

CABINET
22 JANUARY 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 22 January 2013

PRESENT: **Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chairman)**

Councillors Bernie Attridge (Deputy Leader), Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Peter Macfarlane and Billy Mullin

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: Peter Curtis, Veronica Gay, Patrick Heesom, Carolyn Thomas and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGY:

Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Director of Community Services, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of ICT and Customer Services and Committee Officer
Ms. Tanya Clancy, Military Civil Integration for minute number 150 – Flintshire Community Covenant

146. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council indicated that there would be a slight change in the order of business to bring forward agenda item 8 – Flintshire Community Covenant. He welcomed Tanya Clancy to the meeting and explained that she would be providing a presentation.

147. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

148. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2012 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

149. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council praised the work of the Highway Gritting Team for their work during the recent snowy weather and asked the Director of Environment to pass on his thanks. The Chief Executive and other Cabinet Members concurred with the comments made.

150. COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Leader of the Council welcomed Tanya Clancy from Military Civil Integration to the meeting and invited her to provide a presentation on the Community Covenant for Wales.

Ms. Clancy provided a detailed presentation on the following areas:-

- The aim of the Community Covenant
- Making the Covenant Count
- Who has signed?
- Myth v Fact
- Service Leavers
- Community Covenant Grants

The Leader of the Council thanked Ms. Clancy for the informative presentation. The Chief Executive said that the covenant template would need development to move it forward for Flintshire. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure spoke of the need to ensure that Flintshire County Council employees who had made a commitment to the Territorial Army were able to fulfil their requirement to train when needed.

Ms. Clancy responded to a series of questions from Cabinet Members.

The Leader of the Council referred to a Notice of Motion which had been submitted to County Council for an Armed Forces Day in Flintshire and the commitment by local government to provide a North Wales event. He asked that his thanks be passed on to Sharron Jones for the work undertaken to date on the establishment of an Armed Forces Day in Flintshire which had been arranged for 22 June 2013; further information would be shared at a later date. He said that this would reaffirm the commitment to the Armed Forces and he looked forward to a successful event later in the year.

The Leader of the Council asked that an additional recommendation be included that a Champion for Armed Forces Community Covenant be appointed and suggested that this should be the Leader of the Council. Following a discussion it was agreed to recommend to County Council that responsibility for the Community Covenant and Armed Forces issues sit within the portfolio of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received; and
- (b) That the following be recommended to the County Council meeting on 29 January 2013:-
 - i. the adoption of a Community Covenant for Flintshire
 - ii. the signatories as proposed
 - iii. the launch of the Community Covenant

- iv. that the responsibility for the Community Covenant and Armed Forces issues sit within the portfolio of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

151. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2013/14 & CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced a report to consider the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and the Revenue budget proposals for the 2013/14 financial year and the budget proposals for the HRA Capital Programme 2013/14. She explained that a revised recommendation had been circulated for Members' consideration.

The Director of Community Services emphasised that the Capital expenditure financed from the revenue account (CERA) enabled additional investment in the HRA Capital Programme. An investment of £5.195m had been included in the 2013/14 budget which was an increase of £0.758m on the 2012/13 budget and £1.960m on the 2011/12 budget.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the positive report but asked Members to consider the inclusion of an additional recommendation that a letter be sent to the Minister for Housing expressing the Council's wish that the rent convergence policy for tenants should be postponed again during 2013/14 due to the difficult economic circumstances.

RESOLVED:

That the following be approved and recommended to Council:-

- i. the proposed HRA for 2013/14 as set out in appendix 1, incorporating the proposals in appendix 2 and the Service Improvements and Efficiencies in appendix 3;
- ii. the level of rent for 2013/14 as set out in paragraph 3.01, subject to receipt of the final HRAS item 8 determinations from Welsh Government;
- iii. the proposed revised approach and timing for setting annual service charges as set out in paragraph 3.16
- iv. the level of projected balances at 31 March 2014 at 3.20% of total expenditure
- v. the proposed HRA Capital Programme as set out in appendix 4
- vi. that a letter be sent to the Minister for Housing expressing the Council's wish that the rent convergence policy for tenants should be postponed again during 2013/14 due to difficult economic circumstances.

