
THE CABINET TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2018

Present -

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

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

Others invited: Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Local Member - Bangor Glyder) and Councillor Gareth A Roberts (Member - Bangor Dewi)

Item 6: Diane Jones (Arfon Area Education Officer), Dafydd Gibbard (Senior Corporate Property Manager)

Item 7: Llyr B Jones (Senior Economy and Regeneration Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member Cllr Ioan Thomas.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery were extended to the Councillor's wife who had undergone an operation.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor Elin Walker Jones as she was a Governor at Ysgol y Garnedd, but it was not 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. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 2 AND 16 OCTOBER

The Chair signed the Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 2 October and 16 October 2018, as a true record.

6. REORGANISATION OF BANGOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

RESOLVED

To implement the proposal issued on 4 May 2018 to close Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places to the pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420 effective 1 September 2020.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted by Councillor Gareth Thomas.

Following an announcement from Welsh Government noting that there was an opportunity for Local Authorities to deliver additional projects within Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme, Gwynedd succeeded to ensure a bid to reorganise primary schools in the Bangor catchment area. A report was submitted to Cabinet (January 2017) and the recommendation to hold discussions at a local level was approved as outlined in the report on reviewing primary school education provision in Bangor. In June 2017, a Catchment Review Panel was established to discuss a number of options which would improve and maintain the standard of education. The options were submitted to Cabinet in March 2018 and the recommendation to hold a statutory consultation on the process of reorganising primary schools was approved. A statutory consultation was held and 68 responses had been received; the main observations from that consultation had been submitted to Cabinet in July 2018. The Cabinet's decision at that meeting had been

To approve the proposal to close Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places to the pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420.

To approve the issuing 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.

Following the decision, in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013, a statutory notice had been issued on 4 September 2018 and a statutory objection period on the proposal had been held (between 4/9/18 and 2/10/18).

It was highlighted that one objection had been received during the objection period which involved matters relating to transport, child safety, finance, education and the Welsh language. It was added that one piece of correspondence had arrived late in the day and that this correspondence needed to be addressed as part of the discussions.

The Cabinet was requested to support the proposal which would greatly improve education standards for Ysgol y Garnedd children together with Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Coedmawr children.

The objections were discussed.

In response to concerns regarding traffic on Penrhos Road, the Senior Property Manager (Corporate) noted that every attempt had been made to seek to mitigate the situation which was causing difficulties in the area in the mornings and afternoons. He noted that 30 additional parking spaces had been planned for staff and visitor parking together with a drop-off point which would be controlled off the highway.

It was highlighted that a planning application for the development had been

approved at the Planning Committee on 5.11.18 and traffic concerns had been discussed. It was noted that the Transportation Department was happy with the new combination of adaptations which would address the problems.

In response to traffic concerns during the construction phase, it was noted that every effort was being made to reduce any disruption to local residents. It was added that discussions had been held with the residents and some adaptations had been made to the plans. It was noted that a traffic control plan had been drawn up which would respect the considerations of local residents.

It was suggested that consideration could be given to the start and finish time of the five schools in the area, which would reduce traffic density. This would be a matter for the schools themselves to decide.

In response to a comment regarding footpaths, it was stated that an assessment had been carried out to find out where the pupils' homes were, and as a result the main footpaths to get to the school came from three different directions. Although there was no intention to change the footpaths, it was noted that work would be carried out to promote road safety with the children.

Despite the response, the Member for Dewi Ward noted that rumours of closing one of the footpaths for two years had caused great concern among local residents. The Senior Manager responded by noting that there were arrangements to close some of the footpaths temporarily (for approximately 8 weeks) but also that he was willing to discuss the matter with the Member.

Taking advantage of the right to speak the Local Member for Glyder Ward noted the following main points:

- That she was completely supportive of the new school. She added that there was a great need for a new building and that she was very happy with the design.
- She welcomed the observations of the Senior Property Manager about concerns regarding the public footpaths and his willingness to hold discussions locally.
- Attention was drawn to the residents of Penrhos Avenue who had paid for a new road surface as the road had not been adopted by the Council. The Local Member wished to see these residents being fully compensated should any damage be caused to the road during the development phase.
- That it would be possible to consider keeping Ysgol Glanadda open as there was an increase in the numbers and the school was under new leadership.
- That parents of Ysgol y Garnedd had chosen Welsh-medium education for their children. She added that there was a special ethos in the school and that the Council's commitment and support was needed to protect the Welshness of the school.
- That she was supportive of the plan, that it was an exciting period and that it was possible to resolve any issues together.

In response to a comment about protecting the Welsh language, the Cabinet Member for Education noted that every school in Gwynedd had the same language policy. With the strength of the language at Ysgol y Garnedd, it was

noted that there was an opportunity to strengthen the Welsh language in Bangor and that the use of the Language Charter was an additional resource which would ensure social use of the Welsh language.

