

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**12 DECEMBER 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**PRESENT: Councillor Brian Lloyd (Chairman)**

Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Martin White, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley.

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: Sian Braun, Helen Brown, Bob Connah, David Cox, Veronica Gay, Andrew Holgate, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer and Andy Williams.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officers (Organisational Change), Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Democratic Services Manager, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, Finance Manager and Team Leader – Committee Services.

**67. PRESENTATIONS**

In recognition of the Council's Fostering and Corporate Human Resource Teams in being awarded the Fostering Friendly Employer of the Year Award at the Fostering Network's National Excellence Awards, the Chairman welcomed both teams to the meeting. He explained that the Fostering Excellence Awards were the UK's leading foster care awards and celebrated excellence and outstanding achievement in fostering and recognised those who made exceptional contributions to foster care. In their fourth year, the Fostering Excellence Awards were a great opportunity to shine a spotlight on some of the young people, foster carers, social workers and others who made a positive contribution to the fostering community.

In November 2016, as a result of joint working, a 'Foster for Flintshire' Policy was introduced which outlined additional support the Council would provide to employees if they fostered for the Council. Flintshire County Council was the first local authority in Wales to adopt this approach and in recognition of its support to fostering the Council was announced overall winner.

As Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor Christine Jones congratulated the teams on the award which reflected the Authority's commitment to foster care. She echoed the words of the Chairman and added that the additional support offered was by way of flexible working and additional leave being allocated. Following the introduction of this policy a further four prospective foster carers had made enquiries. She thanked everybody involved for their continued dedication in an area which has gone from strength to strength.

**68. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> October and 14<sup>th</sup> November were submitted.

In response to a comment from Councillor Carver, the Chief Executive advised that the Armed Forces Covenant would be amended to include "children of both serving and veteran members of the Armed Forces".

Councillor Phillips said he was disappointed that a photo shoot which had taken place after the County Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November featured Labour Members only. This had followed a unanimous decision on the Notice of Motion by Councillor Aaron Shotton on 'An End to UK Government Austerity'. Councillor Shotton explained that the photo shoot took place before the meeting and related to a petition that was a political campaign that was being submitted to UK Government. It was separate to the Notice of Motion and it was unfortunate that the press had ran it in conjunction. The Chief Executive clarified that the vote on that particular Notice of Motion was not unanimous and details of the recorded vote was shown in the minutes.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dave Hughes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 13, Recommendation from the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee, as he was Chair of that Committee.

**70. COMMEMORATION AND TRIBUTES TO THE LATE ASSEMBLY MEMBER CARL SARGEANT**

The Leader of the Council led the tributes to the late Assembly Member Carl Sargeant, who he said, had been an integral part of what the Council had done over many years. He commented on the sad day for everybody on hearing the news of Mr Sargeant's death. He had been a passionate and tireless campaigner for the area and had been proud to represent Alyn and Deeside since 2003. He referred to when they had first met and Mr Sargeant's time as a School Governor and as a Member of Connah's Quay Town Council where he was soon to become Chair; his civic ball had been the best which the Council had known. He had been privileged to act as Mr Sargeant's agent in the 2011 election campaign which was enjoyable, full of fun, laughter and memories. He commented particularly on two of the biggest areas which had been a result of Mr

Sargeant's hard work which were (1) the need for an Armed Forces Day, and (2) the suspension of the right to buy scheme in Flintshire. Thoughts and prayers were with his wife Bernadette, children Lucy and Jack and his parents, Malcolm and Sylvia.

Councillor White spoke about his brother in law, Carl Sargeant, who had tragically died 5 weeks previous. He spoke on behalf of the family in thanking the Council for their messages of support during this time, particularly Councillor Attridge and the Chief Executive. He commented on Mr Sargeant's larger than life personality and the many goals he had achieved during his time as Assembly Member. He paid tribute to his nephew Jack, Mr Sargeant's son, who had demonstrated maturity since the sad passing of his father.

Councillors Peers, Sharps, Phillips and Ellis also paid tribute to Carl Sargeant, commenting on the achievements he had made, his popularity and kindness, the support shown to local people, the friendships he had made and the sorrow felt by many on his sad passing.

## **71. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

A copy of the Chairman's Communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

The Chairman commented in particular on the funeral of Carl Sargeant which was testament to him.

He also took the opportunity to thank the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) for the work undertaken during the recent bad weather and asked that his thanks be passed on to the team. As Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside, Councillor Carolyn Thomas also thanked the staff in Streetscene who had worked tirelessly since the bad weather started. An operations centre which had been open all weekend had been set up to ensure that schools, sheltered accommodation and town centres were assisted to ensure people were kept safe.

## **72. PETITIONS**

Councillors Hutchinson and Peers submitted a petition requesting the reinstatement of the speed humps on Drury New Road prior to the junction with Mornington Crescent.

## **73. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None were received.

## **74. QUESTIONS**

None were received.

## **75. NOTICE OF MOTION**

One Notice of Motion had been received:

Councillor Richard Jones:

- “(1) That this Council invests equitably in each of the towns in Flintshire in respect of the Infrastructural Support of any revenue or capital investment to:
- (a) Build or improve highway and transport networks (road, rail, cycle way or footpaths), including parking
  - (b) Redevelop or regenerate towns, streetscapes, or recreation spaces including CCTV
  - (c) Build or redevelop housing including community housing such as extra care
- (2) That the respective investment levels, showing external and internal funding, are reported as part of the Revenue and Capital Strategy reports to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis”.

Councillor Attridge queried the additional words to the Notice of Motion that was sent out in the agenda pack and was advised by the Chief Executive that the words “to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis” had been added to (2) following advice given to Councillor Jones based on the work that would be required if the Notice of Motion was supported.

In speaking to his Notice of Motion, Councillor Jones added that, in the past, when both the finances and resources of the local authority were available in greater quantities there had been enough to go around. In this situation it made it less necessary to closely scrutinise the spend in towns and communities. As a result of the depth of the financial challenge faced by the Authority, everybody was aware that this situation had changed. Welsh Government (WG) financial settlements could not be relied upon to provide sufficient funding that would avoid further strain on our already stretched budgets. Finances in Flintshire were more difficult to secure any efficiencies were necessary and closer scrutiny was needed. Furthermore, it was clear that those available resources were therefore diminished, there was a greater need to consider whether the principle of match funding and inequitable spend in Flintshire was a fair or transparent method. This method perhaps did not allow every resident to understand whether their town was benefitting or if it was for the chosen few. Match funding and inequitable spend in one area depleted the remaining resource to such an extent that there was little or nothing left to those remaining towns and communities and he believed the situation was both unfair and unsustainable.

This was seconded by Councillor Peers.

Councillor Shotton spoke against the Notice of Motion but thanked Councillor Jones for the opportunity of the debate. Whilst he understood the sentiment behind the Notice of Motion, he asked Members to understand the implications and consequences if passed. The Council was already doing the best it could under difficult circumstances in towns and villages across the County, each with their own identity. He provided some examples of current

schemes (1) the successor to Vibrant and Viable Communities, Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRIP) and the opportunity for the town of Holywell to be a recipient of that regeneration funding; and (2) as part of the Council Plan prioritised extending residential care bed provision through the capital programme in Marleyfield House in Buckley based on the need that was recognised in the south of the County. If the Notice of Motion was supported it would restrict the opportunity to follow through on those investments as the same amount of funding would be required in each town and that would result in everything in each town, or nothing in each town. The result of supporting the Notice of Motion would be a Council that would be unable to take decisions that were needed for the whole County. The Council was doing its best for the whole of County during difficult times and the Notice of Motion was unrealistic.

Councillor Kevin Hughes said he supported the Notice of Motion but with some reservations. He felt failure to support it would send out the wrong message to the people in the County, but he recognised that the towns and villages in the County may not require as much equitable investment as others. However, he felt the Notice of Motion was not just about equitable funding but about politics. He had thought the job of Independent groups would be to hold the Labour group to account and support them when they agreed on matters. He had heard and witnessed poor behaviour and bullying by both Labour and Independent Members to other Members. Some Members who represented the same or adjoining wards openly despised one another. He asked how any community could be represented properly under those circumstances. Austerity and cuts to services were upon the Council and if Flintshire was to get through those difficult times, Members needed to pull together and set aside historical issues to make Flintshire a better and more prosperous County for all residents.

Councillor Attridge called upon Councillor Kevin Hughes to withdraw his comments relating to the Labour group. Councillor Hughes said he had heard it from all groups.

Councillor Peers said as Group Leader of the Independent Alliance Group he had not received any reports of bullying from Councillor Kevin Hughes or any other Member. In supporting the Notice of Motion, he said it was clear that Councillor Richard Jones was not just talking about Buckley but he was talking about the whole County. Elected Members needed to look at their own areas and ask had they benefitted to the extent as some other areas of the County that had received investment over a long period of time. He commented on the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the North Wales Economic Growth Deal Bid. There had been a workshop on the North Wales Economic Growth Deal Bid but there was not a lot of information available, despite questions being asked on the Metro and other areas. There were a lot of missing pieces that answers were needed for and it was about being fair and equitable across the County and not just about finance. Everybody should have the opportunity to benefit from investment that the Authority could attract and assurances should be able to be given to all communities that if there was a need for a service then it would be given consideration with investments being shared equitably. Investments were coming into the Authority but they were not being spread around.

Councillor Woolley said different locations required different investments and it would be difficult to say that everything should be equal all of the time. He

supported the Notice of Motion but suggested that the words 'according to need' be added after the word 'equitably' on the first line. The Chief Officer (Governance) asked if the mover and the seconder of the Notice of Motion, Councillors Richard Jones and Peers respectively, accepted that amendment which they said they did.

Councillor Bithell said that a number of the speakers who had spoken in support of the motion had in fact given sound reasons for rejecting it. Improvements for the areas identified in the Notice of Motion were carried out as part of annual programme based on prioritising need as not all of those things needed investment at the same time. Town Centre redevelopment schemes were progressed based on need and would take place when WG funding was received. On recreational spaces, a survey had taken place a number of years ago where all play areas were looked at and a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) list was produced and worked through, again, on the basis of need. On housing schemes, a major scheme was underway and houses were being built where there were sites in the Council's ownership. He also commented on the locations of the Extra Care Homes adding that systematically issues were being dealt with in the County. This Notice of Motion would 'spread the jam too thinly' and would not be to the benefit of anybody.

Councillor McGuill spoke in support of the Notice of Motion as each ward was different and it was on the basis of need. Councillor Heesom also spoke in support of the Motion citing the need for a cohesive collective County. He commented that many people saw Flintshire as a dartboard with Deeside in the middle and all of the outside areas also needed to be considered.

In responding to Councillor Hughes' accusation of bullying, Councillor Sharps said that comment was unwelcome and that he should apologise. He was not aware of any bullying as the Group Leader of the Independents. On the Notice of Motion, he said there were issues with parochialism; he said he lived in a rural area but got his fair share of work carried out in his community.

Councillor Ellis welcomed the extra beds at Marleyfield in Buckley and the other work that had taken place in the town, including the regeneration of the town with the investment of Aldi which had encouraged other developments in the town.

Councillors Butler, David Healey and Carolyn Thomas all spoke against the Notice of Motion, citing it was about making the right decisions for the residents of Flintshire, it was impossible to implement or monitor the Notice of Motion, everything could not be done at once and that all schemes were delivered on a need basis and were assessed in that way.

Councillor Attridge asked for advice, saying that the adding the words 'according to need' was contradictory to the previous word 'equitably'.

Councillor Tudor Jones spoke on Number (2) of the Notice of Motion and said accountability was the most important aspect. He said there was perceived inequality which was widespread but said accountability and transparency was needed so that Members knew where investments were going. If such things were reported to Members, they could inform the residents in their wards. He

suggested that prior to an election such information could be delivered as to what investments had taken place in their community over recent years.

In summing up, Councillor Richard Jones said there was a need to be able to show residents that things were done in the areas most in need. Some parts of the County felt they did not get any investments. He urged Members to vote for fairness and transparency saying that everybody deserved to be treated equally. He added that a report from 2010 showed spend in each town but since that date there was no such information. However, from a report on Vibrant and Viable Places he could see that more than £20m had been spent between Connah's Quay and Queensferry between 2010 and 2016; this information was not available for other towns.

The Chief Executive explained that if the Council was to set a policy it was the responsibility of the officers to advise on how it was to be interpreted in the spirit in which it was meant. The insertion of the words suggested by Councillor Woolley made sense to the lay person and were accepted by the mover and seconder. However, Councillor Attridge's point about being contradictory, was fair – 'equitable' did not sit well with 'need'. He and the Chief Officer (Governance) looked at the amended wording and suggested that the word 'equitably' be replaced by 'fairly'. He added that the Notice of Motion implied for cases where the Authority had control over either the revenue or the capital and said Members needed to consider if funding was external and targeted to a specific area, would there be an expectation that the Council would counterbalance it with its own limited capital resources in another area? He provided examples of where that could happen as an unintended consequence. Following the discussion, and regardless of the outcome, it was accepted that better reporting could be provided several times a year for transparency.

Councillor Richard Jones and Peers, as mover and seconder of the Notice of Motion, accepted the suggestion and agreed that the word 'equitably' should be replaced by the word 'fairly' with the following being the amended Notice of Motion:

- “(1) That this Council invests fairly, according to need, in each of the towns in Flintshire in respect of the Infrastructural Support of any revenue or capital investment to:
- (a) Build or improve highway and transport networks (road, rail, cycle way or footpaths), including parking
  - (b) Redevelop or regenerate towns, streetscapes, or recreation spaces including CCTV
  - (c) Build or redevelop housing including community housing such as extra care
- (2) That the respective investment levels, showing external and internal funding, are reported as part of the Revenue and Capital Strategy reports to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis”.

Councillor Richard Jones called for a recorded vote and was supported the requisite number of Members.

The following Councillors voted for the Notice of Motion:

Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Martin White, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley.

No Councillors voted against the Notice of Motion or abstained.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Notice of Motion from Councillor Richard Jones be supported as follows:

- “(1) That this Council invests fairly, according to need, in each of the towns in Flintshire in respect of the Infrastructural Support of any revenue or capital investment to:
- (a) Build or improve highway and transport networks (road, rail, cycle way or footpaths), including parking
  - (b) Redevelop or regenerate towns, streetscapes, or recreation spaces including CCTV
  - (c) Build or redevelop housing including community housing such as extra care
- (2) That the respective investment levels, showing external and internal funding, are reported as part of the Revenue and Capital Strategy reports to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis”.

**76. FINANCIAL FORECAST AND STAGE TWO OF THE BUDGET 2018/19**

The Chief Executive introduced the report on the Financial Forecast and Stage Two of the Budget 2018/19 which had been submitted to a special meeting of Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> December and a special meeting of Cabinet that morning. A copy of the draft recommendations from the special Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had been endorsed by Cabinet that morning, had been given to Members.

Councillor Heesom queried why Members were being asked to approve minutes of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in this meeting. The Chief Executive explained that Members were not being asked to



approve minutes and at the scrutiny meeting the previous week, Members who were present were advised that the outcome of that meeting would be reported to Cabinet and then to County Council. The recommendations and minute content were draft. Councillor Carver indicated that as Chair of that Committee, they were indeed a fair record of what was agreed. Following a further comment from Councillor Heesom, the Chief Executive confirmed that he was faithfully reporting what Cabinet had decided that morning, taking into account the resolutions of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet received and accepted in full the six draft recommendations from Corporate Resources, which were:

1. That having considered the Stage 2 budget options, the report and proposals be noted;
2. That the remaining stages of the budget process and timescales be noted;
3. That the letter to the Cabinet Secretaries for Finance and for Local Government and Public services and the Resilience Statements be circulated to all Members;
4. That the full detail of the assessments of the risks, impacts and consequences of all of the budget proposals be made available for review in January;
5. That the Environment and Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committees be convened in January to review in detail the car parking charges and school budget proposals respectively, including the risks and consequences of the proposals, prior to any final decision being taken; and
6. That a report reviewing the process for the setting of the annual budget process be prepared for the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

Cabinet had noted and recommended Stage Two of the budget to County Council with the proviso that the specific proposals on schools budgets and car parking charges would be reported to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees in January for full review, for them to report back before any final agreement on those two areas. Cabinet also noted the remaining stages of the budget process and the timescales.

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that following approval of Stage One of the budget proposals the gap had reduced to £10.5m which excluded the impact of any in-year risks and pressures which could continue into the new financial year. Stage Two budget proposals were categorised into high or low level of control/certainty and full details were contained in the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny report which was appended to the Council report and varied from £7.592m to £9.001m. The projected in-year overspend of £1.3m was under critical examination and any carry forward of any recurring overspend in the base budget would increase the budget gap for 2018/19.

The Chief Executive added that three national requests had been made to Welsh Government (WG) on the Domiciliary Care Fee Cap (£0.490m), the Intermediate Care Fund (£0.500m) and the Apprentice Tax Levy (£0.350m) with the first two at no cost to WG. There was no request to change the formula but those specific requests had been made to help Flintshire with the budget gap. He clarified that those requests would also not be at any cost to other local authorities. A meeting with the Leader, the two Cabinet Ministers and himself was planned to take place before Christmas.

