

EXECUTIVE
10 AUGUST 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 10 August 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor L.A. Sharps (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Councillors: H. Brown, C.A. Ellis, N.M. Matthews, N. Phillips, N. Steele-Mortimer and M.G. Wright

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie and C.A. Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of ICT & Customer Services, Head of Development & Resources, Head of Asset Management & Transportation, Head of Regeneration, Head of School Services, Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) and Committee Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: A Woolley and H D H Hutchinson

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 July 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

64. DEPOT UPDATE

The Head of Asset Management & Transportation introduced the report which provided baseline information and pressures identified as part of the review of the four depots, taking into consideration the review of Street Scene services. An update was also provided on immediate pressures on existing operational provision at Alltami depot.

The plan of Alltami Depot which was attached to the report showed the Authority's freehold interest, comprising existing offices, fleet maintenance workshop, Red Shed warehouse, Salt Dome, operational external stores and parking areas. Alongside this was 2.42 acres of land currently leased from North Wales Police (NWP) and from which the Grounds Maintenance team and external Highways stores operated. It was recommended that the Authority acquire the freehold interest of this land and dispose of the freehold interest in the former Dobshill Depot to NWP.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the acquisition of the freehold interest of the NWP land at Alltami Depot to ensure that services can be provided without interruption or disruption be supported; and
- (b) That the release of the Authority's interest in the former Dobshell Depot to NWP be supported.

65. IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT - FINAL YEAR REVIEW

The Chief Executive provided an update on progress against actions and targets for 2009/10 contained within the Improvement Agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

A copy of the monitoring document was attached to the report which illustrated the RAG status for each action. It was noted that good progress had been made, with 73.2% of targets met and showing an improved trend. The Chief Executive clarified that the Improvement Agreement Grant of nearly £1.5m per annum over a three year period was secure for the period of the performance shown, based on the advice of civil servants who oversaw the Grant.

RESOLVED

That the progress in 2009/10 against the Improvement Agreement be endorsed.

66. OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT (WAG)

The Chief Executive provided an update on progress in preparation for submission of the Outcome Agreement to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Revised timescales for the development of the Outcome Agreement were outlined in the report.

The draft Outcome Agreement which would replace the current Improvement Agreement was attached as an appendix to the report. The draft version would need to be submitted to WAG by 30 September 2010, with the final version due by 31 December 2010.

The report detailed work undertaken on the draft document following the Overview & Scrutiny workshop held for Members. The Chief Executive drew attention to paragraph 3.05 of the report which detailed amendments made to the draft document following feedback from WAG. The document would be reported to Executive in November/December prior to it being submitted to WAG.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the selected outcomes and aims be endorsed;
- (b) That the progress in the preparation of an Outcome Agreement with WAG be supported and its submission to WAG be endorsed; and
- (c) That the revised timescales for the development of the Outcome Agreement be approved.

67. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WALES 2007-13, BUSINESS PLAN 2

The Head of Regeneration introduced the report, which provided an update on progress of developing Business Plan 2 of the Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales 2007-2013. Approval was sought to underwrite the match funding for all projects approved under Business Plan 2 of the RDP, and to make advance payments to Cadwyn Clwyd for Axis 3 projects. Approval was also sought for the proposed split of funding under the Town and Village Streetscape Enhancement project and Linking Flintshire's Communities project, and a breakdown of each was included in the report.

It was explained that delays in presenting this report had been due to problems with the approval process with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). A breakdown of the projects was shown at paragraph 2.04 in the report which indicated grant availability of 80% of the funding, representing good value to the Authority. All applications submitted for consideration must include confirmation of match funding, or the underwrite would be rejected by WAG. The Authority was therefore required to commit a total of £997,728 in match funding. A series of further arrangements had been set up with Cadwyn Clwyd to ensure that the Council would not be placed at risk as a result of the projects.

