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## THE COUNCIL 14/7/11

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

**Councillors:** Stephen Churchman, Endaf Cooke, Anwen Davies, E. T. Dogan, Dyfed Edwards, Dylan Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, T. G. Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Alun Wyn Evans, Jean Forsyth, Keith Greenly-Jones, Gwen Griffith, Margaret Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Gwenllian, Christopher Hughes, Louise Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, Aeron M Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Evie Morgan Jones, John Wynn Jones, Penri Jones, P.G. Larsen, Dewi Lewis, Dewi Llewelyn, Dilwyn Lloyd, J. Wynn Meredith, Llinos Merks, Dafydd Meurig, 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, Sion S. Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Guto Rhys Tomos, Ann Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, J.W. Williams, Owain Williams and R. H. Wyn Williams.

**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), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager – Strategic Direction), Dewi Jones (Head of Education Department), Tony Bate (Education Quality Improvement Officer), Gwenan Parry (Head of Customer Care Department), Dafydd Gibbard (Corporate Property Manager), Gwen Carrington (Head of Housing and Social Services Department), Marian P. Hughes (Senior Manager – Children’s Services) and Gwyn Parry Williams (Committee Officer).

**Apologies:** Councillors Trevor Edwards, Simon Glyn, Huw P. Hughes, O.P. Huws, Linda W. Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, June Marshall, Keith Marshall, Peter Read, Dafydd W. Roberts, Paul Thomas, Robert J. Wright.

### 1. PRAYER

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor T.G. Ellis.

### 2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 May 2011 as a true record.

### 3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Prior to the meeting, a briefing note from the Monitoring Officer had been distributed to members regarding the item “Schools Reorganisation in Y Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau”.

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 as being 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. Members who had an interest would need to declare this at the beginning of the meeting and note which school was the subject of the interest, and whether they had been granted dispensation or not.

- (i) The following members declared a personal interest in the item "Reorganisation of Schools in Y Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau", for the reasons noted:
- Councillor Evie M. Jones, as he had a grandson who was a pupil at Ysgol y Gader, Dolgellau, and grandsons who were pupils at Ysgol y Clogau, Bontddu;
  - Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn as he was a member of the Governing Bodies of Ysgol y Gader and Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, and his son was a pupil at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau.

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.

- (ii) The following members declared a personal interest in the item "Reorganisation of Schools in Y Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau", for the reasons noted:
- Councillor Gethin G. Williams as he was a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth, and his children attended Ysgol y Clogau, Bontddu;
  - Councillor Linda Morgan as she was a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Gynradd a Babanod Dolgellau.

The members were of the opinion that they were not prejudicial interests and they participated fully in the discussion on the item.

- (iii) Councillor John Pughe Roberts declared a personal interest in the item "Reorganisation of Schools in Y Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau", as he was a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and because his sister had a child at the school. The member had been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee and he participated fully in the discussion on the item.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (i) Condolences were expressed to the family of Councillor Dai Rees Jones who had passed away suddenly at the end of May.

The Council Leader, Councillor Dyfed Edwards, paid tribute to him.

Condolences were then 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) Councillor Dafydd Meurig, the member for Arllechwedd ward, was welcomed to his first meeting of the Council.
- (iii) Best wishes were sent to Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams following his recent operation. It was noted that the member had sent a message to the Council thanking the members and officers for their best wishes and 'Get well soon' cards. The councillor was getting better every day and he hoped to take hold of the reins again in the autumn.
- (iv) Councillor Guto Rhys Tomos thanked everyone who had supported him on the sponsored bike ride recently. He had succeeded in raising £2,600 towards Elupus Cancer Research.

#### **5. QUESTIONS**

A question by Councillor John W. Meredith:-

**“On how many occasions during the last year has the Council used its power to listen to or read private correspondence? I refer to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000”.**

**Response by Councillor Stephen Churchman, Senior Leader – Resources**

“Thank you to the member for his question, but the Council has no power under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to listen to or read private correspondence. However, use of covert surveillance or covert human intelligence sources (“informants”) by the Council is regulated by the Act. It also has powers under the legislation to acquire information about communications data. It is required to report annually to the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner on the use of these powers. The reports for 2010/11 disclosed no reported use of these powers and up to now, there has been no reported use of these powers since they were introduced”.

