

**CABINET**  
**15 DECEMBER 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 15 December 2015

**PRESENT:**     **Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)**

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Christine Jones and Kevin Jones

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: Helen Brown and Billy Mullin

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Chief Officer (Organisational Change), Corporate Finance Manager and Committee Officer

**102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Attridge and Shotton both declared a personal interest in agenda item number 14 - Connah's Quay Swimming Pool Community Asset Transfer, as members of Connah's Quay Town Council.

**103. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**104. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT AND THE COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17**

Councillor Shotton introduced the report on the Provisional Local Government Settlement and explained that the headline figures, which had not been available at the time of preparing the report, had been shared at the last meeting of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He pointed out that a significant challenge remained for the Council despite the scaling down of cuts from Welsh Government (WG).

The Chief Executive delivered a presentation on the initial analysis of the Provisional Settlement and its implications for Flintshire, covering the following:

- Settlement Context
- Settlement Headlines
- Flintshire Position in the Settlement
- Known Impacts for Flintshire
- Ongoing Local Budget Work

- Ongoing National Budget Work
- Timescale for Phasing the Budget

A reduction of 1.5% in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) - slightly above the average reduction and an improved position against the forecast - put Flintshire in 12<sup>th</sup> place out of the 22 Authorities in Wales. However, under the current funding formula, Flintshire was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> as its funding per capita was below the Welsh average. If this was brought up in line with the Welsh average, Flintshire would benefit by an additional £17.455M per annum in the RSG.

Under the Intermediate Care Funds (ICF), the amounts ringfenced for mental health and older people would require discussion in the New Year on how these could be accessed. It was indicated that many specific grants would remain the same or decrease marginally, although details were subject to change. There was some protection given for the Supporting People Grant and an increase in the Pupil Deprivation Grant, however the Single Environment Grant was to be cut by 6.4% across Wales and the Families First grant reduced by at least 10%. The Council was currently working through the implications of these reductions.

Councillor Kevin Jones said that concerns would be raised with WG on the significant reduction to the new Single Environment Grant and its implications for the Council.

Following comments on the impact of cuts to the Families First grant on the provision of playschemes, Councillor Christine Jones spoke about the impact on contributions from town and community councils. Whilst she welcomed the additional funding for social care, she pointed out that this was not extra money as it was already part of the RSG allocation and should be used to benefit ongoing projects rather than new initiatives.

Councillor Shotton said that the Council would engage with the Welsh Local Government Association to make representations on the negative impact from the funding formula on per capita spend and referred to recognition by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the high performance and low funding of Flintshire. Whilst he said that the Council's strong representations on restricting cuts to the RSG had proved successful, more needed to be done on lobbying for a review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and greater flexibility on fees and charges.

In response to comments from Councillor Bithell on the importance of senior officers and Members' input to the Independent Commission on Local Government Funding in Wales, Councillor Shotton said that Flintshire was one of the more vocal councils in recognising the importance of the commission.

The Chief Executive hoped that the contributions being made by individuals through various routes would prove influential on the Commission and that the Medium Term Financial Strategy had been well received and demonstrated the need for a review of the funding formula. He spoke about the negative effect on rural counties in receipt of low per capita funding, based on the formula for population growth and deprivation.

Councillor Attridge praised the approach taken by Flintshire on lobbying for positive changes which he felt had achieved positive outcomes for all, through the joint efforts of Cabinet Members and the Chief Officer team.

Members were reminded by Councillor Shotton that this was a draft settlement only at this stage, with important aspects to be discussed before finalising early in March 2016. The final settlement was not expected to change significantly from the draft stage.

On the second recommendation in the report, the Chief Executive said that more clarity could be given on the precise timetable in the New Year. This was supported by Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the initial assessment of the Provisional Local Government settlement be received as the basis for a fuller report for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees in January 2016 to inform (1) the annual budget setting process and (2) a revision of the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
- (b) To set out a timetable in the New Year for recommendation of the budget in stages through January to March 2016 including the further development of 'fall back' options to reach a balanced budget.

