

THE CABINET TUESDAY, 16 JUNE 2020

Present:

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

Also present:

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

Items 6 – 8: Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager)

Item 9: Emlyn Jones (Assistant Head, Gwynedd Consultancy)

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
Apologies were received from Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn and Cllr Gareth Thomas.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest was received from Cllr Ioan Thomas for item 8 as he was a trustee of Caernarfon Harbour. It was noted that the member would not be required to leave the meeting unless there would be a direct substantial discussion on the Harbour.

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 19 AND 26 MAY 2020

The Chair signed the minutes of the meetings held on 16 and 26 May 2020, as a true record.

6. 2019/20 FINAL ACCOUNTS - REVENUE OUTTURN

Submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

Resolved:

1.1 To note the final financial position of the Council's departments for 2019/20.

1.2 To approve the amounts to be carried forward (the "Revised Over/ (Under) Spend")

column of the summary), namely:

DEPARTMENT	£'000
Adults, Health and Well-being	0
Children and Families	100
Education	(96)
Economy and Community	67
Highways and Municipal	100
Environment	(100)
Gwynedd Consultancy	(11)
Housing and Property	83
Corporate Management Team and Legal	(50)
Finance	(70)
Corporate Support	(100)

1.3 To approve the following recommendations and virements (as outlined in Appendix 2) -

- The Children and Families Department to receive a one-off financial assistance of £3,259k to restrict the level of overspend that will be carried over by the Department to £100k, to support them to move on to face the challenges of 2020/21.
- The Highways and Municipal Department to receive a one-off financial assistance of £447k, which limits overspend that will be carried forward by the Department to 2020/21 to £100k, to support them to face the challenges of 2020/21.
- In accordance with the Financial Regulations, it is recommended that the usual practice is adhered to in order to allow the Environment Department to keep (£100k) of their underspend, and to move (£70k) which is the sum above (£100k), to be used to support the departments that have overspent in 2019/20.
- On Corporate budgets, use (£1,012k) of the net underspend to assist the departments that have overspent in 2019/20.

1.4 To approve the virements from specific reserves and provisions:

- as outlined in Appendix 3 following a review of reserves and provisions, harvest (£801k) from reserves and (£24k) from provisions using the total of (£825k) to assist the departments that have overspent in 2019/20.
- Finance the rest of the departmental overspend from (£1,799k) from the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it elaborated on the Council's expenditure in 2019/20. Fields where there had been a substantial difference following the previous report on accounts were highlighted. It was emphasised that substantial pressures faced the field of care and the field of waste, along with difficulties by some departments to achieve savings.

It was stated that there had been an improvement in the situation of the Adults Department by the end of the financial year, and that this was the result of receiving and re-directing late grants and using one-off finance of £420k. It was noted that there had been a further increase in the overspend tendency by the Children and Families Department, with £3.4 million overspend by the end of the financial year. It was emphasised that the situation was not unique to Gwynedd and that it was a worrying situation that could be seen nationwide. It was added that additional funding of £2 million had been allocated to the Children and Families Department in 2020/21 to meet the increasing pressures.

It was highlighted there had been a reduction in the overspend level by the Highways and Municipal Department, but that the field of waste continued to be problematic. It was noted that the Environment Department had an underspend as well as the Corporate headings. It was added that the adequacy of funds had been reviewed at the close of the accounts and that £825 million of resources had been harvested. As a result, it would also be possible to transfer £1.799 million from the financial strategy reserve in order to bridge the gap and to balance the 2019/20 financial position. By doing this, it was added that the Council's general balances would not need to be used.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted in autumn 2019 that school budgets by 2020/21 would be under threat, but the Cabinet was thanked for being prepared to protect the financial position of Gwynedd schools.
 - In terms of the Adults Department, it was noted that its financial position in 2019/20 had improved as a result of late grants, and the need was emphasised for the Government to fund correctly and to not keep hold of the funding.
- The likelihood was emphasised that the financial position for 2020/21 would be completely different

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - END OF YEAR REVIEW

The report was submitted by Ioan Thomas

DECISION

- To accept the report on the end of year review (31 March 2020 position) of the capital programme.
- To note the £29,069,000 spend on the capital programme during the 2019/20 financial year, which will be included in the statutory financial statements for 2019/20.
- To approve the revised financing as shown in part 4 of the report, namely:
 - £245,000 increase in the use of borrowing
 - £2,363,000 increase in the use of grants and contributions
 - A reduction of £17,000 in the use of capital receipts
 - £244,000 increase in the use of revenue contributions
 - No change in the use of the capital reserve
 - £74,000 increase in the use of renewal funds and others.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that its purpose was to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. The main conclusions noted were that the Council had succeeded to spend over £29.1 million on capital programmes, and £16.2 million had been funded through attracting specific grants.

