

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 NOVEMBER 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Room, County Hall on Friday 2nd November 2018

PRESENT: **Councillor Dave Mackie (Chairman)**

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Sean Bibby, Geoff Collett, Ian Dunbar, Mared Eastwood, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Chris Bithell, Dennis Hutchinson, Tudor Jones, Carolyn Thomas and Andy Williams. Chief Officer (Social Services)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Bernie Attridge and Christine Jones

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Billy Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets; Chief Officer (Housing and Assets); Finance Manager (Community Services) and Accountant (Corporate Finance)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Support Officer

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interests.

26. BUDGET 2019/20 STAGE 2 PROPOSALS

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) introduced a report to advise of the financial pressures and efficiencies identified for the Organisational Change portfolio for the 2019/20 budget. The Committee was advised that Member workshops were held on 13 and 23 July and 18 September, 2018 where information on the latest local financial forecast in the context of the overall national position was provided. An additional workshop specifically for the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee was held on 11 October, 2018 which provided Members with the opportunity to understand the portfolio budgets in more detail and consider the risk and resilience levels of each service area.

The Chief Officer provided a detailed explanation around the portfolio business planning efficiencies, as outlined within the report. The Finance Manager (Community Services) provided information around the savings which had been achieved as part of the Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models but raised concern around the risk to the services if further savings were made.

The Finance Manager (Community Services) also provided an update on the provisional settlement from Welsh Government (WG) which had increased the budget gap by £1.9m. Officers were currently working through the detail of the National Government budget announcements and what additional funding

could be received by WG as a result. The Chief Officer commented on the level of Council Tax which would need to be raised to meet the current financial shortfall.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets said that he was pleased Aura and NEWydd had been able to achieve efficiencies and reported that they were both developing well. He said that the Council should be congratulated for maintaining services despite the difficult financial circumstances.

A number of Members thanked officers for the report and commended them on the efficiencies that had been found whilst maintaining services which had been lost in neighbouring Councils. Councillor Paul Shotton said he hoped any consequential funding to WG from the National Government would be passported to local authorities. Councillor David Wisinger agreed and felt that there needed to be fairness between funding provided to South Wales and North Wales. He also commented on the recent meeting for candidates for the Leadership of the Welsh Labour Party and reported that many questions and concerns around funding to North Wales had been raised. Councillor Janet Axworthy agreed with the comments made but raised concerns around the lateness of additional funding announcements from WG in previous budgets and the difficulty this posed for Councils in setting budgets.

Councillor Sean Bibby commented on conversations he had had with his constituents and the lack of understanding around the effort made by the Council in finding efficiencies and protecting services. He said that greater communication with members of the public was required moving forward. Councillor Geoff Collett agreed and felt that further work was needed to inform members of the public of the true impact of the budget reductions and the impacts this had on the Council.

The Chairman referred to discussions at the recent Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee where it was recommended that Members agree to seek to raise public awareness about the implications of the current financial challenges. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets acknowledged the need for greater public engagement around the financial pressures being faced by the Council and advised that work was being undertaken to address this.

The Chief Officer outlined the forthcoming National Budget timetable and Local Budget timetable, as detailed in the report. The final budget would be presented to Cabinet and Council on 19 February, 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the portfolio efficiency options, as shown in the report.

27. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.33 am)

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Chairman