

EXECUTIVE BOARD

MONDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair)

Councillors:

H.A.L. Evans, L.D. Evans, M. Gravell, D.M. Jenkins, G.O. Jones, T.J. Jones, P.A. Palmer, L.M. Stephens and J. Tremlett.

Present as observers:

Councillors T. Devichand, J.S. Edmunds, P. Hughes Griffiths and J.D. James.

The following Officers were in attendance:

Mr M. James	- Chief Executive
Mr E. Bowen	- Acting Director of Environment
Mr C. Moore	- Director of Corporate Services
Mr J. Morgan	- Director of Communities
Mr R. Sully	- Director of Education & Children
Ms W. Walters	- Assistant Chief Executive
Mr I. Jones	- Head of Leisure & Sport
Mr S. Pilliner	- Head of Transport & Engineering
Ms G. Ayers	- Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager
Mr R. Edgecombe	- Legal Services Manager
Ms D. Williams	- Press Manager
Mrs M. Evans Thomas	- Democratic Service Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen : 10.00 a.m. - 11.35 a.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were made at the meeting.

3. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members. However, he had received notice that Councillor Deryk Cundy would like to ask questions in relation to agenda items 12, 13 and 14 and these would be addressed under the appropriate items later in the meeting.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. WALES AUDIT OFFICE - ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT ON CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Executive Board considered the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2014/15.

Each year the Auditor General was required to audit the improvement planning and reporting arrangements of Welsh Councils and to assess whether each Authority would meet statutory continuous improvement duties.

The Annual Improvement Report summarised the audit work undertaken at Carmarthenshire County Council since the last report was published in July 2014.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the report be received.

6. INTRODUCTION OF A CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY THAT COVERS ALL COUNCIL'S SERVICE AREAS

The Executive Board was advised that during the period March to May 2014 the Wales Audit Office completed a review of Carmarthenshire County Council's assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures were in place and were being adhered to. The study examined what the Council itself had done to seek assurance that its arrangements to support safeguarding were effective by reviewing how the Council was discharging its safeguarding responsibilities at all levels: cabinet, senior management team, scrutiny and individual officers.

The review was specifically in relation to children and overall the findings were that the Authority has adequate systems in place. There were, however, a series of recommendations, one of which was to develop and introduce a Corporate Safeguarding Policy that covers all the Council's areas.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Corporate Safeguarding Policy be endorsed.

7. COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Executive Board considered the revenue budget monitoring report for the period 1st April, 2015 to 30th June, 2015 which provided an update on the latest budgetary position as at 30th June, 2015 in respect of 2015/16.

Overall the report forecast an end of year overspend of £690k on the Authority's net revenue budget with an overspend at departmental level of £2,200k.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 7.1 that the Budget Monitoring report be received;
- 7.2 that Chief Officers and Heads of Service critically review their budgetary positions and implement appropriate action to keep within allocated budget.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015-16 UPDATE

The Executive Board considered a report providing an update on the capital programme spend against budget for 2015/16 as at the 30th June, 2015. The report included details of the main variances.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the capital programme update report be

received.

9. REVENUE BUDGET OUTLOOK 2016/17 TO 2018/19

The Executive Board considered a report detailing the current financial outlook and providing an update on the current financial model covering the next three financial years. The report outlined proposals for taking forward the budget preparation for the three year period 2016/17 to 2018/19.

Concern was expressed over the difficulties faced in preparing the budget without knowing the outcome of the National Government spending review and details of the Welsh Government provisional settlement, particularly in view of the tight timescales involved with the budget having to be finalised by the end of February/beginning of March.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 9.1 that the financial model and the significant financial challenges it poses be noted;**
- 9.2 that the proposed approach to identifying the required savings be endorsed;**
- 9.3 that the proposed approach to the budget consultation be endorsed.**

10. DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION

The Executive Board considered a report providing details of an application to the Development Fund from the Communities Department for an investment specifically targeted at recruiting a team of practitioners to clear the outstanding reviews across Older People Physical Disabilities and the Mental Health/Learning Disabilities Divisions. The funding requested was £289,407.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 10.1 that approval be given in the sum of £289,407 to fund a one off investment in a team of practitioners to clear the outstanding reviews across Older People Physical Disabilities and the Mental Health/Learning Disabilities Divisions;**
- 10.2 that interest be not charged, as per amended Development Fund conditions;**
- 10.3 that Development Fund criteria no. 5 be set aside for this application;**
- 10.4 that the repayment term be over four years.**

