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## THE CABINET (EXTRAORDINARY MEETING), THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023

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### **Present-**

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Dafydd Meurig, Ioan Thomas and Menna Trenholme.

### **Also present-**

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Huw Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Siôn Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)), Dewi Aeron Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

- Item 3           Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department).
- Item 5           Dylan Griffiths (Economy Development Service Manager) and Lisa Evans (Shared Prosperity Fund Manager: Gwynedd).
- Item 8           Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department) and Lowri Roberts (Estates Manager, Housing and Property Department).

## **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Craig ab Iago and Dilwyn Morgan.

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

## **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

It was declared that Cabinet members had an interest in Item 5 as the Cabinet were trustees of the Lloyd George Museum. It was confirmed that this was not a prejudicial interest.

Councillor Dafydd Meurig declared a personal interest with Item 5 as he was the Chairman of the board of one of the applicants. It was noted that this was a prejudicial interest and the Councillor withdrew from the meeting for this discussion.

Councillor Ioan Thomas declared a personal interest with Item 5 as he had a family connection who was Chief Executive of one of the applicants. It was noted that this was a prejudicial interest and the Councillor withdrew from the meeting for this discussion.

A declaration of personal interest was received from Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)) as he had a family connection with one of the applicants. It was noted that this was a prejudicial interest and the Officer withdrew from the meeting for this discussion.

## **3. URGENT ITEMS**

## **PAYMENTS FOR FAMILIES THAT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS OVER THE 2023 SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

The report was submitted by Cllr Beca Brown

### **RESOLVED**

It was resolved that the Council would fund the cost of providing the 'Free School Meals Provision during School Holidays' to families eligible for free school meals over the 2023 summer holidays.

It was emphasised that this decision was relevant to this holiday only, following the Welsh Government's announcement in a letter dated 28 June 2023, where it was said that they would not extend the scheme over the 2023 summer holidays.

It was agreed to draft a letter to the Welsh Government to express the Cabinet's disappointment that the scheme would not be undertaken over the summer and that this confirmation had been received late in the day, close to the start of the summer holidays. It was explained that the letter would include the Cabinet's reasons to fund the scheme over the summer.

### **DISCUSSION**

Disappointment was expressed that the Welsh Government had announced this financial cut very close to the start of the summer holidays, especially in light of the recent cost of living crisis.

It was confirmed that the likely cost of funding this scheme over the 2023 summer holidays was around £316,000. It was explained that this figure had been estimated at a cost of £117 per pupil (total of £3.90 a day for a period of 30 days over the summer holidays). It was detailed that around 2700 pupils had been claiming free school meals.

It was explained that this proposal was one-off funding and that a permanent bid would need to be made to enable funding for such a scheme in the future. It was detailed that funding this scheme would not affect the Council's permanent and long-term budgets as it was a one-off payment funded by money in reserve. It was confirmed that allowing this payment would not create financial problems for the Council.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

#### **5. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: COMMITMENTS FROM THE GWYNEDD ALLOCATION**

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

## **DECISION**

1. It was agreed to commit a total of £21,352,966 of Gwynedd's allocation from the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund to the Schemes listed in Appendix 1 of the report in accordance with the amounts noted.
2. The Head of Economy and Community Department, in consultation with the Head of Legal Service, the Head of Finance Department and the Chief Executive, was authorised to release offer letters to the schemes subject to completing final checks and receiving the seal of approval of the Shared Prosperity Fund: Gwynedd Panel to any special conditions.
3. It was agreed to establish four Enabling Funds (with a total budget of £6,131,000) to distribute smaller amounts of Shared Prosperity funding to enterprises and communities in the county and to authorise the implementation of three funds under the management of Cyngor Gwynedd.
4. The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was asked to carry out an investigation into the work area of supporting community / social enterprises to increase the Council's understanding and to ensure that the efforts of the organisations correspond and reinforce each other.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was explained that the Cabinet's decision at the meeting on 24 January 2023 had established a procedure to administrate the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) in Gwynedd. It was explained that the Shared Prosperity Fund: Gwynedd Panel was established following this decision, to confirm which schemes would be chosen to receive funding, following a period of receiving applications.

It was reported that the fund was worth £24.4 million and that it should be allocated by the end of March 2025. It was noted that the Shared Prosperity Fund: Gwynedd Panel, had received 144 applications (equivalent to £52 million). It was confirmed that 38 of these applications had been successful, and that additional funds had been established in order to support smaller enterprises.

The officers were thanked for assessing the prosperity fund applications effectively and transparently.

It was confirmed that a cross-section of projects had received the support of the fund, with a number of different types of schemes and locations included at the end of the open applications period. It was detailed that it was intended to open funds for smaller amounts of funding using this fund in order to ensure that the funding would reach every area within Gwynedd.

Disappointment was expressed that the period of time to spend the money from the fund had been reduced following late confirmation of the arrangements of the British Government.

## 6. ASSISTANT HEAD OF TRANSPORT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

### DECISION

It was resolved that the Council releases £265,000 from the transformation fund to finance the position of Assistant Head of Transport for a period of 3 years initially.

### DISCUSSION

It was explained that employing an Assistant Head of Transport would allow the Environment Department to achieve more within the field. It was noted that the post had been abolished in 2019 following a managerial review, with the aim of trying to cope without filling the post.

It was reported that the increasing pressure on the transport field following the pandemic, as well as new projects, had led to this desire to re-appoint an officer to the role. These matters included:

- Ardudwy Green Corridor
- Active Travel
- Public transport and the Emergency bus scheme
- Public transport review
- 20mph Scheme
- Car parks and parking enforcement
- Matters arising from Transport for Wales's commission report
- Electric vehicles charging network
- North Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the regional transport scheme

It was acknowledged that the Department's capacity to deal with increasing pressure had fallen short at times. It was felt that appointing an officer to the role in order to address these matters was essential.

## 7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

**RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information about the financial or business transactions of any specific person (including the authority that retains that information).

There is an acknowledged public interest in openness in relation to the use of public resources and related financial issues. It is also acknowledged that there are occasions, in order to protect the financial and commercial interests that matters related to such information need to be discussed without being publicised. The report deals specifically with financial and business matters and related discussions. Publishing commercially sensitive information of this type could be detrimental to the interests of the Council. This would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the best overall outcome.

## **8. BANGOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING CENTRE**

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

### **DECISION**

1. The reference to establishing the Bangor Health and Wellbeing Centre was supported and to authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Finance to continue with the discussions and to report further to the Cabinet in accordance with the outline programme.

2. To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department in consultation with the Head of Legal Services to complete the Options Agreement for parts of Canolfan Menai, Bangor in accordance with the terms to be specified by the Council's Estates Manager.

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.05am.

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**CHAIR**