It was added that £22.8 million would slip from 2019/20, compared to £12.7 million at the end of 2018/19, but it was emphasised that there had been no grant funding losses. The reasons for the slippages were highlighted which included the timing of schemes such as 21st Century Schools, Schools Maintenance Grant, along with a slippage of schemes that were part of the Housing Strategy. Attention was drawn to additional grants the Council had managed to attract since the previous report which included the School Infrastructure HWB Grant and Recycling and Waste Grants.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that this report was a technical report, but that the Council's

capital expenditure was significant. Given the current situation with Covid-19, it was added that it would be possible to spend all of the funding in 2020/21.

8. COVID-19: FIXED FEE CONSIDERATIONS

The report was presented by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

It was resolved to amend the following fees as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, in order for the departments to be able to act accordingly.

Fees	Decision
Commercial Waste	To request a payment that corresponds to the service received, asking the Department to invoice when collections start.
Crematorium and Cemeteries	Fees to remain on 2019/20 levels for the time being
Primary School Meals	Transfer the money with the pupil, and offer a refund if it is not possible.
Pre School Care Club	Offer a refund if children transfer to another school.
Post-16 Transport - 16+ Travel Pass	The fees for the summer term to be refunded, and arrangements for 29/06/2020 - 27/07/2020 to be considered at a later date.
Rents for hiring offices / rooms, Industrial Units and Intec and Mentec	Proceed to invoice for rents in full, but give an opportunity for individual businesses to contact the Council to discuss their specific situation if they are facing hardship.
Rents - hiring space in Libraries, using Parc Padarn, Glynllifon Units	Proceed to invoice for rents in full, but give an opportunity for individual businesses to contact the Council to discuss their specific situation if they are facing hardship.
Pwllheli Harbour, Harbours and Victoria Dock Mooring Fees	Where access to boats and harbour facilities has been restricted, fees should be reduced to the 'winter fee' which equates to 70% of the full fee in order to keep customers.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and the decision noted. At the Full Council meeting on 5 March 2020, it was noted that a net budget of £262 million was approved for 2020/21, with the gross budget for the year being £421 million. It was stated that £59 million, namely 14% of the Council's income, came from fees, sales and contributions.

In light of the crisis, it was added that considerations were needed in relation to fixed fees. It was noted that the Council received a wide range of fees and payments across many of its services, and it was added that the nature of the income varied in terms of payments. Amendments to the fees being

recommended for the Cabinet's approval were highlighted.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was stated that everybody's lives had changed after setting the budget at the beginning of March. In terms of crematorium fees, it was noted that there was usually an increase in line with inflation, but in light of the crisis, the Highways and Municipal Department was eager to keep fees at the 2019/20 price level. In addition, it was noted that the Department was eager to not send invoices for waste collections to companies that had had to close during the crisis, and it was intended to invoice businesses as they used the service.
- It was emphasised that it was reasonable to give parents an opportunity to be given a refund for school meals and school clubs.
- It was noted that the Council had suffered a loss of income during the crisis, and the Government should compensate the local authorities. It was added that Welsh Government had assigned a £78 million fund and it was hoped that a bulk from this amount would cover the income losses of local authorities in the three months between April and June.

9. ESTABLISH THE RIGHT FOR THE SUDS APPROVAL BODY (SAB) TO CHARGE A FEE FOR PROVIDING A PRE-APPLICATION SERVICE

The report was presented by Cllr Catrin Wager

DECISION

To approve the principle of giving the SDS approval body the right to charge a fee for the pre-application service they provide.

The fees outlined in Appendix 1 of the report were agreed as the fees that would be charged by the SDS Approval Body.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the field was a technical one in terms of the nature of the report. It was stated that the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 had become operational in January 2019 dictating that any new developments with drainage implications and a building area of 100m² or more should comply with National Standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). It was emphasised that this means that developers needed to think about how to move water from its site in a sustainable manner.

It was stated that this need was for any development of 100m² or more, highlighting its similarity to a planning application. It was emphasised that this was a new field and that the Council had experts in the field who would be available to advise developers in advance on what systems would work with their development before they submitted their application. It was added that this meant facilitating the process for developers and reducing any delay with the development.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 1.40 pm

CHAIRMAN