

THE CABINET 20/04/21

Present-

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

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Morgan (Assistant Head of Finance Department - Revenue and Risk) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Dafydd Gibbard (Head of Housing and Property Department) and Hedd Tomos (Housing Supply Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
An apology was received from Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

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 30 MARCH 2021

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2021 as a true record.

6. ENSURING THAT THE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT LEADS TO THE BEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS IN GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

- a. To support the prioritisation of using the Housing Support Grant as outlined in paragraph 36 of the report.
- b. To support the principle of continuing to work with external providers to be able to offer additional specialist support services to what can be offered in-house.
- c. To note the risk associated with the revenue grant in the future (as with all other revenue grants) and the mitigation measure noted in paragraph 39 of this report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and it was noted that the Cabinet had been highlighting the fact that the two Governments had not been doing enough to tackle the housing problems in the county. The steps taken by the Council to tackle the housing problem were highlighted, such as a report about second homes within the county, looking at the tourism field and community regeneration. It was stressed that one of the Housing and Property Department's priorities was tackling homelessness, and it was added that a large portion of the Housing Action Plan was dedicated to this issue.

It was added that today's decision outlined the department's plans to use the Housing Support Grant funds to tackle homelessness.

The Head of Housing and Property Department added that the number of homeless people had increased in recent years. It was explained that, during the early years of the increase in homelessness, the Council had been slow to respond and had failed to create a long-term plan. By now, it was noted that the long-term plan was in place and the plan was outlined.

It was stressed that, over the past year, there had been a 26% increase in the number of people presenting as homeless, an increase of 71% over five years. It was noted that it was a period of crisis and that the current way of working was not adequate. It was noted that the Housing Support Grant would assist the department to move ahead with stage 2 and 3 of the plan, namely to build temporary housing units for the homeless and to increase the number of support staff per individual.

It was noted that, in 2019, the Government had forewarned that they would look at reducing this grant. However, as a result of increased homelessness during the covid-19 period, the future of the grant changed entirely. It was noted that there was an additional allocation of £1.6m and consequently the Department would be able to build 50 temporary housing units immediately. It was added that the funds would also allow the Council to double the support team for homeless individuals to receive emotional support as well as life skills.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The report was welcomed and the need for support for the homeless was noted. Attention was drawn to hidden homelessness.
- The need to undertake preventative work was stressed, and it was asked whether it would be possible to use the grant funding for this work. It was noted that the early intervention work was an integral part of offering support so as to support the individuals to keep hold of their accommodation as well.
- Members gave thanks for the long-term plan, together with increasing capacity within the department to undertake the work that was needed to support the individuals.
- It was noted that it was good to have good news to support individuals and be proactive in future.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 1.30 pm

CHAIRMAN