

## THE EXECUTIVE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December, 2024 in the Committee Room and virtually via Zoom

- PRESENT:** Councillor Gary Pritchard (Leader) (Chair)
- Councillors Neville Evans, Dyfed Wyn Jones, Alun Roberts, Dafydd Roberts, Nicola Roberts, Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Robin Williams.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer  
Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer  
Director of Social Services  
Head of Housing Services  
Head of Democracy  
Corporate Programme Manager (AR)  
Committee Officer (ATH)  
Webcasting Officer (FT)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Carwyn Jones, Marc B. Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Douglas Fowlie, Glyn Haynes, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, MBE, R, Llewelyn Jones, Derek Owen, Dylan Rees, Anwen Davies (Scrutiny Manager) (for item 5)
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#### 1. APOLOGIES

The apologies for absence were presented and noted.

#### 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

#### 3. URGENT MATTERS CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR HIS APPOINTED OFFICER

No urgent matters were reported but the Chair took the opportunity to thank everyone who had been working hard over the weekend in very difficult circumstances to respond to and deal with the impacts of Storm Darragh including the Council's staff, contractors, members of the community, local farmers who had assisted with clearing debris from the roads and Scottish Power engineers who have been working to reconnect households to a power supply.

The Chief Executive added his thanks to those of the Chair's and said that Team Môn had shown itself at its best in what had been a serious situation and he was confident that everyone concerned had done their best in the interests of Anglesey's residents.

#### **4. THE EXECUTIVE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The report of the Head of Democracy incorporating the Executive's Forward Work Programme for the period from January to August 2025 was presented for confirmation.

The Head of Democracy updated the Executive on items that were new to the Forward Work Programme and advised that since the publication of the agenda two items had been rescheduled, the one – Local Authority homes for older people, setting the standard charge – from February to January 2025 and the other – Independent sector care home fees for 2025/26 from January to February 2025.

**It was resolved to confirm the Executive's updated Forward Work Programme for the period January to August 2025 with the changes outlined at the meeting.**

#### **5. PROCUREMENT STRATEGIC PLAN AND CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

The report of the Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer incorporating the draft Procurement Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules was presented for the Executive's consideration and approval.

The report was presented by Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing who outlined the background with the UK Government having revised the legislation in respect of procurement in the public sector with the Procurement Act 2023 due to come into force on 24 February 2025 which is later than the initial planned date of 28 October 2024. Also, Welsh Government has passed the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 which places additional responsibilities and duties on public sector organisations in Wales in relation to procurement. The Council commissioned an external company to review the Council's preparedness for the change in legislation and to provide the Council with an action plan to ensure compliance which covers a number of areas including the overall strategy. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's approach to procurement and ensures that the way in which the Council commissions and sources its services, supplies and works is compliant with legislation, internal policies and processes, is ethical, open, fair, transparent and includes economic, social, labour and environmental factors in the process. Councillor Robin Williams said that the intention is to pursue local procurement where feasible, and he highlighted that in the region of a quarter of the Council's contracts are with local firms and in some instances where the contract is with a company that is not local, local resources such as staff are part of the contract delivery.

He further reported that the change in procurement legislation required the Council to update its Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) which set out the process on how to undertake a procurement exercise, the different procurement methods and when they should be used. The revised CPRs have been drafted to ensure they are flexible enough to allow officers to undertake procurement exercises in the most efficient and effective way while still ensuring that any procurement exercise is controlled and ensures that the Council achieves value for money.

The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer advised that if the Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules are approved then work on the action plan will continue under the oversight of a project team with staff training scheduled for January and February ahead of the implementation of the new legislation on 24 February 2025. He referred to the priority areas identified by the Plan as being leadership and culture, use of data and being commercially informed, social value and the environment, ensuring compliance and focusing on the local economy. The Plan sets out how these will be achieved and how success in these areas will be assessed and evaluated the intention being to report regularly on progress to the Leadership Team and annually to the Executive and to the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor Douglas Fowlie, Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee was invited to report on Scrutiny's views from the 19 November 2024 meeting when the draft Procurement Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules were considered by the committee. He referred to the issues raised in discussion by the committee including how the proposed changes would contribute towards realising the objectives of the Council Plan and help the Council achieve value for money, ensuring compliance with the strategy, the new legislation and contract procedure rules, whether the Council is able to consider alternative models of delivery and the use of technology to secure administrative efficiencies, and the benefits to the local economy as regards support for local businesses to tender for contracts and the contract spend on local firms. Having received assurances with regard to these matters the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had resolved to recommend the draft Procurement Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules for approval by the Executive.

The Executive expressed appreciation for the Strategic Plan which it was agreed had distilled a complex matter into an accessible document. The Executive highlighted contracting with local suppliers and engaging with local businesses as important elements of the plan as well as recognising that procuring locally can generate wider social benefits such as employment and can provide experiences for local people who might not otherwise have such opportunities.

