
THE CABINET TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2021

Present-

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

Also present-

Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)

Item 9: Rhion Glyn (Senior Business Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Ioan Thomas and Councillor Cemlyn Williams declared a personal interest in item 6 as they were members of Caernarfon Town Council.

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 16 FEBRUARY 2021

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2021 as a true record.

6. TRANSFER OF LEASE AND MANAGEMENT OF COED HELEN SITE, CAERNARFON TO CAERNARFON TOWN COUNCIL

The report was submitted by Cllr Gareth Thomas

DECISION

Lease and transfer of the management of Coed Helen Park, Caernarfon to Caernarfon Town Council.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and the decision noted. It was noted that, in December 2014, the Council had approved a savings programme of over £1million for the Leisure department. It was added that the department had managed to realise these savings, and as part of the savings, the Byw'n Iach Ltd. company had been established to take responsibility for the leisure service.

It was noted that the company ran 12 of the Council's Leisure Centres as well as five community resources. Parc Coed Helen was one of those community resources, which was used by local clubs within the communities. It was added that the resources had been transferred to the Company temporarily and it had been highlighted at the time that this arrangement was not the most effective for the sites. It was stated that the Economy and Community Department had been holding discussions with several groups and entities in the communities to see whether there would be any interest in having more effective arrangements to manage the resources. It was added that positive arrangements had been held with Caernarfon Town Council and it was noted that the Town Council had decided to take the transfer of the Park on a 99 year lease. It was stressed that the Town Council was happy to maintain the existing services, while also seeking opportunities to improve the facilities for the future.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that as this land was public open land, notification of this intention was a legal requirement. It was stressed that this had been undertaken and no objections had been received.
- It was noted that one of the Local Members had objected and it was asked what concerns had been highlighted by him. It was noted that he had raised several matters such as arrangements for the Caretaker, parking matters as well as the Capacity of the Town Council. It was stated that the Council had explained the situation but that the Local Member continued to object to the transfer.
- It was noted that the park was close to the hearts of many people and that securing its future was completely necessary. It was noted that the Town Council was possibly a better body to manage the resource. Concerns about the caretaker were acknowledged.
- It was expressed that there was a need to look at transferring all the community resources, as it would be possible for them to receive more investment through bodies such as Town Councils.

7. STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL PROGRESS REPORT 2018-2020

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan

DECISION

The report on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Children and Adults Panel was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel. It was stressed that safeguarding was a priority for all within the county and that it had been heightened during the Covid-19 period.

It was noted that the report summarised the work of the panel, with references to the reports of external auditors and the Annual Report of the Corporate Director for the period of two years. It was explained that, although the timing of the report had slipped, this was not a reflection of the work of the panel during the period in question.

The Corporate Director apologised that the report was late, but it was stated that it was a comprehensive report. It was noted that there was a brief delay before meeting at the beginning of the pandemic but it was stated that the panel had met throughout the past year, and this highlighted that safeguarding was a priority within the Council. Everyone's commitment to this field was appreciated.

Attention was drawn to the effect of the pandemic on safeguarding and it was noted that the number of referrals had reduced for a while but the number was increasing as aspects of the pandemic adapted. It was noted that it was encouraging that these trends were consistent with the picture seen across Wales, and that national and regional discussions were continuing to look at these trends.

It was noted that progress had been made with the work programme. Attention was drawn to the good work of raising awareness that was being done continuously, but it was stated that training data remained a concern as the figure for the number of council staff attending training was not 100%. It was added that the panel was looking at the best way of sharing the information with staff. The work that was being done in partnership and regionally and nationally was highlighted. It was further stated that the internal panel had merged community safety within the Safeguarding Panel.

Attention was drawn to the increase in the number of parents deciding to educate their children from home and it was highlighted that safeguarding guidelines were not in place for these children. It was noted that this matter should be looked into further.

Observations arising from the discussion

- A question was asked about the number of children being educated from home and the reasons for the increase. It was stated that the Head of Education Department should be asked about the reasoning behind the decisions but it was noted that procedures were in place in order to contact the individuals who choose to educate from home.

- It was noted that the domestic violence rate was low specifically after the lockdown. Concern about this field was raised and it was noted that specific officers within the field were working closely with heads to try to make everything as simple as possible for individuals who genuinely needed support. It was added that there was an expectation that numbers would increase following the pandemic and that a population needs assessment would need to be created after this period.
- The staff were thanked for their work during the pandemic.

8. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE WHITE PAPER: RE-BALANCING CARE AND SUPPORT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

DECISION

The draft response to the Consultation was approved, noting the need for modifications to respond to question 3 in order to strengthen the response.

The Council's decision to disagree with the proposals included in the White Paper was supported.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Government had published the White Paper looking at Re-balancing Care and Support. It was noted that the White Paper highlighted the Government's vision which included moving away from complexities, moving away from prices and closer to social value and to shift from an organisational focus to focusing on effective collaboration. Support for the vision, which aligned with the vision within the Council, was expressed.

