

THE CABINET TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2019

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Catrin Elen Wager and Cemlyn Rees Williams

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director) and Annes Sion (Member Support Officer), Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department)

Item 6: Gwenllian Williams (Gwynedd Language Development Officer)

Item 7: Dafydd Gibbard (Senior Property Manager)

Item 8: Dewi Wyn Jones (The Council's Business Support Service Manager)

Items 9 and 10: Arwel Wyn Owen (Senior Housing and Well-being Manager), Gareth Wyn Parri (Housing Options Team Leader)

Item 11: Delyth Gadlys Williams (Corporate Policy Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

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 21 MAY AND 4 JUNE 2019

The Chair signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 May 2019 and 4 June 2019, as a true record.

6. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS 2018-19

Submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

The Annual Report was approved, and was authorised for publication in accordance with Gwynedd Council's Language Standards.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that it reported on the Council's actions in complying with the Welsh Language Commissioner standards in relation to the Welsh language. It was noted that the Council far exceeded the Welsh Language Commissioner's expected standards, and added that the Council set a standard for Wales. It was stated that creating and publishing the report was a requirement.

It was added that reporting on any work that ensured compliance, Welsh speaking staff members, any training held, complaints, and they way language requirements were recorded, were all specific requirements.

The Welsh Language Development Officer added that the data for the number of staff members was complete when the report was published but she confirmed that 94% of staff were able to speak Welsh fluently. She emphasised that this showed that the Council's recruitment policy was very good. Attention was drawn to training data available in Welsh, and it was noted that progress had been made in the courses that were available bilingually and in English. It was added that the Service would look into this further.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the fact that, of the 200 staff members that were not fluent in the language, 172 had received further training.
- It was noted, in terms of complaints, that one of the complaints had been presented to the Council through the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner's process was outlined, emphasising its potential lengthiness. Nevertheless, it was explained that the new Commissioner had suggested that the arrangements would be amended in the coming years.
- The Dafydd Orwig Award was mentioned, drawing attention specifically to the work carried out by the Health, Safety and Well-being Department in securing Welsh medium resources for IOSH training.
- It was noted that not all training was available in Welsh, and that this field needed to be reviewed in order to identify and create specialist courses in some fields

7. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S SMALL HOLDINGS ESTATE

The report was submitted by Cllr Gareth Griffith

DECISION

Resolved to respond to the Communities Scrutiny Committee's conclusions by:

- Supporting the Cabinet Member to establish a County Smallholdings Advisory Panel with a clear constitution and a broader terms of reference to assist the Cabinet Member with his smallholdings estate management
- To refer any surplus deriving from the estate in future, which was above the sum already part of the Service's current revenue budget, to be reinvested in the Smallholdings Estate, by using a commercial account and a fund allocated to this end.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting the need to amend the decision after further discussions with the Finance Department. It was explained that the request to commission work to consider whether there would be any financial benefits to establishing a company to manage the smallholdings had to be withdrawn.

It was noted that the Smallholdings Estate had not been reviewed since 2008. It was added that the matter had been submitted as a report to the Communities Scrutiny Committee. The conclusions of the Scrutiny Committee were highlighted, noting the need to establish a single Smallholdings Consultative Panel across the County with a constitution and terms of reference, and the right for the Service to direct any profit generated by the estate to be reinvested in the Smallholdings Estate.

The Senior Property Manager added that the report offered a way forward for the Smallholdings Service. The Scrutiny Committee's conclusions were elaborated upon, noting that the Service had already acted on the Committee's response and had increased the staff resource available to manage the smallholdings.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that the smallholdings provided work and accommodation for people who would contribute to maintaining rural communities in Wales.
- It was noted that the members were pleased to see the report that expressed the opinion of Scrutiny Members. It was added that they concurred with the idea of withdrawing the request to set up a company for a service that had so few staff members.
- It was emphasised that the wording of the decision had to be reconsidered, noting that any surplus derived from the estate would be put in a fund earmarked for reinvestment within the smallholdings estate.

8. GWYNEDD COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19

Submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

The Gwynedd Council Performance Report 2018/19 was approved and recommended for adoption by the Full Council.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and it was noted that the report would be published in which it would track the Council's progress. It was added that the Report emphasised the Council's priorities seen in the Council's Plan. Attention was drawn to the space in the report where the Foreword by the Leader of Gwynedd Council should be. This would be written after this discussion.

It was noted that, in contrast to last year, there was greater emphasis on style rather than on numbers and data. It was stated that the report summarised the Council's Performance Challenge work, which took place throughout the year.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The performance of the Education Department was highlighted, and it was noted that 43.8% of pupils who had access to free school meals (FSM) had gained five GCSEs grades A*-C, and that this figure should be regarded with pride.
- It was noted that the foreword should celebrate the Council's successes this year.
- It was stated that the Cabinet Member for the Adults, Health and Well-being Department was very pleased with the progress made on Improvement Priority 6 - Ensuring we have care services that help people live their lives as they wish. It was stated that five local teams had been formed to work alongside the Health service to provide services to meet the needs and welfare of the citizen.
- Hafod y Gest scheme was highlighted as one of the Council's success stories this year.
- It was noted that two million people had visited the website during the year, and there had been an increase in the number of people using the Self Service provision.
- Attention was drawn to the good work being done jointly by the Council, the Health Service and the Third Sector.
- As regards recycling statistics, it was stated the Gwynedd Council now recycled 63% of the county's waste, and it was added that it recycled responsibly within the UK.
- It was emphasised that the street light changing programme was now in its second phase, which not only reduced costs but reduced the county's carbon emissions.

9. GWYNEDD COMMON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

Subject to amending the wording in paragraphs 2.23 to 2.25 to ensure that the organisation's ability to act as a trustee for applicants aged 16-17 was clear, the new Common Housing Allocation Policy to allocate social housing based on the reflection of needs for the applicants by banding them rather than allocating points was approved.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it discussed the arrangements for letting social housing across Gwynedd. It was added that the Partnership had been established in 2012 and four housing registers had been amalgamated into one system for the Partnership. It was mentioned that the housing register had been making allocations based on points but it was decided that an independent review of letting arrangements was needed in order to implement a system that was easy to understand and that would simplify the system for the individual.

It was noted that the new system had five different bands. Additionally, it was emphasised that individuals with links to Gwynedd would be prioritised in this new banding system. It was reiterated that the new system was innovative and proved they were endeavouring to assist local people.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The policy was welcomed noting that it was a huge step forward to securing housing for local people. People were encouraged to put their names forward

so that plans could be made for them.

- It was noted that the policy could cause problems; therefore, it was asked whether the policy would be reviewed. It was expressed that a commitment had been made to review it in 12 months' time. It was also added that they had learnt from the consultation, that a panel would be set up to escalate some cases. In terms of impact, it was noted that most on the list would be in band two, and that this band had been divided into sub-categories.
- Attention was drawn to point 2.23 in the Policy, which was the procedure for applicants of 16 and 17 years old. It was expressed that applicants under 18 years of age would have to provide details of an adult who was willing to be a trustee. An enquiry was made about the steps if the Council was the corporate parent, as support and accommodation would be required for these young people to succeed. It was noted that the clause in point 2.24, which stated that trustees act on behalf of an organisation or person, had to be amended.
- The importance of informing the public about the change in policy was noted. It was added that the partnership would contact everyone on the list and in the community in different ways to make them aware of the change.

10. HOUSING STRATEGY - FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR 2019/20

Submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

To approve releasing £1.25million from the Council Premium Rates Fund for the three plans noted in Appendix 1 for 2019/20.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the Housing Strategy would be submitted to the Cabinet and the Full Council during the coming months. It was expressed that in order to ensure that plans could be delivered in 2019/20, funds would have to be allocated.

Plans to be funded were outlined, which included Purpose Built Accommodation, a pioneering scheme to provide accommodation units for homeless single people, known as pods, and which had received media attention recently. The Empty Homes Scheme and Housing Repair Fund were also highlighted. It was added that there were more schemes in the Housing Strategy.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that funding these schemes would bridge the gap until the Housing Strategy was in place

11. ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2018-19

Submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting the need to ensure equality across the Council. It was expressed that the report showed that the work carried out in relation to equality was in line with the Council's aims.

It was stated that work had been done with the Core Equality Group and that officers continued to learn about the field through training. It was expressed that the Council was running an unconscious bias course. It was emphasised that equality was an integral part of the Council's work.

Observations arising from the discussion

— The report, which emphasised the Council's good work, was welcomed. Attention was drawn to the third aim, noting the need to ensure that people from different backgrounds stood as elected members for the Council.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.15 pm

CHAIRMAN