152. ADOPTION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - APRIL 2013

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced a report which explained the change from Council Tax Benefit to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, addressed the funding implications and the requirement to adopt the scheme by 31 January 2013. A statement from the Minister for Local Government and Communities and a revised recommendation was circulated for Member's consideration.

The Head of Finance explained that the report had been considered by Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2013 prior to an announcement by Welsh Government (WG) to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90% to 100%. This meant that for 2013/14, claimants would now receive the full amount of support for their council tax bills to which they were eligible. Adoption of the new scheme was required at the County Council meeting on 29 January 2013 and the revised recommendations incorporated the change announced by WG.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the announcement from WG but said that even though the impact of the Welfare Reform proposals would be eased by the proposals, they would still be a concern to those affected. On the issue of the set up costs which had initially been funded by WG, the Head of Finance said that funding of £2.3m for authorities across Wales had been secured for set up costs which if shared equally would equate to £0.105m per Council. The Chief Executive advised that commitment for 100% level of support had only been given for this year and it was not yet known if this would continue for future years.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations (“the Prescribed Requirement Regulations”) by the Welsh Assembly on 19 December 2012 be noted;
- (b) That the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme be noted;
- (c) That the written statement by the Minister for Local Government and Communities on 17 January 2013, which sets out the intention to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90 per cent to 100 per cent be welcomed;
- (d) That the scheme as set out in Appendix 1 be recommended to full Council, subject to the inclusion of any change in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail; and
- (e) That the proposed Discretionary Elements as set out in Appendix 2 be supported and that those be recommended to Full Council.

153. CONSTRUCTION PROCUREMENT NORTH WALES: PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report on Construction Procurement North Wales: Procurement Strategy as a decision was required from each North Wales authority to agree to implement the project (set up a framework for construction projects over £4.35m) for the North Wales region as a condition of grant funding from the 21st Century Schools Programme. He detailed the background to the report and explained that the Procurement Strategy document had been placed in the Members’ Library.

The Director of Lifelong Learning said that it was an exciting opportunity to make a difference across Flintshire and to benefit communities and local businesses.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling welcomed the report and the opportunities to maximise the benefits of projects to the local communities and to sustain economic development through training and employment opportunities.

RESOLVED:

That the project be approved to proceed to implementation stage to set up a framework for projects over £4.35m and improve current construction procurement practices below this level across the region.

154. FLINTSHIRE FUTURES UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced a report to provide an update on progress of achievement against the Flintshire Futures efficiency targets and the strengthened Flintshire Futures governance arrangements and to consider capacity building proposals recommended by the Flintshire Futures Programme Board for agreement. He explained that the Board was now in place with the Member representation being the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and the Chair of Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Terms of Reference of the Board had been agreed and were attached at Appendix 1.

The Chief Executive explained that Appendix 2 showed all projects that were intended to be undertaken with minimum return on investment ratio of 5:1. These proposals in fact estimated a 9:1 return.

The Head of ICT and Customer Services explained that the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee had agreed to look at elements of the programme in more detail in their Forward Work Programme. The P2P system was now in place across Corporate Services and work to roll it out to the Environment Directorate was ongoing.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the Member involvement on the Project Board and the contribution made by Councillor R.B. Jones, the Chair of Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the level of Flintshire Futures efficiencies included in the current Medium Term Financial Plan which will be updated and reported in the final 2012/13 budget report be noted;
- (b) That the Flintshire Futures governance arrangements and the Terms of Reference for the main Programme Board be noted; and
- (c) That the capacity proposals agreed and recommended by the Board be approved.

155. GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment introduced a report to consider the Gypsy-Traveller Needs Assessment that will inform the development of a Gypsy-Traveller Strategy. He detailed the background to the report and explained that Flintshire accommodated 66 caravans representing 58% of all of the caravans available in North Wales. Appendix 1 detailed the Gypsy-Traveller Residential Needs Calculation for 2011-16. He said that it was imperative that all other authorities in North Wales had their fair share of Gypsy-Traveller sites.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that Flintshire and Wrexham Councils were meeting what was expected of them and asked that the remaining North Wales authorities undertake what was expected of them by Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member for Housing spoke of the potential to expand the Riverside site as a transit site to benefit the whole of the community. The Cabinet Member for Education welcomed the report and said that Flintshire County Council had always met its duty morally and legally in making provision for Gypsy-Travellers and raised concern about the lack of provision by other authorities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings of the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) be received and the approach to develop a Gypsy-Traveller Strategy for Flintshire be endorsed;
- (b) That Cabinet expects that all other counties in the region consider fully the outcomes of the GTAA and contributes towards a regional strategy to meet need; and
- (c) That the Council clarifies with Welsh Government its expectations over a regional approach and the resource availability to meet it, with all Councils meeting their localised needs as identified.

156. NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION DIGNITY CODE

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced a report to update Cabinet on the National Pensioners Convention Dignity Code. The report proposed that Cabinet confirm to the National Pensioners Convention that Flintshire County Council adopt the principles of the code across services provided and commissioned by the Council. She asked that Cabinet formally adopt the National Pensioners Convention Dignity code as further evidence of our commitment to pensioners.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet formally adopt the National Pensioners Convention Dignity Code as further evidence of the Council's commitment to pensioners.

157. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 (MONTH 7)

The Head of Finance introduced a report to provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 7) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in 2012/13 which had been reported to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2013.

It was reported that the projected year end position, as estimated at Month 7, was a net overspend of £0.516m on the Council Fund and a net underspend of £0.401m on the HRA. The in year over/(under) spends as detailed in the report reflected a number of risk and assumptions and four requests for carry forward were also reported. The Head of Finance said that it was the intention of Management to contain the currently projected variation within the overall agreed Council budget for the year.

The Head of Finance reminded Cabinet Members that the Overview & Scrutiny budget meetings were to be held before the end of January 2013 as part of the consultation on the budget for 2013/14.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the overall report and the management actions being taken to address the projected overspend be noted;
- (ii) That the Council Fund contingency sum as at 31 March 2013 (paragraph 5.02) be noted;
- (iii) That the carry forward requests included in the report (paragraphs 3.06 to 3.09) be approved; and
- (iv) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 6.03) be noted.

158. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF SHOTTON INFANTS AND TALIESIN JUNIOR SCHOOLS

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to inform Members of the outcome of the consultation process and to seek approval to publish the statutory notice proposing the amalgamation scheduled for September 2014. He provided further details of the consultation which had been undertaken and which ended on 21 December 2012.

The Leader of the Council referred to the letters of support from Shotton and Taliesin schools about the establishment of a through school for infants and juniors. The Director of Lifelong Learning referred to the sense of excitement in the letters and said that it was important to work closely with the school and its neighbours on the design of the new building in ensuring that all felt involved.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the outcome of the consultations be noted; and
- (ii) That the publication of the statutory notice in the local press and at the affected schools be approved.

159. COUNCIL POLICY FOR INSTALLING NEW VEHICULAR CROSSINGS ON THE ADOPTED HIGHWAYS

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment introduced a report to seek Cabinet approval of the new Council Policy for the installation of new vehicular crossings on Adopted Highways. He welcomed the report and explained that the proposed new arrangements would allow residents to obtain competitive quotations for the work, without the Council losing control of any structural changes made to the highway network.

The Leader of the Council also welcomed the report and said that it was important that the contractors were included on a preferred list. He added that it would be a cheaper option for residents but would ensure that they were safeguarded for the works undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's policy for the installation of new vehicular crossings on Adopted Highways be approved.

160. FLINTSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure introduced a report on Flintshire Business Week to provide an update for Cabinet on the sixth event which took place in October 2012. He praised the work of the dedicated team responsible for arranging Flintshire Business Week and making it the success that it had become. He welcomed the highly positive report and added that he was looking forward to the seventh event which was to be held later in the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

161. RESPONSE FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TO THE CALL IN OF A CABINET DECISION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to inform Cabinet of the result of the call in meeting arising out of the calling in of decision 2769, Civil Parking Enforcement.

He explained that the decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting in December 2012 was called in and the call in meeting had been held on 9 January 2013 where it was resolved that the issue be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration. At its meeting in December, Cabinet had resolved to receive a further report in February and it was recommended that Cabinet note this report and take account of the comments made at the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee call in meeting when considering the report in February.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report be received; and

- (b) That the comments from the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee be considered and incorporated into the scheduled report in February 2013.

162. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

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

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Corporate Services

Business Rates – Applications for
Hardship Rate Relief

163. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 11.15 a.m.

164. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were two members of the press in attendance.

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Chairman