
THE COUNCIL 15/12/11

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

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Dyfed Edwards, Dylan Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, T. G. Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Simon Glyn, Keith Greenly-Jones, Gwen Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Gwenllïan, Christopher Hughes, Huw Price Hughes, Louise Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, O. P. Huws, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, John Wynn Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, Penri Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, P.G.Larsen, Dewi Llewelyn, June Marshall, Keith Marshall, J. Wynn Meredith, Llinos Merks, Dafydd Meurig, 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, Siôn S. Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W. Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Guto Rhys Tomos, Ann Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, J.W.Williams, Owain Williams, R. H. Wyn Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies 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), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager – Strategic Direction), Gwen Carrington (Head of Housing and Social Services Department), Meilys Smith (Senior Business Manager – Housing and Social Services Department), Morwenna Edwards (Head of Provider and Leisure Department), Dewi R. Jones (Head of Education Department), Guto Rhys Huws (Schools Reorganisation Programme Co-ordinator), Tony Bate (Primary Schools Reorganisation Lead Manager), Dafydd Gibbard (Corporate Property Manager), Catherine Roberts (Senior Community Safety Manager), Geraint Brython Edwards (Solicitor) and Eleri Parry (Committees Team Leader).

Apologies: Councillors Endaf Cooke, E. T. Dogan, Trefor Edwards, Alun Wyn Evans, Jean Forsyth, Margaret Griffith, Aeron M. Jones, Evie Morgan Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, Linda Morgan.

1. PRAYER

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Dafydd Roberts.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 October 2011 as a true record, subject to noting a correction to clause 6(d) in the item Outcome of the Consultation on the Future of Tan y Marian, Pwllheli and Pant yr Eithin, Harlech Residential Homes, namely *“that there was extensive evidence that specialist units were needed for people with learning disabilities in Meirionnydd, along with affordable housing in Harlech.”*

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 the Eastern Part of Y Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau” and “Council Tax: Discretionary Powers To Allow Discounts”.

It was explained that members who had a personal interest had been given individual advice, and that the governors of the schools in question would be required to declare their interest; however, they would be able to speak and vote.

In relation to the item “Council Tax: Discretionary Powers to Allow Discounts”, it was explained that the item related to two categories of property, namely, second homes

(holiday homes) that were empty but furnished, and houses that had been empty and unfurnished for six months or more.

It was noted that a member who had a house in Gwynedd which fell into either category and who paid Council tax, rather than non-domestic rates, should declare an interest on the item and withdraw from the room.

- (i) The following members declared a personal interest in the following items for the reasons noted:-
- Councillor Dylan Edwards in the item “Reorganisation of Schools in the Eastern Part of Y Gader Catchment Area”, because of a business connection;
 - Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn in the item “Council Tax: Discretionary Powers to Allow Discounts”, because he owned a property which had been empty for over six months;
 - Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies in the urgent proposal relating to the location of the headquarters of the new environmental body as her husband was the Head of Planning – Countryside Council for Wales, who were also consulting on the changes.

The members were of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they withdrew from the meeting during the discussions on the items.

- (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;
 - Councillor John Pughe Roberts as he was a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and as his sister had a child who attended that school.

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

- (iii) Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones and John Wyn Williams declared a personal interest in relation to the question involving Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd since they were members of the Board of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd.

The members were of the opinion that they were not prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the item.

- (iv) Councillors Eryl Jones Williams and Trevor Roberts declared a personal interest in the question regarding Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd as they were tenants of the body.

The members were of the opinion that they were not prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the Chamber during the item.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) The Chairman referred to the tragic and sudden death of Councillor Trefor Edwards's son and condolences were extended to the family in their sad loss.

Also, condolences were expressed to Councillor Alun Wyn Evans who had lost his father recently and Councillor E. T. Dogan on the loss of his sister and his brother-in-law recently. Also, best wishes were extended to Councillor Dogan as he had been admitted to hospital that morning.

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.

- (iv) Congratulations were extended to Tim Fflam, namely five pupils from Ysgol Botwnnog on receiving a Sponsorship and Marketing award in the “Formula 1 in Schools” in Malaysia recently.

Reference was also made to the Council’s success in being awarded the first prize in the British APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) competition in the field of “Leisure Service Management – Most Improved Performer” for Plas Ffrancon Leisure Centre. The Provider and Leisure Department was congratulated on its success.

