

THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2020

Present:

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas and Catrin Wager.

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director) and Annes Sion (Democratic Team Leader).

Item 8: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

Item 9: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department)

Item 10: Dafydd Gibbard (Head of Housing and Property Department)

Item 11: Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
Apologies were received from Cllr Cemlyn Williams.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal 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. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER'S PERFORMANCE REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME BOARDS

Presented by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn and Cllr Dafydd Meurig.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and it was noted that the Cabinet had determined to establish two cross-departmental boards to look at two specific fields - Regeneration and Supporting People.

It was expressed that in terms of the Regeneration field, they had gathered information about the county and had divided the county into 13 areas. It was added that consideration needed to be given into what work was to be done in each community in order to aim towards the 'perfect community'. It was reiterated that engagement was required with residents in order to be aware of their priorities and that the engagement work would commence soon.

It was noted that in terms of the Supporting People field, it had been interesting to see the work stream mapping. It was added that at times, there were insufficient links between the streams but that much of the work drew people together more efficiently in order to look at the support we provided through the citizen's perspective.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The importance of focusing on the residents in the programme boards was emphasised, and a question was raised with regards to the Supporting People Board as to whether other agencies or authorities would be part of the discussion. It was expressed that the Council attended North Wales Boards in various fields, but that this board focused on the work of the Council initially before extending it further, although this would be necessary in due course.
- It was noted that these boards would get to the core of Ffordd Gwynedd, noting that it would transform the way of working and how departments looked at services and work streams.
- It was noted that a recommendation would be submitted to the Cabinet to change the current Climate Sub-group into a new board that would focus on Climate Emergency on a cross-departmental level. It was expressed that there would be a further discussion on the matter at that time.

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

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and it was noted that it would focus on some headings in the report. It was noted that the Cabinet received the Draft Equality Plan in November, and that the consultation work on the document was ongoing. Attention was drawn to the fact that there was an increase in the number of events where information about individuals had been stolen or lost. It was emphasised that work was afoot to look at the implementation policies in order to

respond to the cases.

It was noted that a review had been undertaken of Blue Badge application arrangements. It was added that the Council had been assisting the Government in order to improve the service. The staff of the legal department were thanked for their hard work over the election period.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A question was asked with regards to why the Council had been assisting Welsh Government to ensure that the service was available bilingually. It was expressed that the Blue Badge forms had been available bilingually but that the Council had been assisting them to ensure that they used Clear Welsh so that the residents understood them.
- The Procurement field was discussed, noting the purpose of the unit, namely to obtain the best prices for the Council as well as keeping the benefits local. It was expressed that if a contract was not awarded to local businesses, then we would have failed on the second purpose, and that reviews therefore needed to be carried out to ask why.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND MUNICIPAL AND GWYNEDD CONSULTANCY

The report was submitted by Cllr Catrin Wager.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and it was noted that the target of waste collected and reused, recycled or composted by the Council had been reached, and that the target would increase from 64% to 70% by 2025. It was emphasised that the percentage of waste being sent to landfill had also reduced to 18%, and it was expressed that this figure would reduce once again as it would be sent to the Parc Adfer once it would open. It was explained that the waste would be incinerated to create energy in this park and, consequently, it would not be sent to landfill at all.

Attention was drawn to the waste collection field, noting an apology that problems had arisen following a change in Arfon waste collection arrangements. It was added that the Christmas period, severe weather and vehicle breakdown problems had led to many collections being missed. It was emphasised that this period was a transitional period, and that they were hoping that it would improve.

It was expressed that in terms of Climate Change, changing street lighting to LED technology was continuing and 1,700 lamps had been changed in 2019/20. It was emphasised that this reduced carbon emissions down from 3,435 in 2014/15 to 685 by this year. It was noted that the scheme to modernise CCTV had ended, and staff were thanked for their hard work. It was added that it had also come in

under budget.

Attention was drawn to the Consultancy field, noting that there was a financial deficit in terms of income this year, and that this was due to uncertainty in the field as a result of Brexit. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that the Water and Environment Department had managed to obtain grants for flood areas.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Attention was drawn to the failures in the Waste collection field, emphasising that the numbers were so low in the millions of successful collections. It was emphasised that the number missed was approximately 0.01% of all collections.
- It was expressed that increasing the waste being recycled to 70% was a realistic target, however perhaps there was a need to emphasise to companies that the use of plastic needed to be reduced, and encourage people to reuse rather than buy new.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Presented by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report, and request that the Chief Executive considers the situation with regard to posts funded through annual grants along with the difficulties this situation creates for services and the staff members themselves.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented which reported on the work of the Council, and that the Cabinet Member was satisfied with the progress of projects on the whole. It was added that it was a challenge for the department to realise the savings schemes.

Attention was drawn to the Supporting People Strategy, expressing that the work of identifying the need and mapping what support was available had been completed. It was reiterated that the department had achieved their short-term work programme by setting up the Gwynedd Family Hub which provided information about the available support. The department's priority for the rest of the year was highlighted, namely to agree on a clear vision with the key partners in order to ensure joint planning in the services for families.

