

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2024

Minutes of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 7 March 2024

PRESENT: **Councillor Richard Jones (Chair)**

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Bill Crease, Alasdair Ibbotson, Gina Maddison, Allan Marshall, Vicky Perfect, Kevin Rush, Jason Shallcross, Sam Swash, Linda Thomas and Arnold Woolley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: David Coggins Cogan, Dave Hughes, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin, Andrew Parkhurst and Ian Roberts attended as observers

APOLOGY: Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager and Strategic Executive Officer
Chief Officer (Social Services) and Social Value Development Officer for minute no. 81
Customer Contact Service Manager and Matthew Harris, Head of Complaints Standards, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for minute no. 82
Strategic Finance Managers for minute nos. 84 and 86
NEWydd Managing Director for minute no. 87

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and team

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Following advice sought from the Chief Officer (Governance), Councillor Bernie Attridge declared a personal and prejudicial interest on agenda item 7 Information Rights Compliance report. He withdrew from the room for that item.

77. MINUTES

On minute number 74, the Chair asked that the comments made by the Corporate Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) on the Flintshire Trainee programme be included, namely that the proposal would have a minor impact as those trainees would have been under-resourced during the period.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment, the [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 8 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

78. ACTION TRACKING

The Democratic Services Manager presented a [report](#) on progress with actions from previous meetings. The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress which has been made.

79. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Committee's [Forward Work Programme](#). The recommendations in the report were supported, subject to the inclusion of a report on the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved, as amended; and

(b) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

80. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

A change to the order of business was agreed to bring forward agenda item 8 (Social Value Update) to allow speakers to be present.

81. SOCIAL VALUE UPDATE ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Social Services) and Strategic Executive Officer presented a [report](#) which outlined performance data for the latter six months of 2022/23 and the first six months of 2023/24, together with a summary of areas of focus within the social value programme for 2024/25.

In response to questions from Councillors Sam Swash and Alasdair Ibbotson, a response would be shared with all Members present on whether social value work could be undermined by the North East Wales Investment Zone and tax incentives.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee notes the positive performance achieved in relation to generating social value for quarters three and four of the financial year 2022/23, as well as the first two quarters of 2023/24;

(b) That the Committee supports the next steps for the social value programme, as outlined in the report; and

(c) That to better align performance reporting to a financial year, the Committee supports a change in reporting timeline with annual social value performance reporting being presented in June of each year.

82. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2022-23 AND COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2023-24 ([Link to recording](#))

The Customer Contact Service Manager and Head of Complaints Standards, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales presented a [report](#) on the annual performance of the Council in relation to complaints received between 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023, together with an overview of complaints received by each portfolio between 1 April 2023 - 30 September 2023. The recommendations in the report were supported.

As requested by Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson, further detail would be shared on the variations between the number of open and overdue complaints and those closed after ten days, to better understand the position.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee notes the annual performance of the Council in respect of complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during 2022-23;

(b) That the Committee notes the half year performance of the Council (2023-24) in respect of complaints made against services in line with the concerns and complaints procedure; and

(c) That the Committee supports the priorities outlined in paragraph 1.24.

83. INFORMATION RIGHTS COMPLIANCE ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a [report](#) with performance information in respect of compliance with response targets for Freedom of Information and Individual Rights Requests covering the first six months of 2023/24.

As requested by Councillor Jason Shallcross, the data shown in paragraph 1.03 of the report would reflect percentages for each County. It was noted that the report would be scheduled twice yearly on the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee notes the improvements made to date since 2020/21; and

(b) That the Committee notes the steps proposed to improve performance in those areas where response times are below the required 80% average.

84. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 (MONTH 10) ([Link to recording](#))

The Strategic Finance Manager presented a [report](#) on the 2023/24 month 10 position for the revenue budget monitoring for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

As requested by Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson, further detail would be shared with Members on consultation with Trade Unions and Health & Safety representatives on reference to PPE equipment under Streetscene & Transportation (service delivery) shown as a budget variance on Appendix 2. It was also agreed that officers would bring the matter to the attention of the Chair of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Finance Manager shared an update on the Final Local Government Settlement which would also be circulated to all Members.

The recommendation in the report was supported together with an additional motion.

RESOLVED:

(a) That having considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 (month 10) report, the comments be reported back to Cabinet when it considers the report; and

(b) That a letter be sent to the Home Office and Welsh Government to highlight the impact of sparse affordable accommodation in the private rental sector on the finances of local authorities.

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

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

86. CAMBRIAN AQUATICS

The Strategic Executive Officer presented a report on the Community Asset Transfer, Cambrian Aquatics.

The recommendation was for the Committee to consider the content of the report and provide feedback to Cabinet as necessary.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the content of the report, the Committee provides the following feedback to Cabinet:

(a) That the Committee recognises the strategic value of the baths, given the proximity of Connah's Quay to the River Dee and its tidal estuary;

(b) That Cabinet considers how much has been saved throughout the lifetime of the asset transfer and whether a proportion of that should be made available to Cambrian Aquatics; and

(c) That a further period be allowed for Local Members to work with Cambrian Aquatics to see whether its financial performance can be improved and if there is an alternative solution to closure.

87. NEWYDD BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25

The NEWydd Managing Director and Strategic Executive Officer presented a report to seek endorsement of the NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd Business Plan 2024/25. The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee considers and comments on the content of the NEWydd Business Plan 2024/25, which includes financial projections, potential business opportunities, and strategic objectives and business priorities, along with identified risks and mitigation.

88. ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEWYDD CATERING & CLEANING LTD

The Strategic Executive Officer presented a report to seek endorsement of a proposal in relation to future arrangements between the Council and NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd. The recommendations were to consider and comment on the proposals.

As requested, details of the new Board members would be shared with Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee considers and comments on the proposal for a new contract between the Council and NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Limited;

(b) That the Committee considers and comments on the proposed terms of such a new contract, as outlined in the report;

(c) That consideration be given in contract negotiations to the possibility of transferring across any commercial entities that the Council has dealings with; and

(d) Prior to longer term contract being awarded, to undertake analysis of the costs and benefits of moving the service in-house.

89. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 1.52pm)

Chair

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