

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**26 JULY 2022**

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday, 26 July 2022

**PRESENT: Councillor Mared Eastwood (Chair)**

Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, 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, Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Chrissy Gee, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, 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:** Councillors: Steve Copple, Jean Davies and Hilary McGuill

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development), Strategic Performance Advisor and Democratic Services team

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

During discussion on minute number 25 (questions relating to housing), Councillor Ted Palmer declared a personal interest as a Council house tenant.

**19. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 February, 24 February and 24 May 2022 were received.

Minutes of 24 May 2022 - Accuracy

Minute number 4: The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that inaccuracies on the recorded vote for the appointment of Vice-Chair would be corrected. It was also noted that incorrect reference to Councillors Richard Lloyd and Richard Jones on that item would also be amended.

In response to comments from Councillor Bernie Attridge about obtaining a list of how Members voted on that item, the Chief Officer (Governance) suggested that the amended minutes be deferred to the next meeting for approval.

Councillor Ian Roberts proposed the deferment and was seconded by Councillor Richard Jones.

On Constitutional Issues, Councillor Mike Peers asked that minute 7(i) be amended to reflect that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Roberts, had passed the Licensing Committee Chair to the Independent group. In response, Councillor Roberts stated that he had passed the Licensing Committee Chair to “an Independent group” as had been done in previous years. His comments were supported by Councillor Chris Dolphin.

On minute 7(v) Appointment of Chairs of Standing Committees, Councillor Attridge referred to wording on the two different sets of nominations for the Chairs of Clwyd Pension Fund Committee and Planning Committee. He asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that these were separate nominations from himself and Councillor Ian Roberts, rather a joint nomination.

On minute 7(v), the Chief Officer (Governance) explained that due to an oversight, the draft Terms of Reference for the new Climate Change Committee had not been included on today’s agenda and would be submitted to the next meeting.

As an amendment on minute 7(iii), Councillor Attridge clarified that he had proposed Councillors Antony Wren and Bill Crease and for the Standards Committee (having later withdrawn the latter name, as stated correctly in the minutes).

On minute 9, Councillor Richard Jones referred to his comments on acknowledging the service of former Councillors and commented that a certificate may have been a more fitting tribute than a badge.

Councillor Attridge moved approval of the minutes of 15 and 24 February 2022, noting that the amended minutes of 24 May 2022 would be brought back to the next meeting. On being put to the vote, this was agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the minutes of 15 and 24 February 2022 be approved as a correct record; and
- (b) That the minutes of 24 May 2022 be amended and submitted to the next meeting of Council for approval.

**20. CHAIR’S COMMUNICATIONS**

In presenting her communications, the Chair gave an overview of events she had attended from 25 May until 25 July 2022.

## **21. PETITIONS**

Councillors Glyn Banks and Gina Maddison submitted a petition on behalf of residents in Glan-yr-afon regarding road safety concerns and thanked Streetscene officer Lee Shone for his involvement on this.

A petition was also submitted by Councillor Gillian Brockley on behalf of local residents to oppose the Gladstone estate development on which she called upon the support of all Members.

## **22. COUNCIL PLAN 2022-23**

The Chief Executive presented the draft Council Plan for 2022-23 which had been reviewed and refreshed for content following the response to the pandemic and Recovery Strategy. The framework of the Plan involved six themes which aligned to Well-being Objectives and continued to take a long-term view of recovery, ambition and work over the next year. Having been through consultation with Overview & Scrutiny committees, Part 1 reflected priorities and actions for 2022/23 and included an additional item on Mental Health Services. The final Plan would be published on the website following adoption by Council.

The Strategic Performance Advisor advised that Part 1 set out high level ambitions for 2022/23 whilst Part 2 identified supporting actions, tasks and measures detailing how achievements would be measured and evaluated. Part 3 showed theme alignment with Overview & Scrutiny committees where progress would be monitored.

Councillor Richard Jones said that setting the majority of milestones for March 2023 made it difficult for Overview & Scrutiny to monitor regular progress. Having previously raised this, officers had already agreed to review milestones prior to publishing the Plan. He highlighted the importance of the Council Plan in the context of financial planning and the need to ensure that additional items could be measured. On the 'well-connected, safe and clean local environment' priority, he asked if work with the two towns identified in this year's Plan would also benefit other towns throughout the period.

In proposing adoption of the Council Plan 2022-23, Councillor Ian Roberts thanked the officers for all their work. To address Councillor Jones' comments, he suggested that Overview & Scrutiny committees be asked to review milestones for their respective areas in conjunction with any recommendations from Chief Officers. On behalf of the Labour group, he took the opportunity to thank staff for their dedication and resilience in meeting challenges during this period of the Council Plan.

He was seconded by Councillor Billy Mullin.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to the Fuel Poverty sub-priority definition on households with higher than average fuel costs and sought clarification on whether this applied to all households in this situation or those linked to affordable and accessible housing. On associated risks, he queried the baseline reduction in risks

given the likelihood of more households being affected and asked how funding streams would be prioritised due to the decreasing availability of funding to deliver fuel poverty projects. On the Private Rented Sector priority to raise standards in the management and condition of housing, he sought assurance that provision of resources would not replicate work already being done by Rent Smart Wales.

On Part 1 of the Council Plan, Councillor David Coggins Cogan proposed that the definition of Fuel Poverty be changed within the document as follows: '*Fuel Poverty: Households which experience poverty as a result of their fuel costs*' to reflect the broader range of those affected by continued price increases and not just those with 'higher than average' costs.

After being seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst, the amendment was accepted by Councillors Roberts and Mullin.

Whilst Councillor Richard Jones acknowledged the intent, he questioned whether it was possible to change the wording of this nationally set definition. The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that officers would consider where the change could be incorporated in the Council Plan.

Speaking in support, Councillor Glyn Banks referred to households affected by increases in oil prices.

In response to earlier comments, Councillor Paul Cunningham reminded Members that progress on the Council Plan was subject to regular detailed scrutiny.

Councillor Bill Crease commented on the need for milestones to be realistic and achievable.

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

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Council Plan 2022-23 Part 1 be adopted, subject to (i) a review of target dates for completion of actions by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees; and (ii) redefining Fuel Poverty so that it is not limited to those on low income (if possible).

## **23. POLITICAL BALANCE**

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented a report on the revised political balance calculation, as agreed at the Annual Meeting, incorporating the recent formation of a new political group. The proposed allocations within the calculation had been agreed by group leaders and would meet political balance requirements, providing 135 seats for Members across all of the committees based on current group memberships.

Appendix 1 to the report detailing proposed seat allocations was moved and seconded by Councillors Ian Roberts and Billy Mullin. On being put the vote, this was carried unanimously.

## **RESOLVED:**

That the political balance allocation appended to the report be agreed.

## **24. NOTICE OF MOTION**

A Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Bernie Attridge, Helen Brown, Richard Jones, Dale Selvester and Debbie Owen was received as follows:

*“We call upon Flintshire County Council to return all employees who have been working from home during the Pandemic back to the workplace for a minimum of 4 days of the working week, including all meetings and committees of the Council, lets lead by example.*

*Communication has been very difficult for both members of the Council and also members of the public, we must regain better communication. There are no covid restrictions in place.”*

On behalf of the signatories, Councillor Attridge proposed that the item be withdrawn on the following grounds: (i) the precedent of providing of a detailed report in response prior to the Notice of Motion being heard and understood by Members; (ii) the precedent of postponing a full Council meeting whilst group leaders discussed the Notice of Motion; (iii) the publication of a one-sided report in the public domain prior to explanations from the signatories leading to some disgraceful emails sent to some elected Members; and (iv) an outstanding request by a Member for a full list of vacancies, noting that 25 vacancies were found on the Council’s website.

Councillor Attridge withdrew the Notice of Motion for these reasons whilst he and the other signatories considered their position.

## **25. QUESTIONS**

Three questions from Councillor Bernie Attridge which had been received within the deadline had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting:

- “1. Can full Council have an urgent update on the Capital Costs for Theatr Clwyd and how much money has FCC got to find to make it happen?*
- 2. Can we have an urgent update on the homeless hub in Queensferry that hasn’t got planning permission, and what are FCC plans to relocate and when?*
- 3. Can full Council be advised as a matter of urgency when staff will return to the office?”*

Councillor Attridge expressed his disappointment that the questions he submitted some weeks prior had not been included on the agenda and had been circulated to Members by email that morning. He did not believe that his questions had been treated in the correct manner and claimed that some Members did not have the opportunity to read the questions prior to the meeting as they may have been unable to access their emails. He referred to historic practice where questions

had been circulated in person at Council meetings. On that basis, he asked that his questions be re-submitted to the next meeting.

The Chair allowed Councillor Attridge to submit an urgent question which he had submitted that morning and on which she had sought further clarification. He read out the question as follows:

*“We are aware of three separate important changes relating to Housing but primarily to tenants of Flintshire County Council and their interaction with Members. Issues noted include the following:*

- 1. Notification to Members of new tenants moving into their ward being stopped.*
- 2. GDPR being used as a reason to deny Members assisting FCC Tenants; and*
- 3. Recent notification to FCC Tenants of significant tenancy agreement changes that effect all Tenants without any notification to Members, so Members are unable to answer questions that Tenants have in relation to these changes. As these changes appear to show a desire to disconnect Member/Tenant relationships, can the Cabinet Member for housing confirm that this is categorically not the case and simply an oversight or communication and understanding?”*

As Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration, Councillor Sean Bibby said that he was not aware of the changes and that the issues raised would be discussed with the Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Housing and Assets).

After seeking advice, Councillor Ted Palmer declared a personal interest as a Council house tenant.

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that the practice of sharing questions submitted in advance in hard copy at Council meetings had changed over recent years due to the introduction of remote participation in meetings throughout the pandemic. However he agreed that it would be preferable to share them by email and in hard copy at hybrid meetings where the majority of participants attended in person.

As suggested by the Chief Officer, Councillor Attridge agreed that responses to his three previously submitted questions would be circulated to all Members and would be included in the minutes. The Chair clarified that a written response to the urgent question would also be circulated.

**RESOLVED:**

That written responses to the three questions and urgent question submitted by Councillor Attridge be circulated to all Members.

**26. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received. He advised that the Council's website would be updated to reflect that questions could be submitted electronically.

**27. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.10pm)

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**Chair**