

Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: All Members of the Council

10 April 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2024 at 1.00 PM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in The Lord Barry Jones Council Chamber, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire or on a virtual basis.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024.

4 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose: To receive the communications as circulated.

5 PETITIONS

Purpose: This is an opportunity for Members of Council to submit petitions on behalf of people in their ward. Once received, petitions are passed to the appropriate Chief Officer for action and response.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6 RECRUITMENT OF A TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (Pages 15 - 22)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: To appoint the favoured candidate to the Standards Committee

7 REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE (Pages 23 - 28)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: Due to a change in group membership we need to review the Political Balance and the allocation of seats on Committees.

ORDINARY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

8 ROLLING REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT (Pages 29 - 32)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: To approve the changes to the Code of Conduct for Councillors that have been recommended by the Standards Committee as part of the rolling review of the Constitution.

FOR INFORMATION

9 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Purpose: This item is to receive any Public Questions.

10 QUESTIONS

Purpose: To note the answers to any questions submitted in accordance with County Council Standing Order No. 9.4(A): none were received by the deadline

11 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Purpose: To consider any issues raised by Members arising from the Minutes of the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and other Committees, together with any questions raised under Section 4.20 of the Council's Constitution. Copies of the Minutes of the various meetings that have taken place since the last ordinary meeting of the Council which have been approved and published on the Authority's website, can be obtained, if required, via the Committee and Member Services.

12 NOTICE OF MOTION

Purpose: This item is to receive any Notices of Motion. none were received by the deadline.

13 DIVERSITY CALENDAR (Pages 33 - 34)

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

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report contains information relating to or which might tend to identify a living individual and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing the information .

14 COMMUNITIES FOR WORK PLUS PROGRAMME (Pages 35 - 72)

Report of Chief Executive, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development -

Purpose: To seek Council approval for the proposals for Communities for Work

Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL **20 FEBRUARY 2024**

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday, 20 February 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Gladys Healey (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Helen Brown, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan, Geoff Collett, Steve Copple, Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Chrissy Gee, David Healey, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Billy Mullin, Debbie Owen, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester, Jason Shallcross, Sam Swash, Linda Thew, Linda Thomas, Ant Turton, Roy Wakelam, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren

APOLOGIES: Bernie Attridge and Ray Hughes

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development), Corporate Manager (Capital Programme and Assets), Revenues and Procurement Manager, Strategic Finance Managers, Regulatory Services Manager, Highway Network Manager, Service Delivery Manager, Democratic Services team and Father Paul Wheeler for prayers

76. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

One public question had been received from Matt Brown who was not present at the meeting. The question and response were circulated as follows:

Question

“Can the Administration explain why it decided to close all schools on Thursday, 8th February when every other neighbouring Local Authority, with the same Amber weather warning that includes Wrexham, Conway, Denbighshire, Cheshire West and Shropshire left the decision to close a school with the Headteacher and Governing body of that school?”

Response

“On Tuesday 6th February, a Yellow weather warning for snow and ice in Flintshire was issued, starting at 06:00 hrs on Thursday 08th February and continuing until 06:00hrs on Friday 09th February. At that point schools were advised

that they would be expected to make their own decision regarding any school closure based on local conditions, in line with the adverse weather guidance.

However, when the weather warning was upgraded to Amber on Wednesday 7th February, outlining potentially more severe snow conditions in Flintshire from 08.00hrs to 15.00hrs on Thursday, this triggered a meeting of the Council's Emergency Management Response Team. The purpose of the meeting was: to consider the risk to the delivery of Council services for the following 24 hours in light of the yellow and amber weather warnings for snow and ice

- to agree any changes necessary to maintain essential service continuity and*
- to ensure there were effective arrangements in place to protect the public, particularly those who are vulnerable.*

*An Amber warning means that **essential only travel is advised, and only if safe to do so.** EMRT based the decision to close schools on the anticipated impacts under the Amber weather alert which included;*

- a good chance that some rural communities could be temporarily cut off*
- travel delays on roads are likely, stranding some vehicles and passengers*
- power cuts are possible and other services, such as mobile phone coverage, may be affected*
- some delays and cancellations to rail travel are likely*

There was a risk that the school transport network would be significantly disrupted, resulting in pupils not being able to safely travel to and from school, particularly as the Amber warning was due to come into effect at 8am when the road networks are at their busiest.

There was a particular risk for children with complex needs attending the County's Specialist schools, many of whom require escorts and whose health and wellbeing could be compromised if they were stuck in minibuses in adverse weather.

There was also a risk that as Mold was in the target area due to be adversely affected by heavy snow, this could impact on the delivery of a school meal service to those schools across the county whose meals are produced and delivered from the NEWydd Central Production Kitchen operating out of County Hall.

A further challenge for schools in adverse weather is that many staff travel considerable distances to their place of work, from within and beyond county borders. The potential reduction in the number of staff being present at their school in the event of adverse weather and travel conditions could have made it unsafe for schools to operate.

Because of the timing of the Amber Warning, a proactive response was taken rather than allowing a situation to develop that, based on the information would have most likely seen children stranded at bus stops or stranded in vehicles. Since the pandemic, schools have well developed IT platforms to delivery online learning. It was decided that it was more sensible to give parents time to make alternative childcare arrangements if needed and time for teachers to plan for online learning by

making the decision to recommend school closure in light of the detailed weather forecast rather than leave it until the Thursday morning and be faced with a chaotic situation.

Whilst we understand some parents and carers may have felt frustrated by the decision to close schools, others welcomed the proactive approach taken by the Council as it gave them sufficient time to plan suitable childcare arrangements and they welcomed the fact that the Council was actively considering the safety of their children. Headteachers across Flintshire have been unanimous in their support of the Council's decision as there is no more difficult situation for a Head to be anticipating significant snowfall and wondering whether they will be able to open their school safely, or not or even more challenging, open in the morning and then have to close during the day and get children home safely.

Each Local Authority will have undertaken its own risk assessment and we're not in a position to comment on what were the reasons behind the decisions made in other authorities.

Although, on the day, the snowfall was not as significant in many parts of the county as the forecast had predicted, the decision to close schools was taken in the best interests for the communities we serve with the information we had at the time."

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal interest on the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 (agenda item 11) due to closely associated people employed by the Council: Councillors Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Mel Buckley, David Coggins Cogan, Adele Davies-Cooke, Dennis Hutchinson, Christine Jones, Simon Jones, Roz Mansell, Hilary McGuill, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester and Linda Thomas.

On Council Fund Budget 2024/25 (agenda item 7), Councillor Hilary McGuill declared a personal and prejudicial as a Board Member of NEW Homes. Councillors Glyn Banks and Ted Palmer declared a personal interest on the same item.

78. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Sean Bibby and Teresa Carberry.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

79. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair's Communications covering events attended since the previous meeting were circulated prior to the meeting.

80. PETITIONS

None.

81. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - FINAL CLOSING STAGE

The Chief Executive and Corporate Finance Manager gave a detailed presentation based on the report submitted to Cabinet earlier in the day, which covered the following:

- Setting a legal and balanced budget
- The journey so far...
- Further changes to the additional budget requirement 2024/25
- Additional Budget Requirement 2024/25
- Budget Solutions
 - Aggregate External Finance (AEF)
 - Portfolio Cost Reductions
 - Schools - Cost Reductions
 - Other Cost Reductions
 - Council Tax
 - Final Proposed Solutions
 - Other Budget Option (submitted by the Independent Group)
- Council Tax 2024/25
- Schools and Social Care Budgets
- Open Risks in 2024/25
- Reserves
- Professional Opinions and Concluding Remarks
- Looking Forward
- Next Steps and Timelines

The presentation detailed changes since the position reported in January which had taken into account the financial impact of the Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement (LGPS). Following two Member briefings and additional cost reduction proposals being considered by Overview & Scrutiny committees, work had continued to review the overall position in conjunction with a recent announcement from Welsh Government (WG) on an expected consequential from UK Government. The outcome of that work was detailed in the Cabinet report with final proposed solutions to set out how the Council could achieve a legal and balanced budget for 2024/25. The proposed budget included an overall annual 8% increase on Council Tax for Council services and 1.1% for additional contributions to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the Regional Coroners Service. This equated to an overall uplift of 9.1% which provided overall additional net yield of £9.072m in 2024/25. Analysis of this proposal and an option submitted by the Independent Group - which required the utilisation of the additional WG AEF with an overall Council Tax increase of 9.0% - was explained in the presentation.

A number of significant open risks were highlighted for 2024/25 together with an update on reserves including a reminder of the importance of building and maintaining reserves to safeguard against open risks and for the medium term in view of the reduced settlements expected for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

The Chief Executive concluded the presentation by reflecting on the increased risks and challenges arising from the poor settlement by WG and the need for increased fiscal control in 2024/25 to respond to anticipated future reduced financial settlements, with greater emphasis on service transformation and cost reduction.

As Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Roberts thanked everyone for their input on the challenging budget situation and echoed officers' concerns about the future financial position of local government. Following the Cabinet meeting and discussions with the Independent Group earlier in the day, he moved the alternative budget set out in paragraph 1.25 of the report which included an annual overall 9.0% increase in Council Tax.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Richard Jones who thanked officers, particularly those in the Finance team, for working with the Independent Group on the alternative budget. He recognised the administration for supporting the proposal and referred to the impact of the funding formula which was in urgent need of review by WG.

Councillor Paul Johnson acknowledged the difficult decisions needed to set a legal and balanced budget. He spoke about the impact of inflationary pressures, increased service demand and poor settlements and the importance of strengthening reserves to safeguard against risks.