The Area Officer added that it was reasonable to expect to see more non-Welsh-speakers in the school and it was accepted that support work needed to be carried out in the short term. Nevertheless, it was reported that many non-Welsh-speaking children had attended Ysgol y Garnedd and succeeded.

In response to an observation regarding keeping Ysgol Glanadda open, the Area Officer noted that the financial situation of both schools was fragile and though the school appeared full the situation was not ideal or sustainable.

In response to the late correspondence received which highlighted concern that the response given to the linguistic concerns had not been based on facts, the Cabinet Member for Education noted that a linguistic assessment had been implemented as part of the process. He added that every child should have equal opportunities and Welsh-speaking children should not be kept separate. No child should be deprived of the opportunity to access a new building and new resources and children should not be treated differently on any basis.

Members were reminded that the proposal was a result of a long period of planning within a tight timescale and any delay with the decision would affect the period of releasing the money. It was added that statutory steps had been completed and should a consultation on another option be needed the process would have to be recommenced.

7. TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT PROGRAMME: BANGOR CITY CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEME

The item was submitted by Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn

RESOLVED

- a) To support the intention of targeting the Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme to develop and implement projects within the Bangor City Centre Regeneration Scheme
- b) To commit, in principle, £250k from the Match-funding Fund which was established to provide match funding for external funding programmes but ask for a further report on the final Scheme in order to ensure that it meets the Council's objectives and represents value for money.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted by the Senior Manager - Economy and Community and a summary of the programme's context and background was given which anticipated up to £22m capital funding for North Wales between 2018 and 2021.

It was reported that Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation data for Wales, which used cluster methodology, had been used to identify those areas (towns) that

had the greatest concentration of residents living within the 10% most deprived communities in Wales. In terms of priorities for the TRI programme during the period 2018 - 2021, town centre regeneration projects had been identified for four locations - Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Wrexham and Bangor.

It was noted that notional financial allocations had been proposed and that any funding commitment would be dependent on presenting detailed Project Plans which would meet the requirements of the TRI Programme. It was noted that the indicative regional allocation for TRI Programme funding in Gwynedd included £3m for the Bangor City Centre Regeneration Scheme, and approximately £1.5m in respect of the housing theme (renovating empty properties) which would contribute towards priorities within the Regional Strategy (approved by the Cabinet on 22.5.2018).

It was noted that the Bangor City Strategic Partnership had drawn up a Regeneration strategy for the City and the work programme had been reviewed during the summer of this year, confirming priorities which would contribute to the main objectives and guidelines of the TRI Programme. Reference was made to the projects in the report and it was noted that further preparatory work was needed to develop detailed proposals. It was highlighted that it was possible to submit bids for the funding on an individual project basis instead of one bid consisting of a package of projects.

In terms of financial considerations, the members were reminded that the TRI Programme provided capital funding and the maximum Welsh Government intervention rate per project was 70%. This meant that at least 30% of match funding was required. Whilst partnership working was a key characteristic in each of the projects, the lead body would be responsible for developing the details of the project including the proposed funding package and securing the match funding. It was highlighted that Gwynedd Council would be responsible for leading on three of the projects with the intention of contributing / releasing £250k from the Match-funding Fund to meet the financial deficit. It was added that other partners such as BCUHB, Bangor University and CCG wished to lead on / contribute to other projects.

In response to the presentation, it was noted that the spending constraints on the money was not suitable and that the money was needed across the County. It was suggested that this was another example of Welsh Government funding being distributed at a regional level and then being limited by stringent guidelines.

In response to an observation regarding the likely success of the expenditure, it was noted that the resources were not likely to be sufficient to regenerate Bangor City centre in three years. It was added that the vision had been established and that substantial work was being carried out to try to address elements of that vision. The main emphasis of the programme was to change the function of the City centre which was a 10 - 20 year vision, but that this programme set the foundations for that. It was added that there was an opportunity here to be innovative, to link opportunities and improve the community provision.

In response to a question regarding the financial timeframe, it was noted that expenditure had not been considered for year 1 and therefore there was no risk

of losing money.

In response to an observation regarding sharing feedback with Bangor City Council, it was noted that the Mayor of the City was the Chair of the Partnership and that this strengthened the element of communication.

The following points were noted by the Members

- c) Restrict areas which were selected by the Government. Possibility of being dazzled by promises with an expectation of 'generous' contributions by the Council to realise the projects.
- d) The contribution would have to be of benefit to Bangor - the money must be spent wisely.
- e) Welsh Government had cut budgets, yet expected contributions and support for commitment to programmes led by the Government.
- f) That the Cabinet needed an opportunity to see the individual projects prior to them being submitted - the report was premature.
- g) That there was a need to plan for the future and for what local residents needed.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 2.20pm

CHAIR