

EXECUTIVE
24 June 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24 June, 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)

Councillors: C. A. Ellis, P. G. Heesom, M. Higham, H. D. Hutchinson, N. M. Matthews, N. Phillips, L. A. Sharps and H. Yale.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: K. Armstrong-Braun, R. C. Bithell, J. Falshaw, R. Hampson, R. Jones, D. Mackie and Mrs D. Mackie.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, County Finance Officer, County Legal and Democratic Services Officer, Acting Director of Community and Housing, Chief Education Officer, Assistant Director of ICT and Customer Services, Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Chief Planning Services Officer and Principal Committee Services Officer.

APOLOGIES:

Councillor N R Steele-Mortimer.

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 June, 2008, copies of which have been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a correct record.

The Chief Executive referred to minute number 290 and thanked all Members and Officers who had taken part in the 2 day Interview Panels for the appointment of the two Directors posts. He said a candidate for each post had been offered the job and both had verbally accepted. The post of Director of Lifelong Learning had been offered to Ian Budd from Shropshire County Council and the Director of Environment had been offered to Carl Longland from Telford and Wrekin Council.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding Agenda Item number 9 and whether or not it was necessary for the Buckley Town Councillors to declare an interest, the County Legal and Democratic Services Officer referred to the new Code of Conduct in which there had been a significant change regarding personal interests and which he explained to Members. It was his advice that as the report did not create a conflict (personal or prejudicial) between the ward roles of Members representing Buckley and their decision making roles they therefore did not need to declare a personal interest.

The Chief Executive concurred with this view but suggested that the new Ombudsman for Wales be invited to Flintshire to explain and discuss the new Code of Conduct as it was open to wide interpretation, which was agreed by Members.

24. REGULATORY PLAN UPDATE 2006/07

A report of the Chief Executive, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the regulatory activity as contained within the Regulatory Plan for 2006/07 and any implications which needed to be addressed.

The Chief Executive explained that the Appendix to the report provided a summary of the work programme of the Regulatory Plan to date and reports and findings of both recognition of progress / good practice and also where further work was needed, which was already being addressed. The outstanding items in the Appendix would be reviewed with the relevant Officers.

The Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Strategy supported the recommendations outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the update of the Regulatory Plan activity be noted;
- (b) That the decision that all regulatory reports are presented to the Executive within three months of conclusion by the relevant Director and then referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny or Audit Committee for any further input be reaffirmed; and
- (c) That the Executive receive detailed reports from the relevant Director of the regulatory reports identified in section 3.02 of the report which included proposals for actions to address any issues raised.

25. REGULATORY PLAN 2007/08

A report of the Chief Executive, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform Members of this years Regulatory Plan which summarised the work to be done by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). In presenting the report, the Chief Executive emphasised the significance of the information and said a lot of work had been done by the previous administration, the new administration, officers and the regulators in support of an effective and proportionate Regulatory Plan.

The Chief Executive referred to Exhibits 4 and 5 on pages 10 and 11 of the Appendix. Exhibit 4 reflected a number of the high risk areas currently facing the Council as agreed with its regulators at the recent Joint Risk

Assessment meeting. The regulators had acknowledged that work was also being undertaken within the Council to mitigate risks. Some of the work would be undertaken jointly with the Wales Audit Office as part of their inspection programme which was reflected in Exhibit 5. The table indicated those pieces of work which lead to a full review, in order to provide assurance and those where only a summary report was anticipated.

The Chief Executive explained that ongoing discussions were taking place with the Regulators to stress the value for money aspect of regulation, in that those who provided the service were accountable both for the quality of the service and timeliness of the work, and that the Regulatory Plan placed appropriate assurance over the performance of the Authority and the ability of the Authority to demonstrate improvement effectively. He said level of fees charged by the regulatory bodies appeared to increase each year and the fee base for Flintshire was the same as last year with the addition of inflation. This was despite the level of efficiencies that authorities were required to generate each year and a case had been made to the WAO that regulators should be seeking to generate and pass on similar efficiencies.

The Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Strategy supported the recommendations outlined in the report and referred to the rising fees and supported, in particular, the matter of value for money.

RESOLVED

- a) That the contents of the report and the 2008 Regulatory Plan be noted; and
- b) That all external regulatory reports be received and accountable for by the Executive and reports be referred to the appropriate Audit or Overview and Scrutiny Committee for due consideration.

26. PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS FOR 2007/08

A report of the Chief Executive, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to review Flintshire County Council's outturn performance for 2007/08 of the various sets of performance indicators and measures. The 288 indicators were shown as Appendix 1 to the report. The report also considered the progress made against improving upon last year's performance and meeting the 2007/08 targets.

The Chief Executive stressed the significance of the report which was required to be produced annually under the requirements of the Wales Programme for Improvement. The annual report considered all the indicators to be included as a statutory requirement within the Improvement Plan which would be published by 31 October. By monitoring progress towards achieving targets and whether the trend was positive or negative, the Authority could be better informed about where action may need to be taken to redress seeming under-performance.

The Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Strategy supported the report and recommendations and said it was important to read the commentary alongside the data information.

The Chairman, in response to comments made by Members, said that any urgent indicators would be looked at closely and it could be possible to receive information which was broken down to enable them to look at either the top or the bottom indicators.

RESOLVED

- (a) That Flintshire County Council's performance in those service areas identified by appropriate performance indicators for the period April 2007 to March 2008 be accepted;
- (b) That the target analysis of performance against the targets set for 2007/08 be accepted, where appropriate;
- (c) That the trend analysis of the 2007/08 performance outturns against the performance of the previous year be accepted; and
- (d) That the areas of under performance be considered.

27. CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK

A report of the Chief Executive and Occupational Physician, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval for the implementation of a Noise at Work Management system in order that the Authority fulfil its statutory duties under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

The Chief Executive explained that the 2005 Regulations had introduced new statutory requirements for action to be taken by employers. Employers must take action to protect workers health at levels of 5 decibels lower than in the 1989 Regulations, and now required health surveillance for workers regularly exposed above 85 decibels. Additionally, exposure limit values had been lowered. The system by which the Authority would fulfil its statutory duties and how it would implement the necessary control measures were detailed in the Appendix to the report.

The Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Strategy supported the report and said it was essential that the effectiveness of controls were monitored through regular inspections, regular communication with managers and supervisors and health surveillance.

RESOLVED

That the policy document detailing the Management System for the Control of Noise at Work in order to comply with its statutory duty under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 be approved.

28. FLINTSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK 2008

A report of the Acting Director of Environment & Regeneration, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Chief Planning Services Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the intention to hold the second Flintshire Business Week from 29 September to 8 October 2008.

The Chief Planning Services Officer explained that the 2007 event was widely regarded as a success and attracted considerable press interest and positive publicity for the Council. It also provided a significant opportunity for business networking and had led to greater inter-trading and also raised the profile of many Flintshire companies. The event was an excellent showcase for local economic achievement and highlighted the sharing of best practice between public, private and voluntary sectors.

The event was estimated to cost £20,000 which would be met from external sponsorship however a contingency element of £5,000 had been set aside within the wider Regeneration budget which would be utilised if necessary.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Tourism supported the Flintshire Business Week and said he hoped the event would be well publicised. He said an invitation would be extended to all Members to attend the event.

Members referred to the report and queried whether the dates suggested would be the most suitable for MP's. A suggestion was also made that a presentation be delivered to various schools to highlight the week and for them to become involved in some way. The Chief Planning Services Officer explained that the session scheduled for the MP's could be re-arranged if necessary.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted and that Flintshire Business Week become an annual event be endorsed.

29. BUCKLEY MULTI AGENCY SUPPORT CENTRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A report of the Assistant Director, Schools Services, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The Assistant Director, Schools Services presented the report the purpose of which was to advise Members of the Executive of plans for a new facility for young people in the centre of Buckley. Also sought was an agreement in principle to the development of a multi agency support centre for young people in Buckley, subject to the identification of suitable premises.

The Assistant Director, Schools Services referred to the Centre in Holywell which had surpassed all expectations and had been seen as a model of excellent practice by the Welsh Assembly Government and Ministers. Flintshire Youth and Community Service and Flintshire Youth Justice Service had worked together to develop the Holywell facility and this had been supported by a range of local agencies. The Holywell Centre had been equipped and designed according to a national (Wales-wide) specification for Information Shops for Young People, provided by Canllaw Online.

Based on the success of the Centre in Holywell, the Welsh Assembly Government was keen to support further similar developments within Flintshire and had indicated that capital funding would be available to achieve it. The Welsh Assembly Government had approved the fitting out of any proposed premises, and the rental costs for six years, through a grant of £250,000.

The proposed development of a new Centre has the full support of the Flintshire Community Safety Partnership, and of the Community Safety Partnerships of all North Wales Authorities.

The Executive Member for Social Services supported the report and recommendation and said a land search would be carried out to determine a suitable location. She also said that consultation with Buckley Town Council would be taking place.

RESOLVED

That the creation of a multi agency Information Shop and Support Centre for young people to be located within the town of Buckley be approved, in principle.

30. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information report of the Chief Executive, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, was submitted. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of actions taken under delegated powers.

The actions taken were as set out below:-

- a) Release of restrictive covenant – land adjacent to Northop Service Station, Holywell Road, Northop – Community & Housing.
- b) Approval to implement a programme of Local Road Safety Schemes, education, training and publicity funding by the Welsh Assembly Government – Environment & Regeneration.

31. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 10.35am.

32. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were three members of the press in attendance and one member of the public.

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Chairman

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT

EXECUTIVE	DATE: 24 June 2008
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS