

THE COUNCIL THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillor Simon Glyn (Chair);
Councillor Elwyn Jones (Vice-chair).

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Stephen Churchman, Steve Collings, R.Glyn Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Peter Antony Garlick, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Judith Humphreys, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron M.Jones, Aled Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Dafydd Owen, Dewi Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Jason Parry, Nigel Pickavance, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Ioan Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Cemlyn Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Officers:

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dafydd Edwards (Statutory Finance Officer), Geraint Owen (Head of Democracy Service), Carys Fon Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department), Sion Huws (Senior Solicitor - Corporate), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Manager), Gwenan Mai Roberts (Public Protection Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors: Dylan Bullard, Annwen Daniels, Anwen Davies, Dylan Fernley, Louise Hughes, Linda Ann Jones, Linda Morgan, W. Roy Owen and Gareth Thomas.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meetings of the Council held on the following dates as a true record:

- 28 June 2021 (Extraordinary Meeting)
- 8 July 2021

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer explained that:

- In terms of item 9 (Amendments to the Inter Authority Agreement of the Wales Pension Partnership), being a member of the Pension Scheme did not constitute an interest.
- As item 12(c) (Notice of motion from Councillor Gruffydd Williams) was not involved with raising the level of Council tax premium, there was no need for those members who had declared an interest at the time of setting the premium to declare a connection in this case.

No declarations of personal interest were received.

4. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences were extended to the following:

- Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen as his brother had passed away recently.
- The family of Twm Bryn Jones, a young staff member from the Highways and Municipal Department.
- The family of Ann Rhydderch, the Council's former Chief Archivist and Heritage Officer.

It was also noted that the Council wished to sympathise with everyone in the county's communities who had recently lost loved ones.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and remembrance.

Best wishes were extended to Councillors John Brynmor Hughes and Selwyn Griffiths, who had recently undergone surgery.

The following were congratulated:

- Councillor Gareth Griffith who had recently participated in the London Marathon to raise funds for the Children with Cancer UK charity.
- Elfyn Evans on his victory in the World Rally Championship in Finland and Councillor John Pughe Roberts was invited to say a few words.
- Everyone from Gwynedd who had been successful at the Alternative National Eisteddfod of Wales 2021, and especially Lleucu Roberts, Rhostryfan, on winning two of the main prizes, namely the Daniel Owen Memorial Prize and the Prose Medal.
- Megan Angharad Hunter, Penygroes on winning the Wales Book of the Year Award 2021, Literature Wales with her novel "Tu ôl i'r Awyr".

It was further noted that the High Sheriff's Charity Golf Day was recently held at Porthmadog Golf Club. It was explained that the aim of the event was to raise money for the High Sheriff's charities this year, namely Pact and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. It was noted that a group of young people, who were working with Nia Rees from Ysgol Eifionydd and members of the Gwynedd Youth Duke of Edinburgh Award, had been facilitators on the day, as part of their work for the award. As a thank you for their continuous work, this group was rewarded with a one-day golf lesson with Mark Pilkington, a professional golfer at the club. It was also noted that the Gwynedd Youth Service had a team sponsored by the Chairman of the Council competing on the day. This team, which included Tomos Dobson, Jamie Williams and Sion Endaf Parry, was one of 14 teams that participated on the day, with Andrew Owen, Youth Worker (Botwnnog and Glan y Môr Catchment Area) keeping track of all the scores. This Team won the competition and huge congratulations were extended to them.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. QUESTIONS

(The Cabinet Members' written responses to the questions had been distributed to the members in advance).

(1) Question from Councillor Mike Stevens

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

"Many members feel they were completely misled when we were forced to accept the Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP) in 2017. At the time we were told the plan was a living document that could be updated at any time. Now we are told the plan cannot be altered for three years. Given the desperate housing crisis and the massive housing shortage we now face what direction will be given to planning officers to be more flexible and not so draconian in their interpretation of planning guidelines to allow greater development?"

Response by the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn

"I do not accept that members were misled in 2017 when they adopted the Joint Local Development Plan. The comprehensive report set out the annual monitoring arrangements which have been undertaken since its adoption. The concept of constant monitoring and review is built into the Local Plan process, an arrangement which was not part of previous development plan systems.

Annual monitoring reports have been prepared since the Plan was adopted, and considered against the monitoring framework. The first annual monitoring report was presented to the Communities Scrutiny Committee, of which you are a member, in 2019, and at the same time briefing sessions were arranged for all Members to communicate the findings of the report. In 2020 Welsh Government relaxed the statutory requirement to formally submit annual monitoring reports, due to the pandemic. However, the Council still produced a draft annual monitoring report which is on the Council's website and again, briefing sessions were arranged for all Members. The evidence from the annual monitoring reports did not support the need for an early review of the plan. It is now four years since the adoption of the Plan and there is therefore a legal requirement to undertake a review. Evidence from all the annual monitoring reports will feed into this process.

As reported to the Council in June 2021, there are steps which need to be followed in the review process in order to decide on changes to the Plan.

Whether they are members of the Planning Committee or Officers making delegated decisions planning decisions must be made in accordance with the adopted Local Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. That is the legal requirement.

The idea that a direction might be given to approach these decisions in any other way is merely inviting members and officers to act unlawfully. I also take exception to the statement that officers are inflexible or draconian in their advice. When such an allegation is made outside appropriate channels, with no reference to any evidence, it serves to unfairly undermine officers and the confidence to the public in the planning system and the control development."

A supplementary question by Councillor Mike Stevens

"The fact that the Local Development Plan fails the people of Gwynedd is clear from the crisis we are now facing. The plan, adopted in 2017, has seriously outdated because of the way the world has changed. Therefore, will you arrange an urgent Council meeting and that we put aside the fixed regulations in order to have a full and open discussion regarding the current crisis?"

Response by the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn

"I have some sympathy with the frustration of Councillor Mike Stevens but, in essence, his complaint is against the planning system we have and, personally, I believe a radical reform is needed in that planning system. However, this is not on the agenda of the Government and even if it was, it would take years to develop.

