

**EXECUTIVE**  
**14 DECEMBER 2010**

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 14 December 2010.

**PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of ICT & Customer Services, Head of Housing and Team Manager – Committee Services

**158. MINUTES**

The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection asked that it be recorded that he declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item number 13, Transport to Denominational Schools.

Subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

**159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda item number 8, Transforming Transport Project.

**160. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT 2011/12 AND BUDGET 2011/12**

The Head of Finance introduced the report which provided details of the Provisional Welsh Local Government Settlement 2011/12 and an update on the arrangements for the Budget 2011/12. The final settlement date had been set for 9 February 2011.

The timetable for consideration of the Budget was explained with specific provision for consultation with Overview and Scrutiny, Business Ratepayers, the Schools Budget Forum and the Flintshire Joint Trades Union Committee (FJTUC). Draft proposals would be considered at the Executive meeting on 21 December with Directorate presentations being delivered to Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 18-27 January 2011. Final recommendations would be made to the Council on 1 March 2011, which would be considered by the Executive on 15 February 2011.

The Chief Executive added that the report to Executive on 21 December would contain details of emerging proposals for the 2011/12 Budget which would be put into context following any further information received. He emphasised that overall the revenue gap was approximately £12M. A formal response would be made to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) before the end of December.

In response to a comment by the Executive Member for Social Services on the possible shortfall of approximately £700,000, the Chief Executive said that if a 'cap' was placed on domiciliary care services, he would expect the Authority to be fully reimbursed by WAG.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the 2011/12 Provisional Settlement information be noted;
- (b) That the timetable for establishing budget proposals for 2011/12 be noted; and
- (c) That the Head of Finance be provided with any comments on the Provisional Welsh Local Government Settlement by 20 December 2010 in order that the comments, together with those of Overview and Scrutiny, can be reported to the Assembly by 4 January 2011 (end of the consultation period)

**161. OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT (WAG)**

The Chief Executive introduced the final draft of the Outcome Agreement for submission to Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). He explained that the Improvement Agreement (2008-2010) had received the full level of grant funding (£1.49M) based on performance during 2009/10.

He explained that the Outcome Agreement replaced the Improvement Agreement which had its final year of performance related grant during 2010/11. The Outcome Agreement would attract similar levels of funding over three years i.e. £1.47M.

The Chief Executive thanked the Policy, Performance and Partnerships Team for their work on the Outcome Agreement and added that WAG officials had been supportive of the work carried out.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the final draft of the Outcome Agreement for submission to WAG be approved; and
- (b) That it be noted that the Improvement Agreement (2008-2010) had received the full level of grant funding (£1.49M) based on performance during 2009/10

## **162. LEISURE ACTION PLAN**

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced the report on the outcome of initial consultations undertaken on the development of a Leisure Action Plan against budgetary pressures.

He issued a full statement, extracts of which were:

“Given changes to availability of revenue and capital funding, we know that the status quo is not sustainable. We need to review and renew facilities to maximise usage, increase customer satisfaction and continue to earn the right to continued high levels of participation and enjoyment from Flintshire’s people.

The 2009 leisure strategy debates had extensive consultation and engagement from service users, staff, partner organisations and Councillors in its development. The strategy was discussed extensively in Scrutiny and approved by Executive. Discussions focused on the key role of leisure in delivering health, wellbeing and economic development. They recognised the importance of outdoor provision such as the Walks programme and cycle ways in addition to centre based provision. The strategy set out key priorities for participation and progression in Sport. It also stressed the importance of improving customer experience and providing appropriate leisure environments.

I’d like to thank the many service users, partner organisations and staff who have contributed their thoughts and ideas during the consultation so far. Many ideas have come forward which can be considered in both this process and subsequent service planning. Subsequent to this report being written a number of petitions have also been received. Two petitions were to save Hope Sports Centre, one was to save Saltney Leisure Centre and one was to save Connah’s Quay Leisure Centre. The petitioners’ support for their local centres was clear.

The report’s recommendations provide an opportunity for all involved to work together to put provision at the centres on a legal sustainable basis for the future. However, to do this, more rapid collective progress needs to be made than over recent years.

Further petitions have been received in relation to proposed changes from staffed to vending catering at leisure centres. Expressions of interest have been made during consultation in relation to new ways of operating a staffed café at Flint. They range from developing a cooperative model for service delivery with community partners to interest from a major high street brand. There are realistic proposals to take forward for evaluation. At this stage, there are not equivalent expressions of interest in relation to other catering outlets and so consultation continues.

Some big questions remain for shared Public Services. For example, at Connah’s Quay there are some facilities at the school and more extensive leisure facilities next door at the College. At a time of public funding restraint

we should continue to look at the feasibility of every opportunity to collaborate across the public sector to make it easy for people to efficiently access services, such as through single local booking and operational arrangements.

In 2011, it is important that we continue our development programme, with a renewed Leisure Strategy, featuring wide ranging discussions on where we go next in regenerating local leisure provision. That way, we will continue to have a range of high quality leisure opportunities of which local people will rightly be proud”.

## **RESOLVED**

That the following actions in relation to the Action Plan be approved:

- **Changes in Cafeteria Provision:**

Consultation to be continued, with a report back in January, on the feasibility of the options raised in 3.03 of the report in relation to Flint.

Cafes will continue to be open during the consultation period, which will include consultation with the affected employees and their trade union representatives.

- **Closure of the Creche at Flint:**

Continue consultation with affected employees and their trade union representatives, with a view to closure of the facility at the end of the financial year.

- **Reduction of Duty Managers:**

Continue consultation with affected employees and their trade union representatives, with a view to authorising the new staffing model.

- **Swimming Development:**

Welcome new financial contributions from Swim Wales and Swim Flintshire.

Continue to maintain the Elite programme as currently established.

Continue to work with Swim Wales and Swim Flintshire on finalisation of the revised business plan for the programme.

With regard to the swimming development officer post, continue consultation with the affected employee and their trade union representative with a view for implementing the staffing change following consultation.

- **Small Dryside Dual Use Centres:**

Authorise a detailed options appraisal and recommendation on the two lower cost operating models of reducing duty attendants and incorporating cleaning with the attendant role.

Continue discussions with Governing Bodies and local partners to finalise Transfer of Control Agreements or alternative governance models prior to the start of the next financial year.

Consultation to continue with the affected employees and their Trade Union representatives.

- **Additional Ideas:**

Authorise a full appraisal of facilities development opportunities in partnership with ALS.

Commission a renewal of the 2009 Leisure Strategy in early 2011.

### **163. DEESIDE LEISURE CENTRE: PHASE 2**

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced the report which explained the Development Proposals for Phase 2 of the improvement works at Deeside Leisure Centre. Approval was sought for commissioning of the Phase 2 works.

The proposals for a second phase of improvements to Deeside Leisure Centre focused on the provision of Fitness, Health and Spa facilities. A presentation was made available in the background which illustrated the proposed redevelopment facilities.

Detailed financial information was contained within the appendix to the report and the Director explained that the rental levels required to repay the investment costs could be met from the projected net operating surplus detailed in the business plan.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the redevelopment proposals for Fitness/Health/Spa provision at Deeside Leisure Centre be approved and the completion of a second Works Contract to implement the work be authorised

### **164. TRANSFORMING TRANSPORT PROJECT**

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced the report on the regional Transforming Transport Project and explained how it could contribute and extend plans to obtain greater efficiency and improvement from more rationally planned and delivered transport services, in addition to the changes made locally.

Transforming Transport was a regional project involving all North Wales authorities. The project would support opportunities for change and greater efficiency in the sphere of:

- Mainstream home-school and college transport
- Transport for pupils with additional learning needs
- Social Services transport

- The public subsidised bus network

The Chief Executive added that this was one of the largest regional projects underway which had the support of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). He had attended a meeting of the Environment and Regulatory Services Programme Board the previous day where the importance of the project was reinforced.

The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection left the room during the discussion, as at minute number 159 (declarations of interest).

### **RESOLVED**

That regular reports on the progress of the project as part of the update on the work of the Environment and Regulatory Services Programme Board be received from the Director of Lifelong Learning.

### **165. FLINT REGENERATION AND FLINT MAISONNETTES**

The Executive Member for Housing introduced the report which provided an update on the preparatory work for a potential regeneration scheme for central Flint and the choices around the future of the maisonettes social housing land and units. The report was made in the public interest given the recent media coverage. She highlighted that the management of vacant maisonettes was carried out in the same way as any other vacant property. In addition, she added that it was a decision of the County Council on 2 March 2010 to form a Working Group to review the options at the instigation of local Members.

The Chief Executive said the maisonettes, alongside the future of the Council's housing stock, was a contentious part of the business case for the ballot. Any decision on the future of the homes would be made before Council tenants were balloted on transfer of the housing stock.

The maisonettes were capable of being improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) according to past technical reports. However, they were of a dated design, offered a limited quality of life and made poor use of land in central Flint.

There were a number of options for the Council to either retain the land for an alternative use/development or to retain an option for the direction of use of the land and assets in the event of transfer. The Working Group was exploring the options for a regeneration scheme which could be a mixed civic, commercial/retail, health and social housing scheme. The Group, which had no decision making powers, would advise the Council on the options for the maisonettes in advance of the agreement of the two business cases required; one for transfer and one for non-transfer.