The efforts of both political groups in reaching agreement on such a challenging situation were recognised by Councillor David Healey who called for all Members to work together.

In response to questions from Councillor David Coggins Cogan, the Corporate Finance Manager explained that the provisional AEF uplift had been lower than anticipated due to revised late data sets prior to the calculation of the formula. He also provided information on expectations for the Council's allocation from the WG consequential which had been included in funding estimates, advising that any change would be accommodated from reserves.

Reference was made by Councillor Mike Peers to the Council again being amongst the lowest funded authorities per capita in Wales resulting in the financial burden placed on residents. He paid tribute to Councillors Richard Jones and Ian Roberts for agreeing on what he described as a collaborative budget.

Comments were made by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst about the lack of leadership on the budget and the delay in transformational change by the administration. He went on to speak in support of the protection of small rural schools.

Councillor Carol Ellis spoke about the effect of the low settlement from WG on the Council and residents. She also expressed disappointment at the poor attendance by Members of the Senedd at a recent meeting which had taken place.

Councillor Bill Crease spoke about the increasing difficulties for the Council in light of the below average settlement from WG.

Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the erosion of funding from the Revenue Support Grant over the years and the unfairness of the funding formula which was not sustainable.

Councillor Sam Swash expressed disappointment that some of his suggestions raised during the process had not been taken. He questioned why a number of departmental underspends had not been addressed as part of the budget solutions and spoke against specific actions which he felt did not benefit Flintshire's communities or residents.

Councillor Glyn Banks also commented on the unfairness of the funding formula and the inevitable impact on Council Tax.

In exercising his right of reply, Councillor Roberts acknowledged the impact on schools and residents and gave assurance that robust challenges had been made at ministerial level on the financial situation.

A recorded vote requested by Councillor Andy Hughes was not supported by the requisite number of Members.

Having already been moved and seconded, the Cabinet recommendations as follows were put to the vote and carried, based on the alternative budget option set out in paragraph 1.25:

1. That Cabinet notes and approves the revised additional budget requirement for 2024/25;
2. That Cabinet approves the final proposals for the cost reductions that will contribute to the budget;
3. That Cabinet recommends to Council a legal and balanced budget based on the calculations and two options set out within the report;
4. That Cabinet notes the significant open risks which remain to be managed in the 2024/25 financial year;
5. That Cabinet recommends an overall annual increase in Council Tax for 2024/25 based on the two options provided;
6. That Cabinet invites Council to pass the formal Council Tax resolution now that we have had notification of the precepts of the Police and Crime Commissioner and all Town and Community Councils within Flintshire; and
7. That Cabinet notes the medium-term forecast as a basis for the next revision of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Councillor Adele Davies-Cooke requested that her vote against be recorded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the recommendations of Cabinet for balancing the budget for 2024/25 be approved, based on the alternative option set out in paragraph 1.25 of the report; and
- (b) That the level of Council Tax for 2024/25 as recommended by Cabinet be approved, based on the alternative option for an overall annual increase of 9.0%.

82. COUNCIL TAX SETTING FOR 2024/25

A report was received to formally set the Council Tax charges and associated statutory resolutions for 2024/25 as part of the wider budget strategy on the basis of the decision taken on the previous item. The overall level of Council Tax comprised three separate precepts set by (i) the County Council, (ii) the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales and (iii) all Town/Community Councils, which made up the total sum charged against each property. The report indicated the precepts to be raised by the Council based on an increase of either 9.0% or 9.1% as detailed in the previous report.

The recommendations, based on the option for a 9.0% uplift, were moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Jones and Helen Brown.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that an amendment subsequently moved by Councillor David Coggins Cogan on changing the premium for long-term empty homes was invalid due to the decision reached on the previous agenda item. It was further advised by the Revenues and Procurement Manager that such a decision at this stage would raise a number of significant risks for the Council and that an alternative premium scheme would need to be introduced from April 2025 to allow for the necessary consultation, should Members wish to progress.

Councillor Helen Brown spoke in support of the request which would bring long-term empty properties back into use.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the amendment should have been moved as part of Council Tax considerations within the Budget 2024/25 and that Members may wish to consider the suggestion made by the Revenues and Procurement Manager to follow the legal process as a way forward.

In response to further comments, the Corporate Finance Manager endorsed the advice given by officers and explained the implications of changing the Council Tax base at this stage, having already approved the budget.

Councillor Coggins Cogan subsequently withdrew his amendment.

Following Councillors Jones and Brown withdrawing their motion, Councillor Johnson moved the recommendations in the report based on an overall annual

increase of 9.0% with an addition that Cabinet instigate a review of the Council Tax premium scheme for long-term empty properties and second homes over the next 12 months. He was seconded by Councillor Chris Bithell.