Councillor Dafydd Roberts, Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language referred to the expectations as set out in Appendix B2 that suppliers will provide to recognised standards which for agriculture are cited as Global G.A.P. standards. He sought clarification of what the Global G.A.P. standards entail and sought assurance also that local suppliers including farmers will not be required to deliver to standards that are in addition to or different from local and nationally recognised and agreed standards which could make compliance difficult.

The Chief Executive advised that with the Executive's approval, Officers would look into the Global G.A.P. standards and report back on those as well as on the requirements that suppliers can reasonably be expected to meet which are in line with local and national standards and practices.

#### **It was resolved –**

- **To approve the Council's Procurement Strategic Plan which will come into effect on the date the new legislation comes into force (Appendix A to the report).**
- **To approve the revised Contract Procedure Rules which will come into effect on the date the new legislation comes into force (Appendix B to the report).**
- **To delegate any further decisions in respect of the implementation of the Procurement Action Plan that requires the approval of the Executive to the Portfolio Member for Finance. All decisions will be published in the normal manner.**
- **To ask Officers to provide clarification of the Global G.A.P. farm assurance standards and to report back thereon with a view to ensuring that the Council's expectations with regard to its suppliers are in line with current national and local standards and practices.**

## 6. HOUSING RENT HRA AND HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES 2025/26

The report of the Head of Housing Service seeking the Executive's approval for increases to rent and housing service charges for 2025/26 was presented.

The report was presented by Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing who reported that Welsh Government has announced an increase of up to 2.7% in social rent levels for 2025/26. The charges for services that the Authority provides during 2025/26 are based on actual costs incurred during 2023/24 and are shared equally among tenants and leaseholders utilising the services. As the Welsh Government Rent Policy does not provide any guidance on how to increase garage rent, the Council is therefore proposing to increase the garage rent by 10% or £1.00 per week to £11.02 per week. This will generate an income of £290k after deducting empty garages and will be used to create a strategic plan for the garages. Councillor Robin Williams referred to the Council's garage rent charges as being significantly lower than the charges for container hire. He further highlighted that it is also proposed that representations be made by letter to Welsh Government to the effect that the annual rent uplift is not sufficient to enable the HRA to finance increased costs as a result of additional employer NI contributions announced in the October Budget, new WHQS 2023 standards and building cost inflation.

The Head of Housing Services supported the Portfolio Member in saying that the maximum 2.7% rent increases for 2025/26 allowed by Welsh Government Rent Policy is not enough to cover additional costs and expectations. Applying the 2.7% increase will lead to an increase of between £2.20 and £3.98 per week for all tenants. However, 2,931 of the Council's tenants (74.5%) will face no additional hardship because of the rent increase and service charges as they are in receipt of full or part Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. The same 2.7% increase will be applied also to the Council's 37 intermediate rent properties.

The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 15 Officer advised that Welsh Government's five year rent policy ends at the end of 2025/26 and that the eleven treasurers of the stock retaining councils in Wales have entered into discussions with the Welsh Government officials who are leading on the new policy to raise concerns about rent levels being insufficient to cover the increased costs facing the HRA in 2025/26 and beyond. Welsh Government will be consulting on a new rent policy in the New Year and the Council as a stock retaining council will be working with Welsh Government on that process. One suggestion being made is that the Consumer Price Index should be replaced in the formula for determining rent increases by a measure of inflation that more accurately reflects the cost increases which the housing sector is facing. While it is accepted that social housing needs to be affordable for tenants, councils needs to ensure that the HRA remains financially viable.

The Chair in saying that he had taken the opportunity to raise this matter in a meeting with Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government on her recent visit to Anglesey, acknowledged that there is a fine line between keeping rents affordable and ensuring that the HRA is sufficiently well-funded to enable the Council to continue to maintain and develop social housing of quality for Anglesey's residents.

Councillor Nicola Roberts, Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change said that 75% of the Council's tenants will not be affected by the rent increase as they are in receipt of benefits but that the some of the remaining 25% may be affected and in that case it is essential that anyone experiencing hardship receive advice. She highlighted Citizens Advice as particularly helpful in providing advice on the support that is available as well as Advice Link Cymru's Claim What's Yours helpline which can help people who are eligible to realise their entitlements. She referred to the rent increase for garages as

reasonable for storage facilities which are not just rented by the Council's tenants and said that she supported the proposals.

The Executive agreed that it is important that people do claim the benefits they are entitled to and that members have a part to play in their communities in raising awareness of the sources of support and financial help that are available.

**It was resolved to approve the following –**

- **The rent increase of 2.7% on all general rent units in line with the Welsh Government rent policy on collection over 51 weeks.**
- **An increase of £1.00 per week for the rent of all garages.**
- **That the service charges costs as noted in section 6.3 of the report be applied to all tenants who receive the relevant services.**
- **The administration of the Rent Support Scheme – a local scheme to support tenants who are in financial difficulty.**
- **That a letter be written to Welsh Government stating that the increase in rents is insufficient to enable the HRA to finance the increased costs as a result of additional employer NI contributions following the Budget announcement, WHQS2023 standards and building cost inflation.**

**Councillor Gary Pritchard  
Chair**