**105. QUARTER 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

The Chief Executive provided information on the 2015/16 Improvement Plan which was a positive report, with the majority of activities being assessed as making good progress (72%) and likely to achieve the desired outcome (78%). In addition, 55% of the performance indicators met or exceeded target for the quarter. Risks were also being successfully managed with the majority being assessed as moderate (69%) or minor (20%). The new format of reporting had generally been well received and Overview & Scrutiny Committees had so far been satisfied with explanations given for their respective risk areas.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the following be agreed;
  - The level of progress and confidence in the achievement of high level activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;
  - The performance against improvement plan performance indicators, for the quarter and half year position; and
  - The current risk levels identified in the Improvement Plan
- (b) That Cabinet Members be assured by plans and actions to manage the delivery of the 2015/16 Improvement Priority impacts.

## **106. LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY**

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) presented an overview of the framework for the implementation of local lettings policies by setting out the approach and procedure that could be adopted by the Council, to respond and address local housing issues. The framework gave consideration to good practice and the relevant legal and legislative requirements and guidance by setting out clear aims and objectives, evidence required, consultation and approval process and the need to monitor and review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from any policies implemented.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Shotton said that this gave the Council an opportunity to utilise this particular aspect of the Act as a socially responsible landlord. Councillor Attridge also spoke in support, clarifying that the intention was to approve the framework only at this stage.

Councillor Kevin Jones welcomed the timing of the proposal to coincide with the new Council build programmes and asked if there were plans to oppose any potential changes to restrict long-term tenancies in Wales, as proposed in England. The Chief Officer clarified that housing was a fully devolved function to Wales and that there were growing significant differences between housing policy in England and Wales. Therefore the proposed changes to long-term tenancies would not apply to Wales unless agreed by WG, which was considered unlikely. Councillor Jones asked that this information be conveyed to Council tenants to give assurance on the position.

When asked by Councillor Bithell if the local lettings policies would apply to new build Council homes, the Chief Officer said that this would be considered case by case when considering proposals for each new development.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposed framework for the implementation of local lettings policies be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) and Senior Manager, Council Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to implement the framework for local lettings policies, in response to identified need and evidence.

## **107. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2015/16 (MONTH 6)**

The Corporate Finance Manager provided the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2015/16 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account and reported that no specific issues had been raised when reported to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The position was based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 6 and projected to the year-end. The projected year end position, as estimated at Month 6 was as follows:

### Council Fund

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £0.291m higher than budget

- Projected contingency reserve balance at 31 March 2016 of £4.245m

#### Housing Revenue Account

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £0.147m lower than budget
- Projected closing balance as at 31 March 2016 of £1.384m

There were no significant budget changes between portfolios in Month 6. The overall overspend within Streetscene & Transportation had decreased from a projected £1.108m at Month 5 to £1.042m. The projected overspend was due in part to the delay in the implementation of a number of efficiencies as reported to the Programme Board. In addition fluctuations in recycle sales had led to an increased pressure on income projections which had resulted in a shortfall of £0.397m, full details of which were outlined in the appendix to the report.

The report provided details on the programme of efficiencies, inflation, unearmarked reserves and earmarked reserves.

The report also outlined details on a number of risk areas:

- Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI)
- Recycling
- Car Parking
- Out of County Placements
- Former Euticals Site
- In Year Reductions in Specific Government Grants

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31 March 2016 be noted;
- (b) That the final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted.

#### **108. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 (MONTH 6)**

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that the Capital Programme had increased by £0.662m in the period, largely due to the impact of the following:

- Additional Welsh Government grant funding of £0.717m (Council Fund £0.572m, Housing Revenue Account £0.145m);
- Flintshire County Council match funding for Queensferry Roundabout scheme (£0.228m); and
- Kitchen Replacement contribution (£0.152m)

Offset by:

- Rollover into 2016/17 (£0.345m); and
  - Removal of Traveller Site grant (£0.150m)
- Resources available for future funding capital expenditure was c£2.629m.

As at Month 6, Early Identified Rollover (EIR) had been identified which reflected reviewed spending plans across all programme areas; those committed amounts had been identified to meet the cost of programme works in 2016/17.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be approved; and
- (b) That the rollover adjustments be approved.

**109. CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR INTRODUCTION OF TRAFFIC CALMING AND OTHER HIGHWAY SAFETY FEATURES**

Councillor Attridge introduced the report which sought approval to review and formalise the current consultation process with local Members, Community Councils and members of the public relating to the implementation of traffic calming measures. Details of the current process for consulting on traffic orders and other safety related schemes were provided.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) highlighted the proposed new process for officers to engage initially with local Members on potential schemes including a preferred option. Once agreed, options would be shared with town and community councils for wider consultation.

Councillor Bithell asked if there had been any prior consultation with town and community councils on the necessary resources which would be required. Councillor Attridge said it was the intention to offer as much officer support as possible in recognition of the varying levels of resources available to town and community councils.

As further reassurance, the Chief Officer said that any resource issues raised would be addressed through detailed assistance on the process from officers. He went on to comment that the single consultee approach utilised the important role of town and community councils in engaging with their local communities. Once the scheme was agreed, the Council would be required to carry out the formal statutory consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed approach for consulting with local communities on future traffic calming schemes and be approved and the process currently followed for community consultation on other road safety arrangements be noted.

**110. TERMINATION OF TAITH JOINT COMMITTEE**

Councillor Attridge explained that since January 2014 the activities of the North Wales Regional Transport Consortia (RTC) had ended, however the Joint Committee had continued to meet in line with the constitution of the Committee. He sought endorsement from Members to support the Joint Committee's decision to end the arrangement and wind up the operations of the Committee.

As there was still a requirement to have a strong voice for transport in North Wales, the Chair of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) proposed that a formal Transport Forum for the NWEAB be established to undertake that role. The Forum would meet two to four times annually, based on demand, to support the Connectivity and Infrastructure workstream and to ensure that an effective working relationship with the highways and transport teams in Authorities existed.

Councillor Derek Butler spoke in support of the work done by Taith and hoped that the new forum would give the Council a strong voice on the cross-boundary connectivity and infrastructure workstream in relation to the Mersey Dee Alliance and NWEAB.

The Chief Executive stressed the importance of the NWEAB being underpinned by the highways and transport expertise in place through the new arrangements.

Councillor Attridge thanked the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) and his team for their contributions in reaching this stage.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the decision of the Taith Joint Committee to terminate the role of the Joint Committee with effect from 29 September 2015 be endorsed; and
- (b) That the recommendation that a transport advisory forum be established as a sub-group of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB), consisting of the Portfolio holder for each Authority, to provide support and advice to the Connectivity and Infrastructure work stream be endorsed.

**111. FUTURE OF HOPE HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE (HRC) SITE**

Councillor Kevin Jones explained that the Hope Household Recycling Centre (HRC) site had received approval to remain open at weekends only for the receipt of recycling materials until January 2016. This was subject to an expression of interest (EOI) from the community stating their intention to take on the operations of the site which was received in August 2015. The next stage was for the community's representative to submit an appropriate business case, with information provided by officers. Although an initial outline business case had been submitted, it was proposed that additional time be given for further development work prior to its consideration. It was therefore recommended that the planned closure date of the HRC site be delayed by a month. Significant discussions were continuing between the Waste Strategy team and representatives of the community on the proposed transfer of the facility.

Councillor Attridge supported the proposal for additional time if it enabled the matter to be drawn to a conclusion.

The Chief Executive said that the Council would honour its commitment for the community to take over the operation of the facility and that this was supported by the reported reduction in the Single Environment Grant.

Councillor Chris Bithell spoke about the need to be firm on timescales to achieve the necessary savings in year.

**RESOLVED:**

That an extension of the existing 'weekend only' and 'recycling only' arrangement at Hope until 31 January 2016 be approved to allow additional time for the business case to be approved and to allow the local community representative sufficient time to mobilise resources to operate the site from this date.

**112. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Organisational Change – Leisure Services

- **Provision of High Ropes and Conversion to Gymnastics Facility**  
To approve the proposal to remove and sell the High Ropes (Sky Trail) equipment at Deeside Leisure Centre, using the proceeds to reinvest in the centre facilities. To approve the lease of the resulting available space to a private operator to develop a Gymnastics facility.

People and Resources – Finance (Revenues)

- **Business Rates Write Offs**  
Finance Procedure Rule (section 9.6) – Income and Expenditure, stipulate that any individual debt between the values of £5,000 and £25,000 shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance Manager/Section 151 officer) for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance. There are 5 business rate accounts where the overall debt for each company is greater than £5,000 and the write off of those debts is recommended. The total of these debts is £50,893.94.

People and Resources – Finance (Revenues)

- **Council Tax Write Offs**  
Finance Procedure Rule (section 9.6) – Income and Expenditure, stipulate that any individual debt between the values of £5,000 and £25,000 shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance Manager/Section 151 officer) for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance. There are 3 council tax accounts where the overall debt is greater than £5,000, the total being £23,607.00.

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council (Off-Street Parking Places Queensferry, Shotton, Connah's Quay) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment) Order 20--**  
To advise Members of unresolved objections received following the advertisement of the proposed introduction of Car Parking Charges in Connah's Quay, Queensferry and Shotton off street parks.



### Streetscene and Transportation

- **Unresolved objections to various roads following proposed introductions of speed limits as outlined below. As changes to the delegation report, Councillor Attridge highlighted the withdrawal of objections to 13 of the roads, with the following four to be re-advertised:**

A548 Mostyn Road, Gronant Village – 30 MPH.

B5101 Llanfynydd (At Riding School) – Speed Limit Review – 30 MPH.

B5123 Rhosesmor to Berth Ddu – 30 and 40 MPH.

A5026 Brynford Road, Brynford – 40 MPH.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the actions taken under delegated powers be noted.

### **113. 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 item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

### **114. CONNAHS QUAY SWIMMING POOL COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced a report to seek approval on the legal completion and attached conditions of the community asset transfer of Connah's Quay Swimming Pool. The report contained a brief summary of the case together with information from the organisation concerned. The conditions were required to be completed before the target transfer date, which may be subject to change.

Councillor Kevin Jones paid tribute to the positive engagement with Trade Unions and staff, and thanked the Chief Officer (Organisational Change) and his team for their input, along with that of Connah's Quay Town Council. He welcomed the significant progress made within the timeframe and referred to positive examples of community assets transfers around the country. He agreed that some flexibility was needed on the target transfer date to achieve the right outcomes and hoped that this project would help to generate interest in other potential transfers within the county.

Other Members took the opportunity to express their appreciation to all involved in the process. The Chief Executive spoke about the level of learning from this individual project which was vital to the success of future transfers.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) To agree the Community Asset Transfer proposal from Cambrian Aquatics for the transfer of Connah's Quay Swimming Pool;

- (b) That this Community Asset Transfer be subject to a number of conditions which must be met prior to legal completion:
- Provision of an updated Strategic Business Plan;
  - That this Business Plan covers satisfactorily the areas identified at 1.09 of the report; and
  - Sign off the Business Plan by Chief Officer for Organisational Change in consultation with the two lead portfolio holders
- (c) That the Chief Officer (Governance) be given delegated authority to enter into the necessary legal agreements to complete the Community Asset Transfer including:
- Community Asset Transfer Lease with Cambrian Aquatics for 27 years based on a peppercorn rent;
  - Community Benefits Agreement with Cambrian Aquatics detailing: the requirements for the peppercorn lease; an initial revenue fund of £0.065m and the community benefits required for this funding; an initial capital grant allocation of £0.100m and the conditions for use of this grant linked to the condition survey;
  - Co-operative Agreement with Connah's Quay Town Council and Cambrian Acquatics detailing the principles, values and ways of working between the three main partners.

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

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 11.00 am)

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**Chair**