

THE CABINET 13/02/18

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Mair Rowlands, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Peredur Jenkins, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, W. Gareth Roberts, Gareth Thomas and Ioan Thomas

Also present: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department)

Items 6 and 7: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department), Dewi Wyn Jones (Council Business Support Service Manager)

Item 9: Gwyn Morris Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department) and Steven Edwards (Operational Manager Municipal Work Service)

Item 10: Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

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

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan declared an interest for item 6 as he had a grandson who attended one of the schools in the Bala catchment area. It was a prejudicial 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 MEETINGS HELD ON 2, 9 AND 16 JANUARY 2018

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 2, 9 and 16 January 2018, as a true record.

6. 3-19 LEARNING CAMPUS, Y BALA

The item was submitted by Cllr Gareth Thomas

RESOLVED

Resolved to:

- i. Approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn on 31 August 2019 and for the Welsh Medium 3-19 Learning Campus, community status, to be established on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn to open on 1 September 2019.
- ii. Approve the issue of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the background for this item was noted. It was explained that the Cabinet, on June 27, had decided to withdraw the proposal approved in September 2015 to establish a Voluntary Controlled 3-19 Learning Campus (VC, Church in Wales). It was noted that a pre-consultation had been carried out with the Church following the Cabinet in June and it was noted that the pupils were the priority.

In the Cabinet on 24 October, it was resolved to undertake a statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework (Wales) Act 2013. 28 observations were received following the consultation, and it was added that the observations supported changing the status of the school to be a Community School. It was noted that the next step would be to issue statutory notices proposing the closure of the schools and for the new school to open in September 2019. It was explained that the building would be ready in September 2018 and that arrangements were in place for the schools to make use of the building for the year before it is opened.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that this item had been discussed for a long time but it was appreciated that the department was legally bound and that the right process needed to be followed. It was noted that the people of the area were disappointed that the work had taken time but, nevertheless, it would improve the standard of education in the area.

The community facilities were discussed, and it was noted that they should be praised and it was added that the library was back on the site.

7. COUNCIL PLAN 2018-2023

The report was submitted by Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To approve the 2018-23 Council Plan for submission to the Council on 1 March 2018.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that, in recent months, work had been carried out to prepare the Council Plan that would set a direction for the Council's work for the 2018-23 period. Contrary to previous years, it was noted that this was the Council Plan and not an improvement plan only.

It was noted that, although the document gave the Council a direction for the next five years, it was emphasised that it was a live document and there would be an opportunity for the Cabinet to review it during that period. It was emphasised that work had been carried out in relation to its style and language in order to ensure that it was easy to read.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the Plan had been written in a clear manner and that it was good to see introductions to each department within the Council. It was stressed that this should assist Council members to take ownership of the Plan.
- It was explained that the ambition was clear but the reality was that the financial situation was likely to hinder what could be done. It was added that a Fund was available for the Plan's priorities but that additional funding may need to be earmarked.
- One member referred to an item which seemed to be missing from discussions held in the Bangor Well-being Area.

8. SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

The report was submitted by Dilwyn Williams

DECISION

The Chief Executive's proposal to restructure a little in order to focus more on the work of supporting families was noted and supported.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that a discussion had arisen following the development of the Children and Supporting Families Department's family support strategy. In order to ensure that there is focus on the preventative work of supporting families, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Head of Department believed that it was necessary to appoint a Senior Manager to focus on this field.

Due to the financial pressure on the Council, and the need to make substantial

savings, it was noted that it would be possible to satisfy the need in a different way by transferring the Senior Learning Manager from the Economy and Community Department to the Children and Supporting Families Department. The Senior Manager would bring the Youth Service with her and the Senior Manager would also take the lead in co-ordinating work in the tackling poverty field. A discussion had been held with the Heads and the Senior Manager in question and there is no objection to this transfer.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Support was expressed to this transfer and particularly the element of bringing the Youth Service with her as there was a clear link with preventative work. It was added that preventative work was a priority for the department and the Council and that this was one way of escalating this priority.

9. CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SERVICE

The report was submitted by Cllr Gareth Griffith

DECISION

- i. Set up unmanned Close Circuit Television provision
- ii. Assign £489,000 in capital funding from the Council's Invest to Save Fund to implement the change

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the recommendation was noted. It was explained that the system currently used was a cause of concern as it was nearing the end of its operational life and it could not be renewed. It was added that, during the Gwynedd Challenge exercise, the budget for the service was cut to £90k and, this year, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd decided not to contribute £35k annually to the Service to monitor the Maesgeirchen and Maes Barcer estates.

It was noted that the department recommended Option 2 but it was stressed that there was a significant impact in terms of job losses. It was explained that an initial discussion had been held with staff.

It was noted that the Police used the system most and, with the new system, the Police would be able to access the cameras with wi-fi connection. Although the department was requesting assigning £489,000 from the Council's Invest to Save Fund, it was stressed that the department hoped to receive it as a loan and it would repay the Fund within approximately two and a half years.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The Police's use of the system was discussed and it was asked whether there would be any chance of asking for additional funding from the Police as they made the greatest use of the system. However, it was noted that it was a statutory responsibility on the Council and, in addition, the Council had a duty to reduce offending.

- When looking at the system currently in place, it was noted that the pictures were often of a poor quality. The new system would have more cameras and, therefore, more good quality pictures would be available. It was noted that it was worth investing in technology to the future.

10. 2018/19 BUDGET AND 2018/19 - 2020/21 FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The report was submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

DECISION

To recommend that the Council (at its meeting on 1 March 2018):

- Establish a budget of £242,862,930 for 2018/19, to be funded by £175,127,330 of Government Grant and £67,735,600 Council Tax income, with an increase of 4.8%.
- Establish a capital programme of £8.389m in 2018/19 to be funded by sources noted in clause 9.4 of the report.

To note the Medium Term Financial Plan in Section B, and adopt the strategy which is in part 32-34 of the Plan.

DISCUSSION

A full presentation on the 2018/19 Budget and 2018/19 - 2020/21 Financial Strategy was given which was an overview of the budgetary forecasts for the coming years. It was stressed that discussions had been held with elected members in four seminars in Caernarfon, Dolgellau and Pwllheli and, in addition, that the 2018/19 Budget and the Financial Strategy had been submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee for scrutiny.

The budgetary forecasts for the three financial years of 2018/19 - 2020/21 were discussed, which had been placed in a fan chart. When looking at the range of likely scenarios, it was noted that the Council would need to identify up to £20m in savings between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

It was added that it would be possible to protect the Council's service for the people of Gwynedd and address the 2018/19 deficit by means of a 4.8% increase to the Council Tax and the implementation of the savings and cuts schemes already considered.

Expenditure requirements for 2018/19 were presented noting that 72% of the budget came from the general grant settlement for local government. It was explained that there was concern that the Government had cut specific grants to schools and, specifically, the Schools Improvement Grant which was -£618k. It was added that the Council would not be able to fill this gap and, consequently, the schools would shoulder the Government's cut.

The budget for 2018/19 was discussed and it was noted that by identifying £896k of efficiency savings, implementing the savings and cuts schemes already agreed and an increase of 4.8% in the Council Tax, this would be adequate to balance the budget. It was stressed that no additional cuts would be required during 2018/19 and, therefore, increasing the tax would protect services for the residents of Gwynedd.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the series of workshops for members about the budget had been valuable; it was felt that it was an opportunity to obtain more information and a better understanding of the budget.
- It was added that there had been a change to the constitution and that any member who wished to propose a change to the budget in the Full Council would need to ensure that the proposal was financially clear and balanced. In addition, the proposal would need to be sent to the Statutory Finance Officer at least two days in advance

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.50 pm

CHAIRMAN