11. COMMUNITY NUTRITIONAL STRATEGY FOR CARMARTHESHIRE INTEGRATED SERVICES

The Executive Board was advised that the Welsh Government's Health Promotion Action Plan for Older People in Wales highlighted the importance of prioritising good nutrition for health and well-being and informed the Food and Well Being Nutritional Strategy for Wales. Vulnerable older people were considered by this strategy as a priority group, acknowledging that many of them were living with limiting, long term illness and were on a low income.

The report outlined the main barriers to good nutrition for this group in the community and proposed that Carmarthenshire implemented a holistic community

nutritional strategy which focused on five priority areas and considered available options to support good nutrition for older people. Such a strategy would provide Carmarthenshire with overarching principles for developing services that promote nutritional wellbeing for older people living within our communities.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- 11.1 that the decline in the uptake of meals on wheels by 33% since 2012 be noted;**
- 11.2 to agree and implement a Community Nutritional Strategy for Older People in Carmarthenshire to replace the limited impact of the meals on wheels service;**
- 11.3 that the current meals on wheels service continue as long as it is practicable to do so and people wish to receive the service;**
- 11.4 that Integrated Services develop an action plan and operationally roll out recommendations based on the 5 priority areas identified.**

12. CARMARTHENSHIRE'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR THE NEXT DECADE 2015-2025

The Executive Board was advised that over the course of the next 15 years Older People's services will come under increasing pressure in Carmarthenshire, with over 10,000 additional older people over the age of 75 living in the county, many of whom will require care and support.

Carmarthenshire's Vision for Sustainable Services for Older People for the Next Decade aimed to look in more detail at these challenges and to set out a plan for delivering more sustainable services over the next ten years. The plan must be ambitious and make the best use of the resources available in order to meet the challenges that lay ahead. The plan would be updated annually.

Councillor Deryk Cundy asked the following question:-

"With regard to the 4 year contracts for domiciliary care. The report states that 'The Council entered into a new 4-year contract with selected providers. The new contract enables providers to pay their staff better wages and better terms of employment. This should make it easier for providers to recruit and retain skilled care workers, which in turn should enable providers to be able to meet the demand for the service and deliver a high quality service. Monitoring arrangements are also more robust to ensure providers deliver the care at the standard we purchased.' Could I have some clarification on this please as there have been concerns about the travel between appointments - are staff being paid to do that? Also, about people having a 30 minute session so that carers are not just there for 2 minutes. And are we actually making sure that we have zero hour contracts for the providers who are doing this."

Councillor Jane Tremlett, Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health, clarified that the Authority does not have zero hour contracts and there is a whole new process in place with new contracts. With regard to 30 minute sessions, a new system has been introduced whereby if carers visit a client who has been able to get herself up that morning and get herself dressed and therefore doesn't need help, the carers can leave and bank that period of time for use on another day when the client is having a bad day and needs a bit more help. There is the

flexibility to actually do that and it actually provides better care for the client when it's needed. With regard to travelling, new arrangements are in place and staff are paid travel costs.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the draft Vision and Strategy be approved.

13. ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODULES FOR LEISURE

The Executive Board considered a report detailing alternative management options for leisure.

In 2013, as part of the Authority's work in examining more efficient ways of delivering services, officers were asked to undertake a review of alternative management options for the leisure portfolio. An initial options paper was subsequently presented to the Executive Board Members for consideration and further work was undertaken to examine options around:-

- a new Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO) or Trust to operate some or all of the services; or
- a partnering arrangement with an existing NPDO to delivery services.

Soft market testing was undertaken to establish interest from the market in terms of running the range of services within the leisure portfolio. The main interest was around the Sports & Leisure and Theatre services.

In terms of the two options of setting up an in-house trust or a partnership with an existing trust, it was felt that there were both financial and operational advantages in opting for a partnership with an existing trust.

Taking into account the response from the soft market testing, the key services which were recommended to be transferred were Sport & Leisure and Theatres and consideration could be given to other services if this proved successful.

Members were informed that there was a terrific opportunity to align any new Leisure Centre in Llanelli with a potential "Wellness" development as part of the major "ARCH" City Region project. The Executive Board agreed that, if possible, the new Leisure Centre could be part of this wider development and officers were asked to pursue the opportunity with vigour.