**6. SCHOOLS REORGANISATION IN Y GADER CATCHMENT AREA**

- (a) Submitted – the report of Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director, seeking the Council’s approval to reorganise the schools in Y Gader catchment area and undertake a process of statutory consultation on the relevant proposals.
- (b) A brief presentation was given by Councillor Liz Saville Roberts, Education Portfolio Leader.

She notified the Council that by 2013, it was anticipated that there would be 323 children at Ysgol y Gader and 142 children at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. The rural schools could be divided into two parts, namely the north-west which included the schools of Ysgol y Clogau, Bontddu (26 pupils); Ysgol Ganllwyd (19 pupils); Ysgol Llanelltyd (36 pupils) and Ysgol Y Friog (25 pupils), and the south-east which included the schools of Ysgol Llanfachreth (18 pupils); Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain (15 pupils); Ysgol Brithdir (40 pupils) and Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy (23 pupils). With respect to primary schools, a total figure of 344 pupils was anticipated by 2013.

She referred to the geographical features of the area. Some schools were very far from each other, and many of the area’s children travelled approximately 30 minutes to school at present. Nearly a third of the children in this catchment area attended schools outside the communities in which they lived.

She noted that pupil numbers had decreased by 20% since 1975, that empty places accounted for 36% of places in the area’s schools, and that it was expected for the numbers to decrease further during the coming years. It was anticipated that every one of the eight rural primary schools in the area would be in the safety net within two years. She also drew attention to the critical situation in terms of head teachers in the south-east, as the Head teacher of Ysgol Llanfachreth had accepted the post of Head teacher of Ysgol Llanelltyd, and the Head teacher of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain, would be retiring at the end of the summer term this year.

She gave details of the two models before them, namely:-

- a) To establish an Area School in the eastern side of the Gader catchment area on two sites with one school site on the existing location of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and the other site either on the existing location of Ysgol Brithdir or Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain. The model would mean that one of the sites would close as a school together with the closure of Ysgol Llanfachreth, with the education provision being offered at the Area School.
- b) To close Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Uwchradd y Gader and establish a Multi-site Lifelong Learning Community (School) for pupils aged 3-16 years old. Work would continue in order to establish the most appropriate legal status for the Lifelong Learning Community in Dolgellau. She noted that these models had been approved by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 23 June, and by the Council Board on 5 July 2011.

With regard to the western side of the catchment area, namely the schools at Ganllwyd, Llanelltyd, Clogau and Friog, it was recommended that the discussion be postponed for the time being and that it would be given priority in terms of the schools reorganisation process during the next cycle of consultation.

She proposed the recommendations noted in the report, subject to amending recommendation 10.3 to read "To recommend delegating to the Council Board, including also consultation with the local member/members, the decision on the location of the proposed Area School for consultation purposes, either on the present location of Ysgol Brithdir or on the present location of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd".

- (c) The local member for Brithdir and Llanfachreth ward noted that the schools reorganisation process in that part of Gwynedd had been a long and difficult one, and that there was consensus in respect of the need to reorganise education in this part of the catchment area. He explained that the community wished to have a new Area School on an independent site, however they accepted that this would not be possible within the current economic climate. They did not wish to see schools closing, but the local parents were concerned about the reduction in pupil numbers, and that the situation would be unsustainable in the future. Today, only seven children lived in the Machreth area, and three of those lived closer to other schools. The member noted further that the proposal before the Council was a fair reflection of what had been discussed at the meetings of the Catchment Area Review Panel, and he pressed to proceed without delay due to the very fragile situation of some of the schools.
- (ch) The local member representing Corris and Mawddwy ward reported that the community accepted that the current situation was unsustainable, and that action had to be taken in order to safeguard rural education in the area. However, he pressed for agreement on a site as soon as possible, in consultation with the relevant local member/members. He was of the opinion that the most suitable site for locating the second Area School was Brithdir, as it was central to the area. In relation to Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, he noted that this school was already an Area School following the closure of the schools of Llanymawddwy, Aberangell and Dinas Mawddwy and erecting a new school in Dinas Mawddwy. He noted that it was a very expansive area, with some children having to travel up to six miles to school, and that Ysgol Brithdir was approximately eight miles from Dinas Mawddwy. The parents, governors and Community Council of Mawddwy realised that the present situation was not sustainable, and were willing to cooperate and share resources with another school.
- (d) A member referred to the reports of Dylan Bryn Roberts on the language, community and economic impact assessments, and in particular the language impact, and drew attention to one clause in the report, namely, *"This impact confirms that establishing an Area School on two sites would correspond to a +6 positive score but that a Lifelong School on two sites in Dolgellau would correspond to a -8 negative score. Surely therefore, the Lifelong School would lead to creating the largest institution in the catchment, 512 pupils, which would increase and quicken the rate of linguistic decline in the catchment in respect of seeing more pupils from Welsh schools choosing to study GCSE topics through the medium of English and polarising social linguistic patterns more and more towards English, that would, in turn, inhibit a lot of the good work done by the majority of primary schools in the catchment"*. The member viewed this point as being extremely important, and he asked the Head of Education Department for confirmation of the timescale regarding establishing the specific language scheme suggested by Dylan Bryn Roberts, what the nature of that plan would be and who would be responsible for creating it.

