

EXECUTIVE
21ST APRIL 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 21st April 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)

Councillors: C. Ellis, N. Matthews, N. Phillips, L.A. Sharps, N.R. Steele-Mortimer and H. Yale.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, R. Baker, H. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, R. Jones, Mrs D. Mackie, D. Mackie, P. Macfarlane, P. Pemberton and A.P. Shotton.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of ICT & Customer Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager and Head of Committee, Member and Electoral Services.

APOLOGIES: Councillors M. Higham and H. D. Hutchinson.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman indicated that there would be an additional urgent Agenda item in respect of A. D. Waste.

311. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

312. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N. Phillips declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item no. 8 the report of the Director of Community Services on the restructuring of Housing Operational Services.

313. COUNCIL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Chief Executive presented a report on the progress of the Council Planning Framework. He referred to the Performance Consultation Workshops held the previous day and thanked Members who had attended and for their contribution.

The Chief Executive explained that the Council Planning Framework consisted of co-related documents which together stated ambition, priorities and targets within an overall governance framework. The framework comprised the Council (Plan) Governance Framework, Annual Statements and Service and Directorate Planning. This was a staged report and the suggested outline of a new Council Governance Framework Plan was set out in the Appendix to the report and further reports would come forward to the Executive in due course.

The draft Governance Framework Plan and Directorate Plans would have been reviewed and completed by the end of June and this would give the opportunity to consider the long term priorities as part of the 2010/11 Budget as well as giving Members the opportunity to develop political priorities. In addition, regard would have to be given to the Chancellor's statement to be made the following day.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Council (Plan) Governance Framework be supported and endorsed and the timings for the production of the Service and Directorate Plans be noted.

314. PERFORMANCE REPORTING – AN IMPROVED APPROACH

The Chief Executive presented a report on the improved style of quarterly Performance Report with four model examples. As with the previous agenda item this had been the subject of two workshops the previous day and the People and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee was overseeing this work.

An improved style for quarterly performance reporting had been developed and the four example models presented at the meeting were Community Services Directorate – Social Services for Adults; Environment Directorate – Planning Services; Lifelong Learning Directorate – Development and Resources with a focus on school modernisation and Corporate Services – ICT and Customer Services. The models for Performance Reports were at Head of Service Level of reporting accountability and were broadly based on the performance and evidence position as at quarter three which was reflected in performance for the October to December period. The model samples were work in progress.

The quarterly Performance Reports were based on performance indicators, actions/milestones in relation to the strategic assessment of risk and challenges, performance against improvement agreements, resource management, internal/external audit regulation – key findings, awards/accreditations and customer satisfaction. All quarterly Performance Reports would be accompanied by a table of performance data.

The Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager referred to the contributions made at the workshop the previous day and emphasised the importance of clarity and providing precise information; consistency in what was provided and context in providing meaningful information.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the improved approach to performance reporting be endorsed and the start of the new arrangements for all services for the quarter (April to June) in 2009/10 be approved; and
- b) that the consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

315. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2009/10 TO 2011/12

The Head of Finance presented a report to inform Members of the Committee of the outline Internal Audit plan for the next three years. The plan had been presented to the Audit Committee on 15th April, 2009. The report had been accepted by the Audit Committee and a discussion had been held when the Head of Internal Audit had answered specific questions. The strategy linked to the work with the regulators and work was prioritised in accordance with the highest risk.

The Chief Executive explained that efforts were made to pre-plan the Audit work by agreement, but it was also important to note that there was unallocated time to allow the Head of Audit to undertake specific work as required.

The Chief Executive referred to the consideration by the Audit Committee of the Finance Function Review and in particular the Internal Audit arrangements for the management of Internal Audit. The Committee had made its opinion clear that the current arrangements should stay in place for twelve months pending review; the Committee had corrected the draft minutes of its previous meeting to reflect this precise view. A workshop would be held in June when Members of the Committee would be given the opportunity to make comments and provide an input into the review and to the risk assessment. A guarantee had been given that there would be no changes to the management arrangements until the risk assessment had been undertaken, completed and reported back to the Audit Committee for final decision by the Executive.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

316. PROCUREMENT OF ANAEROBIC DIGESTION CAPACITY

The Executive Member for Waste Strategy and Management introduced a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Environment, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance. The report sought approval to work in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council to procure anaerobic digestion capacity for the treatment of food/kitchen waste.

The Executive Member referred to a conference in January when there had been a Ministerial announcement to support the formation of procurement hubs to accelerate the procurement and delivery of food waste treatment capacity with the preferred technology being anaerobic digestion. The collection of food waste would be necessary in order to meet the waste minimisation target and would assist in Flintshire meeting its quotas for waste to landfill in the latter years. In conclusion, she referred to the recommendations of the report and in particular the request for delegated authority to be granted to the Director of Environment following consultation with herself, to finalise the Outline Business Case and for this to be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government before 26th June, 2009. In relation to funding this would be financed through the Welsh Assembly Government and in 2009/10 Flintshire would receive £414,414 and £1,059,059

for 2010/11. It was emphasised that this money could not be allocated to non-food related recycling projects.

The Director of Environment referred to the very tight timescale which included the submission for approval of the Outline Business Case by the Welsh Assembly Government on 26th June, 2009 in order to access the £380,000 and this was the reason for the delegated authority as requested in the recommendation.

The Chief Executive referred to the five Authorities collaborating on the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project and to the Welsh Assembly Government advocating working collaboratively. He explained that for the food waste only Flintshire, Conwy and Denbighshire Councils were working together because Anglesey and Gwyneth Councils already had a partnership. It was also considered that food waste was better dealt with at a sub-regional level.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Flintshire County Council joining Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council to form a procurement hub to source anaerobic digestion capacity for food waste treatment be approved;
- b) that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment, following consultation with the Executive Member for Waste Strategy and Management to finalise the formal agreement;
- c) that the Project Initiation Document for the procurement of Anaerobic Digestion Capacity be approved;
- d) that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment following consultation with the Executive Member for Waste Strategy and Management, to select and enter into a contract with consultants to support the project; and
- e) that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment following consultation with the Executive Member for Waste Strategy and Management, to finalise the Outline Business Case and to submit it to the Welsh Assembly Government before 26th June, 2009.

317. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Estate Management introduced the report which sought endorsement for the work undertaken to date by Council Officers, Council Tenants and Councillors in relation to resident involvement and to ask the Executive to adopt the Resident Involvement Strategy on behalf of the Council.

The Executive Member referred to the Resident Involvement Working Group and referred to the membership which would include three Councillors nominated by Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee who would be Councillors Peter Curtis, Bernie Attridge and George Hardcastle.

The Executive Member referred to consultation which had included a Members' seminar on 26th February and the strategy had also been considered at the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15th March.

RESOLVED:

That the aims and objectives outlined in the Resident Involvement Strategy be endorsed and the document be adopted as the corporate strategy and to be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government.

318. RESTRUCTURING OF HOUSING OPERATIONAL SERVICES

The Director of Community Services presented a report which outlined the first phase of restructuring of the Housing Service which involved the redesign of senior management roles responsible for Operational Services.

The Director explained that the current structure was no longer fit for purpose and the key principles in designing a new structure were a neighbourhood focus and one stop shop approach for tenants on all tenant related issues; continuous improvement in the Repairs and Maintenance Service combining responsive repairs and plan programme of works; and a comprehensive and tenure neutral Community Advice/Information and Support Service. The proposals had been discussed by the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16th March 2009.

The Director referred to the review of accommodation strategy in relation to co-location of Community Services staff. As an example an assessment was being undertaken into the feasibility of creating a Customer Services Headquarters at the Greenfield Technical Park as part of the relocation proposals for the Canton Depot.

The Director referred to Section 3.08 of the report which proposed the deletion of a number of posts which would be replaced by new management roles. This would include three Neighbourhood Housing Managers serving north, south and east geographical areas; a Community Advice and Information Support Services Manager and a Housing Assets Manager. The restructure and design would provide an opportunity to design management posts which would meet the needs of the service including ensuring that Flintshire's Housing Service continued to modernise and improve.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed structuring of the management of the operational service delivery as outlined in the report be approved.

319. ORGANISATION REDESIGN – HUMAN RESOURCES OPERATIONS

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report which sought endorsement of the scope of one of the Human Resources Reviews which was included in Phase 2 of Organisational Change and Redesign.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development referred to the considerations of the report and making particular reference to HRMIS/Payroll Trent System, the Draft New People Strategy and the ongoing arrangements for managing and maintaining the new job evaluation scheme. The initial project scoping document had been endorsed by the Corporate Management Team and she referred to a planning definition workshop for identified project team members to be held during April. The outcome from that meeting would be the Project Initiation Document and at the same time a Project Initiation Document would be completed for Phase 2 of the HRMIS. Both of these documents would be completed by the end of May 2009.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the scope of the Human Resources Operational Review and the timescales for the Project Initiation Phase of the work be noted and endorsed; and
- b) That a further report be presented to the Executive on completion of the review work to explain the proposals for the redesign of the Human Resources Operations Function, timetable for implementation of the project plan and to outline any potential efficiencies that may have been identified as a result of the early work.

320. MANAGED AGENCY STAFF SOLUTION (MASS)

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report which provided an update on the contract for the provision of agency workers. She referred to the collaborative procurement project with Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council and that Flintshire was the lead Authority in providing a Project Manager to coordinate the procurement phase.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development referred to Matrix SCM being selected as the successful supplier and this managed the supply chain of agencies on behalf of the Councils. Flintshire County Council went live on 20th October 2008.

The savings reported represented the net savings after deducting the Matrix SCM management fee and Flintshire's share of the cost of the Contract Manager position. The projected annual savings totalled £391,901 from which needed to be deducted the cost of implementation management and the Flintshire share of the Contract Manager. The savings achieved for the Housing Revenue Account also had to be passported back to that account and this gave a remaining projected annual saving of £293,771.

It was reported that there was a steady decrease in the use of agency workers and there was therefore a need to monitor to establish whether there were clear trends and the Head of Finance would be reporting on the links to the Matrix system to the Executive through the Budget Monitoring Reports.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the information contained in the report be noted;
- b) that the Executive be provided with a quarterly update report on the agency workers position; and
- c) that Directorate management teams be provided with a monthly management information report from the Matrix HR system to allow monitoring of the spend and savings on agency workers and to facilitate workforce planning.

321. EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

The Head of Finance tabled a report on the developing plan to secure a minimum of £1.0m efficiencies in year to meet the pre-set 2009/10 General Fund Revenue target and to advise on further potential efficiencies in anticipation of difficult settlements in future years.

The Head of Finance apologised for the late report but emphasised that in considering the 2009/10 budget it was reported that an action plan to achieve the efficiencies was being developed and this would be published in April and this was the only opportunity available for this to be reported to the Executive within the month.

The Head of Finance emphasised that the £1.0m was within the base budget. The objective was to achieve the efficiencies from within the revenue budget without the need to call on any reserves. In 2009/10 the efficiencies could be a combination of one off or non-recurring and recurring efficiencies to achieve a balanced outturn position. During the year, £1.0m of recurring base budget efficiencies would need to be identified for the 2010/11 budget onwards. It had been recognised that organisational efficiency had to be a continuous discipline across the whole Council and not a process to balance budgets on an annual basis. Therefore, the £1.0m required in 2009/10 and in the base budget by 1st April 2010 would be added to over time as part of the medium term financial strategy accompanied by organisational redesign. The £1.0m efficiency requirement had increased to £1.260m as a result of the recent announcement of the 2008/09 final pay award which had added an estimated £0.260m cost into the base budget from 1st April 2009. As a result of the 2009/10 budget debate, £0.091m which originally had been intended to be spent on Member Ward Grants had been removed from the budget and had contributed to the Efficiency Programme. The effect of these two items had been to revise the £1.0m to a final figure of £1.169m.

The Head of Finance then referred to the considerations of the report and the developing strategy for the efficiency programme and referred to corporate/centrally led efficiency initiatives and Directorate led initiatives. Particular reference was made to procurement strategy, Managed Agency and staff advertising contracts, the organisational redesign phase 2 reviews, workforce planning and non-essential vacancy management, reduced spend on non-essential supplies, review of budgets for out of county provision and waste

haulage, review of non-standard inflation provision within the 2008/09 budget and other areas of budget scrutiny. The current position with regard to all of the above initiatives had been included in Appendix A of the report and showed that efficiency savings of £1.638m had been identified which had exceeded the revised figure of £1.169m by £0.469m.

The Head of Finance reported that many of the efficiencies that had been identified to date had come from detailed and careful scrutiny of budgets and from proactive work to track the actual effects of inflation in the latter part of 2008/09 and amend budgets accordingly. This was coupled with the delivery of an estimated £0.131m of procurement initiatives. Budget monitoring during the year would inevitably identify areas of variance. It was planned that in order to reinforce the need to make efficiency a part of everyday procurement and to recognise its vital part in budget management, each budget monitoring report would now include a section on procurement.

The Chief Executive emphasised that the process had not been easy but had been very thorough. Organisation discipline was needed and the Council was to operate corporately without being budget protective. Planning for the 2010/11 budget was essential and regard would have to be given to the budget statement to be made the following day by the Chancellor which was very likely to affect local government expenditure. He referred to the calculated risk in the preparation of the 2009/10 budget of making an assumption of £1m efficiency savings. Although a calculated risk this was not a practice he would recommend. From 2010/11 good practice preparation of budgets should prevent the use of such a practice.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report and the revised target of £1.169m of efficiency savings being achieved be noted and that work continues on an ongoing basis to secure further efficiencies;
- b) that budget amendments to reflect the detail in Appendix A be agreed; and
- c) that the procurement based initiatives at paragraphs 3.10 and 3.1 be specifically noted.

322. REVIEW OF CCTV SERVICES

The Director of Lifelong Learning presented a report which provided information on options for the future of CCTV service in Flintshire and provided a summary of the outcome of the recent CCTV service Review including risk to the Council.

The service had been launched in 2002 initially to monitor 46 open space Town and Community Council CCTV cameras which had now been increased to a current active level of 120. The service review had been undertaken in the light of service growth and service delivery expectations of Town and Community Councils and North Wales Police.

The report highlighted the inconsistency of revenue funding, the need to replace outdated equipment and also identify the importance of partnership working with Wrexham County Borough Council and North Wales Police. A major finding of the review was that the future of specialist staffing arrangements of the CCTV control room should be addressed as a matter of priority.

The Chief Executive emphasised the need to upgrade the existing equipment and to explore potential partnership working with Wrexham County Borough Council and North Wales Police with a view to sharing costs, and increasing the contribution from North Wales Police which had already been discussed, should a partnership be viable and meet the needs of Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Option 2 be adopted;
- b) That the outcomes of the CCTV Service Review be noted and that the Improvement Plan, taking into account the revised priorities, be approved;
- c) That discussions take place with (1) Town and Community Councils and (2) North Wales Police and Wrexham County Borough Council to explore the possible partnership model, new contracts and service level agreements including financial contributions and support for CCTV operational arrangements in Flintshire;
- d) To continue the existing service level agreement with North Wales Police which involved £100k contribution to six North Wales authorities and to enter discussions with North Wales Police with a view to developing the service level agreement and improving the partnership funding base;
- e) that staffing levels in the CCTV Control Room be increased to allow for two Operators on duty at all times at an estimated cost of £82,000 per annum; allocation of additional budget in 2009/10 of £82,000 to be met from the Contingency Reserve and to be included in the base budget from 2010/11 onwards;
- f) That the replacement of outdated and obsolete recording and monitoring equipment and the adjustment of the layout of the CCTV Control Room to accommodate improved ergonomic changes to an indicative capital cost of £300,000 in 2009/10 and a further estimated indicative capital cost of £140,000 in 2010/11, representing a total of £440k over 2 years be treated as a capital programme priority subject to the outcomes of (c) above; and
- g) That the CCTV Service revenue budget be increased by £11,000 for 2009/10 and to continue over subsequent years to alleviate identified service pressures, but be subject to further review.

323. CARDBOARD PILOT REPORT

The Executive Member for Waste Strategy and Management introduced a report to provide an update on the result of a pilot scheme for the collection of

cardboard from households in Flintshire and to seek approval to extend the scheme to the majority of households in Flintshire.

In presenting the report the Executive Member referred to the results of the scheme which had shown an increase of 12.5% in tonnages of paper waste collected prior to the pilot being introduced. On the basis of service rollout across the County there was a potential to divert an additional 535 tonnes of biodegradable waste from landfill. This represented a potential saving of £42,800 of landfill costs.

RESOLVED:

That the expansion from a pilot scheme to a county wide service for the collection of cardboard and paper from households in Flintshire be approved.

324. ESTABLISHMENT CONTROL – APPOINTMENT OF SESSIONAL/RELIEF YOUTH WORKERS

The Executive Member for Education and Youth introduced a report which sought approval for the re-designation of 40 Sessional/Relief Youth Worker posts for deployment on an “as and when” basis across Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

That the re-designation of 40 Sessional/Youth Worker posts be approved.

325. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to inform Members of actions taking the delegated powers, was submitted.

The actions were set out as below:-

Community Services –

- Fee Levels – Independent Sector Domiciliary and Day Care Providers 2009/10
- Fee Levels – Independent Sector Providers Care Home Fees 2009/10
- Direct Payment Rates Increase

Environment –

- Disposal of Site of the former Flint Youth Club
- Disposal of former garaging site at the head of Hillside Avenue, Connah’s Quay
- Granting of Licence of first floor premises Arosfa, Mold to Action for Children

326. ADMISSION OF AN ADDITIONAL URGENT AGENDA ITEM

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred to the statement made by the Chairman at the commencement of the meeting of the need to consider an additional urgent agenda item in respect of A.D. Waste Ltd.

RESOLVED:

That the urgent agenda item be considered.

327. 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 paragraphs 14 and 16 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation be agreed and that the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

328. A.D. WASTE LTD

The Director of Environment and Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided an update on the progress being made to bring A.D. Waste back in house particularly on a number of matters that had arisen since the last meeting of the Executive.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the update be noted; and
- b) that the delegated powers given to the Director of Environment at the last meeting of the Executive be not exercised and that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive.

329. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 11.16am.

330. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press present.

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Chairman

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT

EXECUTIVE	DATE: 21st April 2009
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
N. Phillips	Restructuring of Housing Operational Services	318