

EXECUTIVE
12 APRIL 2011

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 12 April 2011

PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)

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

APOLOGY: Councillor M. G. Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor 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 & Organisational Development and Head of ICT & Customer Services

250. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

251. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

252. STRUCTURE OF FORMAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (CHOICES DOCUMENT)

The Executive Member for Housing introduced the report which sought approval of the proposed draft structure of the Formal Consultation Document prior to consultation with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

The Chief Executive explained that Stage 1 of the process involved the distribution of the Choices Document to tenants to invite feedback prior to proceeding to Stage 2. The Choices Document had been named as such to emphasise the Council's neutral stance and it was noted that elements of the document had already been included in the tenants newsletter. The finalised Choices Document would be considered for approval at County Council in June 2011.

It was reported that the overall project was on plan with the ballot due to take place in late autumn and the first meeting of the Shadow Board was due to be held on 13 April 2011. The Chief Executive commented on the recent ballot result in the Vale of Glamorgan which had ended in a 'No' vote with a 50.8% majority and an impressive 70% turnout.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed draft structure of the Formal Consultation Document (Choices Document) as set out in the report be approved and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to be consulted on the draft structure.

253. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION

The Executive Member for Waste Management introduced the report which sought approval to carry out a full review of the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) service across the County.

The report listed the locations of the eight HRC sites currently in operation and that it was the intention to complete the review by mid summer 2011 followed by a report back on future service delivery.

The Director of Environment explained that 30% of household waste was currently managed by the HRCs together with around 48-65% of recycling also received. He commented on variations in the size and age of HRCs which raised issues of congestion, access and safety and to the adoption of the Waste Strategy which had indicated a requirement to review facilities. The review would be undertaken with Task Group Members from the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to establish proposals by July 2011.

RESOLVED

- (a) That a full review of the HRC service be undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the report;
- (b) That a report providing both an options appraisal and recommendations for the future delivery of the service be presented to the Executive after the review is complete;
- (c) That full consultation take place with Members and Town and Community Councils on the proposals and that feedback from the consultation be included in the proposed Executive report;
- (d) That options to introduce a 'residents only' policy at the Council's HRC sites be considered in the report;
- (e) That the future provision of local 'Bring Sites' be considered in the report; and
- (f) That the current permit scheme for vans and large trailers at HRC sites be considered in the report.

254. INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Corporate Management introduced the report which provided an update on progress with the implementation of the corporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy.

The Head of ICT & Customer Services gave an overview of some of the key ICT projects currently in progress. These included mobile working for trade operatives in Housing. Funding had been secured through the WAG 'Invest to Save' bid to equip all trade operatives with mobile devices to allow them to receive details of jobs electronically and report progress and completion. The first ten mobile devices would be allocated to staff on 26 April followed by a fortnightly rollout supported by training. In addition text messaging had been introduced for tenants to remind them of housing repairs appointments. A small but important project under Flintshire Futures was to rationalise the use of printers and since September 2010 over 120 printers had been removed across the organisation resulting in a 60% reduction in the volume of printing on networked printers. An update was also received on potential areas for collaboration on ICT across North Wales.

In response to a question from the Leader, the Head of ICT & Customer Services advised that sufficient backup procedures were in place for all major business systems with copies held in two data centres located in Mold and Alltami. He explained that the Disaster Recovery Plan had been invoked recently following power failure, which was successful. There were some outstanding issues on remote access but it was envisaged that these would be fully resolved very shortly.

The Executive Member for Housing reported that training on mobile working was underway and that this would contribute to service improvements for tenants.

The Executive Member for Social Services referred to the surplus of printers which had been removed and asked if these could be given to community organisations. The Head of ICT & Customer Services advised that these would be re-used wherever possible, but otherwise disposed of. He said that consideration would be given to the Executive Member's suggestion on the basis that the printers could be donated 'as seen' with no support provided.

The Chief Executive highlighted the significant benefits and transactional efficiencies arising from the purchasing of new systems which conformed to the Welsh Assembly Government programmes for procurement and ICT.

RESOLVED

That the progress being made in the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy be noted.

255. OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT (WAG)

The Executive Member for Corporate Management introduced the report on the final Outcome Agreement as agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

The Chief Executive commented on the Authority's performance against the previous Improvement Agreement which had been replaced by the Outcome Agreement. The Agreement would be monitored by the Local Service Board and achievements against it were dependent on partnership working.

RESOLVED

That the final Outcome Agreement as agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) be noted.

256. CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK FOR 2011/12

The Executive Member for Corporate Management introduced the report which outlined the changes to the National Performance Measurement Framework for 2011/12.

The Chief Executive said that the performance measurement framework had been reviewed some years ago and outlined proposals to change the attention to outcomes in services by separating performance indicators into two categories. The first group of top 25 performance indicators would be used for national judgement and the second group would provide a level of detail for benchmarking purposes.

RESOLVED

That the changes to the National Performance Measurement Framework for 2011/12 be noted.

257. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2010/11 (MONTH 10)

The Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Asset Management introduced the report which provided the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 10) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2010/11.

The Head of Finance advised that officers were currently working on figures for Month 11 and that Auditors had commenced some system testing work for this financial year. In line with a continued downward trend, a projected overspend of £389,000 on the Council Fund was reported for year end indicating an improvement from the £460,000 previously reported. A projected net underspend of £55,000 was reported for the HRA.

It was explained that the figures included provision for costs which related to a local agreement with schools for an insurance fund to assist with covering costs for maternity leave. The Head of Finance advised that shortfalls in the fund for 2009/10 and 2010/11 had meant that the scheme was now unviable. Schools had been notified that the scheme was now under review and that any deficit from 1 April 2011 would need to be met by schools.

The Director of Lifelong Learning confirmed that there was no statutory requirement to operate insurance schemes on behalf of schools and that many schools made their own arrangements. Future arrangements would need to be discussed with Head Teachers via the review and consultation with the Schools Budget Forum.

The Chief Executive said that it was appropriate that management action had been taken in year to deal with the financial position which left the Authority in a stable position at the start of the new financial year.

On Planning Control, the Executive Member for Environment raised concerns about the loss of revenue due to the decrease in planning applications and referred to the assumption that the position would not recover to pre-recession levels during 2010/11. He said that this was a major concern for both the Planning Department and the building industry. He remarked on delays in the delivery of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the effect on creation of jobs, commenting that steps would be made to speed up delivery of the UDP. The Director of Environment commented on the recent completion of the UDP consultation process with around 50 representations received and suggested that a report could be made to Executive and County Council in May/June outlining proposals.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the carry forward requests included in the report be approved;
- (c) That it be approved that the overspend on the schools' maternity "insurance" scheme be met by the Council Fund and that urgent work is undertaken within the review of school funding to consider options on the scheme for the future;
- (d) That it be noted that the schools have been advised of the need for a review of options for the future and that any deficit from April 2011 onwards be met directly by schools;
- (e) That the estimated Council Fund Contingency Sum as at 31 March 2011 be noted; and
- (f) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted.

258. SCHOOL CAPITAL REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report which sought approval to increase the value of the contract with K2 Aluminium Systems Limited for the Replacement of Windows at Flint High School from £370,683 to £470,000 (an increase of 27%) as required by virtue of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules CPR 32.1(b).

It was reported that a competitive tendering process for projects under the School Capital Repairs Programme had resulted in a surplus of £100,000. It was proposed to use this to extend the window replacement scheme at Flint High School which was deemed one of the top priority projects.

The Chief Executive said that in a recent visit to Flint High School, he had been asked by the Head Teacher to pass on a message of gratitude for the work being undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and endorsed and that it be approved to increase the value of the Window Replacement contract at Flint High School to £470,000.

259. TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: NORTH WALES REGIONAL COLLABORATION PROJECT FOR THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES - PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2011

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report which detailed the progress made to date with the implementation of the North Wales Regional School Improvement Service project and outlined the next steps to completion of a detailed business plan by the Summer of 2011.

The Director of Lifelong Learning gave an overview of the key considerations of the report relating to the proposal for a regional school effectiveness and improvement service. He advised that responses to consultation on the principles had been positive and that other Authorities had been very supportive. A full business case would be available in the Autumn at which point all of the Authorities would be asked to formally sign up to the consortium.

The Chief Executive said that this was one of the largest current regional projects.

RESOLVED

- (a) That progress with the School Improvement Service project be considered;
- (b) That progress to the next stage of the project, namely the establishment of a Project Management Board to oversee the

preparation of the business plan, which should address issues raised during the consultation process about operational matters relating to finance, staffing and governance arrangements, be approved; and

- (c) That the outline business case be considered by the Executive prior to final approval being given to implement the proposed regional service.

260. DURATION OF MEETING

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

261. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were two 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: 12 APRIL 2011
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
None		