Also, reference was made to Gwynedd Council’s Specialist Children Services and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board who had been honoured recently by the First Minister of Wales for breaking new ground by promoting better collaboration between services and agencies for the benefit of vulnerable children and their families. The Manager, Iona Griffith, and her Team were congratulated on their success.

Congratulations were also extended to Mr Llew Davies, Deputy Head teacher, Ysgol Cae Top, Bangor, on being awarded the “Teacher of the Year” award in the “Pride of Britain Awards” recently. It was noted that this was the second time he had been awarded as he had won the Teacher of the Year award in the Annual Teaching Awards last year.

5. URGENT ITEM

The Chairman agreed, under Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, to include the proposal regarding the location of the headquarters of the new environmental body as the issue had come to light recently and as there were far-reaching implications to the location of the headquarters, and that it needed to be addressed soon.

6. QUESTION

- (a) Question by Councillor John Pughe Roberts

“Since May 2008 how many Council jobs have moved from Meirionnydd to Dwyfor and Arfon, how many have moved from Arfon and Dwyfor to Meirionnydd, how many have moved from Arfon to Dwyfor and from Dwyfor to Arfon?”

Response of Councillor Simon Glyn, Portfolio Leader – Human Resources

He noted that the details of the table below had been distributed to all Council members.

Meirionnydd to Arfon and Dwyfor	Arfon a Dwyfor to Meirionnydd	Arfon to Dwyfor	Dwyfor to Arfon
9	8	9	11

Supplementary question by Councillor John Pughe Roberts

Which jobs have come to Meirionnydd, to where in Meirionnydd and what are the future outlooks?

Response by Councillor Simon Glyn, Portfolio Leader – Human Resources

I do not have the information to hand at present; however, I will refer the question to relevant officers so that they can send a response to the member as soon as possible.

- (b) **Question by Councillor Louise Hughes**

What arrangements have been put in place between Gwynedd Council and Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd to enable Councillors to assist Tenants with queries/problems regarding their tenancies?

Response by Councillor John Wyn Williams, Senior Leader – Care

There are two separate matters to consider in responding to this question, the right of councillors to act on behalf of individual tenants or prospective tenants and the role of the Council in scrutinising the work of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd.

1. With regard to the role of members with individual tenants, it is possible for local councillors to act on behalf of tenants or prospective tenants when dealing with Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd but the key point here is that the individual must agree to this. Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd have a standard procedure for recording that right where an individual confirms that they wish a councillor to act on their behalf and I believe that all members of the Council are aware of this procedure. This procedure is absolutely vital to safeguard Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and Council Members in accordance with the Data Protection act 1998. It is fair to note that the protocol and procedure were included in the Offer Document that was agreed as part of the work of externalising the stock. Linked to the protocol, CCG do maintain a database of every contact / enquiry by a Council member. This database shows the date of the contact, the nature of the contact and also when the contact was replied to. If any member is uncertain of how the protocol works, I am sure that Mared Dafydd, from CCG, would be very willing to speak to any one of us.
2. With regard to scrutinising the work of CCG, when it established the new arrangements, the Council set up a system of quarterly meetings to enable the Council to raise issues of concern with representatives of CCG. The first and third quarter meetings are at an officer level but, in the other two quarters, the meeting includes councillors, specifically the Housing Portfolio Leader and the Chairman or Vice-chairman of the Care Scrutiny Committee.

Some months ago, we introduced a system of sending a letter to each councillor to give individual councillors an opportunity to bring matters of concern to our attention for us to raise issues at those meetings. Of course, we cannot raise individual cases at the meetings but it is particularly important that we receive information on such cases so that we can air them more fully. I should note that, so far, very few councillors have taken advantage of that opportunity and that no significant pattern of problems has come to light.

Another point is that CCG's Chief Executive appears once a year before the relevant Scrutiny Committee. Once again, it is fair to note that very few matters were raised with the Chief Executive at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

3. The final point is, of course, that the Council does have representatives on the Board of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd, myself and Councillors Trefor Edwards, Brian Jones and Anne Lloyd Jones. Obviously, as directors of the company, our responsibility is to the company but, where appropriate, it is possible for us to bring the voice of the Council into the company's deliberations.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Louise Hughes

Many of us in the chamber have experienced difficulties to communicate and speak with Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd; therefore, is the Senior Portfolio Leader prepared to convey the difficulties to CCG and report back with a solution to the problem?