Councillor Deryk Cundy asked the following question:-

"This has already come to the Community Scrutiny and basically they supported the proposal apart from a concern about the finance and to make sure that the finance for Llanelli's residential care facilities was still available and my understanding is that is still the case. However, there was another part of the recommendation which came out of the Community Scrutiny which was to ask officers to look at a new NPDO for the other services that are mentioned in the report, things like libraries, museums, parks and this type of thing. I think it's the point that we need to look at the whole thing and that is what came out of Community Scrutiny, that it was something that was important that we understood that side of it and how much that would cost and where we could go in the future. We have to be prepared for changes. I believe that that is the right thing to do. It

was actually passed at the Community Scrutiny but it appears not to have come through in this report. I was just wondering if that could be attached to this report. The Executive Board thought that was a good idea.”

Councillor Meryl Gravell, Executive Board Member for Regeneration & Leisure, clarified that the idea was to go out and test the market on this, see what comes back and then have another look at libraries and museums etc. as they are two completely different things.

The Director of Communities added that officers had discussed with the Community Scrutiny Committee the pros and cons of how services are grouped together as you look at alternative delivery modules. Officers felt more confident going where there were potential income streams that could be driven in relation to Leisure and Theatres. Some of the expertise of the Not for Profit companies who have a track record in driving that particularly suited those areas and they had a less established track record on a wider portfolio of services. Officers will be looking very carefully at ways in which library services can be delivered and trying to be creative whilst protecting local services for local people.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 13.1 that Carmarthenshire County Council seeks to enter into a partnership with an existing or hybrid Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO or Trust) through a procurement process using competitive dialogue, which has the key parameters set out in the procurement strategy within the main report, and which will seek to deliver the relevant services’ 3 year PBB savings, in line with the affordability levels set out in the report. The procurement process would not include a bid submission from a newly establish ‘internal’ NPDO;**
- 13.2 that the initial scope of the partnership would be for the Sports and Leisure portfolio (including facilities from Llanelli, Carmarthen, Ammanford, Newcastle Emlyn, St. Clears and Llandovery), plus Theatres services (from Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford), with further consideration of other services by Council at a later date after the contract has been operational for a period of time;**
- 13.3 that, if there is no interest in some or all of the services, Carmarthenshire County Council should then seek to develop a business case to consider establishing a new NPDO for the services to deliver the financial savings;**
- 13.4 that it be proposed that the tender specifies that the partner organisation has to apply for admitted body status to the Dyfed Pension Fund, closed to existing employees at the point of transfer;**
- 13.5 that the tender includes a requirement to cost for the replacement of Llanelli Leisure Centre through a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain Model (DBOM);**
- 13.6 that officers pursue the opportunity to align any new Leisure Centre in Llanelli with a potential “Wellness” development as part of the major “ARCH” City Region project.**

14. LLANELLI CAR PARKS

At its meeting held on 15th April, 2015 Council considered a motion requesting a 6 month trial of 2 hour free parking in Council car parks in Llanelli Town Centre. Council resolved that the motion be supported and the proposal be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Executive considered a report providing detailed information on the following:-

- the Authority's Parking Policy;
- information and evidence on car parking performance in Llanelli;
- research undertaken on the impact of parking charges on town centres;
- implications that will arise if free car parking is introduced;
- car park budget decisions that are currently in abeyance whilst the motion is considered.

The report also detailed a number of options for consideration.

The provision of free car parking would reduce revenue for the Council resulting in a reduction in investment for other highway and transport related services, leading to further loss of services. Also, it may not have the desired outcome in terms of trade for the town, however, it was recognised that there was a need to respond to the concerns of the town centre traders and members.

Councillor Deryk Cundy asked the following question:-

“I think that the Task Force is a great idea and it is very important that we really do involve the traders. I'd like to see it as a cross party thing if possible. It is hugely important as obviously there are a lot of Llanelli members who would like to be involved in this. Measurement is the key and I am not convinced that we have all the measurements here. The point of the free parking is not going to go away until we get a proper measurement on this. Two hours in the afternoon, although that helps, I'm not totally sure if that is really in the spirit of the original proposal which was to have two hours in an earlier part of the day and I would like to see that. The whole point here is that we need to see measurements and that the traders are actually getting a benefit from this. Footfall alone does not actually show if the traders are getting a benefit. It's important that we work with the traders on that. The question is can we have more positive action with the traders to actually really involve them a lot better?”