The Executive Member for Regeneration & Tourism commented on the grant funding in what was a major investment in key tourist destinations. He also took the opportunity to thank Sharon Barlow for her involvement in the tight monitoring exercise. In response to concerns on commitment from the Council needed for a further three years, the Executive Member said that this had already been agreed for each partnership project, but that match funding needed to be demonstrated. The Chief Executive outlined the steps to be taken: (i) a joint risk assessment to ensure the liabilities of the Council were managed (ii) formal agreement with Cadwyn Clwyd over project planning and commitments, and (iii) a further Member representative on the Cadwyn Clwyd Board as a Condition of Agreement. The Deputy Leader endorsed the comments made about Sharon Barlow and her team, adding that this was a very complex piece of work.

RESOLVED

That the progress towards developing Business Plan 2 be noted and that subject to the conditions proposed by the Chief Executive, approval is given to:

- (i) Underwrite the match funding for the Business Plan 2 period for the RDP.
- (ii) Advance payments to Cadwyn Clwyd for Axis 3 projects for the Business Plan 2 period.
- (iii) The proposed division of funding under the two Council projects.

68. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 (OUTTURN)

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) presented the report which provided the Capital Programme outturn information for 2009/10.

Changes to the programme during 2009/10 were explained, with information on particular schemes and programme areas being set out in detail.

The current position showed that the General Fund stood at £25M, with £6M in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) out of a total programme of £31M.

The table at 3.05.1 gave details on how the total programme was financed. The report noted a strong sales rate performance achieved during 2009/10 despite the weak property market which was likely to remain mixed in most property sectors, however opportunities to extract value would continue to be identified in support of the programme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and approved.

69. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2009/10 (FINAL OUTTURN)

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) presented the report which provided an update on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2009/10, subject to audit, and the impact on the respective level of reserves as at 31 March 2010.

It was reported that the General Fund and HRA had net underspends of £244K and £171K respectively. The main pressures were attributed to the economic downturn and impact on services as a result of the severe winter weather, however these had been offset by in-year efficiencies. Information on unearmarked reserves put the final level of contingency reserve at just over £1m as at end of March 2010, which was higher than anticipated.

On the HRA, an improved final outturn for 2008/09 together with projected in-year underspend put year end balances at 6.3% of budgeted expenditure, which was above the recommended level of 3%.

The Chief Executive said it was satisfying to note the General Fund outturn position and added that budgetary management discipline was required to advance report projected budget variations in year.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the General Fund Contingency Sum available at 31 March 2010 be noted; and
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the HRA be noted.

70. GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING 2010/11

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) presented an update on revenue budget monitoring for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2010/11 which had previously been agreed at County Council in March and February 2010 respectively. Reference was made to work undertaken on the final accounts for 2009/10 which had enabled the draft Statement of Accounts to be presented to the Audit Committee in July.

Potential risks and pressures to date which may affect the financial position were highlighted, some of which had been identified at the end of the 2009/10 financial year. It was reported that almost £2m of in year General Fund efficiencies had been identified which would be transferred to the Contingency Reserves to help support Flintshire Futures programme costs and budget flexibility.

The Chief Executive explained that the item on Flintshire Futures had been deferred from the last County Council meeting, due to time restrictions. He advised that there could be no reduction in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in year by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). A further WAG budget announcement was expected in October alongside the UK Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). However, the Assembly would be considering reductions in hypothecated grants and specific grants for 2011/12 alongside an RSG reduction. A full presentation on developments for next year would be given at the County Council meeting in September and Members would be provided with information in advance.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

71. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS - ACTUALS 2009/10

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) introduced the report which provided (actual) prudential indicator figures for 2009/10 as required under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities

(the Prudential Code). He outlined the background and key considerations within the report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and approved.

72. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) POLICY UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development presented a progress update on the work programme for HR policies and procedures in line with the People Strategy Action Plan, and sought Members' support for the direction and scope of the flexi time review.

Details were given on a proposed review of the existing change management policies and the development of a toolkit with standard forms. Reference was also made to issues discussed at the former Flexible Working Group and how these could now be fully considered to allow greater flexibility.

An update was provided on the status of the five key HR policies and reference was made to a programme being developed for Employee Volunteering in partnership with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, trade union colleagues and nominated managers in the Authority.

RESOLVED

That the report be accepted.

73. MATRIX CONTRACT UPDATE (MANAGED AGENCY STAFF SOLUTION)

The Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development reported on the progress of the contract for the provision of agency workers. The report showed Quarter 1 of 2010/11 savings and provided an update on the development of procedures to maximise efficiencies and how practices could be improved for the use of agency workers.

Although there was an ongoing decreasing trend in the number of agency workers since 2009, a slight increase was shown in the numbers of these staff working longer than six months.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development outlined further improvements which were set out in the report, together with costings indicating that the total net saving had exceeded the target for this year. As one of the initiatives in the Flintshire Futures programme, work would continue on reducing the number of agency workers.

The Chief Executive commented on the positive progress which had been achieved through the Matrix contract as a collaborative project and would put a recommendation to the Assembly Government that other parts of Wales adopt a similar model.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the approaches being taken to manage the use of agency workers more closely, with further options for increasing efficiency savings for Flintshire, be endorsed.

74. CONNAH'S QUAY, SHOTTON & QUEENSFERRY RENEWAL AREA - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The Executive Member for Housing presented the report which provided information on a number of proposed environmental improvement projects, as part of the Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area, and sought approval to commence with those projects which were within the £250K budget, allocated for the overall scheme.

In response to two of the main areas of concern, the Executive Member explained that the Connah's Quay projects at Dock Road and Church Street were to be progressed jointly, with further consultation to take place. Another area of concern related to the Queensferry War Memorial Institute, however funding had now been secured through the 'Tidy Towns' initiative.

The Chief Executive emphasised that this was a community led programme. He drew attention to the recommendation in paragraph 4.02 that delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing to agree and undertake individual environmental improvement projects within the available budget, and asked that the words "from the next financial year" be included. The Deputy Leader endorsed the comments made.

RESOLVED

- (a) That implementation of the projects detailed in the appendix, within the available budget, be supported and approved;
- (b) That, from the next financial year, delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Renewal Area Project Board and relevant community leaders to agree and make arrangements to undertake individual environmental improvement projects within the available budget; and
- (c) That the Executive receive a quarterly update on progress in delivering the Renewal Area targets and outcomes.

75. CHANGE OF SERVICE PROVISION IN ORDER TO RETURN 3 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM OUT OF COUNTY RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS

The Executive Member for Social Services presented the report which related to a supported living service for three individuals with a learning disability transferring from Children's Services to Adult services from Out of County Residential Placements to the local community. Approval was sought for additional staffing in the Supported Living Team to provide direct care to the individuals who had complex needs.

The Executive Member explained that funds had been identified within the Transition budget with a contribution expected from Continuing Enhanced Care.

RESOLVED

That an additional eight direct care full-time posts to provide support to the three individuals who will be shortly accessing Adult Services be approved.

76. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED DECISIONS

An information report on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted.

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Environment

- Disposal of Unit 5 Catheralls Industrial Estate, Buckley
- Granting of licence of first floor premises, Arosfa, Greenfield, Mold to Action for Children

Lifelong Learning

- Proposed lease to Mold Junior Football Club - Victoria Road Recreation Ground, Mold
- Disposal of small plot of land at St David's High School, Saltney

77. 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 remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraphs 12 and 15 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

78. REVIEW OF CARETAKING/SECURITY SERVICE

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report which provided an update on the ongoing review of the Caretaking and Security service. He outlined the background and key considerations within the report.

The Head of School Services reiterated these comments and drew attention to the costings detailed in paragraph 3.06 of the report. The Chief Executive referred to the review being phased. He highlighted the significant involvement with staff and trade unions on this issue, and the need to be clear on making changes whilst lowering the impact on service delivery.

RESOLVED

That the four full-time equivalent Caretaking and Security Attendant posts to be deleted and that this is through redundancies or early retirement on grounds of redundancy be approved.

79. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 10.25am.

80. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were 2 members of the press in attendance.

.....
Chairman

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

EXECUTIVE	DATE: 10 AUGUST 2010
------------------	-----------------------------

MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
	NONE	