

THE CABINET 4/10/22

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Craig ab Iago, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Menna Jones, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan and Ioan Thomas.

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Huw Dylan Owen (Corporate Director) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 5: Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)

Item 7: Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Nia Jeffreys.

Cabinet members and officers were welcomed to the meeting, and specifically Huw Dylan Owen to his first meeting as Corporate Director.

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. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and the key schemes were noted. It was noted in

terms of the North Wales Ambition Board that some projects were now in progress, however, it was explained that one scheme had now been withdrawn. It was stated that the Bodelwyddan scheme had been withdrawn as a result of amendments to the local development plan which meant that the whole essence of the project had also changed. It was explained that there were arrangements in place to consider schemes to fill the gap.

Attention was drawn to an application to deliver the Llanbedr Access Road and to bypass the village and it was noted that the department was awaiting an announcement from the UK Government to hear whether the application had been successful. Reference was made to the Arfor programme and it was noted that the Government and the Authorities had by now agreed on the schemes but they were still awaiting the formal letter to commence the work. It was highlighted that the time-schedule would be tight to spend the funding within the next 6 months.

The Head of Department drew specific attention to the department's performance, and reported that it would be necessary to submit a further report to Cabinet on the situation regarding Byw'n lach. It was explained that although it was heartening that the number of users returning to the service had risen, it continued to be low following the pandemic and this placed additional pressure on their budget.

On the other hand, it was noted that Hafan, Pwllheli, that is part of the Maritime Service, was now full and this placed pressure on the infrastructure and there was a demand for further investment there. In terms of the position with savings, it was noted that there was pressure on the department's budget as there had been a delay in the work of upgrading Neuadd Dwyfor due to the pandemic and therefore its income target had not been realised. However, it was explained that detailed planning work was being undertaken and the department hoped that the work would be completed by next summer.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was highlighted that some beaches had experienced major difficulties over the summer, specifically Morfa Bychan with Motorhomes staying overnight. It was asked whether it could be ensured that the situation was resolved by next summer. It was explained that a letter had now been prepared to be presented to persons who refused to move their vehicles and / or comply to give them a fine of up to £1000, and this would hopefully be in operation from Easter onwards.
- It was noted that a number of schemes were looking to create work in the area, and it was highlighted that by now there was a lack of people to fill the posts. It was explained that the situation had changed since the schemes were created five years ago, and therefore the new challenges would be highlighted in the next Council Plan.
- It was stated that the European funds would terminate over the next few years, with the majority of the expenditure having to be completed by 2023. As a result, it was noted that a number of services and jobs would be decommissioned. It was explained that two funds were available from the Welsh Government, and the department was

awaiting the result of a bid to the Shared Prosperity Fund, and £24 million would come to Gwynedd through the Levelling Up Fund. It was explained that the money would need to be spent within two and a half years which was an extremely short period of time. In terms of the Rural Development Programme, it was explained that the Welsh Government had highlighted that this funding would be earmarked for environmental agricultural schemes which meant that a number of other schemes and jobs would end. It was stated that the department was trying to plan to build on these schemes rather than to start from the beginning.

— Staff were thanked for their work.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT AND LEGAL

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Jones

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Corporate Support Department had 9 improvement priorities within the Council Plan. It was noted that one of them namely, Workforce Planning was a challenge to all and work was being undertaken within the department to look at this. In terms of Keeping the Benefit Local, this was going in the right direction and it was expressed that the Cabinet Member was looking forward to continue with the good work undertaken in the field of equality.

Attention was drawn to the Legal field and it was noted that training for members during the welcome period had gone extremely well. In addition the percentage of young people 16+ who had registered to vote had now risen to 70%. It was stated that this was due to the appointment of a member of staff to encourage young people as well as leading the work.

On the whole, it was noted that the Cabinet Member was happy with the department's performance.

