

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
24th OCTOBER 2023

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday,
24th October 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Gladys Healey (Chair)

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Teresa Carberry, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Hughes, Roz Mansell, Hilary McGuill, Ian Roberts, Dale Selvester, and Linda Thew

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Morgan Independent Member - Standards Committee (as an observer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Strategic Finance Manager, Head of Democratic Services, Democratic Services Team and Fr. P. Wheeler for prayers

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair introduced and welcomed Mark Morgan, Vice-Chair and Independent Member of the Standards Committee, to the meeting. Mr Morgan read out a statement to explain his role and purpose in joining the meeting as an observer.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair referred to her communication which had been circulated prior to the meeting and listed the events attended from 27th September 2023 to 24th October 2023. The Chair gave a brief overview of the events she and her consort had attended and commented on the success of the Scout Group event which had been held at County Hall on 17th October.

40. PETITIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received.

41. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23 for approval. He provided background information and reported on the key points as detailed in the covering report. He advised that as required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Annual Report had been reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 July 2023 and Cabinet on 19 September 2023. The Treasury Management Annual Report was appended to the report for consideration.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to section 3.01 in the Annual Report and asked for an explanation around the Public Works Loan Board (PLWB) Certainty Rate, and PWLB loans. He also commented on the information provided in the table in section 3.02 regarding borrowing activity. The Corporate Finance Manager and Strategic Finance Manager responded to the comments and questions raised.

Councillor Paul Johnson spoke in support of the report and thanked the Corporate Finance Manager and his team for their work.

Officers responded to the questions raised by Councillor Coggins-Cogan concerning other long-term liabilities shown in the table in section 3.02, loans to NEW Homes, information relating to Arlingclose Limited (the Council's treasury management advisors) in section 4.04 and Section 114 Notices, and the CIPFA Prudential Code update. The Corporate Finance Manager also responded to the further questions raised by Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson on the loans to NEW Homes and explained the arrangements around repayment.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Glyn Banks and seconded by Councillor Johnson.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2022/23 be approved.

42. NEW CONSULTATION: SENEDD CYMRU (MEMBERS AND ELECTIONS) BILL

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report to update Members on a new consultation: Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill. He advised that if passed, the Bill, amongst other things, would increase the number of Members of the Senedd from 60 to 96; change the way in which Members were elected; make provision in relation to the Senedd's constituency boundaries; and decrease the length of time between Senedd elections from five to four years. The Chief Officer provided background information and referred to the main considerations as summarised in the report.

Councillor Richard Jones expressed some concerns regarding the proposals in the Bill and suggested that a workshop be held to enable Members further opportunity to consider the proposals in more detail and provide their views. The Chief Officer responded to the points raised and agreed to arrange a workshop to assist Members.

Members expressed concerns on the proposals and commented on the financial implications; the election method and importance of local representation; democracy and proportional representation; the need for clarification, evidence, reasoning, and scrutiny to support the proposed changes.

Councillor Dave Hughes suggested that following the all-Member workshop Members additional views should be sent to the Democratic Services Manager and that the Council grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to formulate the Council's response to the consultation.

Councillor Richard Jones agreed to the amendment and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Johnson. When put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the additional views expressed by Members following a workshop be collated and the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to formulate the Council's response to the consultation.

43. URGENT CABINET ITEM 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 (PROCUREMENT OF FLEET CONTRACT EXTENSION)

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report to update Council following the consideration of an urgent item (Procurement of Fleet Contract Extension) at Cabinet on 19th September 2023. He provided background information and asked the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) to present the main considerations as detailed in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Jones, the Chief Officer (Governance) provided explanation on why the matter had been submitted as an urgent item to Cabinet when the expiry date of the contract had been known for many years. In response to the further questions raised by Councillor Jones, the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) explained that complex negotiations had been ongoing for some time with the Contractor around the terms to extend the initial contract, however, the issues were not yet fully resolved. She outlined the next steps with a view to the new agreement to the contract to start on 1st April 2024.

Councillor Coggins Cogan raised a procedural matter concerning consent for an urgent item to be submitted to Council which he proposed be referred to the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee to be addressed.

Councillor Ibbotson also referred to the matter raised by Councillor Coggins Cogan and asked the Chief Officer (Governance) if he could provide a written

response with reference to Section 5 - Local Government & Housing Act 1989, to determine if action was required.

In response to the further comments and questions raised by Members the Chief Officer (Governance) clarified that a temporary extension had been granted to the contract as an interim measure pending a final decision on the awarding of the contract following consideration by Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Dave Hughes moved the recommendation which was seconded. When put to the vote the recommendation in the report was carried.

RESOLVED

That the reason for the Urgent item considered at Cabinet on 19th September 2023 be noted.

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

45. QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that a question had been received from Councillor Parkhurst which had been included on the agenda for the meeting. Councillor Johnson, Cabinet Member for Finance, provided a written response to the question which was read out and circulated to Members during the meeting.

Councillor Parkhurst spoke in response to the statement from Councillor Johnson and asked a supplementary question to request that a full business case be prepared urgently to seek a better funding deal for Flintshire and all 22 local authorities by the Welsh and UK Governments. In response Councillor Johnson reiterated the advice given in his statement that in the next few weeks the Leader of the Council would request a meeting of Group Leaders to consider and agree collectively how the Council would move forward on this issue.

RESOLVED:

That the questions and written and verbal responses be received and noted.

46. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

47. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

48. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 1.00 pm and ended at 3.15 pm)

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Chair