In response, the Head of Education Department referred to a particular item on the Council's agenda today, namely the Gwynedd Welsh Education Plan, and associated with that plan was the Gwynedd Primary Schools Welsh Language Charter. He noted that the matter that had been raised by the member was contained in the Education Plan that would be discussed at the end of the meeting.

- (dd) A member expressed concern about the announcement made by the Welsh Government the previous day regarding the lack of funding to construct new schools.

In response, the Chief Executive notified the member that this announcement would not affect the reorganisation of schools in the Gader catchment area, as there was no intention to bid for a grant from the Welsh Government, as the work would be funded from the Council's internal sources in accordance with the Council's financial strategy and asset management strategy. A report on this would be submitted for consideration to the next meeting of the Council Board.

- (e) A member noted that he was keen to keep schools open when that was possible, that he respected the opinion of the local community and was willing to support the proposals before him. However, he expressed concern regarding the Council's ability to realise the proposals without knowing whether the funds were available, and regarding the enormous size of the eastern part of the catchment area.

Furthermore, he explained that he objected the recommendation to delegate the decision on the location of the proposed Area School to the Council Board, and emphasised that the organisation of the county's schools was the full Council's responsibility.

In response, the Education Portfolio Leader notified the Council that she had already suggested that recommendation 10.3 of the report should be amended to include a discussion with the local member/members regarding the location of the proposed Area School.

- (f) The Council Leader stressed that they needed to act urgently in order to safeguard rural education and he pressed on members to support the recommendations.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) **Subject to the decision on the proposed location of the school, to undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Schools Framework Standards Act 1998 during autumn term 2011 on the proposal to establish a Multi-site Community Area School for 3-11 year olds, with one school site located on the current Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy site and the other either on the current location of Ysgol Brithdir or Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain, to open 1 September 2013;**
- (ii) **To establish the proposed Area School, undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 29 of the Schools Framework Standards Act 1998 during autumn term 2011 on the closure of Ysgol Llanfachreth, Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Brithdir and Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd on the 31 August 2013;**
- (iii) **To delegate to the Council Board, including also consultation with the local member/members, the decision on the location of the proposed Area School for consultation purposes, either on the current location of Ysgol Brithdir or on the current location of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd;**
- (iv) **To support the intention of consulting on the principle of establishing a Multi-site Lifelong Learning Community (School) for 3-16 year olds in the town of Dolgellau, to open on 1 September 2013;**
- (v) **To delegate the decision on the legal status of the proposed 3-16 years Lifelong Learning Community (School) to the Council Board in order to allow further work to be undertaken, which includes considering the options of closing and reopening the schools or creating a Federal School together with establishing the appropriate statutory consultation procedure to move the process forward.**

#### **7. 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 due to -

- a) Receiving the resignation of Councillor Dylan Edwards from the Plaid Cymru Group - he had expressed his wish to be an individual member and not join any other group.
- b) The death of Councillor Dai Rees Jones at the end of May.
- c) The by-election that was held in Arllechwedd Ward in June 2011 when Councillor Dafydd Meurig was elected as a member of Plaid Cymru on the Council.
- ch) The resignation of Councillor Richard Lloyd Jones, the member for Diffwys and Maenofferen Ward, Blaenau Ffestiniog, received on 1 July 2011.

It was explained that the Council would need to take into consideration the change in balance between the political groups when allocating seats on the Council's committees, following one member's decision to be an individual member, and due to the fact that the Liberal Democrats, Llais Gwynedd and Independent Groups had one less member than before.

