

EXECUTIVE

1 JUNE 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 1 June 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)

Councillors: C. A. Ellis, N. M. Matthews, N. Phillips, L. A. Sharps, N. Steele-Mortimer, M. G. Wright and H. Yale

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: K. Armstrong-Braun, J. B. Attridge, R. G. Hampson, P. G. Heesom, R. Hughes, D. I. Mackie, A. P. Shotton and C. A. Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Democracy and Governance Manager, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of Housing, Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Regeneration Officer and Team Manager – Committee Services

APOLOGY:

Councillor H. D. Hutchinson

The Chairman welcomed Councillor M. G. Wright to his first meeting of the Executive since being appointed the Executive Member for Regeneration.

He also paid tribute to Mr Phil Wilson, Corporate Finance Manager, who was leaving the authority, for his work and dedication during his time at Flintshire County Council. The Chief Executive added his thanks and best wishes to Mr Wilson and explained that the post had been advertised but an appointment had not been made. In the interim period, whilst the Finance Function Review was underway, Jo Hughes and Gary Ferguson had been appointed to the roles of Interim Corporate Finance Managers.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 May were confirmed as a correct record.

The Chief Executive provided an update on minute number 13 and explained that Neal Cockerton had been successfully matched to the post of Head of Assets and Transport. The second post, Head of Streetscene would be put out to advert.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A. Woolley declared an interest in agenda item number 5 – Voluntary Sector Funding – Update Report, as he was the Director of Flintshire Citizens Advice Bureau (FCAB).

18. REGULATORY PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive presented the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit Plan of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for the period November 2009 to March 2011 and the Financial Audit Strategy for Flintshire County Council (FCC) and the Clwyd Pension Fund.

There were two significant changes for the authority. The Regulatory Plan now appeared as two documents - the Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit and the Financial Audit Strategy, and the change to the External Auditors.

The Chief Executive added that the fees had reduced for the second successive year which demonstrated the confidence of the Regulators in the Authority.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit Plan of the Wales Audit Office for the period November 2009 to March 2011 be noted and endorsed; and
- (b) That the 2009/10 Financial Audit Strategy for Flintshire County Council and the Clwyd Pension Fund be noted and endorsed.

19. VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING – UPDATE REPORT

Councillor A. Woolley vacated the chair and left the room prior to discussion of this item. Councillor L. A. Sharps took the chair.

The Chief Executive presented the status of the Core Funding Agreements with voluntary organisations and the funding position of the organisations receiving relocation costs following the closure of Ty'r Binwydden and the Community Chest grant scheme. The Core Funding Agreements had gone well and he said the financial support had enabled bodies to relocate from Ty'e Binwydden successfully.

The Chief Executive added that there were unallocated funds of £26,309 which would be reclaimed as efficiency savings subject to any future voluntary sector approved needs or the result of ongoing reviews during 2010/11 for core funded bodies.

Councillor Woolley returned and resumed chairing the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the current status of the Core Funding Agreements with voluntary organisations be endorsed; and

- (b) That the funding position for voluntary organisations receiving either relocation costs following the closure of Ty'r Binwydden or Community Chest grant be noted.

20. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Executive Member for Housing introduced the policy which contained amendments on the allocation of council housing. She thanked the Members of the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their contributions and said comments resulting from meetings of the Committee were reflected in the document.

A number of Members at a meeting of Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed an interest in attending the Medical Assessment Panels. The Executive Member explained that this was open to all Members of the Council on an observer basis.

The Head of Housing added that the wording 'for the purposes of consultation' needed to be included after the word 'approve' in recommendation 4.01.

RESOLVED

- (a) That, for the purposes of consultation, the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy, subject to a broader consultation exercise to be undertaken with stakeholders and customers, be approved;
- (b) That the proposals are developed to re-designate and or re-design some unpopular and difficult to let sheltered accommodation, and that any such proposals will be brought forward for formal approval, be agreed; and
- (c) That the voids deemed too expensive to repair as a 'day to day' void (in excess of £17k) will be 'held', classified as "long term" void and removed from the rent debit until a programme of capital works can be undertaken, or alternative action can be considered as part of an Asset Management Strategy, be agreed.

21. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2009/10 (MONTH 12)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the month 12 budget monitoring information for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2009/10.

The position at month 12 was:

- General Fund – Net overspend of £0.562m (overspend of £0.467m at Month 10) (Excludes schools over allocation)
- Housing Revenue Account – Net underspend of £0.361m (overspend of £0.029m at Month 10)

The overall movement in General Fund projections between month 10 and month 12 was an increased overspend of £0.095m which was mainly due to an increase in the overspend of £0.513m in Lifelong Learning, offset by improved positions within Community Services (£0.051m), Corporate Services (£0.217m) and Central and Corporate (£0.165m). The increased overspend in Lifelong Learning was mainly due to Leisure Centres (£0.138m), Recreational Grounds (£0.071m), Out of County Placements (£0.093m) and Service Units (£0.094m).

The report provided details of the contingency reserve and the current projected balance of £0.202m. This did not include any adjustments that could be required for schools over allocation which was being dealt with as part of the final outturn. The report also provided the requests for carry forwards.

The Chief Executive explained the impact that the severe weather conditions had placed on a number of areas of the budget and the additional demand for Out of County Placements which was in excess of that budget.

The Chief Executive added that there was work currently underway to identify 1% efficiency savings in the current financial year in order to top up the contingency fund. At present, it was not clear if the pre-budget savings announced by the National Government would impact on Wales this financial year or be deferred until 2011/12.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the carry forward requests included in paragraphs 3.07-3.14 of the report be approved;
- (c) That the General Fund Contingency Sum available as at 31 March be noted; and
- (d) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 6.05) be noted.

22. BAD DEBT WRITE OFFS

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the report which sought approval to write off debts to the value of £97,776.50.

Financial Procedure Rules required that all write offs in excess of £25,000 be referred to the Executive. Details of the two debts were contained within the report.

The amounts written off would be charged against the respective provisions for bad debts and therefore, there was no direct impact on the Council's Revenue Account in the current year.

RESOLVED

That the write off of the debts totalling £97,776.50 be approved.

23. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT

The Executive Member for Corporate Management introduced the report which provided up to date workforce information data for the fourth quarter and year end for 2009/10. He expressed his disappointment in the recent press coverage on sickness absence days in the authority following a recent Overview and Scrutiny meeting. He said the report considered by the Committee was one of good news and there were many positive comments made at the meeting which were not reflected in the press report.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said two key pieces of data were detailed in the report; sickness absence and employee turnover.

Two sickness absence figures were detailed, the first was a figure based on the calculation required for the Welsh Local Authority Key Performance Indicator (KPI). The second figure was based on industry recommendations and showed a percentage absence rate figure. There had been a consistent reduction in the number of days lost in 2009/10 (10.83 days) compared to 2008/09 (11.61 days).

Work was ongoing with the aim of managing attendance. An Attendance Management Policy had been developed which came into effect on 1 April 2010 and focussed on improving the performance and consistency of attendance. Challenging targets were applied for all services and areas of concern were being focussed on.

On employee turnover, significant work was being carried out to increase the number of exit interviews to better understand the reasons for leaving which would be reflected in future reports.

The Chief Executive said he had discussed the recent press coverage on sickness absence with the Editor of the newspaper concerned. He said reports in the press such as the one referred to did not help staff morale or the reputation of the Council. There were marked improvements in the numbers but further work was required. An all Member Workshop was due to be held where Member input was welcomed. Flintshire County Council was below the Welsh Local Government average and improving, with the senior management committed to higher targets of attainment.

The Executive Member for Waste Management felt employees with 100% attendance should be celebrated.

The Executive Member for Environment asked for a report on short term absence and the Chief Executive said that information would be made available for the Member Workshop.

RESOLVED

That the workforce information report for the fourth quarter be noted.

24. PLAY AREAS: MATCH-FUNDING PROPOSALS

The Executive Member for Housing presented the report on behalf of the Executive Member for Leisure and Health & Safety. The report outlined the response of Town and Community Councils regarding a match-funding improvement programme to play areas.

A number of the responses indicated that funding was not available in 2010/11 but they would be interested in joining the initiative if funding could be made available in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report and the success of the scheme and said he looked forward to next year when Town and Community Council had planned for the initiative in their budgets.

RESOLVED

That the match-funding allocations to the Town and Community Council identified in paragraph 3.2 of the report be approved.

25. PROPOSED EXTRA CARE HOUSING SCHEME AND LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION IN JASMINE CRESCENT, MOLD

The Executive Member for Social Services introduced the report which provided an update on the progress of the Second Extra Care Scheme for Flintshire and on the progress of the learning disability accommodation.

The estimated revenue cost was £940k and the Council had made a provision of £500k per annum available from 2012. It was planned that the balance would be met from the re-alignment of residential and domiciliary care budgets. The Chief Executive commented that the funding adjustment must be achieved and there was a need to review the scope for further schemes in the county subject to demand and funding.

RESOLVED

That the expected completion of the scheme by mid 2012 be noted.

26. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information report on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted.

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Community Services

- 6 month secondment for the Carelink service due to capacity issues
- 6 month secondment to assist and receive training in the role of Prevention Officer due to capacity issues
- Additional post of Architectural Technician to Community Services

Environment

- Disposal of land fronting Glanrafon Road, Mold for the construction of a Primary Health Care Centre

27. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under the paragraphs indicated of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Minute 28 – Paragraphs 12 and 14

Minute 29 – Paragraph 14

28. MODERNISING THE HOUSING GRANTS TEAM TO FORM A HOUSING RENEWAL SERVICE

The Head of Housing introduced a report which sought Member approval for a new staffing structure, as part of the development of an enhanced Housing Renewal Service.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the restructure on the terms set out in the report be approved;
- (b) That an increase to the establishment costs of £42,330 from 2011/12, to support countywide assistance and the Council's newly declared Renewal Area be approved; and
- (c) That ongoing discussions with the Monitoring Officer about minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegations, which will be presented to the Leader of the Council in due course for approval, be noted.

29. DEESIDE LEISURE CENTRE: REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Executive Member for Housing presented the report on behalf of the Executive Member for Leisure and Health & Safety. The report provided an update on recent negotiations with the preferred partner and to invite consideration of the first work package of the Deeside Leisure Centre renewal programme.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the issue of the Partnering/Framework Agreement to Company B for confirmation and execution be approved; and
- (b) That subject to a being concluded, the first work package (as detailed in paragraph 3.06 of the report) agreement based on competitive tendering of the proposals identified at Appendix 1 and taken over a seven year rental term be approved.

30. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30a.m. and ended at 10.25a.m.

31. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were 2 members of the press in attendance.

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Chairman

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

EXECUTIVE	DATE: 1 JUNE 2010
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillor A. Woolley	Voluntary Sector Funding – Update Report	19