It was stressed that, from looking at the documents, the main problem was how the Government would deliver this. It was further noted that the White Paper stressed the element of simplifying, but complicated the arrangements by noting standard commissioning processes, creating a National Office and Boards, and establishing the Regional Partnership Boards as legal corporate entities. A feeling that the above intention was contrary to the vision was highlighted, and that this had been stated in the Council's response.

The Corporate Director added that, at first sight, it aligned with the Council's vision and was a good response from the Government. Nevertheless, it was noted that having taken a closer look, it was contrary to the vision noted. It was noted that the field was made more complex by adding further layers and specifically in large regions such as North Wales. It was added that this would move the far-reaching decisions further away from the individual. It was stressed that buying individual support was a large part of the document and was contrary to the principles of Gwynedd of working on the basis of the individual rather than a choice of support.

It was noted that the document highlighted the need for better terms and

conditions for care staff but that it did not note what the solution was. It was highlighted that there was mention of regional cumulative funds but it was stressed that this would not provide a solution. It was noted that there was no mention of the far-reaching document, A Healthier Wales, which clearly stated that there was a need for a regional vision but local provision. In terms of the response, it was noted that the responses were seen in the appendices but the need to send a letter as well highlighting what the Council was doing to align with the vision highlighted, was noted.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that sending a letter with the responses was acknowledged, but that it was possible they would only look at the responses. The need to highlight clearly the objection to creating a regional legal corporate entity was noted.
- Concerns were outlined about regionalisation as it would be taken further away from the citizens.
- It was noted that there were risks of creating funds and that these needed to be highlighted in the response to strengthen the objection to creating a regional body.
- It was stressed that the vision aligned with the Council's aspirations. It was noted that there was no mention of good practice that could be seen across Wales, and no mention of the public's observations either. The need to be open was stressed, and for the public to be aware of what was being offered.

9. RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING FEES 2021/22

The report was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

DECISION

The following residential and nursing fees for 2021/22 were approved for agreement with independent providers.

Category				Fee
Residential				£586.32
Dementia dependency	residential	–	high	£650.79
Nursing				£683.90
Dementia dependency	nursing	–	high	£722.33

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it was a bid to increase the fees. Attention was drawn to the preferred option.

The Business Manager from the Adults Department added that, prior to the pandemic, attention needed to be given to the fees because many providers refused the fees and charged their own fees. The need to review the fees was

acknowledged, and it was added that a piece of work had been commissioned to look at the matter further.

It was stated that, as a result of the pandemic, this work had been put to one side and was therefore not mature enough to be used to look at the fees for 2021/22. As a result, it was noted that a regional standard tool had been used to set the fees for 2021/22. The need to adapt this tool was noted, and that a regional discussion was being held with providers.

The options were highlighted, stressing that the preferred option, Option A, responded to some matters that were being highlighted together with some costs. However, it was added that it gave an opportunity for the Council to continue with the discussions to pay higher costs in the future as well as re-start the work which had been commissioned.

The Head of Finance Department noted that he was disappointed not to have been a part of the bids procedure and that it was a separate decision. He added that regional aspects were holding them back rather than working simply and clearly. It was noted that the preferred option was affordable within the budget.

10. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2021/22 BUDGET OF BYW'N IACH COMPANY

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

The Head of Finance Department was authorised in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Economy and Community Department, to provide a letter of assurance to extend the period of assurance already given to the Byw'n Iach company until the end of the 2021/22 financial year, in accordance with the provision in the agreement with the company.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that in May 2020 a report was submitted noting a possible gap in the Byw'n Iach company 2020/21 budget as a result of Covid-19. It was added at the meeting that it was expected that Welsh Government would fund additional expenditure and it was resolved that the Cabinet would be willing to provide the necessary financial support to sustain the services of Byw'n Iach company initially until the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

It was stated that the Government had given fair contributions from the Hardship Fund towards loss of income and that the Council had claimed funds from the Furlough scheme whilst the leisure centres were shut. It was noted that the Finance Department was expecting the Council to claim a total of £3m in assistance on behalf of Byw'n Iach company.

It was noted that the side-effects of the Covid-19 crisis would continue in 2021/22

with the possibility of some sort of restrictions in place together with the challenge of re-building the confidence of the company's customers. It was stressed that the Council remained of the opinion that an arm's length company model was the most suitable one to address the aspirations in the leisure field and that a close relationship would continue to secure its financial viability.

The recommendation to extend the period of assurance to the next financial year in order to support them financially until 31 March 2022 at least, was noted. It was added that, in using 2021/22 as a basis, it was not anticipated that the cost of keeping the company viable would be above this year's sum. In addition, it was stated that there was a reasonable budgeting presumption that the Government would continue to compensate the Council for loss of income for the next financial year.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 4.30pm.

CHAIR