

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION MAKING
MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2020 AT
1.00PM

PARTICIPANTS: Councillor Billy Mullin (as the Cabinet Member making the decision) and Councillor Ian Roberts. Advised by the Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), and Corporate Finance Managers.

The Revenues Manager advised on minute number 14.
The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) and Asset Manager advised on minute numbers 15 and 16.

IN ATTENDANCE: Team Leader (Democratic Services)

The Chief Officer (Governance) gave details of the procedure and the arrangements for ensuring consultation and transparency. The reason that an Individual Cabinet Member decision was required was because of the emergency situation.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member confirmed that, under the Councillors' Code of Conduct, he did not have an interest in the report.

14. CONSULTATION ON CHARITABLE RATES RELIEF FOR SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

The Revenues Manager introduced the report which sought views on whether there was a need to reform Charitable Rates Relief for some schools and hospitals to ensure that the support the Welsh Government provided through its rates relief schemes was properly targeted. The consultation had been extended to 29th May as a result of the national emergency measures and the significant pressures on key stakeholders.

Flintshire had 13 voluntary aided Church in Wales or Roman Catholic faith schools that qualified for 80% Charitable Rate Relief amounting to annual rate relief of £185k. There were also three further education sites in the County that also qualified for Rate Relief amounting to annual rate relief of £556K.

In Wales there were 30 properties classified as private hospital, none were in Flintshire.

As Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carver made the following comment:

'My view as Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is that I full agree with the recommendation in the report "that any proposed reform of Charitable Rate Relief for schools and hospitals should be deferred due to the economic impacts of this emergency situation as the sustainability of the whole rate scheme, in its current form, might be in need of review by Welsh Government'.

Councillor Mullin, as Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets, supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That any proposed reform of Charitable Rate Relief for schools and hospitals should be deferred due to the economic impacts of this emergency situation as the sustainability of the whole rates scheme, in its current form, might be in need of review by Welsh Government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

15. SALE OF NEWTECH SQUARE, DEESIDE BUSINESS PARK, DEESIDE, CH5 2NT

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) introduced the report and explained that the Council owned the freehold to Newtech Square. The current tenant was no longer in occupation and wished to exercise their break clause in 2021.

Following an independent valuation, an offer made to the Council was deemed acceptable and was recommended for approval.

As Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carver submitted the following views:

'My views as Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

- (1) the tenant of 1 Newtech Square has exercised their break clause and despite their actively marketing the property in order to assign or sublet without success. Interest in the property has been shown by a pharmaceutical company whom are already on Deeside Industrial Park with their offer being deemed acceptable.
- (2) the Council has a building to dispose of, it has a buyer who has made an acceptable offer which will save the Council having to pay £8,000 per annum Service Charge and Non-Domestic Rates of approximately £6,875 per annum should the offer not be accepted and the building become vacant.

Therefore, in the circumstances, I have no objection to the proposal to accept the offer'.

Councillor Mullin, as Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets, supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet support the sale of Newtech Square, an office and laboratory space of 22,500 sq. ft. on Deeside Industrial Park.

16. SALE OF HOPE HALL FARM, HOPE

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) introduced the report and explained that the Council owned the freehold to Hope Hall Farm in Hope.

The farm was split into three lots:

- The farm and 101 acres;
- A seven acre plot being disposed of separately; and
- Retained land which fronts the main road should it become developable in the future.

The sale would be subject to a claw-back clause which would remain in effect for the next 25 years.

As Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carver made the following comments:

‘As Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I find it rather strange that the sale of Hope Hall Farm has come to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet some months after it has actually been sold. From the report, following the Capital Assets Programme Board supporting the disposal of the Farm in February 2018, it was sold by informal tender in November 2019.

I accept that whilst it would have been better if Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet had been involved earlier, certainly in the current situation market conditions may have deteriorated and the purchaser have second thoughts on the offered sum. Therefore, in the circumstances, I have no objection to the recommendation that Cabinet support the sale of Hope Hall Farm, Hope, comprising 101 acres of agricultural land, house and associated buildings’.

Councillor Mullin, as Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets, supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet support the sale of Hope Hall Farm, Hope, comprising 101 acres of agricultural land, house and associated out buildings.

17. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and finished at 1.30pm.

Chair