

GWYNEDD CABINET DECISION NOTICE

Date of Cabinet Meeting:	16 February 2021
Date decision will come into force and be implemented, unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of the Gwynedd Council Constitution	3 March 2021

SUBJECT

Item 6: BUS EMERGENCY SCHEME

DECISION

It was agreed that the Council would join the BES2 Scheme in accordance with the report.

Delegated powers were granted to the Head of Environment Department in consultation with the Head of Finance Department and Head of Legal to agree and complete the Voluntary Regional Partnership Agreement for the implementation of the scheme in North Wales.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It was highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic had severely affected bus travel, passenger numbers had plummeted and social distancing and additional cleansing requirements had placed added burdens and costs on operators. It was added that Welsh Government and local authorities had stepped in to support the sector with financial assistance.

Prior to the pandemic, Welsh Government had consulted on a range of proposed changes to the way bus services were delivered in Wales. A Bus Bill was due to have been brought forward during the current Senedd term. Pressures associated with not only Covid but also the large volume of legal work generated by Brexit and the transition period forced Welsh Government to postpone the planned legislation.

It was stated that details outlining the Government's proposal had now been included in the Wales Transport Strategy, which had been the subject of consultation. In addition, it was noted that the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport had encouraged local authorities to sign up to the Bus Emergency Scheme 2.

The Government had now prepared a further BES2 plan and there was a need to decide whether or not to sign up to this scheme for north Wales, and also meet the need for regional governance arrangements between the transport authorities.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.

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Item 7: PARKING REVIEW

DECISION

The amendments to the Parking Strategy were adopted by changing the parking management arrangements and implementing the parking fees structure in Gwynedd to be implemented from 1 April 2021. It was agreed on an additional late adjustment to the report, reconciling the enforcement hours of Band 1 Car Parks to be operational between 10am and 4:30pm, and to keep the income level under review during 2021/22, with a view to assist the Environment Department should the real income from parking fees be lower than the target in the budget due to this late adjustment. The Head of Environment was authorised to take the necessary statutory steps to implement the revised fee structure from 1 April 2021.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The need was noted to update the parking strategy and offer appropriate solutions to meet the requirements of people in this modern age as well as to address the sufficient income level expected from the Department.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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Item 8: BUY TO LET SCHEME TO LET PROPERTIES FOR GWYNEDD RESIDENTS

DECISION

The business case to invest £15.4m to purchase approximately 100 houses to let to Gwynedd residents on an affordable rent was approved with every purchase to demonstrate its own financial viability on a case-by-case basis.

It was agreed that the Head of Housing and Property in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Finance Department review the statutory arrangements for implementing the Scheme following the publication of revised Government Housing Revenue Account Guidance and report further to Cabinet if additional decisions are needed.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

At its meeting on 15 December 2020, the Cabinet approved the Housing Action Plan 2020/21 to 2026/27 with the principle of purchasing houses on the market to be rented out for Gwynedd residents.

It was stated that the financial ability to create the Housing Action Plan mainly derived from the decision to establish a Council Tax Premium for second homes. However, it was noted that the Plan also highlighted an opportunity to take our aspirations in this field further by means of prudential borrowing in order to fund a purchase of approximately 100 houses to be let out to Gwynedd residents.

Back in December, it was noted that the Buy to Let scheme was the subject of a report and a specific business case and it was highlighted that the purpose of this report was to present the business case for implementing the scheme.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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Item 9: GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN 2018-23 - REVIEW FOR 2021/22

DECISION

The Gwynedd Council Plan for 2018-23, Review 2021/22 was approved subject to amendments to the wording of Priority 4 and Priority 7, and to recommend that the Full Council adopted the Plan at its Full Council meeting on 4 March 2021.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Full Council adopted the Council Plan 2018-23 in March 2018. It was noted that the content was reviewed annually to ensure that the Council continued to prioritise its work according to the needs of the people of Gwynedd.

The need was highlighted for the Cabinet to approve the plan so that it would be possible to recommend it to the Full Council for adoption at its Full Council meeting on 4 March 2021.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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SUBJECT

Item 10: THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL STRATEGY

DECISION

It was agreed to:

- finance the funding gap for Canolfan Dolfeurig (£600,000)
 - finance the funding gap for the former Llanrug school house site (£150,000) and recoup the majority of the initial investment by selling the house and part of the land for affordable housing to local people and to make improvements to the primary school
 - that a further £2m is provided to commence work on constructing industrial units in the county
 - wait to see what the outcome of the discussions held with Welsh Government regarding Barmouth Promenade will be, before considering any further allocations in the Asset Plan.
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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In March 2019, the Full Council adopted an Asset Plan for a ten year period. It was noted that the Plan anticipated the resources the Council would have for the 10 years to come and all the plans proposed by the departments. The report prioritised those plans that we could achieve, considering the resource that was likely to be available.

It was stated that the resources situation had changed somewhat since the plan was approved and there was a need to consider what modifications were therefore needed to the Plan.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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SUBJECT

Item 11: 2021-22 BUDGET

DECISION

It was agreed to recommend the following to the Full Council on 4 March:

1. Establish a budget of £271,751,360 for 2021/22 to be funded through a Government Grant of £194,793,140 and £76,958,220 of Council Tax income with an increase of 3.7%.
2. Establish a capital programme of £47,085,960 in 2021/22, to be funded from the sources noted in Appendix 4 of the report.

It was noted that the figures in recommendation 1 above would change in line with the figures in Appendix 5 of the report should the Full Council increase the Council Tax Premium from 50% to 100%.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council must set a balanced budget for 2021/22. By 2021/22, it was noted that the Council had received a grant increase which addressed inflation, and was a fairer settlement than those in previous years. Nevertheless, it was stated that some decisions must be made to finance nearly unavoidable increases in the cost of some core services and increasing the Tax by 3.7%. It was recommended that the Tax was increased by 3.7% in 2021/22 in order to protect essential services for the people of Gwynedd, as it would be impractical to implement additional savings schemes this year.

It was a matter for the full Council to consider the budget and set the Council Tax for 2021/22 but the Cabinet was required to recommend the budget to the full Council.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.

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SUBJECT

Item 12: COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM ON SECOND HOMES AND LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES

DECISION

It was resolved to recommend to the Full Council in March that Gwynedd Council:

- Allowed no discount on class A second homes, in accordance with Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992
 - Allowed no discount and raised a premium of 100% on class B second homes, in accordance with Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992
 - Allowed no discount on homes that have been empty for 6 months or more and raised a premium of 100% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more, in accordance with Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

A report was submitted to the Full Council on 3 December recommending that Premium levels were kept at 50% for 2021/22. An amendment was submitted at the meeting to defer the decision and ask the Cabinet to consider the appropriateness of increasing the level by up to 100% and to ask the Cabinet to undertake a consultation process on these grounds.

On 15 December, the Cabinet resolved to hold a public consultation on the proposal to increase the Premium on Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties up to 100% for the 2021/22 financial year, in line with Section 12, 12B and 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The results of the consultation were submitted and detailed consideration was given to these along with studies of the holiday home situation in Gwynedd and the Housing Action Plan, so that the Cabinet could take stock before coming to a decision on a recommendation to be proposed to the Full Council in March.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A declaration of interest was received by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn as a close relative of his

owned property affected by the Council Tax Premium; it was a prejudicial interest and he left the meeting for the item.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.