Response by Councillor John Wyn Williams, Senior Leader – Care

I am aware of our problems, I discuss them regularly with Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and I am more than willing to discuss them again with CCG.

7. REFERENCE UP IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURAL RULE 21

- (i) It was reported that the appropriate number of members had given written notice that they wished to refer the following matter up.

COUNCIL BOARD 11 OCTOBER 2011

Item 5 - Consultation on the Future of Hafod y Gest Residential Home

- (ii) It was reported that the Council Board at its meeting on 11 October 2011, had resolved as follows:-

RESOLVED

- (a) to cease the use of Hafod y Gest as a residential home timed in accordance with the development timetable of the extra care housing on the site.
- (b) to ensure that assessments of the existing residents of Hafod y Gest are held and to re-home the residents in accordance with their individual needs.
- (c) to submit a report to the Board on transferring the site to Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, free of charge;
- (ch) to support the Portfolio Member and the Corporate Director to submit a formal application to the Welsh Government to redirect the social housing grant allocated to build Extra Care Housing in Llan Ffestiniog to develop Extra Care Housing schemes in Porthmadog and Bangor
- (d) that the provision meets the residential needs and follows best practice in order to enable the individual to maintain their home, including people suffering from dementia, and to continue in close collaboration with the University and Professor Bob Wood;
- (dd) to look at day opportunities and ensure that the third sector leads on this;
- (e) to support Cymdeithas Tai Eryri's intention to consult locally on the detailed design prior to submitting a planning application.
- (iii) Submitted – the report of the Head of Housing and Social Services Department on the outcome of the statutory consultation on the future of Hafod y Gest Residential Home, Porthmadog in order to consider the future of the home.
- (iv) With the support of a seconder, the Portfolio Leader – Social Services proposed the Board's decisions with amendments to clauses (a), (b), (d) and added clause (f) as follows:-
- (a) *To change the use of Hafod y Gest by building extra care housing to replace the existing provision in accordance with the timetable for developing extra care housing on the site.*
- (b) *To ensure that assessments are undertaken of Hafod y Gest's residents in order to meet their individual needs;*
- (c) *To submit a report to the Board on transferring the site to Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, free of charge;*
- (ch) *To support the Portfolio Member and the Corporate Director to submit a formal application to the Welsh Government to redirect the social housing grant allocated to build Extra Care Housing in Llan Ffestiniog to develop Extra Care Housing schemes in Porthmadog and Bangor;*
- (d) *That the new provision meets the needs of individuals to maintain their home, and following best practice by collaborating with Professor Bob Wood from Bangor University regarding those suffering from dementia;*
- (dd) *To look at day opportunities and ensure that the third sector leads on this;*
- (e) *To support Cymdeithas Tai Eryri's intention to consult locally on the detailed design prior to submitting a planning application;*
- (f) *To continue to consult with the neighbourhood.*
- (v) The background and context of the report was set out by the Portfolio Leader - Social Services, and details of the main considerations were provided, as well as the basis of the recommendations, namely that:-
- many more people lived longer, and Gwynedd, as every other authority, had to serve in a different way;

- the proposed arrangements tied in with the Council's vision and the aspirations of the older people of the county to promote and maintain their independence, to enable them to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Implementing this vision resulted in an unavoidable reduction in the need for residential care;
- enablement, telecare, day care and respite care services, etc. enabled people to live independently;
- there was a need to listen to the views of experts who noted that there was a need to look at ways of encouraging people to regain their confidence and reach independence outside social services, and there was a need to attempt to collaborate with local partners to improve the quality of services;
- there was an excellent service in Hafod y Gest; however, the building was in a very poor condition, and there was agreement that there was a need to address the problem;
- the Council's capital funding was scarce, and that the substantial investment of Cymdeithas Tai Eryri should be welcomed for the construction of the extra care housing;
- the Council had been criticised for not changing and moving the service forward, and that developing Hafod y Gest ensured an improved provision in a modern building that responded to the future needs of individuals;
- should there be support to the Board's decision, there would be a need to move the residents out of Hafod y Gest home; the members were reassured that places that would be suitable for their needs would be available locally;
- the delay had caused great uncertainty for the residents and he pressed on members to reach a firm decision urgently.