The steps that we take to review the Local Development Plan are enforced upon us. They are statutory. You have seen the letters we have received from the Minister. We must adhere to the statutory process, namely Welsh Government guidelines, and this takes time. We have to, and this is the important point. I am sorry, but we have no choice. If we will not follow this system, and the threat is clear in the Minister's letter, then we may be in a position where the Minister states that our plans, or our adaptations, have no grounds, and we will not be able to take action. Therefore, we must do so, despite what we feel about the existing system. By the way, the review has commenced and meetings will be held at the beginning of November for all members for you to discuss the Local Development Plan matter. In addition to this, in terms of the problem of holiday and second homes, I do not believe that this can be resolved via the Local Development Plan, but via other matters. There is a need to review the Local Development Plan, but most importantly, and I believe that this is part of the democratic process, we must obtain everyone's opinions, the electors, any stakeholders. We cannot push something through alone or we will be at risk of failing to review the Local Development Plan. I am sorry to disagree with Councillor Mike Stevens with regards to this and I am certain that we can have a mature conversation about the matter in future."

(2) Question from Councillor Angela Russell

"I would like to ask a question about a matter regarding vaccinating children and young people against Covid-19.

Can I say, right at the outset, that this has nothing to do with whether one believes in Covid or not, or whether you believe in vaccinating or not. That is not what I am raising by asking this question. We must also remember that none of us at this meeting are medical experts in this complex field.

But I am going to ask here about our responsibility as councillors, and some of us are school governors also. I am extremely concerned about the issue of vaccinating children. As children and young people are offered the Covid vaccine, the experts tell us that this will reduce the disruption to children's education during the winter months, and will benefit those who live in the poorest areas, or who already suffer from health disorders.

It frightens me that children, under 18 years old, can take the vaccine without parental consent. Too young to legally have sex, to marry, to vote ... but it is okay for them to take the vaccine without consent. This worries me greatly.

I have been approached by many parents who are very concerned about the situation. I have advised them to write to the school expressing their concerns.

As a Governor of two schools, I am very much aware of my responsibilities as a Member of a Governing Board. Teachers have to obtain parental consent to give tablets to children, to apply sun cream, etc.

In loco parentis – the school is responsible.

- What is our responsibility as Governors, who are Members of the Governing Boards of these schools, and responsible for the school and its children?
- What is our responsibility should something, great or small, go wrong if a child is harmed by the vaccine?

- What is the Governing Board's responsibility at such time, and us as Governors?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Cemlyn Williams

"I am not going to repeat the whole written response, but the first paragraph fundamentally states that the vaccination programme is run by NHS Wales and the Welsh Government. It was their decision to introduce a vaccination programme for 12-15 year olds.

There is some background information in the written response, but to respond particularly to Councillor Angela Russell, the last paragraph elaborates on the role of schools and governors, namely that even though schools, and also governors in this context of course, can agree to undertake on-site immunisation services and help to distribute information, they are not responsible for securing parental or child consent, assessing Gillick competence or mediating between parents and children who may disagree about whether or not to consent. This is the role of the school nurses, who have the expertise and experience to handle such issues. Registered nurses are professionally accountable."

A supplementary question by Councillor Angela Russell

"GPs have been receiving over £25 for both Covid vaccines and I understand that there is an extra £10 for vaccinating children. Therefore, will this go over £35 per child for both vaccines, and who received the money for vaccinating thousands of children - the school nurse, the school, Gwynedd Council or Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board? Many parents will keep their children at home. Absences will be high. How much additional funding will be available in the budget for home-schooling?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Cemlyn Williams

"As far as the budget is in the question, I am unaware of any additional cost for Gwynedd Council. Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board is undertaking this and I have further information about that. As I noted in the response to the original question, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board does not intend to introduce these vaccinations in schools. The Board notes "at this time, we do not intend to vaccinate this age group in school clinics, but we will continue to review this decision. The intention is to mainly use vaccination centres on weekends and during the evenings, and a parent will be expected to accompany their child to give consent". Therefore, unless the situation changes, there will be no responsibility on schools or governors regarding the role of vaccinations, and as I have already noted, only trained nurses will be responsible for securing parental or child consent."

(3) Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

"In the 2017 full Council meeting, the Local Development Plan was narrowly passed by the casting vote of the Chair. At the time, a number of members who had voted both in favour and against expressed the view that it was flawed. The Leadership stated that this was a live Plan and that it could be changed. At that time, should it not have been vital for the Leadership and the Officers to inform members of the Council that the review process which would take place in 4 years time was going to take an additional 3 and a half years?"

Response from the Deputy Leader, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

"This question is similar to the earlier question by Councillor Mike Stevens regarding the process of drawing up a Local Development Plan. To an extent, I share the frustration that we are in a very cumbersome and statutory planning system, and that so much work is involved with every step in order to deliver, and this is also true of the monitoring and reviewing process. It is a system that has been set in statute. I hope that everyone has had an opportunity to read the written response and apart from that, I cannot add much more to that, only to share the frustration regarding the planning system."

Supplementary question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

"Given that each of the 65 indicators in the recent monitoring report state that no further action is needed, rather than what would be expected in the midst of a housing crisis, namely a suggestion to change the policies, then it follows that there will be no change to policies during the review period. In that case, is this not a stagnant plan that justifies itself via vague statistics and dooms our communities and the Welsh language to their demise and, therefore, in light of the fact that the Leadership has led us to an inescapable swamp, should they consider their position and resign?"

Response from the Deputy Leader, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

"I do not know what I can add to what I have already said. The document is not a defunct document. It is a live document and is currently being reviewed. Of course, things have changed during the last four years - there are changes in terms of Wylfa newydd, the impact of Brexit can be seen, the impact of Covid is seen and climate change is a factor. Major changes have taken place and there will be a review, and it is likely that a review will take some time as a result of the changes that have occurred. Therefore, I do not accept that. What is important as we proceed to review is that we all participate in that review, that all of us attend the awareness raising sessions for members, and that we all take part in the consultation period, and I believe that this is essentially important. Therefore, I do not accept that anyone was misled. There was comprehensive documentation in 2017 and it was absolutely clear what the guidance was regarding the review and monitoring system. Therefore, I cannot speak on behalf of people who, maybe, had not read the documents in full at the time, but certainly, I share the frustration regarding the system, but this is the system and I hope that all of us will participate in the process."

7. GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S DIVERSITY DECLARATION

The Leader submitted a report which recommended:

- That the Full Council adopted the Diversity Declaration in order to publicly state that Gwynedd Council encouraged and promoted diversity in democracy.
- Request that the Democratic Services Committee led on developing a full work programme to realise the declaration, submitting the work programme to the full Council at its next meeting on 2 December, 2021.

The Leader of the Independent Group was invited to say a few words, and then the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support elaborated on preparations to hold a Democracy Week in Gwynedd, that would commence on 18 October. She asked everyone to share the messages that would be tweeted and shared during the week, noting that it was intended to re-run the campaign in January after having an opportunity to learn lessons from the first campaign.

Members were then given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions. The following matters were raised by individual members:

- Concern was expressed that something major was wrong when so many members were elected to the Council unopposed, and that it could not be certain that what was being recommended would change the situation in terms of attracting people to stand for election.
- It was noted that the declaration was commendable and the campaign to try to get more diversity from different backgrounds to stand as councillors was welcomed.
- It was suggested that the declaration should include, not only women, young people, disabled people and ethnic minorities, but also people of colour and people with other characteristics that were included in the equality legislation, such as gender and sexual orientation. In response, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support noted that she welcomed the observation and that she would ensure that the declaration was amended to reflect this important point. She would also ensure particular attention to this in the work programme that would be developed to support the declaration.
- It was noted that there was a clear role for political parties to reach out and hold events to raise awareness of councillors' work.
- Frustration was expressed that the delay in publishing Welsh Government's decision regarding electoral boundaries could have delayed the process of trying to attract a variety of candidates to stand for election in May 2022.
- It was suggested that a change of culture was needed within the Council to make it more dynamic, as it seemed that only a little was taking place in Gwynedd compared to some other counties, and it was enquired whether this was due to the attitude of senior officers towards some councillors.

RESOLVED to adopt the Diversity Declaration below and request that the Democratic Services Committee develop a work programme to support the declaration:

"This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. Therefore, we wish to reflect the community in which we live by, in the first instance, increase the number of females, young people, disabled and ethnic minority who stand in the elections to be a Gwynedd Councillor.

We agree to:

- ***Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy***
- ***Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct***
- ***Promote actions as a Diverse Council ahead of the 2022 local elections***
- ***Work towards the standards set out in the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development***
- ***Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for Councillors***
- ***Consider how to provide flexibility in council business by reviewing our practical arrangements***
- ***Continue to encourage all members to take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.***
- ***Work towards ensuring that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles."***

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021 – UPDATE FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support submitted a report updating the Council, following the approval of arrangements at the previous Council meeting on 8 July, 2021, to hold Council meetings in order to address the new requirements in Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The Head of Democracy Services elaborated on the progress of background work noting that, although the original timetable had slipped slightly, work to upgrade the Dafydd Orwig and Hywel Dda Chambers to hold hybrid meetings in future had now been completed. He also noted that initial trials of the technology bode well but minor elements needed further attention.

Members were given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions.

A number of members referred to the advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid meeting system.

In terms of the advantages, it was noted that it would:

- Reduce costs and travel time to meetings.
- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Facilitate the participation of all types of different people, namely people who work, disabled people, carers etc.

In terms of the disadvantages, it was noted that:

- Members saw value in meeting on a face to face basis, and that they missed the conversation and sharing of experiences that occurred naturally before and after a meeting.
- A virtual or hybrid system would change the dynamic of meetings and that it was not possible to recognise body language etc.
- Joining a meeting remotely could be a lonely experience.

The following matters were raised by individual members:

- The need to spend £130,000 on developing the hybrid system was questioned. In response, it was explained that this amount was for the upgrade of 17 committee rooms across the county, and there was a need to ensure that we had a modern and reliable system in place. It was also noted that the majority of other councils faced the same level of costs.
- As teachers and children were now allowed to go to schools, it was enquired why councillors were not allowed to go to the Chamber to meet on a face-to-face basis? In response, it was explained that Welsh Government guidance was quite clear that we should work from home if possible, and until that guidance would change, it would not be possible to hold face-to-face meetings.
- It was noted that the Senedd and Westminster Parliament already met in a hybrid manner and the need to move forward with arrangements in Gwynedd as soon as possible was emphasised. In response, it was explained that Welsh Government had invested at a very early stage during the period, and that a large number of officers were working in the background. In terms of the progress of technical work, Gwynedd was about half way among Welsh councils, but the sooner the trialling work etc. could be undertaken, the better so that we would be in a position to act sooner, rather than later, should Government guidance change.
- Whilst accepting that the current Government guidance was for everyone to continue to work from home if possible, it was enquired whether we were truly aiming for a hybrid meeting or a face-to-face meeting of the full Council in March next year? In response, it was noted that we had managed to hold virtual meetings effectively for 18 months, and as the number of Covid cases was

increasing in our areas, there was a responsibility on us, as community leaders, to set an example until the situation had improved.

- It was suggested that it would be possible for the majority of meetings to be hybrid, but the full Council and meetings where confidentiality is important, such as appointment committees, should be on a face-to-face basis.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that changes resulting from lockdown had enabled Council officers to learn a lot by holding a larger number of national meetings than ever before, and to have more of an influence than ever before by holding virtual meetings with the Government etc.
- It was enquired how much savings in travel costs had been achieved since the start of the pandemic. In response, it was confirmed that 2020-21 travel costs figures had been published on the website, and it was believed that the saving was close to £40,000.

RESOLVED to accept the report for information.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT OF THE WALES PENSION PARTNERSHIP

The Chair of the Pensions Committee submitted a report asking the Council to approve amendments to the Inter-Authority Agreement of the Wales Pension Partnership as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members were given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions.

