

THE CABINET 22/11/16

Present-

Councillors: Dyfed Edwards (Chairman), Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Peredur Jenkins, Dafydd Meurig, Mair Rowlands, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas and Mandy Williams-Davies. Councillor Aeron M. Jones (for item 10 only).

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager), Dewi Morgan (Senior Manager - Revenue and Risk), Rhion Glyn (Senior Executive Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor John Wynn Jones and Councillor W. Gareth Roberts; Councillor Roy Owen and Councillor Gethin G Williams (for item 10) and Iwan T Jones, Corporate Director.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest for the reasons noted:

- Councillor Peredur Jenkins, in item 8 on the agenda, because he owned a personal property and rented business property
- Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, in item 8 on the agenda, as he owned a second property
- Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies, in item 8 on the agenda, as her husband had inherited an empty property from his parents

The Members were of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion on the item noted.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2016

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 November 2016, as a true record.

6. REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 - SECOND QUARTER REVIEW (SEPTEMBER 2016)

The item was presented by Cllr Peredur Jenkins.

RESOLVED

To accept the report on the second quarter review of the Revenue Budget (position as at 30 September 2016) and consider the latest financial situation regarding to the budgets of each department/service, and ask the Cabinet Members and the relevant heads of department to take the appropriate steps regarding matters under their leadership/management.

- To transfer (£135k) from a corporate budget to the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to finance the additional costs resulting from the change in charging for the first six weeks of residential and nursing care.
- To allow the Regulatory Department to use (£200k) of their underspend to finance specific plans to improve the condition of car parks.
- To transfer (£300k) from the Regulatory Department to the Corporate Redundancy Fund to assist with the changes facing us as a Council.
- To harvest (£300k) from the favourable Council Tax collections, and (£290k) from the Benefits underspend, together with (£200k) of the underspend included within 'Other', and transfer as follows:
 - use (£20k) of the underspend as a financial contribution to the independent Harlech Swimming Pool as a one-off bridging payment for the period to 31 March 2017, in accordance with the Cabinet decision on 4 October 2016.
 - use (£135k) to finance the financial obligations of the change in the Care Act 2014 by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department.
 - the remainder of (£635k) to be set aside in the Transformation Fund.

DISCUSSION

The Cabinet Member noted that the report included the latest review of the Council's revenue budget for 2016/2017 and a summary for each Department was submitted. Compared with quarter 1, it was reported that the situation had improved and that this derived from good collaboration between Cabinet Members and Heads of Service who have ensured good control.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- That the increase in car park income reflected increased use of car parks

in a prosperous year in tourism terms.

- That the financial position was very good given the challenges facing the Council. It appeared that the financial responsibility had cascaded through the Council's departments and that this was now a good foundation for sound planning.
- This was effective control of expenditure by moving and transferring funds. This allowed investment in different methods of providing services.
- Welcome transfers to corporate funds towards the Council's priorities in order to plan appropriately for the future.

The services were thanked for their financial discipline.

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 - SECOND QUARTER REVIEW (SEPTEMBER 2016)

The item was presented by Councillor Peredur Jenkins.

RESOLVED

To accept the report on the second quarter review (30 September 2016 position) of the capital programme, and to approve the revised financing as shown in part 4 of the report, namely:

- an increase of £1.367m in the use of other borrowing (including unsupported borrowing)
- a decrease of £1.174m in the use of grants and contributions
- an increase of £0.035m in the use of revenue contributions
- an increase of £0.938m in the use of renewal and other reserves

DISCUSSION

Councillor Peredur Jenkins noted that the report was a technical one and was a part of the 2016 budget monitoring procedure. He highlighted the main findings which arose from the situation together with the main changes according to source of funding.

Comments arising:

- that a significant investment had been made in educational buildings across the county and that these included excellent resources which have a significant impact on children's education.
- that capital funding made a difference in all parts of the County.
- that the future of grants was uncertain as a result of the decision to leave the European Union - we must prepare and plan for this gap.

The officers were thanked for the information.

8. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM ON LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES

The report was submitted by Councillor Dyfed Edwards.

RESOLVED

To recommend to the Full Council:

For the 2017/18 Financial Year:

1. That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount for 2017/18 in accordance with Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to the two classes of second homes (classes A and B), as defined in the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998.
2. That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount in 2017/18 in respect of empty homes (class C).

For the 2018/19 Financial Year:

3. That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount on class A second homes for 2018/19, in accordance with Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
4. That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 50% on class B second homes for 2018/19, in accordance with Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
5. That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 50% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more for 2018/19, in accordance with Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

DISCUSSION

The Council Leader noted that the report was a result of wide-ranging discussions in a field in which Gwynedd Council had lobbied hard over the years to increase the additional taxation levels on second homes and empty properties. One outcome of the increase would be to invest a sum of money for a fund to support those who have difficulties accessing housing - this was a basic right. It was noted that the Council had consulted with the public and that additional work had been carried out by the Scrutiny Investigation Group (Corporate Scrutiny Committee) to look into the recommendations in detail.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- We must be clear about the impact of implementing any policy.
- When considering empty houses, we must take sensible action. That there was a twofold element here - creating a detrimental impact on the environment visually and devaluing neighbouring houses together with the impact on the condition of the housing stock.
- If action were to be taken, an adequate fund must be created to make a difference to housing schemes.
- To comply, the Finance Department would require funding to carry out inspection work; therefore, the matter must be looked at in detail.
- The change could have a positive impact on those who cannot access housing.

The Head of Finance Department submitted the recommendations of the scrutiny investigation group; the Cabinet accepted the recommendations and the scrutiny members were thanked for the detailed consideration given to the matter

9. PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

The report was submitted by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED

- a) To accept the Commission's proposals in respect of the Isle of Anglesey and Arfon parliamentary constituency;
- b) To disagree with the proposals set out by the Commission for South Clwyd and Gwynedd constituency and to present alternative proposals that would keep the County's boundaries intact but by also including similar areas in relation to culture and language to obtain the necessary electorate within the constituency as noted in the report;
- c) To press upon the Commission to adopt Welsh names for constituencies in Wales;
- ch) To present suggestions for appropriate names for the Gwynedd constituencies, such as Gwynedd Uwch Conwy, which is an old historical name.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Executive noted that the matter had been under discussion for some years and that the Boundary Commission for Wales had now announced its proposals for changing parliamentary constituencies in Wales and reconciling the number of people that each constituency would represent. It was noted that the report included other arguments and possible options that the Commission could consider. The observations would be submitted to the Commission by 5 December.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- That there was a lack of understanding by the Commission of 'Traditional Communities' that were very important to Gwynedd
- Concerns were raised about how Gwynedd Council would be able to work effectively
- Concerns about the collaboration element with Members of Parliament who may be representing three counties
- Identity must be safeguarded in vast parts of Gwynedd
- Important to use native Welsh names as new names
- That the response was acceptable and that the proposals made sense
- These were Mathematicians not logical Historians.
- Propose the name Gwynedd Uwch Conwy in the decision

10. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE SERVICE

The report was submitted by Cllrs Peredur Jenkins and Dyfrig Siencyn. Councillor Aeron Maldwyn Jones was welcomed to the meeting as one of five Councillors who represented Gwynedd Council on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED

To propose the observations noted in part 4 of the report in response to the Fire Service consultation.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the report responded to the consultation by the Fire Service in light of the financial squeeze and the likely threat to the service.

Cllr. Aeron Maldwyn Jones noted that he had been a member of the Authority for a year. He said that the front-line work was excellent but that the management system and the administrative arrangements needed to be looked at. He added that salaries appeared high given the responsibilities compared with management salaries in the Council.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- It did not appear that a thorough process of identifying efficiency savings had taken place before moving on to cuts.
- A suggestion was made to accept the average increase of the settlement until evidence would be provided that further efficiency savings were not possible.
- Who scrutinised the Service's financial strategy?
- The Council, which had an interest as one of the subscribers, must seek to collaborate.
- It must be ensured that there would be no risks for the residents of Gwynedd.
- The Service had robust working conditions, but there were opportunities to look at the situation.
- A suggestion was made to form a Joint Scrutiny Committee (across north Wales) which would have independent expertise to co-ordinate and advise. This would ensure an understanding of the budgets together with broader, less traditional elements.
- There was a need to look at the national position and the possibilities of working with other emergency services.
- A fuller picture must be obtained of the considerations given to the cuts by the Service.

It was proposed and seconded to add the suggestion to form a Joint Scrutiny Committee across north Wales and that this should be added to Gwynedd Council's response to the consultation.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT: CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The item was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn in the absence of Cllr. W Gareth Roberts. The main points were highlighted by Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director).

RESOLVED

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

When referring to Strategic Plan G2 - *Integrated Working Project, focusing on what counts for individuals*, it was highlighted that the work in Eifionydd was going from strength to strength with the number of traditional packages reducing. It was noted that there had been some delay with consultation processes with Health Board staff, but it was hoped that a robust structure would be in place by April 2017.

Strategic Plan G3 - *Restructuring the Adults, Health and Well-being Department* - it was noted that the report on the structure of the Adults Safeguarding Team would be submitted to the Cabinet.

Strategic Plan G5 - *Frondeg* - it was confirmed that Grŵp Cynefin was eager to be a development partner.

Strategic Plan G7 *Capacity and sustainability of the care and health arrangements - New Care Model* - it was noted that the work of developing Llys Cadfan Residential Home continued with the key task of drafting a statement of purpose underway. Having completed this, it would be possible to request that the Care Inspectorate changed the registration of the home. It was noted that this new model was being addressed nationally.

Performance of measure **SCA/001** - *the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over* - significant concern was noted if the trend were to continue. It was reported that work was being done to get to grips with the problem and that a session facilitated by specialists had been arranged for January to better understand the process of transferring patients.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Assessment - it was reported that a number of staff had now qualified to carry out the assessments, but we continued in a situation of battling against the numbers.

Overspend of £303k - continued to collaborate with the Finance Department to ensure that savings would be realised by transforming services.

Collaboration with the Health Board to understand the process of transferring patients was welcomed - this was considered an important step forward and a good opportunity to better understand the situation.

12. PERFORMANCE REPORT: CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, CUSTOMER CARE, LIBRARIES, DEPRIVATION AND EQUALITY

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas.

RESOLVED

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The Cabinet Member referred to two strategic projects T7 *Working Together against Poverty* and expressed the need to collaborate across departments and hold discussions with Heads to get to grips with the matter. It was noted that, following the announcement of the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to end the Communities First scheme, there was a need to keep an eye on the likely effect on the most vulnerable residents of Gwynedd.

In response, the Cabinet Member for the Economy noted that the Council needed to analyse what the effect would be as the Communities First Scheme had been the foundation for many good projects. There would be a need to look at the make-up and identify which project was associated with each department.

Scheme T9 Housing Supply Strategy - *Establishing Affordable Housing for Gwynedd residents in rural areas* - that we needed to establish our own brand in order to ensure that Gwynedd Council would get recognition. When discussing the provision for homeless people, it was noted that work was being done to look at the current provision in Corris.

In the context of measuring performance - Homelessness Unit, concerns were highlighted that a high number of individuals needed to be housed and that the number of people contacting the unit was increasing. It was noted that work was underway to try to respond to this.

The recent increased pressure on Galw Gwynedd and Siopau Gwynedd Units to respond to calls regarding the changes in the brown bin arrangements was highlighted.

When referring to the four objectives of the Gwynedd Council Strategic Equality Plan, it was highlighted that creating the circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election to be an elected member was challenging, but that good work had been done recently with a video clip released on the Council's website.

In terms of the financial situation, it was noted that 94% of the savings had been realised and the remainder would be realised before the end of the year.

A request was made to look in more detail at establishing a brand for Gwynedd Council in the context of Affordable Housing: an opportunity to consider the public impact and ensure recognition for the Council.

In the context of Communities First, it was noted that though it may not have been the best scheme, it was a robust foundation for many things. There was a need to look at the effects of this and try to sustain the projects which would be affected significantly.

There was a suggestion for the Council to try to influence the Minister. What was the Government's plan to respond to poverty? Concern that there was no long-term vision.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for the information and for the work and progress with the projects within a very wide-ranging portfolio. The Cabinet Member thanked Rhion Glyn for his support and he was congratulated on his secondment.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.25 pm

CHAIRMAN