

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
11 SEPTEMBER, 2012

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday 11 September, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor A. Minshull (Chair)

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, G. Banks, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, A. Bragg, H. Brown, C.S. Carver, P.J. Curtis, R. Davies, A. Davies-Cooke, R. Dolphin, I. Dunbar, B. Dunn, D. Evans, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, R.J.T. Guest, A.M. Halford, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, J. Johnson, R. Johnson, C.M. Jones, R.K. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, P. Lightfoot, B. Lloyd, R. Lloyd, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, M.J. Peers, M.A. Reece, I.B. Roberts, L.A. Sharps, A.P. Shotton, P. Shotton, I. Smith, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, S. Williams, D.E. Wisinger and M.G. Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, D.L. Cox, A.G. Diskin, G.D. Diskin, C.J. Dolphin, C.A. Ellis, G. Hardcastle, M. Lowe, N. Phillips, H.G. Roberts, D.T. Williams and A. Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager, Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair welcomed Councillor E.F. Evans to the meeting, who had been absent due to ill health.

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that no questions had been received.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal interest in agenda item number 10: Consultation on Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft Annual Report:-

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, G. Banks, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, A. Bragg, H. Brown, C.S. Carver, P.J. Curtis, R. Davies, A. Davies-Cooke, R. Dolphin, I. Dunbar, B. Dunn, D. Evans, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, R.J.T. Guest, A.M. Halford, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, J. Johnson, R. Johnson, C.M. Jones, R.K. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, P. Lightfoot, B. Lloyd, R. Lloyd, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, A. Minshull,

W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, M.J. Peers, M.A. Reece, I.B. Roberts, L.A. Sharps, A.P. Shotton, P. Shotton, I. Smith, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, S. Williams, D.E. Wisinger and M.G. Wright

47. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held on 17 July, 2012 had been circulated with the agenda.

Accuracy

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services commented that the word 'Modernisation' had been spelt incorrectly on page 9 of the minutes.

Matters arising

Councillor A. Halford commented on page 7 of the minutes and asked what progress was being made by the Cabinet to address the concerns around the use of temporary classrooms. Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council said that a workshop for all Members would be held to consider the Capital Programme prior to a draft report being submitted to Cabinet in December, 2012.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment listed above, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair explained that details of her communications would be made available in the Members room.

She congratulated Jade Jones for her achievement of winning a Gold Medal at the 2012 Olympics and Bev Jones for her achievement of winning a Bronze Medal at the 2012 Paralympics. She had attended a civic reception at Flint for Jade Jones on 25 August, 2012 and thanked Flint Town Council and Flintshire County Council for organising such a wonderful event.

Councillor I.B. Roberts also commented on the event at Flint and thanked the Chief Executive, Gill Watkins, Barbara Milne, Mark Edwards, John Williams, the Streetscene Team and Flintshire Catering Team for the work they had undertaken during the event. He also thanked the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council for their commitment to re-naming Flint Pavilion in honour of Jade Jones.

The Chief Executive confirmed that Jade Jones, Bev Jones and her fellow Paralympic teammates from Flintshire would be invited to a civic function at County Hall during September/October 2012.

49. PETITIONS

Councillor R.C. Bithell submitted a petition to request the removal of the traffic island/refuge on the A5119 at the junction to Bryn Awelon, Mold.

50. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of motion had been received from Councillors: C.A. Ellis, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, G. Hardcastle, and L.A. Sharps:-

In view of the:-

- a) Proposals from Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board currently out for consultation on health care in North Wales.
- b) The impact on Flintshire residents of those proposals and in particular the proposed changes to arrangements at Glan Clwyd, Mold and Flint Hospitals, together with the repatriation of services into Wales from Countess of Chester and other hospitals in England.
- c) The increasing concerns about the proposals from Flintshire residents.

The signatories to this Notice of Motion encourage all Members to attend the special meeting of the Social & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee at 11.00 am on the 19 September 2012 when it will be considering the consultation proposals.

Prior to discussion of the notice of motion, the Chief Executive clarified that the Social & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting would be held at 10.00 a.m. on the 19 September, 2012.

In speaking to the Motion, Councillor L.A. Sharps raised a number of concerns around the proposals from Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board in particular the proposed changes to arrangements at Mold and Flint Hospitals and the repatriation of services into Wales from England and the impact the changes would have on Flintshire residents. He thanked the Chief Executive for arranging the special meeting of the Social and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and encouraged all Members to attend but raised concern that Members had been asked to give advance notice of questions they wanted to raise during the special meeting.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council spoke in support of the Motion and provided details of the actions the Council had taken since the publication of the proposed changes. Together with the Chief Executive, he had attended a meeting with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board officers to raise concerns around the consultation process which restricted Flintshire residents from attending public meetings. He said that this would not be conducive to a positive outcome.

A number of Members outlined their concerns on the public consultation process and proposed changes at Mold and Flint Hospitals. Councillor I.B. Roberts asked if land had been allocated for a proposed primary health centre in Flint as part of the Flint Town redevelopment.

The Chief Executive explained that there currently had been no specific allocation of land. During the early stages of the creation of primary health centres in Connah's Quay, Mold and Buckley, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board had been invited to a discussion around the creation of a future primary health care facility in Flint. There was the opportunity to develop this further and identify possible sites not only in the ownership of the Council.

Councillor Roberts raised concerns around the particular areas of concern outlined in a letter to Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board which he said did not mention why the Board were proposing to move the health facility in Flint. He asked that this area of concern be reworded prior to the special Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Chief Executive explained that a letter had been sent to the Board outlining the particular areas of concern. The Board had also been instructed to give a detailed presentation at the special Social and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. He commented that additional questions, not submitted prior to the special meeting, would be addressed by representatives of the Board.

RESOLVED:

That all Members be encouraged to attend the special meeting of the Social & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 19 September 2012 when it will be considering the consultation proposals.

51. QUESTIONS

The following question had been received from Councillor N. Steele-Mortimer:-

'What Plans does the Council have for dealing with the infestation of Ragwort along the A55 and the County road network generally? I note that it has even spread to the grounds of County Hall itself'.

A response to the question had been provided by Councillor J.B. Attridge a copy of which had been circulated to all Members at the start of the meeting.

Councillor Steele-Mortimer was given the opportunity to ask a supplementary question and he asked Councillor Attridge if he would give a commitment to dealing pro-actively with the infestation of Ragwort in the future. Councillor Attridge explained that the process for dealing with the infestation of Ragwort had not changed in the last four years and explained the steps he was personally willing to take.

52. PRIDE OF FLINTSHIRE AWARDS

The Chief Executive welcomed Cheryl Ozbilen, Independent Reviewing Officer to the meeting. She gave a detailed presentation on the Safeguarding Unit and Corporate Parenting which covered the following areas:-

- Working in partnership with multi-agency staff and Managers
- Involving Flintshire Young People
- Pride of Flintshire Awards 2012
- 'Access to Action'

Members thanked the Independent Reviewing Officer for the presentation. Councillor H.G. McGuill asked all Members to donate money towards the Pride of Flintshire Awards which would be held in October 2012. Councillor R.C. Bithell outlined the important role Members held as Corporate Parents and commented on the Pride of Flintshire Awards which celebrated the achievement of looked after children.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

53. CONSULTATION ON INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Democracy and Governance Manager introduced a report to enable the Council to determine its response to consultation by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) on its draft annual report. Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a proposed draft response to the consultation which included the following points:-

- concern that despite proposals requiring payment of so called senior salaries to certain posts there was no proposed increase in the number of Members eligible;
- advocating a return to annual payments for co-optees; and
- seeking to retain the discretion to pay less than 45p a mile travel allowance.

Councillor W. Mullin thanked the Democracy and Governance Manager for preparing the draft response on behalf of Members and proposed that the County Council approve the draft response to the consultation and support the need for meeting with the IRPW. Councillor A.P. Shotton seconded the proposal and explained that a meeting would be requested with the IRPW to explain in more detail specific Flintshire circumstances, such as, the Panel's previous decision to grant Flintshire County Council approval to pay a special responsibility allowance to the Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund, yet this had not been taken into account in capping the number of Members that could receive such payments.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft response to the consultation, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (b) That the Council request a meeting with the IRPW.

54. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES COUNCIL SIZE POLICY CONSULTATION PAPER

The Chief Executive reported that during its meeting held on 17 July, 2012, County Council agreed to provide its response to the Consultation Paper. The Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales had circulated a generic response to all Local Authorities to advise on the current situation concerning the Council size policy consultation paper. It was the intention of the Commission to consider the options arising from discussions with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and decide on further steps to take the matter forward. Copies of the Council response and Commission response were attached to the agenda for Member's information.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

55. APPOINTMENT OF TOWN & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable the County Council to select a representative from the Town and Community Councils to serve on the Standards Committee and to amend the process for appointing such representatives to enable future interviews to be carried out by the Chair of the Council, the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer. A copy of the revised procedure was attached at Appendix 2 of the report. Following a letter being sent to Town and Community Councils seeking nominations, 6 applicants were interviewed on 28 August, 2012 by the:-

- Retiring Member of the Standards Committee representing Town and Community Councils;
- The Chair of the Council; and
- The Chairman of the Standards Committee of a neighbouring authority.

Following the interviews, the preferred candidate was Mr. Jonathan Duggan-Keen, currently serving as a Caerwys Town Councillor.

Councillor M.J. Peers suggested that the words 'not actively participate in local or national politics' be removed in future letters to Town and Community Clerks seeking nominations for the Standards Committee. He also proposed the following amendments to the Standards Committee recruitment process:-

- That the panel interviewing the short listed candidates be called the Recruitment Panel;
- That the process should state that the Monitoring Officer would notify Town and Community Councils of the preferred candidate; and
- That the procedure should include that the recommendation of the Standards Committee will be reported to Council as well as the name of the preferred candidate.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest said that the word 'discrete' be amended to 'discreet' in the letter seeking nominations from Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Mr Jonathan Duggan-Keen be appointed to the Standards Committee;
- (b) That Mrs Diane Johnson be thanked and reimbursed for her service on the Standards Committee and in the recruitment of her successor;
- (c) That the Chair of the Standards Committee from Wrexham County Borough Council be thanked and reimbursed for his involvement in recruiting the Town/Community representative;
- (d) That the letter seeking future nominations from Town and Community Councils be amended accordingly; and
- (e) That the Standards Committee recruitment procedure, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved subject to the amendments listed above.

56. ELECTED MEMBER SURVEY

The Democracy and Governance Manager introduced a report to enable County Council to consider the results of the survey of elected Members undertaken during June, 2012. Members were asked to consider the following suggestions, as detailed in the report:-

- The preference for when different types of meetings should be held;
- The number of committees that Members believe it was practical for them to serve upon and whether there should be any limit; and
- The despatch of committee agendas.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council thanked the Democracy and Governance Manager for compiling the results of the Member survey. He proposed the following:-

- The times committee meetings be held remain unaltered and be reviewed prior to the submission of the Diary of Meetings 2013/14;
- That any limit on the number of Committees a Member serves on be left to individual Group Leaders; and
- That the despatch of committee agendas be carried out in line with the wishes of individual Members.

Councillor C.S. Carver suggested that the questions detailed in the survey be reviewed when carrying out a further survey to ensure that the alternative answers would produce a majority decision. Councillor A.P. Shotton thanked Councillor Carver for his suggestion and said that this would be taken on board.

In response to a question on electronic devices, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported that the Head of ICT and Customer Services was leading the project to identify a suitable electronic device for Members and he would ask him to provide a progress report to be circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the times committee meetings be held remain unaltered and be reviewed prior to the submission of the Diary of Meetings 2013/14;
- (b) That any limit on the number of Committees a Member serves on be left to individual Group Leaders; and
- (c) That the despatch of committee agendas be carried out in line with the wishes of individual Members.

57. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable the County Council to consider a recommendation from the Democratic Services Committee that its Chairman be appointed Member Development Champion.

Councillor R.C. Bithell proposed that Councillor R.J.T. Guest, Chairman of the Democratic Services Committee be appointed Member Development Champion. The proposal was seconded by Councillor W. Mullin.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor R.J.T. Guest, Chairman of the Democratic Services Committee be appointed Member Development Champion, pursuant to paragraph 2.20 of the statutory guidance on the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

58. SCHOOL MODERNISATION UPDATE

The Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning provided a verbal update on the School Modernisation Area Reviews, detailing the proposed timetable for the forthcoming consultation events.

Following approval of the preferred options for further consultation on 17 July, 2012 work had commenced in order to progress the consultation process with schools during the autumn term. Work was also progressing on the creation of a corporate business case for future investment for schools together with the continued amalgamation of a number of primary schools across the County. It was anticipated that a decision could be made by the summer of 2013 with the proposals being fully implemented by September 2015 at the earliest.

The Director of Lifelong Learning asked Members to contact him following the meeting with any suggestions on the arrangements for the forthcoming consultation events.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

59. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.50 p.m.

60. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were three members of the press present.

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Chair