The Chair agreed that it was important to get the traders on board as part of the equation. The Task Force will have to make sure that trader involvement is there because footfall is one thing but getting people into their shops is their role in the equation. What we can do to increase and encourage footfall we will do but the traders run their own businesses and shops and that part is up to them. He added that it was disappointing that in the past a lot of shops have chosen to close on the night of the Christmas Lights switch on and this was one of the things which could be discussed by the Task Force. He stressed that it was important to get the equation right between what we can do and what the traders can actually get on board and do themselves.

The Executive Board Member for Technical Services explained that the reason the hours 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m. were chosen was to encourage new footfall into the town centre e.g. families visiting town after school.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 14.1 that the town centre be encouraged to maximise the take up of free car parking days available to the town centre;**
- 14.2 that the existing charges be retained but the introduction of evening charges and the 20p increase for the current year be postponed and introduced next year;**
- 14.3 that a two hour period of free car parking be introduced between 3.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. each day for a period of one month in October. Such an initiative would enable a further analysis of demand to measure the impact of free parking;**
- 14.4 to retain all current and planned charges but seek town centre trader support for the introduction of a scheme whereby traders are able to discount the cost of their goods/services where users have produced evidence of parking on the day of purchase;**
- 14.5 to retain all charges but explore an option to introduce a pay on exit system at the multi storey car park in lieu of the pay and display/pay on foot system;**
- 14.6 that charges be introduced at the Llanelli Leisure Centre car park to encourage non centre users to park at more appropriate locations and appropriate dispensations for leisure centre users be accommodated within the charging system;**
- 14.6 that the Llanelli Task Force be reintroduced and chaired by the Leader of Council.**

15. PRE-APPLICATION FEES

The Executive Board was advised that Section 18 of the Planning Act 2015 introduced a new statutory requirement on Local Planning Authorities to provide pre-application services to applicants.

Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, Local Authorities may charge for discretionary services and the Board considered a report detailing various options for the introduction of charges.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- 15.1 that the charges be introduced as proposed in the consultation document, with the caveat that any charges reflect the nationally set levels once they have become law;**
- 15.2 that charges also be introduced on issues not covered by the nationally listed developments such as work on Tree Preservation**

Orders;

- 15.3 that existing charges for work such as High Hedge disputes be reviewed.**

16. SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSON'S RELOCATION SCHEME

Further to the decision made at Council on 9th November, 2015 (minute 12 refers) when it was resolved that the Council should assist with the Syrian refugee crisis, the Executive Board considered a report which provided details of the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme and how Carmarthenshire could support and actively participate in the scheme.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 16.1 to appoint a member 'champion' and lead officer to be responsible for developing the Council's approach;**
- 16.2 to initiate a cross sector task force of interested partners to deliver a co-ordinated programme;**
- 16.3 to work with neighbouring authorities, public sector colleagues and the third sector (including advice agencies, voluntary, charitable and religious organisations) to ensure a co-ordinated and effective regional approach;**
- 16.4 to play a full part in national conversations and initiatives, working closely with the Welsh Government and the WLGA;**
- 16.5 to prepare a detailed action programme, including the financial implications, for consideration by the Executive Board;**
- 16.6 that regular progress reports be submitted to the Executive Board on the delivery of the re-settlement and support programme.**

17. MATTER REFERRED FROM THE SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Executive Board was advised that the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on the 3rd July, 2015, requested the Executive Board to lobby the Welsh Government to stress the importance of the Carers Measure funding and to request that it not be cut from April 2016 onwards.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health informed the Board that she met with the Minister for Social Care & Health earlier in the month and raised the concerns expressed by the Scrutiny Committee and Carers Forum. The Carers Measure will be repealed when the next Act comes in on 6th April, 2016 and for the first time, carers will have the same rights as the cared for.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the referral be noted and the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee be advised that appropriate representations have been made.

18. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

PANEL

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillors J. Williams and J.M. Charles be appointed to serve on the School Improvement Panel in place of Councillors T. Davies and G.O. Jones respectively.

19. MINUTES

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 1st September, 2015 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE