

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 MAY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Thursday, 9 May 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Clive Carver (Chairman)

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Geoff Collett, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Mared Eastwood, Patrick Heesom, Paul Johnson, Richard Jones, Mike Lowe, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Andy Williams and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES: Councillor Helen Brown

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader and Cabinet Member for Education; Councillor Glyn Banks, Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Billy Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets; Chief Executive; Senior Manager, Human Resources and Organisational Development; and Corporate Finance Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Democratic Services Manager gave a reminder that at the Annual Meeting, Council had resolved that the Conservative group should nominate the Chair of the Committee. The nomination from the group had been for Councillor Clive Carver.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Clive Carver be confirmed as Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year.

(From this point, Councillor Carver chaired the remainder of the meeting)

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chairman sought nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chair. Councillor Paul Cunningham was nominated by Councillor Paul Johnson and this was seconded by Councillor Mike Lowe. On being put to the vote, the nomination was carried. No further nominations were received.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Paul Cunningham be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2019 were submitted.

Minute 101: Councillor Heesom asked that his point on the need for Members to disassociate themselves with the views of Officers about the increase in Council Tax as agreed in the budget, be included in the minutes. Councillor Heesom also took the opportunity to express concerns that a budget monitoring report had not been included on the agenda for consideration by the Committee at the present meeting. The Chief Executive referred to standing practice which was that monthly monitoring reports began following the first quarter of each year. Therefore, one was not due until July.

Minute 104: Councillor Woolley referred to his comments and said that the concerns raised by the Authority had been represented to the WG by the WLGA since 2008 but had still not been addressed. It was agreed that the minutes be amended to reflect that national progress in resolution was unsatisfactory.

Minute 103: Following a suggestion from Councillor Richard Jones it was agreed that the words 'It was acknowledged that the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee would maintain an overview and become involved in discussions as required' would be included in the last paragraph.

It was agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would send an email to the Committee inviting Members to forward any proposed amendments to the draft minutes to him before meetings so the wording can be prepared in advance.

Councillor Paul Johnson moved that the minutes be approved with the two amendments, which was duly seconded

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **ACTION TRACKING**

The Democratic Services Manager presented the progress report on actions arising from previous meetings. He referred to the agenda item on Finance and Business Planning Cycle and advised that the performance information workshop had been rearranged and would be held on 30 May.

Following discussion at a previous meeting the Chief Executive had suggested that a Member workshop be held on employer pension funding and it was agreed that a short session on 'How the Local Government Pension Scheme works' would be held immediately prior to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 June.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress which has been made.

5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration and drew attention to the items scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 June.

Councillor Paul Johnson referred to the suggestion that representatives of the Welsh Local Government Association be invited to participate in a future Member workshop before the August recess to link in with the Council's work on the budget. Councillor Johnson was advised that a response to agree a suitable date was awaited from the WLGA.

Councillor Richard Jones asked if consideration could be given to the Committee participating in the work of the Cross-Party Working Group on Local Government Finance. The Chief Executive and Councillor Ian Roberts agreed with the suggestion and advised that the next meeting of the Cross Party Working Group was to be held next week and feedback could be provided.

Reference was made to the need to discuss with Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chairs across the region on how best to scrutinise the North Wales Economic Ambition Board Reserved Matters in due course. The Chief Executive offered to pursue this.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme, as amended, be approved; and
- (b) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, should this become necessary.

6. REVIEW OF PAY POLICY AND PAY MODEL

The Chief Executive introduced a progress report on (1) pay modelling for the implementation of the second year (2019) of the two year National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement (2018/19 – 2019/20); and (2) maintenance of structural design and terms of employment following the Single Status Agreement (2014).

The Chief Executive provided background information and advised that if the Council implemented the second year of the two year NJC pay agreement as per the national model on a straight like for like 'read across' basis, the local pay model would be disrupted to an extent that it would no longer meet organisational design and pay policy principles and might be open to challenge on the grounds of gender inequality. Consequently, the existing Council pay model had been fundamentally reviewed to accommodate the national pay agreement.

The Senior Manager, Human Resources and Organisational Development, reported on pay modelling, maintenance of the Single Status Agreement, and

Organisational Change and Redesign. She advised that year 2 of the NJC pay agreement included the introduction of a 'new' pay spine with assimilation to newly created spinal column points and necessitated a fundamental change to the pay model/spine locally. Local agreement had been reached on a preferred pay model in March 2019. The overall outcome of the new model not only resulted in the implementation of the new national pay spine provided for as part of the two year agreement, but achieved a smoothed pay spine, addressed pay parity and the gap between the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) core pay and Hay senior pay scales.

The Senior Manager, Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that the new pay model passed the tests of being legal, equitable, workable, sustainable, acceptable and affordable. Initial communications to employees were made in March. The effective date of the new pay model was 1 April 2019 and the target date for implementation was July 2019 (to be backdated to April 2019). In addition to an internal Equity Impact Assessment, an independent Equality Impact Assessment was commissioned. The Assessments were positive and provided assurance. The Senior Manager continued that final approval was given to the proposed pay model and grading structure by the recognised Trade Unions in April, and work had commenced on implementation. She advised that the critical activity being a data cleanse and realignment of portfolios on iTrent (the workforce software system) which had been completed. The new model would be applied in a test environment for rigorous testing before being transferred into the live environment.

The Chief Executive and the Senior Manager advised that preserving the integrity of the pay model was critical to protect the Council from equal pay claims. Governance of the ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the Single Status Collective Agreement ensured the integrity of the Agreement was preserved and was achieved in part through the provision of regular Equal Pay Audits and follow-up action plans in addition to service redesign.

Councillor Billy Mullin referred to the difficult and complex work undertaken in the Pay Policy and Pay Model Review and expressed thanks to the Chief Executive and Senior Manager Human Resources and her team for their work. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would send an email to on behalf of the Committee, to thank the Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, and Senior Manager Human Resources & Organisational Development, for their work and asked that thanks also be passed to other staff involved.

During discussion Officers responded to the comments and questions raised by Members concerning the National Living Wage, payment of agency workers, and comparable pay models in other areas.

The Chair sought clarification on the figures provided for rates of protected allowances for Laboratory/Workshop Technicians. Officers advised that the rates were agreed nationally and were confirmed as annual figures but were not applicable to the Authority.

Councillor Arnold Woolley highlighted a typographical error on page 30 of the report and said Greater Local Provincial Council should be amended to read

Greater London Provincial Council. Councillor Woolley also said he had some concerns regarding pension matters that he would raise with Officers following the meeting.

The Chief Executive advised that provision had been made in the annual budget for the pay award.

The Senior Manager Human Resources explained that the majority of services within portfolios had been through some degree of organisational change since the implementation of the single status agreement in June 2014. On each occasion this had necessitated a review of the operating model including structures roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and safeguard of the Council from external challenges.

Councillor Paul Cunningham congratulated Officers on the report and reiterated the thanks which had been expressed to Officers and all staff involved for their hard work on the Pay Policy and Pay Model Review.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes and welcomes the progress made in reviewing the Pay Model to incorporate the national pay agreement; and
- (b) notes the other information contained within the report; and
- (c) expresses its thanks to all of the officer team involved in the Pay Model review and associated work

7. COUNCIL PLAN 2019/20

The Chief Executive introduced a report on the Council Plan 2019/20 which was approved by Cabinet on 16 April and developed since. The Committee was asked to review the priorities and sub-priorities and provide feedback to Cabinet.

The Chief Executive provided background information and explained that the outline of the Council Plan for 2019/20 including the seven themes, their priorities and sub priorities were summarised in the report. Work was progressing well on the detail of each sub priority and the in-year actions planned. Cabinet endorsement of the priorities and sub-priorities of Part 1 of the Plan was given in April. The whole Plan – Parts 1 and 2 (Part 2 including the detailed measures and milestones) was to be adopted by the County Council in June on the recommendation of Cabinet.

The Council Plan 2019/20 retained the super structure of six themes and supporting priorities with an additional theme to focus on the high profile operational services. He said a draft plan with a short questionnaire to provide feedback would be sent to the Committee next week and suggested that a

workshop be held to consider the Council Plan in detail at the end of May. This was agreed by the Committee.

Councillor Billy Mullin spoke of the Committee's valuable input in scrutinising the Council Plan and said the comments and views of Members were taken on board. He also spoke of the importance of Members attendance at workshops and the opportunity they presented to raise any concerns.

Councillor Richard Jones expressed the view that not all Members had fully appreciated the invitation to the workshop and the importance of the Council Plan. He commented on the need to manage the Plan alongside the budget process. Councillor Jones proposed that the item be deferred until a workshop on the Council Plan had been held and that an email be sent on behalf of the Committee urging all Members to attend the workshop to be held at the end of May. This was duly seconded by Councillor Paul Cunningham. The Chair agreed to send an email on behalf of the Committee to emphasise the importance of attending the workshop on the Council Plan. Councillor Glyn Banks suggested that Members be asked in the email to provide feedback on the draft Council Plan.

Councillor Richard Jones drew attention to the last sentence, second paragraph, on page 57 of the report and said that it suggested that some services were viewed as a lower profile and were not protected.

Councillor Patrick Heesom expressed a number of concerns on the Council Plan and said more work needed to be undertaken on the budget setting and key functions as outlined in the Plan. He also commented on the North Wales Growth Deal and the Integrated Transport Strategy and said there was a need for more structure in the Plan to address the key issues of economic and social development. The Chief Executive said he would welcome further discussion around specific issues or challenges that Members wished to raise and commented that the Plan reflected the budget which Council had recently approved. The Chief Executive also said he would welcome the opportunity for further input and discussion with Members at the workshop on 30 May.

Councillor Richard Jones said he did not think there was a need for the introduction of a seventh theme on Safe and Clean Communities which he felt would make it more difficult to undertake year on year comparison.

It was agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would email the Corporate Business and Communications Officer with the Committee's good wishes for her recovery.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Richard Jones and seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the process and timetable for the annual review of the Plan;

- (b) That the Committee defers further consideration of the report until a workshop is held; and
- (c) That an email be sent by the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, urging all Members to attend the Council Plan workshop to be held on Thursday 30 May 2019.

8. **CROSS-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE**

The Chief Executive gave background information and provided a presentation on the Cross Party Working Group on Local Government Finance which covered the following key points:

- context
- origins
- terms of reference
- planning the work of the Group
- our developing position
- what next

Councillor Ian Roberts said the meeting which had been held between the cross-party delegation and the Minister in February had been positive. He referred to service pressures and cited the need for Welsh Government to provide funding to meet teachers' pay awards which had been delegated to local authorities and on the need to cap local funding for Out of County placements. He also referred to the need for indexation for inflation, the cost for new legislation, and the longer term review of the funding formula. Councillor Roberts thanked all who had attended the meeting and advised that a further meeting was scheduled next week. The Chief Executive advised that the focus of the Group was to provide an evidence base for improved national funding.

Councillor Patrick Heesom said there was a need for Members to have greater accountability and involvement in budget monitoring of expenditure. In his response Councillor Ian Roberts explained that Members were welcome to send any further suggestions on the budget to the Chief Executive, Cabinet Members, or Finance Team.

During discussion it was agreed that the presentation slides would be sent to the Cross-party Working Group with the agenda for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the progress of the Cross-party working Group on Local Government Finance be welcomed

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

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m and ended at 12.10 p.m)

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Chairman