The Leader – Social Services thanked Hafod y Gest staff for their care and their commendable work over the years.

(vi) The local member representing Porthmadog West expressed considerable discontent on a number of elements. The following matters were noted:-

- although the list of consultees was long, very few had replied; he expressed astonishment that the Council had not contacted the consultees in order to seek a response from them;
- that the consultation was worthless as no attention had been given to the responses received;
- that the Council had alleged that no plans were available, despite the fact that Cymdeithas Tai Eryri had submitted rough plans during the consultation, and he was concerned about this;
- that he accepted that the Hafod y Gest building was in a poor condition, and that no expenditure should be incurred on the existing building. He supported the development of a combination of services; however, he was of the view that the report was one-sided and focused wholly on extra care housing;
- there was evidence that very few residential places were available in the Porthmadog area at present and that this outlined the need for the service;
- no research had been done to show that so many extra care housing were needed in the area;
- he was concerned that other members would also experience a difficult situation when the future of residential homes in their wards would be discussed.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to refuse the current recommendations and return to hold transparent and thorough discussions in order to secure a suitable provision for the needs and aspirations of the community.

(vii) The Portfolio Leader – Provider noted that he was very supportive of the vision of promoting independence and the need for new provisions that met the needs of older people.

However, although people were eager to live independently for as long as possible, he noted that health and age did not always permit that to happen, and that care was a priority at that time.

He added that Hafod y Gest home had been discussed for many years now and that he was concerned about residents and staff and that an urgent decision was required on the future of the home. He expressed concern that the care provision did not have any direction in Gwynedd and that comprehensive guidelines were needed for the entire county.

He expressed concern that the decision to close Hafod y Gest would be reflected in the other homes in the county, with the service being externalised. He pressed on members to support the local member's amendment.

- (viii) The member representing Porthmadog East noted that the consultation and the engagement work had been defective, and that he was dissatisfied that the views of the scrutiny committees, the local member, the nearby members, Porthmadog Town Council, along with the local community, who had all asked for further discussion and consultation, had fallen on deaf ears. He pressed on members to support the amendment and hold further discussions in order to secure a suitable provision for the needs and aspirations of the community.
- (ix) A member noted that she had asked the Council on numerous occasions over the years to dual register residential and nursing homes under the same roof, so that the elderly did not have to be moved from one home to another. The Council had informed her that this was not possible; however, she had now been given to understand that this was not the case. She pressed on members to support the local member's amendment.
- (x) Another member noted that there was evidence that moving the elderly shortened their lives. The member expressed grave concern regarding the existing residents and pressed that extra care housing should be built separately to the current provision in Hafod y Gest so that current residents did not have to move from the home.
- (xi) Many members expressed concern regarding the current residents of the home, and it was expressed that this concern was at the root of many of the objections to the proposed changes.
- (xii) The Council Leader noted that 96% of Gwynedd's residents wished to continue living independently and that the Council needed to provide comprehensive provisions to ensure that this was possible. He noted that there was agreement that there were shortcomings in the provision of extra care housing in Porthmadog and although much work had been achieved already, he agreed that further work and discussion was needed. He pressed on members to support the amendment in order to ensure a modern, current and purposeful provision for the area; however, he emphasised that there was a need to set a specific timeframe for the work.

With the permission of the proposer and seconder, an addition was made to the amendment that the full report would return to the Council in six months.

In accordance with procedural rule 19(6), the following vote was registered to refuse the current recommendations and return to hold transparent and thorough discussions to secure a suitable provision for the needs and aspirations of the community, and to return a full report to the Council in six months.

In favour: (60) Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Anwen Davies, Dyfed Edwards, Dylan Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, T G Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Simon Glyn, Keith Greenly-Jones, Gwen Griffith, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Gwenllïan, Christopher Hughes, Huw Price Hughes, Louise Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, O P Huws, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, John Gwilym Jones, John Wynn Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, R Len Jones, Penri Jones, Eryl Jones-

Williams, P.G.Larsen, Dewi Llewelyn, J Wynn Meredith, Llinos Merks, Dafydd Meurig, 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, Siôn S. Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Guto Rhys Tomos, Ann Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, J.W.Williams, Owain Williams and Mandy Williams-Davies.

