

**THE CABINET 28/04/20**

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**Present-**

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

**Also present-**

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department).

**1. APOLOGIES**

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

**2. DECORATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

No declarations of personal interest were received.

**3. URGENT MATTERS**

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 10 MARCH 2020**

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020, as a true record.

**6. APPLICATION FOR RESOURCES BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams

## **DECISION**

Resolved to commit £180,000 of one-off funding from the Council's transformation fund up to the end of March 2022 to enable the Education Department to have additional capacity on secondment terms for a period of two years to target, support and offer an appropriate and timely challenge for secondary schools realising one of the commitments in the Council Plan so as to improve outcomes for children and young people.

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented, noting that this was a bid for funding for a secondment post for a period of two years. It was added that there were two parts to the post, the first to give support to the county's secondary schools to respond to the problems arising within the secondary sector and secondly to release resources for the Education Modernisation - Twenty First Century Schools service.

The Head of Education Department noted that the department had acknowledged that there were some situations in the Secondary sector that required additional support and assistance in order to improve schools' outcomes. It was noted that this scheme was linked with one of the Council's strategic priorities, namely to develop leadership. It was added that challenges existed in the Secondary sector, specifically in Meirionnydd, with low numbers applying for leadership jobs within schools. As a result of this, it was added, discussions were being held with all head teachers to review recruitment processes. It was noted that there was a lack of resources in the Education Modernisation field at present, and the funding would ensure this resource. Additionally, it was noted that the resource was available to assist with new challenges of ensuring that children, and specifically vulnerable children, remained in education during this crisis period.

Observations arising from the discussion

— A question was asked about the situation in relation to the Transformation Fund, and it was noted that it was healthy and was available currently but that it depended on what the need would be following the Covid-19 crisis

## **7. UPDATE ON THE RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The report was submitted by Dilwyn Williams

### **DECISION**

To note the information and thank staff for their work during the crisis period.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Chief Executive noted that he would provide an update which would outline what the Council was doing to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. It was noted that elected members would be receiving an update before the end of the week.

A snapshot of the staffing situation was given, noting that 137 were in the Government's shielding category, 175 staff were ill with 46 of those as a result of covid-19 symptoms. It was added that over 1800 staff were now working from home and that only 132 members of staff were now working in an office. It was noted that, currently, the care field was coping fairly well but that cases had arisen in three older people's homes, but that the situations were now under control.

It was reported that statistics showed Gwynedd as being fairly successful and that the cases were at the bottom end of the range highlighted in the potential scenarios. It was added that, once the restrictions would be relaxed, we would need to plan for the next period. It was noted that there was much talk about PPE but it was stressed that the level of PPE in Gwynedd was fine but that the level of masks was a cause for concern. It was stated that supplies were coming from the Government and it was also noted that work was being undertaken to investigate the level of additional costs facing the private sector.

It was stressed that the volunteer system was working well, with an army of people in Gwynedd ready and willing to assist. It was explained that education continued to look after the children of key workers and vulnerable children. It was emphasised that the bins service had continued throughout the period but that the Recycling Centres would remain closed for now.

#### Observations arising from the discussion

- The Chief Executive and the Chief Officers were thanked for leading the work throughout this period. It was added that the Cabinet members had been meeting informally regularly.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance expressed his gratitude to the department's staff for their work during this period, specifically the Information Technology staff for ensuring that all staff could work from home. It was also stressed that no council tax would be recovered until the end of June and it was outlined that work was being done in order to measure the financial effect of this period on the Council.
- It was stressed that this was a crisis period and that it struck everyone compared to the crises the county had faced in the past, where specific communities had been struck. In relation to the Adults field, it was explained that staff were working hard and they were thanked for this work under challenging conditions.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal thanked the staff for being willing to work and for ensuring that the people of Gwynedd received a service. It was expressed that fly-tipping had been raised as a cause of concern but that the level of cases occurring had not been much higher than usual.
- It was noted that homeless individuals had now been housed during the crisis period. It was added that the Property department had secured ten extra beds in the Bryn Blodau home for the period.
- The Cabinet Member for the Environment noted that alternative arrangements for the planning field had been introduced by Welsh Government. It was added that the Public Protection service had been busy leading on the work of reducing scamming which had been

highlighted during the period.

- The Corporate Support department was thanked for their willingness to change their working methods. It was stressed that Siop Gwynedd were now closed and that Galw Gwynedd staff continued to work from home.
- It was stressed that direct payments were being made to the parents of free school meals children and it was added that work was being undertaken to prepare an educational provision. It was explained that 2000 devices were needed for pupils in order to facilitate that educational provision, and it was added that these would come from the schools directly. The staff and teachers were thanked for their work during this period.
- The Cabinet Member for Economy noted that the department had been working very differently compared to usual and the staff were thanked for that. It was explained that supporting businesses was the main priority and ensuring that there would not be a long-term effect on the area's businesses. It was added that work had been undertaken to ensure community resilience and that 23 members were part of a team to ensure that vulnerable people could get in touch to seek support.
- The Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting People stressed that the department had been working hard and that there were many positive stories within the department. It was explained that staff had received PPE and understood how to use it and had found a different way of working and supporting young people and children.
- It was explained that the care fields - children and adults - were open to vulnerable people. All Council staff, as well as residents, were thanked for their willingness to assist in the care field.

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 14:20

**CHAIRMAN**