Councillor Shotton reconfirmed the recommendations from Cabinet that morning which was as explained by the Chief Executive. He explained that the new process for setting the budget was now done in three stages, emphasising the importance of planning. He also stressed the importance of the impending discussions with WG to help to achieve a balanced budget, particularly on the three requests. The Cabinet was not prepared to “passport” any further UK Government cuts onto Council services and he was seeking support from WG to fight back against austerity. He sought Members’ support, particularly for the discussions that would take place with WG.

Councillor Peers asked for information on the in-year spend that was under critical examination and the further negative changes to specific grants which was agreed would be sent. On the £13.6m budget gap, he said a negative gap would occur when spending exceeded income. On Stage Two proposals, particularly on no level of control or certainty, this was at some risk and it was out of the Council’s control. He asked if there were contingency plans for the end of Stages Two and Three, citing uncertainties in Stage One which could still change. He added that he had asked a number of questions on Stage One and he had not yet received responses. He queried if all Members would be invited to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees when the schools budgets and car parking charges were to be discussed so that questions that would have been asked at this Council meeting could be asked at those Committees.

The Chief Executive said that work was being undertaken on Councillor Peers’ questions on Stage One of the budget for the New Year. On the crucial examination of the in-year pressures, the question was the predictability of what would happen next year, one area being the increase in spend on Out of County Placements. In January the likely impact of such pressures could be detailed. On specific grants, the Education Improvement Grant and the Single Environment Grant were significant and always late. There was a combination of three ways in which the budget could only be balanced: (1) supplementary support from WG; (2) use of reserves and balances as a temporary measure; and/or (3) service and budget reductions which would result in services being impacted, such as Social Care, Streetscene and Education, all of which had been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings always welcomed other Members to their meetings.

Councillor Heesom queried the recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had been handed to Members. He commented on the magnitude of the budget gap faced by the Council and felt there was an air of desperation on the position being faced. Unless WG was prepared to assist then the position was dire. He said the Administration had

made the situation and it was for them get the Council out of the position. Comments had been made at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week on Stage One and Members were advised by the Leader of the Council that the budget had been looked at line by line, but he said other Members in Overview and Scrutiny Committees had not had that opportunity. Even if all Stage Two options were put in place that would only raise £9m with a gap still remaining. He asked the Chief Executive, on the three options he referred to, what other options were remaining as if there was a surcharge in addition to a possible 5% rise in Council Tax, Members needed to inform their residents as soon as possible.

The Chief Executive said the financial situation was extremely serious. The responsibility of setting the budget was for Members, based on professional advice provided by Officers which could then be scrutinised. He advised that it was not appropriate to personalise comments to him on options such as Council Tax levels. He said it may not be necessary to raise the Council Tax up by 5% and added that a Council Tax rise was not mentioned by any Members at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week as an area of major concern. Councillors Richard Jones and David Healey had both indicated that the recommendations were correct and he reiterated that they had been accepted by Cabinet that morning. The Chief Officer (Governance) also said the recommendations reflected what had been discussed at that meeting and they would form part of the draft minutes for that Committee to consider. As Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carver also said they were a true reflection of what was agreed. He also said that he welcomed other Members to his meetings. The Democratic Services Manager confirmed the dates as, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 16<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00 a.m. and Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> January at 2.00 p.m.

Councillor Richard Jones thanked the Chief Executive for capturing the main points from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He raised concern on the possibility that some of the options may not be felt to be acceptable, citing car parking charges which could result in a town no longer being viable, but he did not understand the consequences sufficiently to be able to make such decisions. He felt there was an immunity for Deeside due to the Deeside Plan. He believed that the £500k for the Intermediate Care Fund should be included in the figures.

The Chief Executive explained that the three proposals which would have consequences for the public were Council Tax, schools and car parking and two of those had been taken out of the main report for separate discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as previously discussed. All of the remaining options were a corporate risk and did not impact people directly; equalities impacts assessments looked at the risks to people and communities. Details of the assessments, impacts and consequences would be available in January. In response to the point on Intermediate Care Fund, he explained that this was not guaranteed at this early stage.

Councillor David Healey also said the draft recommendations faithfully reflected what had been said at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he also welcomed all Members to the Education and Youth

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in January. He expressed his concern on schools budgets and commented that some schools in England had reduced to a four day week to meet budget pressures. He expressed his appreciation that such a situation had not occurred in Flintshire.