Against: (0)

Abstaining (5): Councillors: Selwyn Griffiths, June Marshall. Keith Marshall, R. H. Wyn Williams and Robert Wright.

The Chairman reported that the amendment had carried and a vote was taken on the amended proposal.

In response to an enquiry, the Head of Democracy and Legal Department explained that the Council's new democratic arrangements would come into force in May 2012. Although the Cabinet would decide upon this issue in six months' time, she explained that it would be possible to return the item to the full Council for a discussion on the matter.

RESOLVED to refuse the current recommendations and return to hold transparent and thorough discussions to secure a suitable provision for the needs and aspirations of the community, and to return a full report to the Council in six months' time.

8. SCHOOLS REORGANISATION IN THE EASTERN PART OF Y GADER CATCHMENT AREA

(i) Submitted:-

- (a) The report of Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director, following a statutory consultation on proposals to reorganise primary schools in the eastern part of Y Gader catchment area.
- (b) The recommendations of the Council Board at its meeting on 13 December 2011.

(ii) The Education Leader set out the background and context of the report and it was explained that following a statutory consultation period, support was sought to the recommendations to reorganise schools in the eastern part of Y Gader catchment area. It was noted that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, along with the Council Board, had approved the recommendations without objection.

It was explained that the confirmation received from the Minister for Education that resources were available for the construction of an area school in Bro Dysynni, along with the development in progress to build the new Ysgol yr Hendre in Caernarfon, meant that the County's Primary Schools Reorganisation Strategy had brought £17m to Gwynedd at a very challenging economic time for developers. It was added that Gwynedd had also been successful with a number of aspects of the bid for capital funding from the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme. This meant that a further investment of £36m would come to Gwynedd towards the schools in the Berwyn area, Ysgol Groeslon and Ysgol Glan Cegin and towards a new Ysgol Hafod Lon.

- (iii) The Education Leader expressed gratitude to the campaign of the Herald newspapers and other extensive support which had enabled the Council to create momentum and secure investment across Gwynedd, including in the poorest areas of the county.
- (iv) She also thanked the local members for their hard work over the past months.
- (v) The Education Leader referred to a letter she had received from the mother of a three year old girl from the village of Llanfachreth. The letter noted that they had decided to keep the girl in a private nursery education provision because of the lack of nursery school-age

children in Ysgol Machreth. Also, the four children who were in the foundation phase were boys. The Education Leader emphasised that the letter highlighted the complex problems facing the parents in the area. Furthermore, it was explained that the family supported the principle of establishing a new area school as they were of the opinion that it would strengthen the educational provision for all children in Brithdir, Llanfachreth and Rhydymain. Also, it would enrich the educational and social experiences of the pupils and improve resources and the education environment for them, as well as strengthen the use made of the Welsh language amongst them.

(vi) The local member representing the Brithdir a Llanfachreth ward noted:-

- that he was very grateful to the Education Portfolio Leader and the Council's officers for their praiseworthy work in re-organising schools in the eastern part of Y Gader catchment area;
- that the Catchment Area Review Panels had ensured an opportunity for every school to voice its opinion and that there had been consensus at the meetings that the current situation was unsustainable for the future and that there was a need to re-organise;
- that the outcome of the review showed that the Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy schools supported establishing an area school, and that Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain, also supported the area school but that they would prefer to see the school being located in their village;
- that the response in Llanfachreth had been slightly more mixed, with an objection to close the school based on the loss to the community and the loss of a church school in the countryside; also, there was a wish to establish a new area school on a neutral site;
- that he had discussed the situation with some of the parents of Ysgol Machreth before the decision was made to close the school, and some of the parents were concerned about the future as pupil numbers were so low in the catchment area;
- that the Council's experts had undertaken a very detailed assessment of the advantages and strengths and weaknesses of many locations in the area and had decided, for valid reasons, that the new school should be established in Brithdir;
- with Ysgol Brithdir full to capacity, it was emphasised that centralising the new school on a site that was closest to the majority of the children reduced the risk to the Council in future.

(vii) The local member representing the Corris a Mawddwy ward noted:-

- that he congratulated and thanked officers for their hard work to secure an excellent investment for south Meirionnydd that would assist the local economy;
- that there was consensus that the current situation was unsustainable and that an area school was needed; however, some had changed their minds as the school would not be located in their village;
- that the community wished to have a new area school on a neutral site, but that the current economic climate did not allow for that;
- taking the three sites into account, the risk to the Council of investing in dwindling schools was much too high and it would be better to establish the area school on the Brithdir site as the current school was full to capacity;
- that the new school would have to collaborate with Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy as both schools would be as one and the governors of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and the community council were fully supportive of the Ysgol Brithdir site;
- that he also supported the Ysgol Brithdir site and hoped that it would be possible to proceed without delay to issue the statutory notices for the benefit of the area.

In accordance with procedural rule 19(6), the following vote was recorded on recommendations to re-organise primary schools in the eastern part of Y Gader catchment area.

In favour: (50) Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Keith Greenly-Jones, Gwen Griffith, Siân Gwenllian, Christopher Hughes, Huw Price Hughes, Sylvia Humphreys, O. P. Huws, Anne Lloyd Jones, Brian Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, John Gwilym Jones, John Wynn Jones, Linda Wyn Jones, R. Len Jones, Penri Jones, P. G. Larsen, Dewi Llewelyn, June Marshall, Keith Marshall, Dafydd Meurig, Dewi Owen, W. Roy Owen, Arwel Pierce, Peter Read, Dafydd Roberts, E Caerwyn Roberts, Glyn Roberts, Ieuan Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, Siôn S. Roberts, Trevor Roberts, W Gareth Roberts, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Guto Rhys Tomos, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, R. H. Wyn Williams, J.W.Williams, and Mandy Williams-Davies.

Against: (0)

Abstaining (8): Councillors: Anwen Davies, Thomas G Ellis, Simon Glyn, Alwyn Gruffydd, Louise Hughes, Llinos Merks, Owain Williams and Bob Wright.

RESOLVED

- (i) to close Brithdir, Dinas Mawddwy, Ieuan Gwynedd and Machreth schools on 31 August 2013, and issue statutory notices in accordance with the requirements of Section 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to implement this.
- (ii) to establish a Multi-site Area Community School for 3-11 year olds to open on 1 September 2013 on the existing sites of Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy schools, to provide education for the existing catchment areas of Brithdir, Dinas Mawddwy, Ieuan Gwynedd and Machreth schools, and issue statutory notices in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to implement this.

9. DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL

- (i) Submitted:-
 - (a) The report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department on changes to the Council's structure and role of back-bench members to support the change to Cabinet arrangements;
 - (b) The recommendations of the Principal Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 December 2011.
- (ii) The Council Leader set out the background and context of the report.

It was reported that the Council, at its previous meeting, had adopted the Leader and Cabinet form of executive from May 2012 onwards, and that the proposed arrangements provided a strong, new framework to support the change to Cabinet arrangements, and strengthened the role of back-bench members and allowed them to call the Cabinet to account.

It was explained that the proposed framework sought to ensure that there was better clarity regarding the role of a member, that suitable forums existed for correct discussions, along with strengthening the Council's engagement with the residents of Gwynedd.

- (iii) It was noted that the Principal Scrutiny Committee had discussed the arrangements in detail and had approved the proposed recommendations. It was explained that the Council's agreement was sought to the direction of the proposed arrangements, and it was emphasised that the new Council would have an opportunity to consider the details in due course.
- (iv) A member expressed considerable discontent regarding establishing area forums to the detriment of area committees. He emphasised that there was a special identity in the Meirionnydd area. He explained that he had sought to strengthen the role of the Meirionnydd Area Committee over the years, and that the committee had recently

undertaken key matters of great importance to Meirionnydd, such as the economic situation and the situation of secondary schools in the area. He expressed grave concern that establishing area forums would undermine the role of the local member and he emphasised that further attention needed to be given to the matter.

- (v) The Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee reported that the scrutiny committee had approved the proposed arrangements. He emphasised that thorough consultation had been undertaken on the arrangements and expressed his disappointment that the member had not voiced his concerns during the consultation.