Having been moved and seconded, this was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2024/25 Council Tax be set based on a 9.0% uplift in the County Council charges, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) That the continuation of the policy of not providing a discount in the level of 2024/25 Council Tax charges for second homes and long-term empty homes be endorsed. Also, where exceptions do not apply, to charge the Council Tax Premium rate of 75% above the standard rate of Council Tax for designated long-term empty dwellings and 100% for second homes from 1st April 2024;
- (c) That approval be given for designated officers to issue legal proceedings and appear on behalf of the Council in the Magistrates' Court for unpaid taxes; and
- (d) That Cabinet reviews the Council Tax premium scheme for long-term empty properties and second homes over the next 12 months.

At this point, the Chair called for a brief adjournment prior to the remaining items.

83. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 for approval.

No significant changes had been made to the Strategy since the previous year and no specific issues had been raised following consideration by the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Johnson and Glyn Banks.

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.

84. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION - 2024/25 POLICY

Members received a report to approve the annual policy for the Minimum Revenue Provision for the prudent repayment of debt.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following be approved for Council Fund (CF):-
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in financial year 2024/25 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing fixed as at 31st March 2017. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over 49 years.
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2024/25 for all capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing from 1st April 2016 onwards. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2024/25 for all capital expenditure funded from unsupported (prudential) borrowing or credit arrangements, including MIM. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.
- (b) That the following be approved for Housing Revenue Account (HRA):-
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2024/25 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure funded from debt fixed as at 31st March 2021. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over 50 years.
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2024/25 for all capital expenditure funded from debt from 1st April 2021 onwards. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.
- (c) That MRP on loans from the Council to NEW Homes to build affordable homes through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) (which qualify as capital expenditure in accounting terms) be approved as follows:-
- No MRP is made during the construction period (of short duration) as the asset has not been brought into use and no benefit is being derived from its use.
 - Once the assets are brought into use, capital (loan) repayments will be made by NEW Homes. The Council's MRP will be equal to the repayments made by NEW Homes. The repayments made by NEW Homes will be classed, in accounting terms, as capital receipts, which can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt. The capital repayment / capital receipt will be set aside to repay debt and is the Council's MRP policy for repaying the loan.

85. PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2024/25

The Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development) presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 to enable publication within the statutory deadline. This was the twelfth annual statement published by the Council and reflected current agreements and arrangements regarding pay, incorporating updates as set out in the report. Prior to publication, the introduction of the Equal Pay Audit would be amended to reflect that this was the eight pay audit.

Councillors Chris Bithell and Dennis Hutchinson welcomed actions to further reduce the overall gender pay gap where work of equal value was being done.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development) to update the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 during the year to reflect any changes required by legislation, Government policy or national negotiations so that it remains accurate and current.

86. QUESTIONS

None received.

87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

None received.

88. NOTICE OF MOTION

None received.

89. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were two members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

(The meeting started at 1pm and ended at 4pm)

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Chair



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 16 April 2024
Report Subject	Recruitment of a Town and Community Council Representative to the Standards Committee
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Standards Committee needs to include one member who represents the Town and Community Councils within Flintshire. Following the elections we made an appointment, but we now need to select a new representative because the previous representative had to step down due to ill health.

All Town and Community Councils were asked whether they wished to nominate candidates. 5 were nominated. Each then prepared a pen portrait, which was sent to all Town and Community Councils.

Councils were asked to select their 1st and 2nd preference candidates. The candidate with the most 1st preference votes would be chosen. The 2nd preference votes were to be used to break any tie where 2 or more candidates received an equal number of 1st preference votes.

Cllr Ros Griffiths from Saltney Town Council and Broughton and Bretton Community Council had a clear majority of both 1st and 2nd preference votes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That all the candidates be thanked for their interest.
2	That Cllr Ros Griffiths be appointed as the Town and Community Council representative until 6 th May 2027.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE RECRUITMENT OF A TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE		
1.01	The Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require the County Council to appoint a representative of the Town and Community Councillors in its area. The representative cannot be “dual hatted” i.e. they cannot also be a County Councillor.		
1.02	The previous Town and Community Council representative from Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor Community Council had to step down due to ill health.		
1.03	The process for appointing such a representative is not specified in the legislation. In order to give the Town and Community Councils control over who would represent them, we use a process whereby they voted for the own representative (rather than, for example, the County Council holding interviews). A simple 2 preference system has been adopted so that, in the event of one or more candidates having an equal number of votes, there would be a second preference vote to help break the tie.		
1.04	All Town and Community Councils were asked if they wished to nominate a candidate by the 2 nd February 2024. 5 candidates were nominated. Those 5 candidates were asked to prepare a pen portrait of no more than 250 words so that the Town and Community Councils could choose between them. The deadline for receipt of portraits was also the 2 nd February.		
1.05	The pen portraits were circulated on 5 th February and Councils were asked to indicate their first and second preference by the 1st March. 20 Councils did so by the deadline, one asked for an extension to the 7 th March which was granted. The results are as set out in the table below. Cllr Ros Griffiths is the clear winner on first preference votes, and the result would be the same based on second preference votes as well.		
	Votes		
	Name	1st	2nd
	Cllr Bill Cooper	3	4
	Cllr Russell Davies	5	5
	Cllr David Ellis	2	2
	Cllr Ros Griffiths	9	6
	Cllr Patrick Heesom	2	1
	Note that not all councils indicated their second preference vote.		

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The process adopted is not resource intensive. The costs are therefore minimal and easily absorbed.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	One Voice Wales must be consulted before the appointment can be made. I have outlined both the process and the result. One Voice Wales commented – “This seems to be a very fair way to proceed and produces a defensible outcome.”

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The process gives a high level of influence to the Town and Community Councils which should help them feel engaged by the process. The recruitment process does not ask for any specific qualifications or any relevant experience. However, as the role is representative, the main criterion for appointment can be said to be the status of being a Town or Community Councillor. All further training will be provided in any event as part of the development programme for Committee members thereby addressing any current lack of knowledge or experience.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Pen Portraits.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Insert any hyperlinks to supporting documents if necessary.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer (Governance) Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	One Voice Wales – the membership/representative body for Town and Community Councils in Wales. It provides advice and training as well as acting as spokes body for the sector.

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PEN PORTRAIT – CLLR BILL COOPER

My name is William David Cooper and I am a Community Councillor serving Hawarden & Ewloe.

I was elected as a Community Councillor in 2021 and within that time I have been asked to be Chair of Community and Environment. And Joint maintenance committee.

I'm also part of a number of steering committees and have been attending training courses with one voice Wales as well gaining a First Aider Qualification.

Currently, I am a Managing Director of 2 companies.

HMO – working alongside the County Council to home vulnerable young adults.

I have an electrical business which I have been running since 2020 and a rental business from 2001.

My background has always been running my own businesses but, alongside this, dealing with people has fuelled my passion to act on behalf of the community I have lived in for 33 years.

I feel that my knowledge and ongoing experience with running 2 successful companies and my passion for my local community are the experiences which would be ideally suited for the candidate for the Standards Committee.

I have always had a “can do” attitude and meet every challenge with a successful outcome.

My experience with interacting with customers has meant I can deal with people at all levels and environments.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for this position and I hope my application meets with your approval.

Cllr Bill Cooper

PEN PORTRAIT – CLLR RUSSELL DAVIES

Application to be elected onto the External Standards Committee.

With a steadfast commitment to Flintshire spanning over three decades, I bring a wealth of experience and an unwavering dedication to the community. For the past 20 years, I have served as a teacher and Head of Department in the local Comprehensive school, witnessing firsthand the evolving needs and dynamics of our town. My role as a teacher has not only allowed me to contribute to the academic development of generations but has also deepened my understanding of the challenges and aspirations of the residents of Flint.

As a devoted family person, raising two children alongside my wife in this community, I am personally invested in its well-being and growth. Currently serving as a Town Councillor in Flint Town Council for the second consecutive year, I have actively participated in local governance, gaining insights into the intricacies of decision-making and community representation.

My multifaceted engagement in Flint positions me uniquely to contribute meaningfully to the External Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council. My experiences as a teacher, town councillor, and long-term resident have cultivated an understanding of our community's fabric. I am dedicated to upholding ethical standards, fostering transparency, and ensuring accountability within our local governance. If elected, I am committed to using my knowledge and passion to strengthen the foundations of governance in Flintshire, making a positive impact on the lives of its residents.

Cllr Russell Davies

PEN PORTRAIT – CLLR DAVID ELLIS

Name- David Ellis

Age-66 years Old

I am a Buckley Town Councillor and I was elected in 2009 and have held many senior positions within the Council.

Present position on Council- Chair of Highways and Leisure.

Mayor 2018-19 raising £17,000 for Charity.

Member of the Staffing Committee that deals with all staffing issues.

Health and Safety Advisor to Hawkesbury Community Centre, where I was Chairman for 10 years.

Board member of Buckley Town Football Club.

Defibrillator Champion in Buckley successfully in installing these lifesaving pieces of equipment working with community groups and Tomos Hughes of the Welsh Ambulance Service.

Education

Nebosh Genral Certificate in Health and Safety

Degree in Health, Safety and Occupational Health.

Chartered Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

Present Employment

I work for Sarens UK, a Lifting Specialist on Essar Oil Refinery Ellesmere Port and have been based on this site since 1999. My role has over the years consisted from Driving Cranes, Appointed Person for planning Crane lifts, Crane Safety Inspector, also Auditor and Accident Investigation.

I also am the Safety Focal Point for the Company and I have been a Senior Union Shop Steward and Safety Representative.