The Chief Executive explained the importance of schools knowing the situation as soon as possible to enable them to plan. As Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Roberts said he had attended a number of consultation meetings and general feedback from schools was they were grateful for what the Council had done thus far and they expected the situation as set out. However, he concurred with the Chief Executive on the importance of them being provided with information as soon as possible.

On being put to the vote, the recommendations were carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Stage Two Budget options within the Scrutiny report and the recommendations of Cabinet detailed below be received;
  - (i) *That feedback from Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received with a recommendation to Council on Stage 2 of the budget strategy;*
  - (ii) *That the remaining stages of the budget process and the timescales be noted; and*
  - (iii) *Cabinet received and accepted in full the 6 draft recommendations from Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (listed below). Cabinet noted and recommended Stage 2 of the budget to County Council with the proviso that the specific proposals on schools budgets and car parking charges would be reported to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees in January for full review, for them to report back before any final agreement on those two areas.*

*Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations:*

1. *That having considered the Stage 2 budget options, the report and proposals be noted;*
2. *That the remaining stages of the budget process and timescales be noted;*
3. *That the letter to the Cabinet Secretaries for Finance and for Local Government and Public services and the Resilience Statements be circulated to all Members;*
4. *That the full detail of the assessments of the risks, impacts and consequences of all of the budget proposals be made available for review in January;*
5. *That the Environment and Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committees be convened in January to review in detail the car parking charges and school budget proposals respectively, including the risks and consequences of the proposals, prior to any final decision being taken; and*

6. *That a report reviewing the process for the setting of the annual budget process be prepared for the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.*

(2) That the remaining stages of the budget process and the timescales be noted; and

(b) That the remaining stages of the budget process and the timescales be noted.

## **77. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report on the Appointment of an Independent Member to the Standards Committee. There was one vacancy on the Committee for an independent (co-opted) member and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) had two such vacancies.

The Council had undertaken a joint recruitment exercise with the NWFRA with the costs of advertising being shared. The vacancies were advertised in the local press, on the website and on social media. There were 8 applicants who were shortlisted against criteria that had previously been approved by County Council. He was in communication with one of the applicants who had not been shortlisted and who believed the process had been flawed.

Five candidates were invited to interview by a panel which agreed to recommend Julia Hughes to both Flintshire County Council and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) with Sally Ellis being recommended for the second vacancy on the NWFRA. Given the appointment to Julia Hughes to both the Standards Committee and the NWFRA, this would allow the two authorities to share the investment in training, provide her with a wider experience and also cross fertilise between the two organisations.

Councillor Carver said he had been contacted by one of the applicants who had not been shortlisted and he expressed his concerns about the recruitment process and the low number of applicants. He queried why on the advert it was stated that travelling and subsistence could be claimed for, but it did not state the remuneration of £99 for half a day or £198 for a full day which he felt may have put people off from applying. He also referred to the successful applicant being a serving member on the Standards Committee at Denbighshire County Council since 2015 and asked if that two year term that had been served would be taken off the term of office at Flintshire and whether or not it would be a disadvantage serving on two different Standards Committees. He moved deferral of the item for it to be considered by the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Hardcastle.

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that compared to previous occasions when applications have been sought, this time a good response had been received. Alongside the advert was a full application pack which provided more detailed information, including the remuneration rates as set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. He confirmed that if a member served on another Councils Standards Committee, this did not disbar them from

being a member nor did affect their term of office. It would also bring an added depth of experience. He added that the recruitment process had been followed correctly as laid down in legislation and he took the opportunity to thank the Chair of Standards Committee, Councillor Arnold Woolley and the lay person, Noella Jones, for being on the Panel.

On being put to the vote, the amendment for deferral was lost.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Julia Hughes be appointed by the Council to the Standards Committee until 2022; and
- (b) That Noella Jones be thanked for her participation.

**78. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CLWYD PENSION FUND COMMITTEE**

*Having declared an interest, Councillor David Hughes left the Chamber for this item.*

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report which recommended to approve an allowance of £8,700 to the Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee which would be back dated to the start of the municipal year. The cost would be borne by the Clwyd Pension Fund.

Councillor Attridge moved approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Dunbobbin.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That an allowance of £8,700 be approved for the Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee, which would be back dated to the start of the municipal year, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017; and
- (b) That details of the payment be included within the Council's Schedule of Member Remuneration as being additional to the regulated 18 senior salaries.

**79. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the press and one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.48 pm)

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**Chairman**