The Business Group had discussed the matter, and its opinion had been, in fairness to the Individual Member, that as few changes as possible should be made to the seats on the committee, so as to offer two seats on the committees to the Individual Member, and to submit further recommendations to the full Council in October 2011. This would mean that the Independent Group would yield one seat to the Individual Member on the Audit Committee and on the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee, and that the Liberal Democrats Group would yield one seat on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to the Independent Group, and yield one seat on the Central Licensing Committee to the Plaid Cymru Group.

She also noted that, since the recommendation was not a true reflection of the political balance as it currently stood, the members would have to vote unanimously in favour of the recommendation.

Also since May 2011, the Council had faced difficulties in seeking to elect the vice-chairpersonships of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Meirionnydd Area Committee, and had therefore asked the Business Group to look into the matter. Several possible options for the vice-chairpersonships were noted which affected the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and Llais Gwynedd groups, but did not change the political balance. The options included keeping the vice-chair of the Meirionnydd Area Committee vacant, or that the Llais Gwynedd Group could take the vice-chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and that the Plaid Cymru Group could take the vice-chair of the Meirionnydd Area Committee while the Liberal Democrats Group could take the vice-chair of the Human Resources Committee.

The Council Leader reported that he had held a discussion with the Leader of the Llais Gwynedd Group, and that it had been proposed that the Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee should be allocated to the Plaid Cymru Group, and the Vice-chair be allocated to the Llais Gwynedd Group.

In relation to the Planning Committee, there was a vacant seat on the committee, as one member of the Plaid Cymru group, from the Dwyfor area, had accepted a seat on the Council Board. In May 2012, the Council had decided to elect members to the Planning Committee in accordance with the Council's political balance and area balance. This meant that a seat for a member from the Dwyfor area was vacant, but a Plaid Cymru Group member had submitted an expression of interest in becoming a member of the committee, and this would affect the balance between the areas on the committee.

## **RESOLVED**

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

<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>16</b>

<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Individual Member</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vacant Seat</b>	<b>2</b>

- (ii) To change the allocation of seats on the Council's committees so that the Independent Group gives one seat to the Individual Member on the Audit Committee and on the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee, while the Liberal Democrats Group gives a seat on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to the Independent Group and a seat on the Central Licensing Committee to the Plaid Cymru Group;
- (iii) To allocate the Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee to the Plaid Cymru Group and the Vice-chair to the Llais Gwynedd Group.
- (iv) To abolish the need for area balance on the Planning Committee in order to allow the member from the Arfon area to be elected on the Planning Committee.

## **8. COLLABORATION AND THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

- (a) Submitted – the report of the Chief Executive noting that the purpose of the presentation was -
  - i) To raise awareness regarding the rapidly emerging national agenda.
  - ii) To prepare members for collaboration reports which would be presented to Council Committees in the autumn cycle.
  - iii) To remind members that the Council had already signed up to the revised vision for collaboration in North Wales last year.

In relation to the situation nationally, he referred to some reports that had been presented during recent months such as the Simpson Report which referred to a number of services namely planning, trading standards, highways, social services and education, where there were recommendations in respect of which type of activities ought to take place on a regional and national basis. He drew attention to quite radical proposals in terms of the way Councils would be expected to operate to the future. He referred to the report of Vivian Thomas on the Structure of Educational Services in Wales, which mentioned regional collaboration, especially in respect of improving schools. He noted that this Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council were already collaborating in this field. The Chief Executive also referred to the report prepared by Gwenda Thomas, the Welsh Government's Deputy Minister for Social Services, on Sustainable Social Services for Wales – A Framework for Action, which spoke of collaborating regionally in order to achieve some aspects of social services. He highlighted the statements that ministers in the Welsh Government had made, such as Leighton Andrews, Gwenda Thomas and Carl Sargeant.

In terms of the public value, the Chief Executive emphasised the importance of maximising this for each investment made. He noted, that for any particular field, that the objectives should be clear, the right action should be taken and the most effective activities chosen in order to achieve the objective, and the right things should be executed well in order to perform the work economically and efficiently.

He noted that the next step nationally would be to sign an agreement with the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association regarding within which fields they promised to increase collaboration. It was expected for details to emerge during the coming weeks, and for the final agreement to be signed in the autumn.

He gave details of the four Regional Programme Boards, namely Education, Social Services, Support Services and the Environment. He noted the intention to submit reports on improving schools, social services, transportation and partnerships.

He explained that on a sub-regional basis, collaboration continued between this Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council in the Planning field, and that discussions were also

ongoing regarding the Public Protection field. He noted that, together with the Council Leader, he hoped to meet the commissioners and interim Chief Executive at Isle of Anglesey County Council during the coming weeks to discuss sharing more services.

He highlighted the risks involved with collaboration in terms of language, commissioning, jobs, governance and objection to change.

- (b) In relation to the language risk, a member noted that this was one of the greatest problems faced by the Council, and the member asked whether the Council should collaborate with Councils that had a similar population and language profile to Gwynedd.

In response, the Chief Executive notified the member that the Cabinet during the last few days had spoken of collaborating based on regional boundaries that corresponded to those of the Police Authority and the Health Authority. He noted that the Councils of Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly had decided to merge their social services. It would be possible for this Council to follow the same pattern with other councils such as Isle of Anglesey County Council etc.

- (c) A member noted that collaboration was a good idea, but before collaborating with other councils he was of the opinion that there was a need to improve collaboration between some departments within the Council such as the Planning Department and the Economy and Community Department. He also highlighted the importance of retaining frontline jobs.

In response, the Chief Executive acknowledged that better internal collaboration was required in some Council departments. With regard to the observation on retaining frontline posts, it had been proven with the senior managers that the Council was very competitive in terms of the number of those posts in relation to the size of the population.

- (ch) A member referred to local contractors and their ability to win contracts across North Wales, and that it should be ensured, through collaboration, that local contractors did not miss out on contracts.
- (d) The Council Leader noted that he anticipated that the collaboration agenda would become more and more important over the coming years for many reasons, some being financial reasons, but also to secure the right infrastructure to continue to improve services. He was of the opinion that the Council had a good reputation regionally and nationally and was willing to collaborate and contribute ideas to this agenda.

**RESOLVED to accept the report.**

## **9. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

- (a) Submitted – the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the performance and efficiency of Gwynedd Social Services in 2010/11, and outlining the matters agreed upon as the most important ones to be addressed during the coming year.
- (b) The Head of Department reported that there was much work to be accomplished in a short time, and she noted that the title of the report this year was “Achieving more, in an improved and quicker way”. She recognised that the year had been a successful yet difficult year. She referred to the sudden death of the late Councillor Dai Rees Jones and to his leadership and continuous support of the service during his time as Portfolio Leader.
- (c) Details were given on the main achievements.

It was reported that the Joint Review phase had officially ended in July 2010. Complimentary practice reports had been received in the fields of disabled children and ill



children; fostering and adoption and assessment and admission to care in the children field. Positive feedback had also been received in the POVA field, namely the security of arrangements for older people where the recommendations had been implemented, and on that basis the department's practice in terms of protecting children and young people was well-placed.

She noted that the standard of practice had improved in terms of quality and performance, especially in the children field. Staff capacity had not been increased. Many of the department's staff, including officers from the Provider and Leisure Department, had received praise and awards in a ceremony that had been arranged by the Council this year. Furthermore, the Council had been given recognition in the adults field by the Care Council regarding the practice in the dementia field and the use of a person-centred approach in that field.

- (ch) With regard to resource management and commissioning, the Head of Department explained that it had been reported last year that the year would be challenging. As regards the increased demand in the children field, the department had succeeded in coming within 0.2% of the budget. She referred to a number of vacant middle management posts in the adults field due to sickness and also turnover in terms of sickness in the children field.

She noted that there had been success in addressing historical overspend in the learning disabilities field.

The department had also succeeded in improving the home care provision. The economy had been increased in the southern part of the county with the independent providers operating there, and also the cost of the provision had been reduced. She noted that the introduction of the brokerage system within the department had not only added value in terms of user experience, but had also generated savings of over £100,000 during the year.

She explained that they had also succeeded in reducing delayed transfer of care in hospitals, mainly due to the ability to rearrange and re-commission residential care and secure increased dementia provision.

- (d) Reference was made to the main challenges which the services faced.

She explained that the demand patterns evidenced the need to change sooner. The pace of change had to increase in respect of re-commissioning the adults and children provision within the context of the whole sector. She noted that the care sector in Wales employed over 70,000 people in local government alone, and that nationally, expenditure in the care field totalled over £1.5 billion.

She noted that quality must be pursued and challenged. Having a workforce with self-confidence and professional confidence was key to fulfilling services.

She referred to the fact that many of the services were already being planned and provided jointly. She noted that the adoption service was by now being provided on a regional basis. It was aimed to undertake the key changes within the context of financial savings.

- (dd) Details were given of the main priorities for 2011/12, namely to implement commissioning plans, and she referred specifically to the older people residential field, learning disabilities and children and young people fields, increasing the range of community care provision and financial efficiency through partnership work across the care sector and the regional agenda and continuing to improve on performance measures and quality evidence of provision across the service.

To close, she sincerely thanked the committed and conscientious workforce of social services.

- (e) The Social Services Portfolio Leader thanked the Head of Department for the report and thanked all the officers within the services who were associated with the report.

**RESOLVED to accept the report with thanks.**

## **10. GWYNEDD WELSH EDUCATION SCHEME**

- (a) Submitted – the report of the Head of Education Department, which referred to the fact that a final draft version of the scheme had been submitted for the attention of the Welsh Language Board and had been approved by it on 30 June 2011 – this followed a period of detailed discussion and consultation on the draft scheme. The Board had welcomed the targets in the scheme and looked forward to continued collaboration with the Authority during the period of implementing targets and monitoring progress, until the time that the Welsh Government's new arrangements for Welsh Language Strategy Plans would come into force. He noted that this change would befall authorities and schools during the next academic year. This would provide an opportunity to bring Welsh education arrangements and the Welsh education strategy to the main stream of every discussion on education.

The Head of Department referred to the aims and objectives of the Welsh Language Scheme, and he referred particularly to the following clauses:-

- a) Although the overall aim of the Language Policy was bilingualism, the balance was placed in favour of the Welsh language in the early years in order to establish firm foundations for further development. For the other key stages, schools were expected to plan intentionally in order to develop pupils' grasp of the Welsh language.
  - b) This would sit comfortably with the main aim of the Welsh Education Scheme, namely to ensure the development of Welsh as a subject and a teaching medium from pre-school age onwards.
  - c) Following a thorough review of the current scheme and an internal discussion with stakeholders and partners, it had been agreed that the amended Welsh Education Scheme would focus on the following aspects:-
    - Setting a firm foundation for the Welsh language during nursery and early years education.
    - Ensuring progression in the Welsh language as a subject and as a teaching medium from KS2 to KS3.
    - Strengthening action in the areas/establishments/schools where data showed the need.
    - Strengthening the use of language cohorts as a tool to plan continuity in secondary schools.
    - Introducing the Welsh Baccalaureate on levels 1, 2 and 3 in the secondary schools.
- (b) A copy of the Gwynedd Primary Schools Welsh Language Charter was submitted.

The Head of Education Department noted that the document had been developed over the last year in consultation with members of a specific working group that had been looking at the social use made of the Welsh language by the children of Gwynedd. He referred to Appendix 12 of the Welsh Education Scheme which gave details of proposals to promote the use of the Welsh language more widely, and specifically the informal opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh as a social medium so that they could develop confidence to use the Welsh language and nurture positive attitudes towards the language beyond situations of formal education. He noted further that the charter had been applauded by the primary and secondary head teachers for setting a clear direction to their work. He gave details of the seven aims of the charter, namely:-

- Set a firm foundation for the Welsh language in the Foundation Phase
- Ensure that each pupil reached his/her potential in the Welsh language, as a subject and as an educational medium
- Implement the Welsh Curriculum
- Nurture an awareness of Wales' cultural and heritage identity amongst school pupils
- Ensure that all aspects of everyday life at the school and its community were Welsh, and in the medium of Welsh

- Promote the use of the Welsh language in extra-curricular activities
- Support staff members to develop their confidence and skills in using the Welsh language in the workplace

**RESOLVED**

- a) To accept the Welsh Language Scheme as an indication of commitment to see the contents of the document being achieved and so as to enable everyone to contribute to the discussions and action in all the educational establishments for which the Council is responsible.**
- b) To accept the Gwynedd Primary Schools Welsh Language Charter as a significant document to set a direction to the task of developing the social use made of the Welsh language by children who reside in Gwynedd.**

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.45 pm.

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**CHAIRMAN**