The Head of Corporate Support added that two of the improvement priorities would come to a natural end this year namely Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language and the Use of the Welsh language in Public Services. In terms of the department's performance, it was noted that there had been some delay as a result of the pandemic in the health surveillance field, and the occupational health team was trying to catch up with the work. It was added that the work of creating an independent entity for Hunaniaith was continuing and the lead group was confident that it would be possible to make an announcement at the National Eisteddfod in 2023.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was asked, with so many men on the Management Team within the Council what did the Women in Leadership project do to promote women in senior roles within the Council. It was noted that the Women in Leadership Project Group met regularly and there were several schemes such as the developing potential programme and teatime chats for staff and Councillors. It was explained that a firm foundation had been laid and there was confidence that the project will be successful but changing the culture would take time. In addition, it was added that the number of women who had applied for senior posts had increased, however, this had not been seen in the appointments as yet.
- In terms of Workforce Planning, pride was noted that the work was proceeding but it was a major challenge across the Council. It was asked how the Plan measured performance. It was noted that the Workforce Planning Group met every month, and the statistics would be presented to Cabinet members over the next few weeks.
- It was asked how opportunities within the Council, such as Cynllun Yfory and Apprenticeships were marketed to young people. It was noted that a new scheme was in the process of being developed and there had been a high number of visits to educational establishments over the last year and a half. In addition, it was emphasised that both schemes received quality applicants applying for the opportunities.
- It was expressed that there was a great deal of talk about the lack of housing and the housing crisis on Social Media, and it was noted that a number of the comments highlighted that the lack of good-quality jobs within the county was the main problem. It was noted that this was an old narrative as there were a number of good opportunities in terms of jobs, and there was a wide variety of jobs to be seen across Gwynedd.
- It was noted that women, specifically female councillors, were often seen as easier targets and treated in a different way on Social Media and it was asked what the Council had done to support women in this situation. It was noted that there was practical help for members and a great deal of work had been done recently. It was explained that events over the last few months had ensured that the safety of women had been discussed across the Council, in order to ensure that additional measures were taken to ensure safety.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Cabinet Member was very happy with the department's performance and attention was drawn to some aspects. It was noted that the Homelessness situation continued to worsen every day and the figures were now 50% higher than those seen prior to the pandemic. It was explained that the plans created prior to the pandemic were no longer good enough, and there was a need to create plans to implement the principle of having suitable homes for local people within their communities. It was highlighted that one scheme asked private landlords to use their houses to home local people rather than for holiday accommodation.

Attention was drawn to an innovative scheme that was being implemented in the homelessness service, with specialist mental health support. It was explained that there was a high percentage of homeless persons with mental health issues and the department had appointed a member of staff with expertise in this field to work with the individuals for them to remain in their homes and to prevent them from becoming homeless.

It was stated that the Council had bought a parcel of land in Morfa Nefyn to build housing for local people in the centre of the village in affordable, easy to heat and environmentally green housing. It was noted that these houses were based on the concept of Tŷ Gwynedd, namely creating the type of house Gwynedd residents need and not only a house but a home.

Overall, the Cabinet Member noted that he was satisfied with the performance, however, it was difficult to celebrate as the situation remained unresolved but the department was trying its best to assist people giving hope in a hopeless situation.

The Head of Department added that they were aware of the significant challenges facing the department following the pandemic, brexit, increase in the costs of living and an increase in homelessness. It was noted that the department was eager to change some of its plans that could be seen within the Council Plan for 2023/24 to include new priorities that are more specific to get to grips with the challenges facing the department.

Observations arising from the discussion

- An enquiry was made about the Mental Health Plan within the homelessness team. It was explained that the plan was innovative and unique to Gwynedd, and that the plan would secure support for the homeless by the Health Field. It was stated that it was a clear example of how the department was trying to think differently and was working to resolve problems.
- It was stated that the pods in Caernarfon for the homeless now appeared to have been completed, however, there were issues with Welsh Water and a number of questions had been raised locally why no one was living in them. It was noted that there had been issues with drainage, however, there was now a solution and the department hoped that there would be persons in the pods within the next two weeks.
- It was asked whether the Department as part of the Scheme for Purchasing Houses and Land had seen the comments on social media

as many people had noted their intention to sell on these sites in order to try and get a local buyer. It was noted that the department was keeping an eye on this and that people could also approach the Council directly to note their wish to sell directly to the Council.

- It was asked whether the Council was looking at their estates and small holdings as locations to construct housing. It was noted that the Council was looking at every parcel of land in its ownership to ensure opportunities to erect new housing.

8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report was presented by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To approve the Forward Work Programme included with the meeting papers.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 2:15pm

CHAIRMAN