

**EXECUTIVE**  
**21 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 21 September 2010.

**PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillors: K. Armstrong-Braun, J. B. Attridge, R. Baker, R. G. Hampson, P. G. Heesom, D. I. Mackie, A. P. Shotton and C. A. Thomas

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control), Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of ICT & Customer Services, Head of Housing, Head of Pensions and Funds and Team Manager – Committee Services

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: N. Phillips and L. A. Sharps

**87. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 10 August 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

**88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were received.

**89. NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY – ANNUAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE IMPROVEMENT AND RISK REDUCTION OBJECTIVES**

The Chief Executive introduced the report on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's consultation document which invited comments on improvement objectives and risk reduction proposals.

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority had agreed an extension to the deadline for comments to 22 September 2010. This was to allow the Executive and the joint meeting of Corporate Management and People and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had taken place on 9 September 2010 to consider and comment on the improvement objectives and risk reduction proposals. Six Flintshire County Councillors were serving members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and had been involved in the development of the consultation document in that role.

The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection paid tribute to the excellent work carried out by the Fire Service at the recent fire on Spencer Industrial Estate in Buckley.

## **RESOLVED**

That the improvement objectives and risk reduction proposals be agreed.

### **90. PRELIMINARY CORPORATE ASSESSMENT – REPORT BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**

The Chief Executive explained that the Auditor General was required to undertake an annual Improvement Assessment for each improvement authority in Wales - local councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities. The requirement was fulfilled by a Corporate Assessment and a Performance Assessment. Taken together, the two assessments would form the basis of the Annual Improvement Report which would be published in November.

As this was the first year of the new approach to the Corporate Assessment, the Chief Executive explained that this was a first and preliminary one.

The Chief Executive welcomed Mr Steve Martin from the Wales Audit Office to the meeting and invited him to deliver the preliminary Corporate Assessment to the Committee.

Mr Martin explained that the Report by the Auditor General for Wales followed the same format for each improvement authority in Wales.

The conclusion arising from the first Corporate Assessment was that Flintshire County Council was actively promoting improvement whilst some arrangements were not yet fully developed. Four areas of improvement had been identified:

- Review arrangements to ensure that appropriate behaviour standards of Councillors were maintained
- Complete work on the Council (Governance) Plan Framework
- Develop the process to enable the allocation of resources to priorities
- Complete the People Strategy 2009-2012 and action plan

Progress would be reviewed in November and the suggested areas for improvement would be confirmed or amended.

The Chief Executive said the Assessment was an important periodic “health check” which he felt provided a fair and balanced representation of the Authority. He commented on three of the four areas identified for improvement, (1) complete work on the Council (Governance) Plan Framework, (2) develop the process to enable the allocation of resources to

priorities and (3) complete the People Strategy 2009-2012 and action plan, all of which the Authority was addressing.

The Chief Executive added that data was due to be received in the coming weeks on Performance Indicators in Wales and Flintshire County Council would be reported as one of the top Authorities for improved performance.

### **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the Preliminary Corporate Assessment recently provided by the Auditor General for Wales be noted.

## **91. BENEFIT TAKE UP STRATEGY**

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) introduced the report which sought Member endorsement of the Benefit Take Up Strategy 2010.

The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits were administered on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions. Activities were principally governed by the Social Security Act 1998, which encompassed an obligation on Flintshire County Council to promote and maximise benefit take up. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) provided annual funding specifically to support benefit take up activities throughout Wales.

The Strategy aimed to maximise Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for eligible households, contributing and supporting the key aims and objectives in Flintshire County Council's Community Strategy in relation to Community Inclusion, Reducing Poverty and Supportive Places.

### **RESOLVED**

That the proposed Benefit Take Up Strategy outlined in Appendix A be endorsed.

## **92. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY - UPDATE**

The Head of ICT and Customer Services provided Members with an update on progress with the implementation of the corporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy.

The Council's ICT Strategy was a four year strategy which defined the use of ICT to support the Council's priorities and services and it was supported by an Action Plan with key milestones.

The Strategy Action Plan had been reviewed and the 2010 plan was attached as an appendix to the report. The plan took account of work undertaken with directorates to identify their ICT priorities and also key enablers for change and modernisation. As the Flintshire Futures programme

developed and service reviews were completed, the action plan would need to be revisited to take account of new and revised priorities.

### **RESOLVED**

That the progress being made in the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy be noted, and the ICT Strategy Action Plan outlined in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

### **93. TOURISM STRATEGY NORTH WALES – 2010-2015**

The Executive Member for Regeneration presented the Tourism Strategy North Wales 2010-2015 which had been commissioned by Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW).

Marketing the region as a destination was an important element of the Strategy but Destination Management was also key to improving the visitor appeal of places within the region. The Strategy suggested that 'tourism hubs' should be defined within each county which would act as focal points for visitors.

The Chief Executive added that a useful meeting had recently taken place with himself, the Leader, the Executive Member for Regeneration, Flintshire County Council's Chief Regeneration Officer and Dewi Davies, the Regional Strategy Director of the Tourism Partnership, North Wales on Destination Management.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Tourism Strategy North Wales 2010-2015 be endorsed.

### **94. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2010/2011**

The Chief Executive presented the 2010/11 Quarter 1 performance reports which had been produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council. The update of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) summary was contained within the performance reports.

Appendix 1 of the report contained a scheduled of all of the Improvement Targets which were reported on a quarterly basis. This was in line with the revised list of Improvement Targets endorsed by Executive on 5 January 2010. A Member Workshop was scheduled to take place to consider whether a number of similar task based activities could be merged under one risk heading to simplify reporting and aid tracking of progress.

### **RESOLVED**

That specific issues for consideration be referred for management action and/or referral to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**95. WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME MONITORING REPORT 2009-10**

The Chief Executive presented the Council's Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2009-2010 which sought agreement for formal submission of the report to the Welsh Language Board (WLB).

Following last year's Monitoring Report, the WLB met with the Council to discuss and agree a range of Scheme commitments that required prioritised attention. As a result, Task and Finish Groups were being established to develop detailed improvement plans for a range of areas which were detailed in the report.

The Chief Executive congratulated all senior officers who had passed their Welsh examinations earlier in the year as a mark of commitment. The Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection suggested that all Members should be invited to learn the Welsh language.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted and formal submission of the report to the Welsh Language Board be approved.

**96. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2010/11 (MONTH 3)**

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) introduced the report which provided the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 3) for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2010/11.

There was projected in-year overspend of £2.006M which was made up of £2.914M on services offset by a contribution of £0.908M from Corporate Services. The Out of County Placement budget overspend formed a large part of Community Services and Lifelong Learning's total overspend (£0.914M and £0.915M respectively) and was the largest area of overspend across the total budget.

The Chief Executive said it was a concerning position to be in but he emphasised that the position would change throughout the year. Demand led services, such as Out of County Placements, had the biggest impact on the budget as specialist services had to be provided and variations in numbers could have an adverse effect on the projected outturn. However, the strategy was to remain within the total budget for the remainder of the year. A report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive and also to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Out of County Placements. In addition, the Director of Lifelong Learning was leading on complex Out of County Placement work which would have a positive impact. In addition, he said there had been a shortfall of income for Design Consultancy.

He commented on the ability to react to change, economic impacts and external Local Government Policy and Legislation.

On Out of County Placements, the Director of Lifelong Learning said that provision needed to be allocated and resources dedicated to people whilst being as efficient as possible. A number of things were being considered, such as possible discounts from providers and spend to save initiatives.

The Executive Member for Social Services said the Authority was duty bound to provide Out of County Placements and the situation could not be easily controlled. She felt the Welsh Assembly Government should review the budget situation as the problems were on a national level.

The Director of Environment commented on the shortfall of income for Design Services. A detailed review of projects had been commissioned and further projects were planned which would have a positive impact on the service. The projected capital programme figures for the future would be incorporated into the organisational review being undertaken.

### **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the General Fund Contingency Sum available as at 31 March 2011 be noted; and
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted.

## **97. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2009/10**

The Head of Pensions and Funds presented the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2009/10 and a minor change was recommended to the wording of the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement 2010/11.

The Treasury Management Annual Report for 2009/10 was attached as an appendix and a number of key points were detailed in paragraph 3.01 of the report. An additional sentence was recommended within paragraph 3.3.4 of the Policy Statement to state that 'where investment limits re expressed as a percentage these will apply at the time the investment is made'.

### **RESOLVED**

That the following be recommended to County Council:

- The Treasury Management Annual Report for 2009/10
- The additional sentence within the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement as outlined in paragraph 3.02 of the report

**98. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS – MAKING THE MOST OF OUR RESOURCES**

The Interim Corporate Finance Manager (Financial Control) provided details of the efficiency gains achieved in 2009/10, as set out in the 'Making the Connections' Agenda.

The target set for the Authority was £2.150M per annum and was based on the Authority's share of the Standard Spending Assessment. As the target was cumulative, the total efficiency gains to be achieved by the Authority over the five year period were £32.250M.

The value of efficiency gains achieved in 2009/10 was £10.698M. Whilst this was £0.052M below the Year 5 target, the cumulative actual for the five year period, £32.598M, was £0.348M over target. The declared efficiency gains included items relating to the HRA, General Fund Capital Programme and Pension Fund.

**RESOLVED**

That the efficiency gains achieved by the Authority be noted.

**99. APPROVAL OF THE EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the eighth annual report of the Flintshire Local Access Forum for approval.

The Annual Report had been completed in accordance with guidance issues by the Countryside Council for Wales. Once approved, a copy of the Annual Report would be sent to the Countryside Council for Wales for it to be placed on their central records of Annual Reports of all the Local Access Forums in Wales.

The Executive Member for Regeneration said the Local Access Forum had been supportive of the Heather and Hillforts Project and reminded Members that a presentation on that project was being delivered at Clwyd Theatr Cymru at 3pm that day.

**RESOLVED**

That the eighth annual report of the Flintshire Local Access Forum for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 be approved and submitted to the Countryside Council for Wales for their records.

**100. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented an update for the first quarter Workforce Information Report of 2010/11.

Two key areas of information were sickness absence figures and staff turnover.

On the sickness absence figures, the quarterly figures for 2009/10 showed a consistent reduction compared to 2008/09. The figure for Quarter 1 2010/11 was likely to reduce from 2.53 days when reported in the Quarter 2 report. This reduction was owing to the delay encountered in the return of some sickness forms.

On turnover, the number of leavers was reported as 344 but within the breakdown by directorate, it was reported as 346. This was consistent with previous reports where employees held multiple employments.

Work was ongoing to increase the number of exit interviews in an effort to improve the analysis of the reasons for leaving and to identify remedial actions for implementation.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that work was on-going to cleanse the data held on the Midland Trent system. The Chief Executive added that there was a high level Improvement Group to oversee the Midland Trent system improvement plan and a report would be presented to Executive and Overview and Scrutiny in October on those issues, and how they were being managed.

The Chairman said he was pleased to read that the concept of recognising employees who had an excellent attendance record was also being explored. The Chief Executive added that this would need to be done sensitively.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Workforce Information Report for the first quarter of 2010/11 be noted.

## **101. BUDGET REALIGNMENT – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

The Chief Executive presented the report which outlined the proposed budget realignment within services to children which reflected undertakings previously given to the foster care population.

Children’s Services wished to realign the budget to reflect the position for 2010/11 and utilise the funds released to cover the increased costs of the Emergency Duty Team and pressures upon the Family Support Team budget. This was due to increased numbers of children subject to care proceedings and the costs associated with court directed contact arrangements.

The Executive Member for Social Services took the opportunity to remind Members of the second Pride of Flintshire Awards Ceremony that was taking place the following evening. She encouraged attendance at this popular event which was an awards ceremony for looked after children in Flintshire.



## **RESOLVED**

That the realignment of the Children's Services budget through the virement as outlined in paragraph 3.05 of the report be approved.

### **102. GLAN Y MORFA COURT – PHASE 2**

The Executive Member for Housing presented the report which sought approval for a proposed second phase of improvement works to Glan y Morfa Court, Connah's Quay.

A consultation event had taken place on 15 June 2010 to which all of the tenants of Glan y Morfa Court had been invited to along with local Members. At the event, a presentation was given outlining proposals for a phase 2 and possible phase 3 of remodelling works. The overall feedback was very positive and tenants seemed particularly pleased that they were given the opportunity to raise their concerns and that their views would be taken into account as firm proposals were developed.

The Head of Housing added that following the feedback, officers and local Members considered what options were available. The favoured options that best met residents wishes and addressed the issue of unpopular outdated stock was to remodel phase 2 from 16 bedsits into 8 one-bedroom flats and to not proceed with a phase 3 at the moment. This would mean that 16 of the current bedsits within the scheme would remain at Glan y Morfa Court for the near future.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That a phase 2 remodelling of Glan y Morfa Court be approved;
- (b) That approval be given that the letting of flats that would be affected by a phase 2 remodelling of Glan y Morfa be stopped; and
- (c) That approval be given that the properties that would be remodelled in phase 2 be removed from the rental debit (once vacant), until the scheme is completed.

### **103. RIVERSIDE CARAVAN SITE**

The Head of Housing presented the report which sought approval to enable the conclusion of the agreement for the management of the Riverside Gypsy site with the National Gypsy Council (NGC).

The site, which was owned by the Council, was occupied under a management agreement dated 21 December 1997 with the NGC and a named manager. A revised agreement had been agreed with the NGC and the current site manager. This agreement had not been formally completed as the extent of officer authority was unclear.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That approval be given that responsibility for the site will rest with Community Services (Housing); and
- (b) That the Head of Housing be given authority to approve any necessary future amendments to the management agreement to reflect any operational changes to the management of the site, including the identity of the site manager and authority be given to enter into any future agreement for the management of the site in the event of the NGC ceasing to be the site manager (whether by agreement or otherwise).

### **104. THE BUILDING (LOCAL AUTHORITY CHARGES) REGULATIONS 2010**

The Director of Environment presented the report which sought approval to replace the Authority's existing Scheme for the Recovery of Building Regulation Changes and Associated Matters with the scheme set out in Appendix A, with effect from 1 October 2010.

A scheme of charges had been in place since 1 April 1999 based on The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998. This scheme had been updated annually with the last changes made on 1 April 2010.

New Regulations approved by the Secretary of State in February 2010 required all Local Authorities to approve a new scheme of charges to come into force by 1 October 2010. The new Regulations provided more flexibility for Local Authorities in setting their charges and relating the charge to the amount of time spent on each individual project. The new charges were a combination of standardised charges and individually determined charges for the more complex schemes.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That adoption of the new Flintshire Scheme for the Recovery of Building Regulation Costs and associated Matters, with effect from 1 October 2010, be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Environment to amend or replace the scheme of charges as and when required, following consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure Services and Public Protection.

### **105. GREENFIELD VALLEY TRUST LTD – ACCOUNTS FOR 2009**

The Director of Lifelong Learning presented the accounts of the Greenfield Valley Trust Ltd. For the period 1 January – 31 December 2009.

## **RESOLVED**

That the report be received.

## **106. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED DECISIONS**

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

The actions taken were as set out below:-

### Finance

- Write off of Council Tax and Business Rates in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules
- Housing Benefit Overpayment
- Application for Hardship Rate Relief

### Environment

- Release of Restrictive Covenant at 28 Kynaston Drive, Saltney Ferry

### Lifelong Learning

- Disposal of Bailey Hill Lodge, Mold

## **107. 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 items by virtue of exempt information under the paragraphs indicated of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Minute 108 – Paragraph 14

Minute 109 – Paragraphs 14 & 15

Minute 110 – Paragraphs 12, 13 & 15

Minute 111 – Paragraphs 13 & 15

## **108. INTRODUCING A NEIGHBOURHOOD OPTIONS APPRAISAL SYSTEM**

The Head of Housing introduced the report which sought approval for:

- the adoption of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal System
- utilisation of the adopted Neighbourhood Options Appraisal System, for an assessment encompassing 2 Mold Road, Connah's Quay and 149-159 High Street, Connah's Quay
- entering into negotiations for the acquisition of 149 High Street, Connah's Quay
- compensation payments to be made available for property within Area 1 on the map attached to the report, where a voluntary acquisition occurred. The arrangements were in compliance with the new Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement Policy

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the use of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal system as detailed within the report and Appendix 1 be approved;
- (b) That the use of the system to determine the future of 2 Mold Road, Connah's Quay and 149-159 High Street, Connah's Quay, be approved; and
- (c) That the commencement of negotiations with the owner of 149 High Street, Connah's Quay, in an attempt to acquire the property, be approved.

### **109. SCHOOL MODERNISATION STRATEGY – REVIEW OF YSGOL RHES Y CAE**

The Executive Member for Education introduced the report which sought approval for the process of consultation on options with relevant groups as required in the School Modernisation Strategy.

## **RESOLVED**

That the consultation process with the relevant groups be approved.

### **110. DELIVERY OF SHARED SERVICE FOR MINERALS AND WASTE PLANNING IN NORTH WALES**

The Director of Environment introduced the report which informed Members of progress on the development and implementation of the shared service.

The Chief Executive said this was a good example of collaborative working.

## **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted and the establishment and development of a shared Minerals and Waste Planning Service be supported.

### **111. ORGANISATION REDESIGN – CULTURE AND LEISURE**

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced the report which updated Members on progress with organisational redesign in Culture and Leisure and sought approval for the specific proposals in relation to the Head of Culture and Leisure and Public Open Space Manager.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the deletion of the two posts of Leisure Services Manager and Libraries, Arts & Culture Manager, with the creation of one new post of Head of Culture & Leisure be approved; and

- (b) That the deletion of the two posts of School Amenities Officer and the Head of Play Unit, with the creation of one new post of Public Open Space Manager, and the redesign of the existing vacant Technical Officer post as detailed in paragraph 3.09 of the report be approved.

**112. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 11.20a.m.

**113. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There were 2 members of the press in attendance.

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**Chairman**

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

<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>DATE: 21 SEPTEMBER 2010</b>
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<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MIN. NO. REFERS</b>
	NONE	