Members supported the proposal on the basis:

- The partnership had served the Gwynedd Pension Fund very well, and the changes would be of assistance to improve performance and the method of service delivery by the Wales Pension Partnership.
- As we were moving into the private market, there was a need to appoint a private market allocator with extensive experience and knowledge of private markets, and the potential advantages for the fund in the long-term would undoubtedly outweigh the costs of the appointment, which would fall on the partnership, and not Gwynedd.
- The selection of the scheme member representative from amongst members of the pension boards and the inclusion of such person on the joint committee would extend the decision-making process, by ensuring that all the scheme's members are included in the discussions.

RESOLVED to approve the amendments to the Inter-Authority Agreement of the Wales Pension Partnership as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report to the Council.

10. REGULATION OF SEX ESTABLISHMENTS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982

The Cabinet Member for the Environment submitted a report asking the Council to adopt powers to regulate sex establishments and associated requirements.

The Assistant Head of the Environment Department elaborated on the background information.

The Monitoring Officer noted that the third recommendation in the report needed to be rectified, which referred to delegating the matters of determining fees, setting standard conditions and a plan for processing applications to the '*Central Licensing Committee*', to read '*General Licensing Committee*'.

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

Members were given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions. Individual members submitted the following observations:

- The report was welcomed and gratitude was expressed to the Department that had been working urgently on this policy matter.
- It was emphasised that it was important to get the right to regulate this field and although low level establishments were in question, and they were very scarce in the county, if at all, it had to be ensured that sex shops continued to be modern places, that were friendly to women and couples, and not only for men, as they had been in the past.
- Although it was not anticipated that the Council would receive an application to license an adults' cinema in the current on-line digital age, it was noted that the ability to manage the type of products that could be exhibited in such an establishment was all important.
- Although it was not anticipated that sex entertainment premises would come to Gwynedd, it was noted that it was essential that we had powers in place to be able to protect the well-being and safety of women working in such establishments, as they were among the most vulnerable in society, and often very young.
- Although the current discussion had been instigated by an application to open a sex shop, it was noted that it was important to remember that the same relevant act here included sex entertainment premises. As a result, it was a requirement to consider the far-reaching implications of the discussion in case we had to face such applications in future.
- It was noted that sex establishments reinforced damaging cultural attitudes towards women, and normalised women being seen as sex objects, and that the link between seeing women as sex objects, dehumanising them and violence against women had been recognised. There was also a great deal of concern about the way women working for these businesses were treated and exploited. Reference was made to research that showed that women felt more forlorn and vulnerable in public spaces when sexual images of women were displayed there, along with other research work that showed that the cases of sexual harassment and violence against women increased in the vicinity of these businesses.
- Should the Council prohibit these businesses, it was suggested that this would send a clear message to the people of Gwynedd, which could reduce the damaging attitudes of men towards women, and this policy would be consistent with the Council's efforts to promote equality and consistent with the message being conveyed in our schools, namely that men should respect women.
- It was noted that the majority of women working in these businesses did so because of poverty, a lack of care and child care needs and that sex businesses profited from the deprivation within our communities.
- It was noted that it was also important for sex and relationship education in our schools to discuss these complex subjects and that we held awareness raising campaigns and worked on plans that created alternative paths for vulnerable women, in order to prevent women from having to work for these businesses in the first place.
- It was emphasised that we must do everything within our means as a Council to prevent all types of prejudice and violence against women, and we should follow the example of other councils by working towards a White Ribbon Accreditation, namely a declaration that the Council is committed towards tackling violence against women.
- It was enquired what would be the procedure in terms of further discussion and proposing of further action to manage the potential number of sex establishments, or to declare a complete objection to businesses of these type, following the regulation? In response, it was explained that the recommendation before the Council was to adopt a system that approved licensing or not, and in having this statutory discretion, a viewpoint stating that the Council would not

allow any at all could not be put forward. Dealing with any applications would be a matter for the General Licensing Committee.

- It was noted that closing these establishments would not ensure the safety of any woman or person, and that they should be regulated instead of being swept under the carpet.

RESOLVED

- **To adopt, county-wide, the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2009, to become operational no earlier than 1 December 2021.**
- **To instruct the Head of Legal Services to publish the statutory notices associated with the decision to adopt for two consecutive weeks, with the first no later than 28 days before the date when the decision to adopt comes into force.**
- **To delegate the matters of determining fees, setting standard conditions and a plan for processing applications to the Central Licensing Committee.**

11. REVIEW OF GWYNEDD ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

The Leader submitted a report on the decision of Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government to accept the recommendations of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales in relation to the county of Gwynedd.

Members were given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions. The following matters were raised by individual members:

- Although the Council had done everything it could to ensure that members' wishes were relayed to Welsh Government, it was noted that the Government had ignored those observations.
- It was noted that there was no specific reference in the report to some of the Dwyfor wards that were affected by these changes, and concern was expressed that 3 out of 6 seats would be lost in Dwyfor. In response, it was noted that the report before the Council was very brief, and information that had been received very late in the day, but that the full information was attached to it and also available on the members' intranet. It was noted that officers shared the frustration of members that the official decision had been received so late in the day, especially as the review had been carried out for nearly three years, but anyone was welcome to contact the Chief Executive or the Democracy and Language Services Manager to discuss any part of the review in particular.
- Frustration was expressed that the Bethel Ward was joining another ward. It was emphasised that multi-member wards were a step backwards for democracy and accountability and the change was questioned as the current system worked fine as electors knew who to contact. It was further noted that it was hoped the Council could reject the report. In response, it was noted that there was sympathy with the observations and that the frustration regarding the contents of the document was understood; however, the report was submitted to members for information only, and that the question should be referred to the Minister for Finance and Local Government.
- Tremendous disappointment was expressed that Bangor would lose 3 seats and 3 wards on the Council, and the need to retain, or even increase, the current number of councillors was emphasised in order to maintain the democracy of the city. As a university city, with very few students registering to vote, the demography of Bangor was very different to some other areas in the county, and the new wards proposed for Bangor were enormous considering the local population and the student population that lived in them.

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

- As a tourism area with a high number of holiday homes, it was noted that the demography of some parts of Pen Llŷn was also very different to other parts of the county, as very few second home owners registered to vote.
- It was noted that work pressures on the 69 members who would try to achieve the work of the current 75 members would be enormous. In response, it was noted there would be, perhaps an unfair, requirement for everyone to undertake more work, and that this was a requirement that had not been fully considered by the Boundary Commission or the Minister when reaching their decision.
- It was suggested that the Government could have taken advantage of this opportunity to introduce Proportional Representation. It would then make sense to have more wards and it would be a more democratic way of electing members. Potentially, one way of attracting more people from different backgrounds to the Council would be substantially cutting the number of councillors, and establishing a councillor's post as a full-time post.
- The decision to merge Llanfrothen with the Tremadog Ward to form a new 'Glaslyn' constituency was welcomed, as this meant that the number of electors would be more consistent with the Penrhyndeudraeth Ward. However, the member for the new ward would be part of the Meirionnydd Area Committee and the Dwyfor Area Committee and would have to attend 4 community council meetings.

RESOLVED to accept the report for information.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Elwyn Edwards in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

1. **That the Council asks the Cabinet to consider officially recognising St David's Day by giving a day's leave to its workforce in order to celebrate our Patron Saint's Day on 1 March 2022 and every year thereafter.**
2. **That the Council calls on Westminster Government to devolve to Welsh Government the power to create bank holidays for Wales (via the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971) - in the same manner as already happens in Scotland and Northern Ireland.**

The member set out the context for his motion by recounting some of the history of our patron saint and his significance to us Welsh, while also emphasising that the purpose of the motion was to try to reclaim some self-respect in terms of our distinctiveness and our national identity.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support noted:

- She fully agreed with the principle and supported the call to establish St David's Day as a bank holiday in Wales.
- In terms of the first part of the motion, should the Council grant an additional day's leave for staff, it was important to note that it would not be possible for the Council to grant that day to some staff, and not other staff who worked under the same employment terms and conditions. The additional day would have to be granted to those staff working on St David's Day in order to take it on another day during the year, and a cost would be associated with this should you wish to provide the additional day for this purpose. If there was a wish to use one of the current 1.5 additional day's leave provided by the Council to this end, a formal consultation with recognised trade unions would need to be undertaken, with a view to securing a collective agreement before action could be taken.
- In terms of the second part of the motion, she fully supported the call as it was disgraceful and an embarrassment that the right to create bank holidays had

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

been granted to the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, but not to Welsh Government and she was ready to ensure that a letter would be submitted formally to the Westminster Government.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by individual members:

- It had been an insult to us for centuries that we did not have the right as a country to celebrate the day of our patron saint. Cost was still the argument but a bank holiday was an incredible boost for a rural economy and celebrating St David's Day should be part of the Council's post-Covid economic recovery programme.
- It had to be made clear that St David's Day should be a holiday for the whole nation, and not only the workforce.
- The Government and every other council in Wales should fight for this.
- This was an excellent idea but as Council staff enjoyed much better employment terms than employees in the private sector, the additional day's leave should be taken from their current annual leave entitlement.
- There was a duty on anyone living in Wales to support our patron saint, whatever their background and tradition.
- Care had to be taken that we did not discriminate between employees working within the Council and other employees associated with Council work, but employed by private companies, such as carers.
- The argument that schools needed to celebrate on 1 March did not carry weight. The date could fall on a Saturday or Sunday and it was possible for schools to celebrate on the nearest school day to St David's Day.

A registered vote was called for on the motion.

According to Procedural Rules, the following vote on the motion was recorded:

In favour (56) Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Stephen Churchman, Steve Collings, R.Glyn Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Peter Antony Garlick, Simon Glyn, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Judith Humphreys, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron M.Jones, Aled Wyn Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Elwyn Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Dewi Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Rheinallt Puw, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Ioan Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Cemlyn Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

The Chair noted that the amendment had been carried.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:

1. That the Council asks the Cabinet to consider officially recognising St David's Day by giving a day's leave to its workforce in order to celebrate our Patron Saint's Day on 1 March 2022 and every year thereafter.
2. That the Council calls on Westminster Government to devolve to Welsh Government the power to create bank holidays for Wales (via the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971) - in the same manner as already happens in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In response to a question from a member, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that Cabinet members had not prejudged their position in the Cabinet by voting on the matter, as the Cabinet would only be asked to consider the matter.

Councillor Dewi Roberts asked whether members with relatives employed by the Council should declare an interest. In response, the Monitoring Officer explained that, although they technically had an interest, the matter had now been discussed and passed, and it was the responsibility of members to determine whether or not they should declare.

(B) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Catrin Wager, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

1. **That this Council wishes to declare a warm welcome to refugees from Afghanistan who have recently, or will shortly, be arriving in Gwynedd.**
2. **This Council supports the fundamental principles of:**
 - **Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries, and the**
 - **1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.**
3. **The Council is concerned that the UK government's proposed New plan for Immigration does not uphold the principles outlined above, and objects to the criminalisation of the act of seeking refuge.**

The member set out the context to her motion, noting that:

- She was extremely pleased that this Council had been so willing to step in to offer a home for refugees from Afghanistan, and this was the right thing to do, in principle and morally.
- It was also important that we recognised the generosity of the county's residents, who had contributed goods and substantial funds via voluntary organisations in the county for the refugees.
- The Westminster Government did not view the situation in the same way, and that was why the Council had been asked to take a step further, and to recognise the fundamental right to flee, as defined by the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol.
- These rights were at risk of being undermined by the UK Government's New Plan for Immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill, which had already had its first reading.
- Labelling refugees as offenders would not help the situation, and even more so, it was immoral and set a terrifying precedent regarding the way we treated our fellow man. It was an attempt to tear society apart and to turn a person in need against another, and we had to reject it.

These observations were reiterated by another member, and an amendment to the motion was proposed, namely that the Council also expressed its gratitude to the residents of Gwynedd for their immense generosity, and their willingness to support refugees over the years, and to the county's voluntary organisations such as Pobl i Bobl, Croeso Menai and Cefn for their exceptional work in this field. The amendment was seconded.

The proposer of the original proposal and the seconder agreed to amend the proposal on these grounds with the Council's consent.

Enthusiastic support was expressed for the amendment by many members.

RESOLVED to adopt the amendment, namely:

1. That this Council wishes to declare a warm welcome to refugees from Afghanistan who have recently, or will shortly, be arriving in Gwynedd.
 2. This Council supports the fundamental principles of:
 - Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries, and the
 - 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.
 3. The Council is concerned that the UK government's proposed New plan for Immigration does not uphold the principles outlined above, and objects to the criminalisation of the act of seeking refuge.
 4. This Council expresses its gratitude to the residents of Gwynedd for their immense generosity, and their willingness to support refugees over the years, and to the county's voluntary organisations such as Pobl i Bobl, Croeso Menai and Cefn for their exceptional work in this field.
- (c) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Gruffydd Williams, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

That this Council, in light of the housing crisis caused by the increase in property prices, the increase in second homes and the influence of on-line short-term property letting platforms, request that the Cabinet earmarks all funds collected through the council tax premium on second homes / holiday homes on meeting the needs of the residents who live in the areas where the housing crisis is at its worst, namely in those areas where the majority of the tax premium is collected. Welsh Government encourages local authorities to use any additional revenue generated by charging the premium to assist with meeting the local housing needs, in accordance with the objectives of the premiums policy. Whilst accepting that the Council does not have to do this, it is the right thing to do, and it is what is expected by the majority of Council members and the wider public.

The member set out the context to his motion, noting that:

- At the Council meeting in December 2016, when a discussion was held on charging a 50% premium on second homes and vacant properties, an amendment was proposed that the majority of funds received from charging the premium should go towards helping young people in our communities to obtain an affordable home, and that this additional clause had motivated many councillors to vote for the amendment.
- The 2021-2027 Housing Action Plan earmarked a total of £23m in expenditure from Council tax premium funds, and although plans to reduce homelessness, to improve care accommodation and support for people with needs were totally worthy, it was a cause for concern that no finance had been earmarked for these elements from the Council's core or developing sources.
- It appeared that over £10m from the Council tax premium fund was earmarked for requirements beyond meeting the lack of housing crisis, although Welsh Government encouraged local authorities to use any additional returns generated by charging the tax premium to help to meet the housing needs of local residents.

The Cabinet Member for Housing expressed a strong objection to the proposal, noting that:

- The Council had adopted a Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan valued at £77m in response to the housing crisis. Officers were implementing this by

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

housing local people in our communities in safe, green and affordable homes, and his role, as a Cabinet Member, was to challenge that day-to-day work.

- Despite the pandemic and the unprecedented increase in homelessness and the number of people on the housing waiting list, and loss of Head of Department, the Department managed to spend £1.4m on restoring empty homes, including several homes in the areas mentioned in the proposal. £500,000 was spent towards adapting homes for people with disabilities, an additional £1m was spent towards the 'Homebuy' scheme, four innovative pods were created for vulnerable adults and four youth support flats. Work was in the pipeline to develop 30 units for vulnerable individuals with approximately an extra £1m being spent on improving support for people in their homes. The Council was also in the process of constructing the first homes for decades, and was looking at land in order to develop housing across Gwynedd.
- The Department came to a conclusion on local need via consultation, and this should be the basis of housing decisions, not this proposal, which meant that the Council could only spend money in areas where the majority of the tax premium was collected.
- There was a great need in his own ward, and in other wards across the county, and public money should be spent where there was need, and not where funds were collected.

The observations of the Cabinet Member were supported by a number of other members who expressed their objection to the proposal. It was noted that:

- The principle that funds should be spent where the funds were charged was repugnant in terms of social fairness and in terms of progressive taxation principles, and by adhering to this principle to the utmost as a measure of where spending should occur, the implications would be completely contrary to the benefit of Wales, and to the benefit of Gwynedd. On a British level, the majority of public resources would be spent in London and South-east England; on a Wales level, the majority of the expenditure would be on the M4 corridor between Newport and Swansea, and on a Gwynedd level, the majority of the expenditure would be on the banks of the Menai Strait, and not in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.
- Although it was recognised that there was a great need in the Western communities, there was a need for different types of housing in the urban communities, where thousands were on the waiting list for community housing and 3-4 generations had been on the list for years, and living under very difficult conditions.
- The proposal seemed to be a postcode lottery, and where would that end up considering all Council services? Should the Council consider such an extreme, and consider a policy of spending in communities where the Council collected the tax, some areas, which would clearly include a large number of rural areas in the county, would substantially lose out.
- The proposer noted that Welsh Government encouraged local authorities to use the premium yield to assist with meeting the local housing needs, but it was believed that 'local' in this context referred to the local authority, namely the whole of Gwynedd, and not parishes or communities in the county.
- It could be argued that the other side of the equation of charging a premium on a property also needed to be considered, namely that there were substantial losses to the tax base as a property changed from council tax to business tax. In general, these property losses and the income tax loss corresponded with the areas where premium income was at its highest, but clearly, the Council would not examine this on a parochial basis and consider spending less in those areas.
- Any councillor who supported this proposal would have to explain to their electors why housing was not being built in their ward.
- Wards, potentially deprived, that abutted areas with a high number of second homes, suffered more traffic and litter as a result, and that house prices were

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

also increasing in those wards. However, by adopting the proposal, those wards would not receive any premium funds.

- Adopting the proposal would mean that councillors would be parochial and compete against each other per ward for funds. Every member knew his/her own area, but no individual member understood the situation across the whole county. It was the role of the Cabinet Member and officers to understand this and to earmark the areas with the greatest need. The Cabinet Member could be fully entrusted to ensure that funding was spent as effectively as possible across the county in order to meet the need, and this would more than likely include areas where the lack of housing crisis was at its worst.
- The Welsh language resided in every corner of Gwynedd, and not only in Pen Llŷn, and there was a battle to retain the Welsh language as a community language in places such as Bangor.
- Everyone was on the same side and wanted to see local young people being given the right to live at home. There was also a housing crisis in the towns, possibly for different reasons, but the need was the same, and a fair solution was needed for all residents in the county.
- People purchased houses in Bangor, not to live in them, but as an investment to make a profit, and that this also created enormous problems.
- The members were hopeful that the Housing Strategy would address the housing crisis for local people in every part of Gwynedd, and the strategy should be supported and given an opportunity to work for the benefit of young people and local people across the county.
- What about the situation where the indigenous community had been pushed out to a neighbouring area? What about places where growth was taking place now in terms of second homes, such as the slate areas? Were they not going to be supported?

The proposal was supported by a number of other members. It was noted:

- There was a huge problem of a lack of homes in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, and a lack of action by housing associations to construct rented housing for local people in areas such as Abersoch and Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- Some home-owners evicted their tenants in order to convert those houses into holiday homes.
- Some second home owners were more than willing to pay the premium, provided they could see that their money was going towards meeting housing needs in the area.
- The needs of the homeless, individuals with social needs etc. should be funded from the Council's core or developing sources.
- There was a lack of empty homes to be brought back into use and a lack of land for construction as a result of the restrictions of the Local Development Plan. Development boundaries needed to be extended and provision made, not only for the homeless, people with social needs and the disabled, but also for professional young people, who had been pushed out of the housing market.
- The Housing Action Plan did not refer to Tywyn or any place south of Barmouth.
- Shelter stated that there was no difference between a homeless person in Tudweiliog and a homeless person in Grangetown, Cardiff, but the one fundamental difference was that homelessness in Tudweiliog had a serious impact on the Welsh language in that village. As a result, specific attention was needed for Welsh-speaking areas.
- The proposer was campaigning impassionedly for his area and the right to live at home. The situation was very frustrating, and how much evidence was needed to prove that we faced a crisis? Something had to be done, and it was believed that the proposal provided a glimpse on how to fund this problem.
- There was a difference between the housing stock available in the rural areas and in urban areas. A house could still be purchased in a town for approximately

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

£100,000, but as well as being much more expensive, the housing stock available in the rural areas was also lower. Since the Cabinet had closed schools in Carmel and Fron, an increase had been seen in the number of holiday homes and AirBnB homes in the area, and the same thing would happen in Abersoch following the Cabinet's decision to close the village school.

- The greatest thing the Council could do to help young people would allow them to have mortgages, in accordance with its rights under the Local Government Act 1972.
- The purpose of the second homes pot was to help people in those communities where there was an excess of second homes, particularly in Dwyfor and Merionnydd, and the funding should only be earmarked for this.
- The coastal rural communities were rapidly being vacated. As things were going, Pen Llŷn would be a massive holiday park, and no local person would be able to afford to live there, if it was not for the financial boost from the premium funding.
- Although it was agreed with the core element of the proposal, it was suggested that, instead of '*all the funds*' collected from the premium should be spent in areas where the housing crisis is at its worst, that '*a high percentage*' or '*the vast majority*' of the funds should be spent in those areas.
- Those people who had transferred their properties from the council tax to the business rate needed to be contacted, and those who had benefited from the Covid grant to hospitality businesses.
- The discussion had highlighted the tensions between the largest towns and coastal rural areas of Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, where the problems existed. It was not believed that people in the towns fully realised the dimension of the problem in the rural communities that were under immense strain, and the situation had seriously worsened during the pandemic.

Some other members noted their intention to abstain their vote on the proposal. It was noted:

- Although the spirit of the proposal was understood, there were no boundaries for the housing crisis in the county, and it would be difficult for members to vote for the proposal and then face people in their ward, where there were equally worthy cases.
- It was unsurprising that some type of clear relationship was expected between the funding charged from the premium and plans in the areas that currently suffered the worst as a result of the second homes crisis, but it was very difficult to determine what was fair, what was the need and where was the need, as we had such a common housing problem across the county, and several aspects to this problem.
- Rather than disregarding the proposal entirely, all of this should be revisited in future, examining the exact relationship between collection and expenditure, and holding the discussion if it does not appear that there is a fair or commensurate investment in plans that address the fact that young people fail to obtain homes.
- Given the depth of the current housing crisis and the need for an urgent solution to the situation, a careful discussion was also needed on whether some of the funds to help the schemes should come from the Council's core sources and developing funds.
- The Housing Action Plan was promising, innovative and far-reaching, and it had to be given an opportunity to work.

In response to some of the observations, the Chief Executive noted:

- He fully sympathised with the fundamental point of the proposer, as everyone wished to see as many resources as possible being referred to provide more opportunities for our local residents to live in our communities.

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

- It was very early days in the lifespan of the Housing Action Plan (7 months into the 6-year plan), but very early successes could already be seen. For example, nearly 100 empty homes had been brought back into use by specifically using the premium funding, and there would certainly be successes in every part of the county, including areas along the western coast.
- The Housing Action Plan was a £77m plan and the income coming in from the premium was £23m. The Department would spend substantially more than this £23m on the types of schemes that members would wish to see being implemented. There was a specific scheme for £15m to repurchase housing from the market, which in itself was 75% of the premium income, but coming from a totally different source.
- The Housing Action Plan could not solve our entire housing situation and national changes were needed, including additional funding from the direction of the Government and changes on the planning side.
- The Council had done what it could in terms of using our own funding and drawing up an Action Plan, which was the envy of other councils across the country. A scrutiny report in approximately one year would show what it has achieved, and it was hoped that it would be a great success and making as much contribution as possible towards the situation.

An amendment was proposed that the '*vast majority*', instead of '*all*' the funds collected from the premium should be spent in areas where the housing crisis is at its worst.

The Monitoring Officer noted that the term '*vast majority*' was indefinite in terms of meaning, and he asked the proposer of the amendment to confirm whether he actually meant the '*majority*' of the funds.

A member noted that he envisaged a problem with the term '*vast majority*' and that he was also unhappy with '*all the funds*', and he suggested that a '*high percentage*' could possibly be a compromise, should the proposer of the original proposal be willing to accept this.

The Monitoring Officer asked for a seconder to the amendment, namely the '*majority*' of the funds.

The amendment proposer noted that he would withdraw his amendment, and seconded '*a high percentage*' of the funds.

The Chair explained that a proposal had not been made to this end.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that '*a high percentage*' of the funds collected from the premium should be spent in areas where the housing crisis is at its worst.

The amendment was discussed.

The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that it was unclear to him what he would be voting for, as there was no reference here to any specific figure.

Some other members noted:

- The amendment did not help the situation at all, and that it would be better to refuse the amendment and the proposal.
- It was agreed with the amendment as the purpose of the premium was to help young people in our communities to obtain an affordable home, and that there were other funding pots to respond to other things.

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

The Monitoring Officer noted that 'a *high percentage*' was an open-ended term, and that he was unclear in terms of its meaning or significance.

A notice of a further amendment was given, namely that '70%' of the funds collected from the premium should be spent in areas where the housing crisis is at its worst.

Should the amendment carry and the matter referred to the Cabinet, the Chief Executive noted that it would be a matter for the Cabinet to interpret what was meant by 'a *high percentage*', and he asked the amendment proposer if he wished to reconsider.

The proposer noted that he was still eager to put up the amendment, and the seconder confirmed that he would also stick to the amendment.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that '70% of the funds collected from the premium should be spent in areas where the housing crisis is at its worst.

The amendment was discussed.

The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that it was unclear to him whether the amendment meant that 70% of the premium would be spent in 50.1% of areas where the housing crisis was at its worst.

The Chief Executive noted that, unfortunately, the original proposal did not define 'areas where [the premium was] collected' and the proposer was asked to cast some light on this.

The proposer of the original proposal noted that it was difficult to define, but in terms of the affordability definition, it meant those areas where the vast majority of local people could not purchase a house. He added that 60% of Gwynedd residents could not buy a house, but in areas that he had in mind, the figure was now closer to 90%, and he did not believe that it was difficult to work out where the funds needed to be spent.

In terms of the areas and how to define them, the Chief Executive noted that the only specific thing that could be included was the areas that contributed the majority of the income, therefore, the percentage would have to be set at 50.1%.

The proposer and seconder of the amendment noted that they were satisfied with this explanation.

A member noted, no matter which way the Council would vote on the matter, that the Cabinet would ultimately make any decision.

It was enquired on what basis it could be stated that the majority of the premium funding was collected in the western coastal areas, because if second homes were converted into businesses, they did not pay the premium. Therefore, the people that would possibly be at a loss should the proposal be passed would be the people who contributed the most, and who subsidised people who had sold houses in those areas. In response, the Chief Executive referred to the '*An estimate of the sum of second home and empty house premium collected in parishes since April 2018*' paper that had been sent as background information to members before the meeting, explaining that approximately 12 of the highest communities on the list were included within the 51%.

The Cabinet Member for Housing expressed his wish to have as many communities as possible into this group, and he asked whether it would be possible for the percentage to be 50.1% rather than 51%.

For clarity, the Chief Executive noted that the wording of the amendment was:

"That this Council, in light of the housing crisis caused by the increase in property prices, the increase in second homes and the influence of on-line short-term property letting platforms, request that the Cabinet earmarks 70% of the funds collected through the council tax premium on second homes / holiday homes on meeting the needs of the residents who live in the areas where the housing crisis is at its worst, namely in those areas where 51% of the tax premium is collected. Welsh Government encourages local authorities to use any additional revenue generated by charging the premium to assist with meeting the local housing needs, in accordance with the objectives of the premiums policy. Whilst accepting that the Council does not have to do this, it is the right thing to do, and it is what is expected by the majority of Council members and the wider public."

As figures of the different areas changed from year to year, it was noted that some communities would move in and out of the 51%. However, housing schemes would take several years to realise, and it was enquired how the Cabinet would resolve that problem?

In response to a question, the Chief Executive elaborated on the individual communities that would receive 70% of the premium funds according to the figures of the last four years per annum, and on average.

The Leader noted that the discussion had led to a wholly unnecessary complexity and he recommended that the amendment and original proposal were refused.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.

In his concluding observations, the proposer of the notice of motion noted:

- It was now evident from the discussion that the proposal would fall, but that additional funds raised from the premium was a separate funding pot.
- Over 90% of residents from Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, and some from areas in the vicinity of Llanberis, could not afford to live in their areas anymore.
- He had asked the Chief Executive and the Head of Housing and Property Department how much of the premium funds had been spent per parish, and he had received the answer that little expense had been spent from the council tax premium fund so far, and this despite the fact that the funds had been collected for four years.
- He wished to call for a registered vote on his original proposal so that all our residents could see how their representatives had voted on this critical vote to try to preserve our Welsh-speaking communities.

On a point of order, the Chief Executive noted that it was not possible to start spending the funds until the Housing Action Plan was in place, and it was expected that expenditure would substantially increase from now on.

In accordance with Procedural Rules, the following vote was recorded on the original motion:

In favour (15) Councillors: R.Glyn Daniels, Alwyn Gruffydd, John Brynmor Hughes, Aeron M.Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Angela Russell, Mike Stevens, Hefin Underwood, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Against (25) Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Beca Brown, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Annwen Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Dafydd Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Rheinallt Puw, W.Gareth

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 7 October 2021

Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Catrin Wager and Cemlyn Williams.

Abstentions (13) Councillors: Menna Baines, Stephen Churchman, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Simon Glyn, Judith Humphreys, Aled Wyn Jones, Elwyn Jones, Keith Jones, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts and Gethin Glyn Williams.

The Chair noted that the original proposal had fallen.

RESOLVED to reject the notice of motion.

(CH) The Chair noted that he would defer the following notice of motion submitted by Councillor Kevin Morris Jones, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution until the next meeting of the Full Council.

That this Council calls on Welsh Government to change the planning act in order that it is compulsory for any person wishing to convert a dwelling-house into a holiday home to receive planning permission to do so and that thresholds are set to restrict the numbers of holiday homes in any area.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 6.20 pm

CHAIR