I have dealt with many difficult situations and sensitive issues on the site. One of my Specialist skills is mediation.

I am well organised person with a clear and positive approach to problem solving.

I have high standards and a good understanding of codes of conduct and I believe that I have the experience and expertise that this role requires to ensure procedures and protocols are followed by Councillors.

Regards

Councillor David Ellis CMIOSH

PEN PORTRAIT – CLLR ROS GRIFFITHS

Hello, my name is Rosalyn Griffiths , I am a Community Councillor serving Saltney Town Council and Broughton and Bretton Community Council.

Previous experience as an Alyn and Deeside District Councillor, before becoming a Flintshire County Councillor in 1997 - 2008. I have been a Community Councillor for nearly 37 years on Broughton and 2 years at Saltney.

I am married with two grown up children and have lived in Broughton since 1971.

In the past I was very involved with Pre-School playgroup, Chairman of Broughton, then moving on to become Chairman of East Clwyd Pre-School Playgroup Association, before returning to paid employment when my youngest child started school.

My employment was in the Post Office, working in Chester, Tarporley and lastly in Saughall.

During this time I was also Clerk and then Chairman of Broughton Primary School for 25/26 years. I also served as a Governor at St David's High School in Saltney. Currently I am Secretary to our Twinning Association with our twin town in the South of France, we have been twinned for 33 years, although we haven't as yet celebrated our 30th Anniversary due to COVID and other issues.

I feel that my with my previous and current experiences I would be a good candidate for the Standards Committee. I have down to earth common sense values that I feel are required , dealing with issues that may arise.

My service on Community Council includes Chairing the Finance Committee and having been Chairman of Council on 4 occasions, representing residents of our Community.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for this position.

Cllr Ros Griffiths

PEN PORTRAIT – CLLR PATRICK HEESOM

Cllr Heesom, with then a long residency in North Wales, vacated in the 1980s his business interests in the London area and resettled in the Flintshire area.

He then confirmed his interests in local government and representative politics and was elected as a Clwyd County Councillor for the then extensive ward areas of Gronant, Trelawnyd, and Mostyn, and then subsequently as part of the then revised Welsh authority areas, the Mostyn Ward.

His commitment was to community welfare and serving community interests across the full range of public services.

Cllr Heesom was re-elected over several years and fought assiduously for the local ward area of Mostyn and its residents. Cllr Heesom is committed to local community authority.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 16 April 2024
Report Subject	Review of Political Balance
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is required under the Political Balance Rules contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended to review the Council's political balance calculations following a number of changes to political group membership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That seats on committees be allocated in accordance with political balance as shown in appendix A.
2	That any changes to nominees be notified to the Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	CALCULATION OF POLITICAL BALANCE
1.01	The Council is required, as soon as practicable, after a change in the composition of political groups to recalculate political balance in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Since the last calculation there has been a by election and a number of councillors have moved from their political group.
1.02	The basis of the statutory requirement is that Committee seats should be allocated to political groups (so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups have to the total membership of the County Council. The allocation of seats on Committees to the political groups must recognise that:- (i) There must be no Committees whereby only one group has all the seats;

	<p>(ii) Where there is a majority group it is entitled to a majority upon every Committee. (This does not apply where the largest group does not have an overall majority);</p> <p>(iii) The total number of seats allocated to each political group should be (in so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups' strengths upon the full Council;</p> <p>(iv) Each Committee should (so far as is practicable) have the same proportional division between political groups as is represented upon the full Council.</p> <p>Thus if a group holds 25% of the total number of Councillors it should have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 25% of the overall number of seats on the Council; and 2) 25% seats on each Committee. <p>These rules are applied in hierarchical order so it is more important to allocate the correct number of seats overall than it is to allocate the correct number of seats on a particular committee.</p> <p>NB Under the legislation these rules do not apply to either the Cabinet or the Standards Committee.</p>
1.03	<p>In addition, at Flintshire we have 2 non-statutory conventions that we seek to apply when allocating seats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) we seek to allocate seats to those members who wish to serve on a specific committee. We therefore try to allocate seats, in so far as that is possible, to groups (or individual councillors) based on their expressed wishes; and 2) Whilst we allocate seats to all the groups on each of the "personnel" committees on a politically balanced basis, as these committees meet extremely rarely, we don't take those seats into account when assessing the overall allocation of seats on the principal committees.
1.04	<p>The political balance calculation is attached as Appendix A. This is one possible lawful allocation seats and other possible lawful allocations may exist.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Group leaders and deputies were consulted on the political balance calculation by email.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Political Balance table April 2024.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.

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Political Balance April 2024

	Labour			Independent			Eagle			Liberal Democrat			Conservative			Non Aligned (Cllr Ellis)			Non Aligned (Cllr Attridge)			Total Council	Cross check			
No.of councillors	32			25			3			4			1			1			1			67	67			
% of councillors	47.76%			37.31%			4.48%			5.97%			1.49%			1.49%			1.49%			Total				
Notional entitlement	64.48			50.37			6.04			8.06			2.01			2.01			2.01			Seats				
Allocation of seats	65			50			6			8			2			2			2			135.00	135.00			
Community, Housing & Assets OSC	6	5.73	0.27	5	4.48	0.52	1	0.54	0.46	0	0.72	-0.72	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Corporate Resources OSC	6	5.73	0.27	5	4.48	0.52	1	0.54	0.46	0	0.72	-0.72	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Education, Youth & Culture OSC	6	5.73	0.27	4	4.48	-0.48	1	0.54	0.46	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Environment & Econor	6	5.73	0.27	4	4.48	-0.48	1	0.54	0.46	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Social & Healthcare OSC	6	5.73	0.27	4	4.48	-0.48	0	0.54	-0.54	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.18	-0.18	1	0.18	0.82	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Planning	8	8.12	-0.12	5	6.34	-1.34	0	0.76	-0.76	1	1.01	-0.01	1	0.25	0.75	1	0.25	0.75	1	0.25	0.75	1	0.25	0.75	17	17.00
Licensing	6	5.73	0.27	4	4.48	-0.48	1	0.54	0.46	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Governance & Audit	2	2.87	-0.87	2	2.24	-0.24	0	0.27	-0.27	1	0.36	0.64	0	0.09	-0.09	0	0.09	-0.09	1	0.09	0.91	1	0.09	0.91	6	6.00
Climate Change	5	5.73	-0.73	6	4.48	1.52	0	0.54	-0.54	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	12	12.00
Constitution and Democratic	8	7.64	0.36	6	5.97	0.03	1	0.72	0.28	1	0.96	0.04	0	0.24	-0.24	0	0.24	-0.24	0	0.24	-0.24	0	0.24	-0.24	16	16.00
Pensions	3	2.39	0.61	2	1.87	0.13	0	0.22	-0.22	0	0.30	-0.30	0	0.07	-0.07	0	0.07	-0.07	0	0.07	-0.07	0	0.07	-0.07	5	5.00
Joint Pensions	1	0.48	0.52	0	0.37	-0.37	0	0.04	-0.04	0	0.06	-0.06	0	0.01	-0.01	0	0.01	-0.01	0	0.01	-0.01	0	0.01	-0.01	1	1.00
Fire Authority	2	2.87	-0.87	3	2.24	0.76	0	0.27	-0.27	0	0.36	-0.36	1	0.09	0.91	0	0.09	-0.09	0	0.09	-0.09	0	0.09	-0.09	6	6.00
Total to Group	65	64.48		50	50.37		6	6.04		8	8.06		2	2.01		2	2.01		2	2.01		2	2.01		135	135
Grievance	6	6.21	-0.21	4	4.85	-0.85	1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.78	-0.22	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	13	13.00
Grievance Appeals	6	6.21	-0.21	4	4.85	-0.85	1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.78	-0.22	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	13	13.00
Invest + Disc	6	6.21	-0.21	4	4.85	-0.85	1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.78	-0.22	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.19	-0.19	13	13.00

If the allocations come to a total that is too high/low then the numbers along the bottom/on the right change colour

TABLE 2

	Labour			Independent			Eagle			Liberal Democrats			Conservative			Non-Aligned			Non-Aligned		
Scrutiny chairs																					
Notional	2.39			1.87			0.22			0.30			0.07			0.07			0.07		
Actual	2 or 3			1 or 2			0			0-1			0			0			0		

Groups with a seat on cabinet round down, and groups without round up, their entitlement to OSC chairs. In this scenario if Labour are in the cabinet then they have 2 chairs and the Independent group 2. If the Independents are in the Cabinet, then Labour would get 3 chairs in this scenario because their entitlement is higher than any other group, and the Independent Group would get 1.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 16 th April
Report Subject	Rolling Review of the Members Code of Conduct
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council must adopt a Code of Conduct that is based on the prescribed national model. It can amend the code provided the provisions are no less onerous than the model.

The Standards Committee keeps all the codes and protocols in the Constitution under rolling review to ensure they are up to date and pertinent. As the code is mandatory, clearly the key question is whether it adequately covers behaviours that would be inconsistent with the Nolan principles/unacceptable.

Since the last time the Committee reviewed the code in November 2022 agreement has been reached across all authorities in Wales to adopt a common value, £25, for the registration of gifts and hospitality. The Standards Committee recommends that the Council adopts this value as well. The Constitution and Democratic Services Committee, unusually, disagreed with the recommendation and thought the value should remain at £10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council decides whether the value above which gifts and hospitality etc must be registered should be increased from £10 to £25.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVIEW OF THE CODE
1.01	Under section 51 Local Government Act 2000 the Council must adopt a Code of Conduct for Councillors (“the Code”) based on a national model. All Members must sign to say that they will follow the Code. The Council’s current code is based on the national model contained within The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008 (as amended).
1.02	The Standards Committee keeps all the codes and protocols within the Constitution under review to ensure that they remain pertinent and up to date. Council may recall that the Penn review recommended changes to the code, some of which have already been adopted on a voluntary basis.
1.03	<p>One such recommendation was</p> <p><i>“4.2.4 Paragraph 17 of the Model Code requires members, within 28 days of receiving any gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage above a value specified in a resolution of their authority, provide written notification to the authority’s monitoring officer... of the existence and nature of that gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage. The Code does not specify any threshold for such declarations but a number of authorities have specified a threshold beyond which there must be a declaration. This ranges from £21 to £100 and there is agreement that the threshold should be specified in the Code to ensure consistency across Wales.”</i></p> <p>At Flintshire the value was set in paragraph 18 of the code at £10 when the code was adopted. It has remained at that value since.</p>
1.04	The Standards Committee agreed that it would ask monitoring officers to seek consensus across Wales on the level above which gifts and hospitality must be registered. As at March 2023 most authorities (16 out of 29) in Wales already required registration for gifts/hospitality of £25 or more. The National Forum therefore reached a consensus that this value should be used across Wales, in order to achieve the recommended consistency. Each council however needs to individually resolve to make this change because the Forum has no decision-making authority on behalf of its members.
1.05	At its meeting on 6 November, the Standards Committee agreed to recommend the £25 value to Council. When the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee considered the issue, it did not agree. It felt that the value of £10 was more open and that (some) public opinion did not support a change to £25.
1.06	Members may also recall that Welsh Government consulted on whether to implement the recommendations in the Penn Review. It concluded that it would leave this matter to individual councils, but recommends regular review by monitoring officers and the National Forum.

1.07	It is unusual, though, of course, perfectly legitimate, for the two committees to take a totally different view on issues pertaining to the code. Ordinarily, any differences are minor matters of emphasis that can be reflected in amendments to drafting, but on this occasion the views are mutually exclusive. Council will therefore need to choose which to prefer.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The proposed change would have no impact on resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	All chairs of the Standards Committees across Wales.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The value for declaring gifts/hospitality has been £10 since the code was adopted in 2001. Had that sum kept pace with inflation (measured by the Consumer Prices Index) over that time it would now be £17.94. If it were to adopt £25 as the value, Council would be slightly easing the duty on councillors but by a small amount that might be deemed insignificant compared the benefit to be derived by the application of consistent requirements/expectations across the whole of Wales.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>The Review of the Ethical Framework by Richard Penn</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer (Governance) Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	National Forum – a biannual meeting of all the chairs of Standards Committees across Wales. Its purpose is to share good practice and provide an opportunity to consider issues relevant to the ethical framework. Its creation was a recommendation of the Penn Review based on existing practice in North Wales.

<p>Penn Review - a review commissioned by Welsh Government and conducted by Richard Penn looking into the Code of Conduct, how it is enforced, how training is undertaken and all other mechanisms to ensure high standards of ethical behaviour.</p>
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Diversity Calendar - April 2024 to December 2024

Date	Who	What
April 2024		
9 th April	End of Ramadan	
May 2024		
6 th – 12 th May	Deaf Awareness Week	
13 th – 19 th May	Mental Health Awareness week	
13 th – 19 th May	Dementia Action Week	
17 th May	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHoBIT) Day	
June 2024		
1 st – 30 th June	Gypsy and Traveler History month	Dave Jolly
1 st – 30 th June	Pride Month	Dave Jolly
10 th – 16 th June	Carer's Week	Naomi Harper
12 th – 18 th June	Men's Health Week	
17 th – 23 rd June	Refugee Week	Dave Jolly
20 th June	World Refugee Day	Dave Jolly
22 nd June	Windrush Day	
July 2024		
14 th July	International Non-binary people's day	
September 2024		
21 st September	World's Alzheimer's Day	
23 rd September	Bi-visibility Day	

Diversity Calendar - April 2024 to December 2024

Date	Who	What
October		
1 st – 31 st October	Black History Month	
1 st October	International Day of Older Persons	
8 th October	World Dyslexia Awareness Day	
10 th October	World Mental Health Day	
14 th – 20 th October	National Braille Week	
18 th October	World Menopause Day	
26 th October – 2 nd November	Financial Capability Week	
November 2024		
13 th – 17 th November	Anti-Bullying Week	
19 th November	International Men's Day	
20 th November	Transgender Day of Remembrance	
25 th November	White Ribbon Day	
December 2024		
1 st December	World AIDS Day	
3 rd December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	
9 th December	Genocide Prevention Day	
10 th December	Human Rights Day	

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