The Head of Housing added that there had been three vacancies in the maisonettes in the last three months. One had been re-let, one would cost in

excess of £6,000 to repair and was therefore on hold at the moment and the third was a recent abandoned property which was currently being assessed. She stressed that the letting of the maisonettes was carried out in the same way as any other vacant properties.

### **RESOLVED**

That the update on the preparatory work for a potential regeneration scheme for central Flint and the implications for choices over the future of the maisonettes social housing units be noted.

## **166. UNIVERSAL CREDIT: WELFARE THAT WORKS**

The Head of Finance presented the report which contained a summary of the Government's proposals on Welfare Reform and the implications of the White Paper – "Universal Credit: Welfare that Works". The report also highlighted potential budget considerations.

Benefits were currently administered by a range of sources on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The impact for local authorities was significant and the DWP would be holding further detailed discussions with local authorities and their associations about the implications for Universal Credit for their housing benefit operations and the new approach to council tax costs.

An indicative table for key dates around Welfare Reform affecting Housing and Council Tax Benefit was detailed in the report.

The Council would need to be instrumental in informing and shaping the programme for the introduction of Universal Credit, the localised Council Tax Scheme and the decommissioning of the national Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments.

### **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That further reports be submitted to inform the ongoing debate about the implication of this significant reform, to afford early opportunity to Executive for decisions as details emerge from the Government and to consider in depth the financial implications as these become clear.

## **167. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development explained the progress achieved in relation to the implementation of the current People Strategy (2009-2012) Action Plan. The update covered the first and second quarters of 2010-11.

She provided details on the following: Management Development Programme, Managing Change Programme, Volunteering for Development

Programme, HR Policies and Procedures, The Planning and Implementation of Phase II of HRMIS (Midland Trent), People/Workforce Workstream – Flintshire Futures Programme, Single Status, Trent Improvement Programme, Establishment Control and Casual/Relief Worker Review and the HR Service Review.

**RESOLVED**

That the progress made in relation to the delivery of the People Strategy be noted.

**168. CLWYDIAN RANGE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Director of Environment introduced the report which sought approval for the Clwydian Range AONB Management Plan 2009-2014.

The Plan set out a framework for the conservation and enhancement of the area. It was a revised and updated version of the 2004-2009 Statutory Management Plan. The Plan defined features and qualities that made the area special and identified some of the challenges for the future.

**RESOLVED**

That the Management Plan be approved.

**169. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN TESTING**

The Chief Executive provided an overview of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan and the supporting Mission Critical Service Plans.

Following the development of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan and the Mission Critical Plans, a programme of testing took place using scenarios. The key issues which emerged in testing the Plan, and the key issues from testing the Mission Critical Services Business Continuity Plan, were detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED**

That the overview of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan and the supporting Mission Critical Service Plans be noted.

**170. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2010/11**

The Chief Executive presented the 2010/11 Quarter 2 performance reports which had been produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council. The update of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) summary was contained within the performance reports.



Appendix 1 of the report contained a scheduled of all of the Improvement Targets which were reported on a quarterly basis. This was in line with the revised list of Improvement Targets endorsed by Executive on 5 January 2010.

### **RESOLVED**

That specific issues for consideration be referred for management action and/or referral to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **171. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2010/11 (MONTH 6)**

The Head of Finance introduced the report which provided the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 6) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2010/11.

The projected year end position as estimated at Month 6 was a net overspend on the Council Fund of £0.574M and a net overspend on the Housing Revenue Account of £0.068M. Since Month 5, significant work had been undertaken by Directors and Heads of Service to identify ways of significantly reducing the projected overspend on the Council Fund of £2.388M. Arising from this, there was an improvement of £1.764M resulting in the net overspend of £0.574M.

The Out of County Placement budget projected overspend formed a large part of Community Services and Lifelong Learning's total overspend, however this had reduced by £0.268M compared to Month 5.

The movements to date on unearmarked reserves and the estimated level of contingency sum were detailed in the appendix to the report. As a result of those movements currently projected, the net amount available in the Contingency Reserve was £2.220M, of which £1.786M was ringfenced for Flintshire Futures investment costs.

The Chief Executive added that it was the aim of the Authority to balance the budget by year close. A lot of the reduction in the overspend on the Council Fund was due to management action in addition to market action outside of the control of the Council. He stressed the continued need for management actions to ensure a balanced budget.

### **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the estimated Council Fund Contingency Sum as at 31 March 2011 be noted; and
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted

**172. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 (MONTH 6)**

The Head of Finance introduced the report which provided the latest capital programme information for 2010/11.

Details of how the programme had changed during 2010/11 were provided in the report. The previously reported programme total of £37.697M had decreased to £36.317M, a net decrease of £1.380M which arose through net reduced schemes and contractually uncommitted, released funding, schemes.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

**173. COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATE POLICIES 2011-12**

The Head of Finance introduced the report which sought approval for various policies for the administration of Council Tax and Business Rates for the financial year 2011-12. The policies listed in the report were required by statute.

On the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Charitable and Non Profit Making Organisations, the Head of Finance explained that the Flintshire Futures programme included a commitment to consider a revised policy from 2012-13 which could realise potential efficiencies. Statutory provisions which governed Discretionary Rate Relief arrangements placed a legal requirement for the Council to give one year's notice of an impending change to the scheme or decision to potentially end or vary the level of rate relief awarded to organisations. In order to allow Members the opportunity to review the policy and effect any agreed changes from the financial year 2012-13, it was necessary to issue appropriately worded letters to all ratepayers in March 2011 to revoke the current relief from 31 March 2012.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the continuation of the current Local Taxation Policies for 2011-12 be agreed;
- (b) That the payment dates for Precepting/Levying bodies and payment dates for Council Tax and Business Rates, giving support to the introduction of weekly direct debits from April 2010, be noted; and
- (c) That in order to facilitate a review of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, the revocation of current awards from 31 March 2011, thereby giving statutory notice to ratepayers, prior to the formulation of a new policy that could then take effect from 2012-13, be approved

**174. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided an update for the second quarter Workforce Information Report of 2010/11. The report provided details on establishment, headcount, agency numbers, turnover, diversity and absence.

In response to feedback from Members, the Turnover Summary Report had been amended and now showed cumulative totals over the whole period from the beginning of the financial year. In addition, the report now included the total number of leavers and the Stability Index. The Stability Index was an industry standard measure that showed the extent to which the experienced workforce was being retained.

On sickness absence, the Authority was exceeding the performance target set for the quarter 2.

**RESOLVED**

That the Workforce Information Report for the second quarter of 2010/11 be noted.

**175. PLAY AREAS MATCH FUNDING SCHEME 2011/12**

The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection introduced the report which identified the responses from Town and Community Councils to the invitation to submit bids for the 2011/12 Match Funding Scheme to improve Play Areas.

He explained the criteria and methodology used to prioritise the bids, which was detailed in the report.

The Director of Lifelong Learning said 18 responses were received and the total amount of funding represented by those bids far outweighed the sum available from the Council. A full list of responses was attached as an appendix to the report.

A list of projects for further consideration from within the bids received was detailed in the report.

The Chief Executive said a decision was required before the end of the year to enable confirmation to be sent to the relevant Town and Community Councils in advance of their meetings in January 2011 when their precepts (matching funds) would be set.

**RESOLVED**

That the list of improvement schemes detailed in the report be approved.

**176. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF BROUGHTON INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report on the amalgamation of Broughton Infant and Junior Schools in accordance with the Statutory proposal.

The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that the scheme required a modification to the library which would be subject to a cost of £600,000, which could be procured using the revenue savings from the amalgamation to fund Prudential borrowing in accordance with the Council scheme for Prudential Borrowing.

The Chief Executive added that a corporate approach would be taken on future schemes requiring Prudential Borrowing.

**RESOLVED**

That the amalgamation of the existing Infant and Junior Schools to create a new through Primary School as of 1 September 2011 be approved.

**177. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION – WATS DYKE INFANT AND MYNYDD ISA JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report on the outcome of the statutory period for objections to the proposal to amalgamate Mynydd Isa Infant and Junior Schools.

The Director of Lifelong Learning said extensive consultation had taken place and no objections had been received.

**RESOLVED**

That the amalgamation of Mynydd Isa Infant and Junior Schools on 1 September 2011 to form a new through primary school using the same school buildings be approved.

**178. GREEN DRAGON: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The Chief Executive introduced the report and said Flintshire County Council had been successful in retaining the Green Dragon Level 3 accreditation.

The audit and assessment confirmed the Authority had retained Level 3 compliance without any conditions which confirmed good environmental performance. The auditors also reported that some of the requirements for Levels 4 and 5 were already in place.

**RESOLVED**

That the success of the Council in retaining Green Dragon at Level 3 which confirmed good environmental performance across the organisation be acknowledged.

**179. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 11.35a.m.

**180. 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**

<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2010</b>
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<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MIN. NO. REFERS</b>
Councillor H. D. Hutchinson	Transforming Transport Project	159