In terms of the Department's performance, it was expressed that the safeguarding arrangements were robust. It was noted that extending the screening work of the Welcomm tool in the Early Years field was being carried out, which would attempt to improve the developments of a child's language. The success of the Bridging the Generations scheme was highlighted, where sessions had been held between the residents of the Bryn Seiont care home and the children of the Plas Pawb nursery. It was emphasised that there was concern

about schemes funded through grants. It was added that funding was often received for a short period of time, and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to retain experienced staff, noting whether it would be possible to obtain long-term or permanent agreements. It was asked for a piece of work to be created in order to consider the situation.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was expressed that the number of jobs funded from annual grants made it difficult to retain staff and created uneasiness for them every year. A message needed to be sent to Welsh Government noting our concerns about the jobs being funded through annual grants. The Chief Executive was asked to consider the situation and the difficulties it created for services and the staff members themselves in order to be able to present firmer evidence to the Government.
- An update was requested on the work of the Youth Service in terms of working with other youth organisations. It was expressed that work was being carried out with the organisations, and that the youth provision now reached more places than ever before.
- The department's financial situation was discussed, expressing that there was financial pressure across the country. It was added that the number of out-of-county placements were higher in comparison to previous years, and that the cost was high. It was expressed that discussions were being held in order to see whether it would be possible to bring the provision closer to home across the North Wales region. In addition to this, it was expressed that work was being undertaken with Anglesey County Council in order to develop services to work with families through this and reduce the need for out-of-county placements.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

Presented by Cllr Gareth Griffith.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report, and approve the alternative savings schemes contained within part 5 of the report, namely to use the underspend from the 'Pupils with Additional Learning Needs who attend Out-of-County Schools' budget.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting the decision of the Cabinet Member for the Environment in the absence of the Cabinet member for Education. It was added that the Cabinet Member for the Environment had been sitting in the performance challenge meetings with the Cabinet Member for Education and had had an interesting morning looking at the department's work.

Attention was drawn to the TRAC project, noting that the plan had been implemented since approximately three years and that the grant would be coming to an end. It was expressed that a further report was required in order to look at

the matter in more detail. If effective, the Council would have to consider to continue or not - with or without a grant - however evidence would be required to support this.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Concerns were raised about the fact that the Welsh Language Charter continued to create a work load for Headteachers. It was expressed that the level of paperwork had now increased following the national adoption of the scheme by Welsh Government. Hope was expressed that there would be an opportunity to revisit this in light of the Language Charter coming into force in September 2020.
- Concern was expressed for the TRAC scheme that would be ending in two years. It was elaborated that the children who were part of this scheme were young vulnerable people, as well as the need to highlight this.
- It was noted that the numbers who received school meals tended to be lower, and a question was asked whether there were implications to this. It was reiterated that evidence showed that increasing the cost in the past had partly been the reason for the reduction. It was added that the department was eager to look in more detail at flexibility in the field. It was emphasised that there was also a reduction in primary demography, which was clearly a reduction in numbers.

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

Presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the department was hoping that a Housing Strategy could be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in the coming weeks, and to the Cabinet before Easter. It was noted that the number of people who presented themselves as homelessness was still on the rise. It was emphasised that the service was dependent on grants and, consequently, it was difficult to plan. It was added that funding was required to ensure a long-term solution that would get to the core of the problems.

It was noted that a new project in conjunction with the third sector agency Cais and Grŵp Cynefin had been successful in the Cymorth Cymru Awards, in the homelessness prevention category. It was emphasised that this project was to offer support to prison leavers with profound needs who had been sleeping rough. It was noted that receiving this award highlighted the work that could be achieved. It was emphasised that Ffordd Gwynedd work needed to be done in the Housing Supply and Enforcement Service, that is responsible for providing grants to adapt houses for people with disabilities. It was hoped that by holding a Ffordd Gwynedd review, the work flow could be investigated in order to identify

barriers.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The importance of creating Ffordd Gwynedd reviews on the services within this field was expressed, noting that it was crucial to consider the aspirations and needs of the individuals. It was emphasised that with an increase in homelessness, and specifically hidden homelessness, there was a need to ensure that the packages available were specific to the individual.
- It was emphasised that the field of housing was a difficult field as 10% of the area's housing stock were holiday homes. It was expressed that a housing supply was required in order to live in them. It was added that the Welsh Local Government Association had drawn attention to this, and it was hoped that it would be discussed at the next meeting of the North Wales Cabinet.

11. SAVINGS OVERVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT ON REALISING SAVINGS SCHEMES

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas.

DECISION

To accept the information in the report and to note the encouraging progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2019/20 and previous years.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that £32m worth of savings had been approved to be realised in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. It was added that the appendix noted each department's attainment against the savings target that had been set, which was a total of nearly £27m.

It was emphasised that there were substantial risks to realising 2019/20 savings by the Children and Supporting Families Department, namely a Start to Finish Review. It was noted that a Children Budget Taskforce had been commissioned in order to address financial matters within the Department, which included this field. Attention was drawn to the risks of realising savings in the Housing Department as well as in the existing Structures and Placements Revision scheme, noting that the department was looking to discover alternative schemes.

It was noted that appendix two summarised the situation in terms of realising the savings schemes for 2019/20. It was emphasised that 48% had been realised and 23% were on track. It was highlighted that 22 schemes were slipping or had risks to be realised. It was expressed that it was a challenging period, but that the schemes were satisfactory overall.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 2.30pm.

CHAIR