He emphasised that the Area Committees had lost powers over the years, and that there was support to establishing Area Forums as it was an opportunity to establish closer contact with the areas and residents of the county.

Many members expressed their objection to abolishing the Area Committee and noted that they provided an opportunity for members to question Heads of Department. Also, they agreed that the proposed arrangements would weaken the role of the local member and would not be democratic.

Another member noted that Area Forums were successful in some local authorities and that they gave local members more voice and powers.

There was general agreement that further information was needed in order to make a balanced decision.

- (vi) With the agreement of the Leader, an amendment to **consider further** the establishment of Area Forums to replace the Area Committees was accepted.
- (vii) A member noted that it was important that the Area Committees had an opportunity to discuss the matter further, and an amendment was proposed and seconded to consider further the establishment of Area Forums to replace the Area Committees in the Council in May 2012 along the lines noted in the report and **“to submit a report on the matter for the consideration of the area committees”**. A vote was taken on the amendment.

The Chairman reported that the amendment had carried and a vote was taken on the amended proposal.

- (viii) A member noted that there was a need to give further detailed attention to the role of champions.
- (ix) A member expressed great discontent as it would not be possible to reference up the Cabinet's decisions to the full Council. The Head of Democracy and Legal Department emphasised that the legal rules were the same for every Council and that the full Council was not entitled to change the Cabinet's decision, unless it was contrary to budget or policy framework. However; she noted that it would be possible for the full Council to discuss and make recommendations on matters.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) To adopt the scrutiny committees' structure along the following lines:**
- (i) To establish three Scrutiny Committees, each with 18 members, namely Strategic and Development, Supporting Communities and Providing Services in accordance with the themes noted in the report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department.**
- (ii) To increase the membership of the Audit Committee to 18 elected members and that this committee undertakes the overview and scrutiny duties noted in Table 1 of the report.**
- (iii) To submit a further report on the required amendments to the Constitution and Scrutiny Strategy in order to establish the amended scrutiny structure.**

- (b) To consider further the establishment of an Area Forum arrangement to replace the Area Committees in the Council in May 2012 along the lines noted in the report and submit a report on the matter for the consideration of the area committees.
- (c) To accept the direction on the role of the full Council.
- (ch) To adopt the structure for other committees.
- (d) To accept the proposal to strengthen the role of the back-bench member by means of contact with the Cabinet, champions and workshops.
- (dd) To accept the proposals on support for members.

10. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Submitted:-

- (i) The report of the Head of Democracy and Legal Department proposing changes to the polling districts and polling places following a review;
- (ii) The recommendations of the area committees on the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.

The background and context of the report was set out by the Senior Leader – Resources and details were given on the arrangements for the 2011 review.

It was noted that the Meirionnydd Area Committee, at its meeting on 14 November 2011, had recommended closing the polling station in the Oakley Arms, Maentwrog, and move the polling station to Gellilydan. However, as there was agreement that the Grapes Hotel, Maentwrog was suitable to be used as a polling station, the Council was asked to move the register to the Grapes Hotel, rather than to Gellilydan.

In response to an enquiry, the Head of Democracy and Legal Department explained that temporary provisions would have to be made at the Grapes Hotel and in a few other stations in order to have disabled access.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations of the Area Committees as follows:-

Arfon Area Committee

To close the Polling Station in Nant Peris and move the register to Llanberis Polling Station;

Dwyfor Area Committee

To close the Polling Station in Bryncir and move the register to Garn Dolbenmaen Polling Station;

Meirionnydd Area Committee

- (i) To retain the AG2 (Bontddu) register separately and combine E1, E3 and E4 (Barmouth).
- (ii) To close the polling station at the Oakeley Arms, Maentwrog and move the register to the Grapes Hotel, Maentwrog.
- (iii) To close the Polling Station in Sarnau and move the register to Llandderfel Polling Station.
- (iv) To close the Polling Station in Bontddu and move the register to Llanelltyd Polling Station.

11. COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS

- (i) Submitted – the report of the Head of Finance Department to formally confirm the previous decisions made not to allow discounts for second homes and empty properties, for 2012/13 and beyond.
- (ii) The Finance Leader set out the background and context of the report and noted that the Council's financial strategy and the grant settlement were based on continuing with the policy and not allowing a discount.

- (iii) It was reported that a number of members had suggested that more than 100% of the Council Tax payable normally on second homes should be charged by using a 'premium' rather than a discount. To this end, it was noted that a change would be needed in the national Regulations.

It was explained that the Council, along with other authorities, continued to campaign to encourage developments of this type. However, in order to implement this in full, it was explained that there would be a need to secure legislative powers for the Welsh Government and powers relating to managing the transfer of second homes to commercial holiday homes and non-domestic rates.

- (iv) A member noted that he had been given to understand that 40 properties had been brought back into use this year, and the Finance Leader was asked to attempt to identify additional funding in order to bring more empty properties back into use.

RESOLVED that Gwynedd Council, for 2012/13, allows NO discount under Section 12 of the Local Government Act 1992 to the two categories of second homes (classes A and B), as defined in the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) Regulations, and that Gwynedd Council allows NO discount in the context of empty homes (class C).

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2011/12

Submitted – the report of the Head of Finance Department on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2011/12.

It was reported that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2011/12 approved by the Council on 3 March 2011 set the framework for investing surplus money in order to earn interest on it during the year.

As the global financial situation had deteriorated during 2011/12, and as a number of banks on the Council's List of Authorised Counterparties had been downgraded, it was explained that the Council's treasury consultants had recommended that the minimum credit rating should be changed to "A-", rather than "A", and reduce the maximum term of investments to one year, rather than the existing two years.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2011/12 included Fixed Term Deposits with Local Authorities and that the Council's treasury consultants recommended increasing the limit from a total of £10m for the category to £25m.

It was noted that the Audit Committee had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED

- a) **To change to a minimum credit rating of "A-" and reduce the maximum cash deposit term to one year for any financial institution used for investment purposes.**
- b) **To increase the limit for investments with local authorities to £25m.**

13. DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER RELATING TO THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN BETHESDA, GERLAN AND PARC MEURIG

Submitted – the report of the Senior Community Safety Officer seeking the Committee's support to create a Designated Public Places Order in Bethesda, Gerlan and Parc Meurig.

The Senior Leader – Care set out the background and context of the report, details were given of the purpose and aim of the Order and reference was made to the evidence to support the proposal and the response received to the local consultation.

A member noted that there was evidence that drinking alcohol in public places was a problem in the areas of Bethesda, Gerlan and Parc Meurig and that the Order was greatly welcomed. It was emphasised that effective policing was essential in order to ensure the success of the Order.

RESOLVED to create a Designated Public Places Order in Bethesda, Gerlan and Parc Meurig, in accordance with the details noted in the report of the Senior Community Safety Officer with the order to become operational on 1 March 2012.

14. URGENT MATTER - NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Procedural Rule 13, it was reported that a notice of motion had been submitted, along with a procedural motion, in accordance with Procedural Rule 13 (12), by Councillor Dyfed Edwards, requesting that the matter be discussed at the full Council without being referred to committee:-

RESOLVED to discuss the proposal at this meeting.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:-

“The Welsh Government has stated its intention to create one environmental body for Wales. The headquarters of the Countryside Council for Wales is already in Bangor. Gwynedd Council believes that this is an excellent opportunity to devolve jobs from Cardiff and that the headquarters of the new body should be located in the Bangor area. The Council instructs the Council Leader to write to the First Minister of Wales and relevant ministers in the Welsh Government to encourage them to ensure that this happens. Furthermore, we ask the people of Gwynedd and all elected representatives to support this request.”

It was noted that there was a risk that the Welsh Government’s proposal to merge the Forestry Commission, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency could lead to job losses in the headquarters of the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency in Bangor, by centralising the jobs in Cardiff or elsewhere outside Gwynedd.

It was emphasised that there was an opportunity available to press on the Welsh Government to locate the headquarters of the new body in Bangor, and thus safeguard these quality jobs in Gwynedd.

The Leader noted that he hoped that every elected member and body across the county supported the request.

The Leader was thanked for bringing this important matter to the attention of the Council.

RESOLVED to instruct the Gwynedd Council Leader to write to the First Minister of Wales and relevant ministers of the Welsh Government, to encourage them to locate the headquarters of the new environmental body in the Bangor area.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN