the plan, that summarised the Council's aspirations for the future, was outlined and it was noted that it was important to ensure that the actions were carried out.

It was explained that there were some fields where a request had been made for programme boards to be more ambitious. A request was made for the Economy and Regeneration Programme to include the "Young Apprentices Employment Route" Project, where the Economy and Regeneration Board looked to extend the scheme and establish more apprenticeships in the public sector, in addition to what was noted in the document already.

Also, as a result of the Simpson Review that reviewed public services across Wales, it was explained that there was a need to add a new project to the field of the Transformation Programme Board, under the heading "Future of Public Services". It was noted that the project would look at the shift to review and rationalise public services along with the likely impact of the Collaboration Agenda on Gwynedd.

- (iii) A member expressed concern that many of the responsibilities of members were delegated here and there and that he was unwilling to delegate powers for the document to be changed by officers after it had been approved by the Council.

The Chief Executive explained that only editorial changes were in question here, and that it was not intended to make substantial changes to the document.

Further concern was expressed that excessive emphasis was being placed on the programme boards. He explained that he was unsatisfied that the constitution of the boards included many more officers than members. He strongly believed that elected members should be prominent in the work from the outset and that he was unsatisfied that the power of the local member was reducing and that there was a need to reconsider the role of the programme boards.

Another member noted that there was a need to be more inclusive.

The Chief Executive reported that the governance arrangements of councils emulated the situation in the House of Commons. He explained that the Council had sought to introduce more democracy into the arrangements and had attempted to be more inclusive by including backbench members as part of the workshops and scrutiny committees. He explained that it was intended to be more inclusive again, but that this would be more difficult under a Cabinet procedure.

RESOLVED

- (i) **To approve the Three Year Plan;**
- (ii) **To authorise the Head of Strategic and Improvement Department to make any required editorial changes to the Plan before it is published.**

16 NOTICE OF MOTION

- (a)(i) Submitted – the following notice of motion received by Councillor Ioan Thomas under Procedural Rule 13 along with an organisational notice under Procedural Rule 13(12) requesting that the matter be discussed at the Council without being referred to the relevant committee first:-

RESOLVED to discuss the proposal at this meeting.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:-

“That the Council reviews the residents’ parking scheme fees after considering the residents’ response to the consultations which have already taken place.”

The member reported that he had submitted the proposal because a number of pilot schemes had been refused because the fees were too high and he was eager for the Council to reconsider the fees.

- (ii) Submitted – the report of the Head of Regulatory Department in response to the proposal noting that there were many reasons why residents had refused the pilot schemes, including a general lack of interest, discontent as a parking space was not guaranteed outside the house, discontent as the enforcement was not operational after 5pm, along with the cost of the permits.

Should the Council wish to establish schemes at a lower cost, the resources for the initial investment would need to be identified from existing management and maintenance budgets, and annual revenue amounts to run the scheme would also be needed. It was noted that there were other costs also.

Many members noted that parking enforcement during the day only was valueless and that there was a need to extend the enforcement hours. The committee was asked to address this element.

RESOLVED to ask the Environment Scrutiny Committee to consider the residents’ parking scheme in its entirety.

- (b) Submitted – the following notice of motion received from Councillor Dylan Edwards under Procedural Rule 13 along with an organisational notice under Procedural Rule 13(12) requesting that the matter be discussed at the Council without being referred to the relevant committee first:-

RESOLVED to discuss the proposal at this meeting.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:-

“That Gwynedd Council expresses its sincere condolences to all those affected by the disaster in Japan; notes the resulting damage to at least four Japanese nuclear power stations, including Fukushima Daiichi power station; applauds the courage and expertise of those working to make them safe; welcomes the decision by the Secretary for Energy and Climate Change to ask for a report from the Chief Nuclear Inspector on the implications of events in Japan for the UK; but nevertheless believes that events in Fukushima underline the extreme dangers inherent in nuclear power, and the inevitable inability of even the highest design and safety standards to protect citizens from unforeseen events; and therefore calls on the Secretary of State to suspend the Government’s plans for a new nuclear programme in the UK.”

The member referred to the atrocious and destructive effects of radiation, and emphasised that the radiation deriving from the incident at Fukushima Daiichi would kill hundreds of thousands of people in Japan and beyond.

He noted that the Japanese Prime Minister had declared that he would not construct 14 new nuclear power plants in the country and that he was eager for Britain to follow the same path.

Many members emphasised that the Westminster Government should invest in developing alternative energy and it was noted that more jobs would be created as a result.

Concern regarding the safety of nuclear energy was reiterated. A member noted that uranium mining took place in poor countries and that it created pollution and caused suffering for many years. Also, securing radioactive waste created huge problems for the future, and there was concern that nuclear companies were dishonest and that they hid the truth. The member pressed for support to the proposal in order to protect future generations.

A member asked for support to postpone a decision on the second part of the proposal until the results of the report had been published and then considered by the Development Scrutiny Committee.

Many members noted that they agreed that implementation should be postponed in order to consider all evidence and the implications of the report in order to make a firm decision. Others called for urgent action.

An amendment to postpone a decision on the second part of the proposal until the results of the report of the Chief Nuclear Inspector had been published and until the Development Scrutiny Committee had had an opportunity to consider the results, was proposed, seconded and passed.

A vote was held on the proposal, as amended.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Gwynedd Council expresses its sincerest condolences to the people of Japan following the earthquake and tsunami; notes that damage has been made to at least four nuclear power plants in the country, including Fukushima Daiichi; applauds the courage and expertise of the workers who are attempting to make those stations safe; and welcomes the decision of the Secretary for Energy to request a report from the Chief Nuclear Inspector in the UK on the implications of the incident in Japan;**
- (ii) That the Development Scrutiny Committee considers the results of the report of the Chief Nuclear Inspector and reports back to the Full Council.**

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN