

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008**

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in County Hall, Mold on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

**PRESENT:**

**Councillor Q. R. H. Dodd (Chairman),**

**Councillor C. Legg (Vice-Chairman),**

Councillors: J. B. Attridge, S. R. Baker, D. Barratt, G. H. Bateman, C. S. Carver, Mrs J. C. Cattermoul, E. G. Cooke, R. Davies, Mrs A. J. Davies-Cooke, C. J. Dolphin, B. Dunn, E. F. Evans, J. E. Falshaw, Ms E. V. Gay, F. Gillmore, Miss A. M. Halford, R. G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, P. G. Heesom, M. Higham, H. T. Howorth, Mrs N. Humphreys, H. T. Isherwood, G. James, R. Johnson, Mrs C. N. Jones, Mrs N. M. Jones, R. B. Jones, Mrs S. Jones, R. P. MacFarlane, D. I. Mackie, Mrs D. L. Mackie, Mrs N. M. Matthews, D. Mcfarlane, Mrs H. J. McGuill, Mrs A. Minshull, W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, E. W. Owen, M. J. Peers, P. R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M. A. Reece, H. G. Roberts, I. B. Roberts, A. P. Shotton, N. R. Steele-Mortimer, Mrs C. A. Thomas, W. O. Thomas, D. E. Wisinger, A. Woolley, M. J. Wright and Miss H. Yale.

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: L. A. Aldridge, R. C. Bithell, D. L. Cox, P. J. Curtis, A. G. Diskin, Mrs G. D. Diskin, Mrs R. Dolphin, Mrs C. A. Ellis, R. J. T. Guest, Mrs C. Hinds, R. Hughes, L. A. Sharps and D. T. Williams.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, County Legal and Democratic Services Officer (Monitoring Officer), County Finance Officer, Director of Lifelong Learning, Assistant Director (Financial Management) (for Item No. 44) Democratic Services Manager and Principal Committee Services Officer.

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Messrs Heulin Gwyn Davies, Dave Wall and Alan Knowles attended as representatives of the Post Office for Item No. 45.

**39. PRAYERS**

The Chairman's Chaplain the Reverend Anthapurusha conducted prayers at the commencement of the meeting.

**40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made Declarations of Interest in respect of the following items.

- (a) Post Office Closures – North Wales (Min No. 45)

Councillors: B. Dunn, H.T. Isherwood, Mrs N.M. Jones, H.J. McGuill, C. J. Dolphin and Mrs C. A. Thomas.

The above Members declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the Chamber whilst it was being discussed as required by the Code of Conduct.

(b) Statement of Accounts (Min No. 44)

Councillors: J. B. Attridge, D. Barratt, I. B. Roberts and A. P. Shotton.

The above Members declared personal, non prejudicial interests in this item as Members of the Clwyd Pension Fund and the Monitoring Officer advised that in these circumstances it was in order for the Members to remain in the meeting and to be able to speak and vote on the Statement of Accounts.

**41. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**42. WELSH CLASSROOM ASSISTANT OF THE YEAR AWARD**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms Andrea Davies of Ysgol Y Llan, Whitford who had won this prestigious award. The Chairman referred to the excellent and innovative work that Ms Davies had undertaken.

The Chairman in offering congratulations on behalf of the Council presented Ms Davies with a bouquet and a gift to commemorate this achievement.

Councillor C.J. Dolphin was pleased to add his own personal congratulations as the Member in whose electoral division the school where Ms Davies worked was located.

Councillor N. R. Steele-Mortimer, in his capacity as Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, extended his own personal congratulations as did Councillor P. G. Heesom who referred to the work Ms Davies had undertaken previously at Ysgol Bryn Pennant.

Ms Davies was accompanied by Mr Elwyn Davies, the Chief Education Officer and Ms Carol Royals, the Headteacher of the school. The Chief Education Officer displayed the trophies that Ms Davies had been awarded and Ms Royals extended her own congratulations and thanks to Ms Davies upon the excellent work she had undertaken at the school and how she was held in the highest esteem.

She explained that Ms Davies would now be considered for the British Classroom Assistant of the Year at a ceremony to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008

and which would be televised on BBC2. There would be a strong presence from the school to support her.

Ms Davies thanked the Council for inviting her to the meeting and for the gift. As Ms Davies left the meeting the Council gave her a standing ovation.

#### **43. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ian Budd, the new Director of Lifelong Learning, to his first meeting of the Council.

The Chairman referred to the proposed criteria by which Notices of Motion were to be considered for Council and asked the Constitution Committee to give the issue appropriate consideration.

The Chairman also indicated that he had written a book on the history of his legal practice which contained general information on the history of Mold. He was now making copies of the book available at a discount price with all monies received being donated to his charities.

#### **44. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2007/08**

The Council considered the report of the County Finance Officer, previously circulated, the purpose of which was to seek Members' approval on the final Statement of Accounts for 2007/08.

The Council was informed that at its meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Members had accepted a recommendation from the Audit Committee and approved and adopted the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 (subject to audit). The audit of the 2007/08 accounts had now been completed and the statutory closure Audit Notice would be reported in the press in due course.

It was noted that as part of the final accounts process, Pricewaterhouse Coopers presented to the Audit Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the report "ISA 260 – Communication of Audit Matters to those Charged with Governance". The ISA (International Standards on Auditing) 260 required the Auditor to communicate relevant matters relating to the audit of the financial statements to those charged with Governance of the entity.

In the paper circulated at the Council meeting, it was noted that no changes were recommended by the Audit Committee. However, minor changes made to the Statement of Account subsequent to their despatch with the agenda for the Committee which met on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 were notified under the following headings:

- (a) Notes to the Core Financial Statements.
- (b) Group Statements.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor I. B. Roberts as the Chairman of the Audit Committee referred to the excellent debate at the Audit Committee

held the previous day and the pertinence of the questions asked. He also recorded his thanks to staff of the Finance Department and of Pricewaterhouse Coopers for the excellent work undertaken. In seconding the proposal the Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor W. Mullin, expressed similar sentiments.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the unadjusted misstatements as detailed in Appendix A of PricewaterhouseCooper's ISA 260 report (pages 10-13) together with the unadjusted reclassifications misstatement as included in Appendix B (page 18), not be amended in the accounts; and
- (b) That the final version of the Statement of Accounts be approved.

**45. POST OFFICE CLOSURES – NORTH WALES**

The Post Office had accepted an invitation to attend the meeting and were represented by Heulin Gwyn Davies, (Welsh Affairs Manager), Dave Wall (External Relations Manager) and Alan Knowles.

Prior to the opening of the debate, Councillor C S Carver referred to the information provided by the Post Office and the reference to Cymau Post Office which was identified as being in Denbighshire but was, in fact, within Flintshire. He also commented that the consultation period was now over the summer recess when Councils did not have a proper opportunity to discuss the document.

The Chief Executive submitted a report, previously circulated, which updated the Council on the Post Office closure proposals for Flintshire and North Wales and set out questions to obtain the Council's response to the proposals.

The Government had announced that Post Office Limited was to close 2,500 post offices across the country and to set up 500 out-reach centres to mitigate closures in some areas. The report expanded upon the closure proposals.

It was noted that Post Offices Limited had divided the United Kingdom into 47 review areas, based on groups of parliamentary constituencies and was consulting on the proposals for each review area on a rolling basis.

The Council was informed that on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Post Office Limited announced details of proposed branch closures across North Wales and opened a seven week public consultation exercise on its Area Plan for North Wales (attached as Appendix 1 to the report). It was noted that of the 323 existing branches, 66 were proposed for closure and of these, 14 would be placed with a much more limited "out-reach service". In Flintshire, 10 branches were proposed for closure and these were detailed in the report. However, this did not take into account the Post Office in Cymau.

Post Office Limited had also announced that it intended to trial an additional out-reach outlet at the Spar Store, Golftyn Lane, Connah's Quay and would be reviewing its performance and usage to determine whether it should remain in the longer term.

In announcing its branch closure programme for Flintshire and North Wales, Post Offices Limited indicated that it had sought to ensure that customers continued to have adequate access to Post Office Services by applying the minimum access criteria prescribed by the Government nationally as detailed in the report.

At the meeting of the Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008, initial consideration was given to the 'Network Change Programme – Area Plan Proposal for North Wales'. The Executive noted that the seven week consultation period was a very limited exercise which provided limited opportunity for debate on individual branch closures.

The report showed an initial Council response, which recorded the Council's dissatisfaction and disagreement with the Network Change Programme consultation, stating that the term "consultation" was a misnomer and that in effect the consultation process was advance notification of a rationalisation and change programme to the network of post offices across the United Kingdom (Appendix 2 to the report).

The Post Office had been invited to discuss openly with elected members and officers the following four areas of Network operation:-

- Resourcing of post offices to be retained to meet the additional customer demands transferred from areas no longer to be served by a post office;
- How outreach services would support, in practice, the areas no longer to be served by a post office;
- The operation of the post office development fund; and
- The impact of Council services on those customers who accessed Council services/made payments via Post Offices which included Rents, Council Tax, Education, Invoices, Library receipts and Mortgages.

On the final point, the evidence of transactions within a 12 month period demonstrated the importance of retaining the Post Offices within Flintshire. The ability of customers to make payments locally within their communities was crucial along with the importance the Council placed on the partnership arrangements with the Post Office in maximising points of access to allow a range of payment points for many Council services.

Post Office Limited was informed that the Council would be discussing these four issues at this meeting and had been invited to provide further

information to inform the debate and attend in person. As referred to above, the invitation to attend was accepted.

The Chairman of Postwatch Wales had also written to the Chief Executive setting out Postwatch's role within the current closure programme and outlined particular issues which any person or organisation may wish to raise with the Post Offices Limited when responding to the consultation. The letter was attached with the Chief Executive's reply, as Appendix 3 to the report.

In August 2008, Welsh Assembly Government issued a consultation document "A Refocused Post Office Development Fund" (PODF) setting out some draft proposals regarding the type of support a new fund could provide to diversify and improve post offices within Wales and inviting comment on the proposals. The Chief Executive explained that the new PODF would open from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 and would provide both capital and revenue monies. The initial scheme operated between 2002 – 2004. Grants totalling £4.1 million were provided to 106 post offices within the principality but were for capital costs only. It was noted that the closing date for responding to the consultation document was 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

The consultation document comprised a series of specific questions around the following key issues:-

- The type of activities a refocused Post Office Development Fund would support.
- The levels of funding awarded.
- The eligibility criteria.

The Council was informed that attached as Appendix 4 to the report was an issues paper for consideration which set out a series of specific questions for the County Council to consider around the above issues.

The Council went on to discuss the Post Office Card Account. In this respect a large number of individuals received a variety of State benefits by means of a Post Office Card Account. The tender for the delivery of these benefits was currently being reviewed by the Government and it was understood that at least one other organisation had expressed an interest in securing the contract. It was noted that if the Post Office Card Account contract was awarded to another party, it would have a serious adverse affect on the future viability of a large number of post offices across the United Kingdom with some estimates claiming that up to three thousand additional post office branches would close if the Post Office failed to secure the Post Office Card Account contract.

The Chairman invited the representatives of the Post Office to address the Council. Mr Heulin Gwyn Davies opened the presentation and thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting. In opening his presentation, Mr Davies advised that the Government had indicated that the Post Office must be commercially viable by 2011. He provided figures regarding the number of

post offices in the United Kingdom and those in Wales, together with the number which were managed independently. He indicated that, at present, the Post Office was losing £3.5m per week. Mr Davies commented that consumer behaviour was changing and it was necessary to respond. It was also difficult to deal with unplanned closures which were beyond their control.

Mr Davies referred to the public consultation undertaken by the United Kingdom Government between 2006 and 2007 and indicated that there were 2,500 submissions in relation to this consultation which he suggested was a disappointing response in view of the extent of the consultation. He felt that the response from public bodies in Wales was particularly disappointing.

He explained that when developing the Area Plan proposed for North Wales, Post Office Limited analysed a number of factors:-

- The proximity of the Post Office branches proposed for closure to other nearby branches.
- The number of customers currently using a particular Post Office.
- The size and ability of nearby branches to absorb extra customers.
- The commercial implications of any decision for Post Office Limited.

There were a number of demographic issues to be taken into account when these factors had been assessed.

Mr Davies continued that it was not ideal for the consultation to be undertaken during the recess period, however they were geared to the fact that the Government had decreed that they had to complete the exercise by the Autumn. Although the consultation period was due to end on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008, some Post Offices had already been relieved based on the representations that had been received.

Following the presentation by Mr Davies, the Chairman opened the debate to Members. Councillor M Wright indicated his intention to move a proposition which he felt was an addition to, rather than an amendment to, the recommendation detailed in the report. Councillor Wright duly moved, and was seconded by Councillor A Halford, the following:

*“This Council believes that the community has been short changed on the consultation period with Councillors not invited to key meetings and consultation letters going missing, and as a Council believe that to ensure information is received appropriately, the consultation period should be extended by one month”.*

He then spoke to the motion and expanded upon difficulties caused to rural communities with the closure of Post Offices, particularly when they became the last operating shop in a village. He used the village of Brynford by

way of example in his own electoral division. Councillor Wright referred to the lack of good access to the nearest available Post Office which was in Holywell. Members shared his view that it was particularly difficult for the elderly who relied on the Post Office for many of their services.

The Chairman took the vote on the motion and it was CARRIED.

Councillor F. Gillmore reported that the closures affected post offices within his electoral division. He explained that Gronant was not in Prestatyn as indicated in the Post Office document. He indicated that he had attended a consultation meeting in Ruthin and requested consideration for a mobile service in his area. He had already received a response on the basis that this was not a consideration although the consultation period was not due to expire until 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008, and therefore felt that Post Offices Limited had already made its decision.

Councillor A Halford raised an issue in connection with those Members who had left the meeting because they had declared prejudicial interests and the Monitoring Officer explained that in the circumstances they were required to withdraw from the meeting under the Code of Conduct.

To allow the information to be available for those Members, the Chief Executive indicated that the Post Office would be requested to provide a written submission of their comments. There were also details on the website which would provide the necessary information together with any press coverage following the meeting.

Councillor P. Macfarlane supported the recommendation for an out-reach service detailed in the report and referred to the circumstances at Golftyn Post Office. He accepted that transport was generally better in the urban areas than those in rural areas but the location of this particular post office was crucial for a number of people. He expressed his surprise that consideration was given to this closure as that particular area of Connah's Quay had an expanding population when there would be increased demand for Post Office Services. He also sought criteria on what would be regarded as successful for an out-reach post office such as the Spar shop in Golftyn.

Other Members commented generally on the proposals highlighted and how they might affect local communities in their Wards.

Mr Dave Wall, from the Post Office, responded on the points made. He reiterated details of the number of closures, the out-reach projects and the necessity to be commercially viable by 2011. He confirmed the criteria for use in determining the closures and that the demographic situation was also taken into account. He stressed that no one wanted to see Post Offices close but there were business implications which had to be considered. However, he stressed that consultation was real and that when valid information was received, it was duly considered, and decisions on closures had been changed.



He explained why Postmasters and Postmistresses were requested to keep proposals confidential prior to the consultation process.

Mr Wall also referred to the difficulties from a business point of view with the services the Post Office had lost, referring in particular to BBC Licensing and Benefits payments. The DVLA was also actively encouraging people to apply for car tax on line. However, he referred to a wide range of product services available at all Post Offices and displayed leaflets to illustrate this. He stressed that it was most important to get people to use the Post Offices and buy these services. By way of example, he indicated that if an insurance policy was sold it was good business for the Postmaster/Mistress. Mr Wall also referred to the Post Office Card account and felt that if they lost that contract, the effect would be significant.

With regard to the Golftyn Post Office, he explained that this was a trial period to identify the wishes of the customers and whether or not it would provide a more effective service for them.

Councillor A. P. Shotton also indicated that he wished to add to the motion already raised together with the recommendation contained in the report. He sought guidance if what he proposed was an amendment or if it could be added.

The Chairman indicated that he was happy for it to be added.

Councillor A. P. Shotton duly proposed and was seconded, by J. B. Attridge

*“This Council commits to undertake a scoping study to assess the possibility of providing Post Office Services within Flintshire County Council premises and with specific emphasis within the study upon utilising the Council’s mobile office so as to provide a mobile post office out-reach facility”.*

The Chief Executive went on to raise a number of questions and referred to the situation at the Golftyn Sub Post Office and suggested it was necessary for the Post Office to identify the reason for the choice of Golftyn being used as an out-reach Post Office and the criteria used. He referred to page 21 of the report on the Mobile Services and suggested it would be useful if the Council had information on how the facility could benefit Flintshire.

The Chief Executive also referred to an internal analysis undertaken for 2007/08 whereby the Council received a total of £18.5m by way of 220,000 Post Office transactions. The Chief Executive felt that a breakdown from the areas where this money was received would be useful in assessing how the income to the Council could be affected if particular Post Offices were closed. Members felt that this was a good suggestion.

The Chairman concluded the debate and the Chief Executive indicated that recommendation (i) and (ii) in the report had been addressed and need not be included in the Resolution.

This was accepted and Council agreed that the Resolution already approved by the Council, as proposed by Councillor M Wright, be included together with the proposition by Councillor Shotton and the points raised by the Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That guidance be sought from Post Office Limited about:
- Resourcing Post Offices to be retained to meet additional customer demands transferred from areas no longer to be served by post offices.
  - How out-reach services will support in practice the areas no longer to be served by a post office
- (b) That support in principle be given to the proposed reopening of a reformed Post Office Development Fund and respond to the Consultation paper in relation to the questions proposed at Appendix 4 of the report;
- (c) That the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions making clear the importance the County Council places on the social role post offices play in their local community and its concern about the impact that any future loss of business will have should the Post Office Card Account be discontinued;
- (d) That this Council believes that the community has been let down on the consultation period with Councillors not invited to key meetings and consultation letters going missing; and as a Council, believe that to ensure information is received appropriately, the consultation period should be extended by one month;
- (e) That this Council commits to undertake a scoping study to access the possibility of providing post office services within Flintshire County Council premises and with specific emphasise within the scoping upon utilising the Council's mobile office as to provide a mobile post office outreach facility;
- (f) That Post Office Limited be requested to provide information on the reason why the Golftyn post office was used as an experimental outreach office and the criteria used, and be requested to provide information on how the mobile services referred to in the report could be used for the benefit of Flintshire; and
- (g) That Post Office Limited be requested to provide detailed information on the breakdown of the income received, via post offices, to the County Council on an area basis.

**46. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION 2008/09**

The Council considered the report of the County Finance Officer previously circulated, the purpose of which was to present to the Council recommendations of the Executive for a setting of a prudent minimum revenue provision for the repayment of debt.

The County Finance Officer reported that at its meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008, the Executive considered the County Finance Officer's report in respect of a calculation of minimum revenue provision for 2008/09 and retrospectively for 2007/08.

The Council was informed that the report of the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008 detailed the revised arrangements and associated guidance in respect of:

- The four available options for making prudent provisions.
- The circumstances for using the options, two of which were available in respect of capital expenditure funded by way of Welsh Assembly Government supported borrowing, and a further two in respect of unsupported (prudential) borrowing.
- Capitalised expenditure by virtue of capitalisation directions.

The recommendations of the Executive of 5<sup>th</sup> August, to the County Council, were detailed in Section 4 Executive report, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Option 1 (Regulatory Method) be used for the calculation for the minimum revenue provision in 2008/09, (and retrospectively 2007/08) for all supported borrowing; and
- (b) That Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the minimum revenue provision in 2008/09, (and retrospectively 2007/08) for all unsupported (prudential) borrowing.

**47. DRAFT RECRUITMENT POLICY**

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, previously circulated, the purpose of which was to recommend the adoption of a recruitment policy for Flintshire County Council.

In detailing the background, the Chief Executive explained that it was essential for Flintshire County Council to have a recruitment policy which supported the development of the workforce with flexibility and potential to meet the future needs of the Council.

The Council noted that an effective recruitment policy would recruit into and from within the Council, people with the required behaviours, knowledge and skills in a fair, professional, timely and cost effective manner and would

promote the Council as an employer of choice. The policy would ensure that the Council had an objective, fair and transparent recruitment process which would not only protect the Council from claims of illegal discrimination, but would also ensure that the best candidates were selected for a given position. The report identified the key objectives of that policy.

The proposed recruitment policy would incorporate details of how the Managed Service (matrix) would operate for the procurement of agency workers. This policy defined the criteria to be applied to ensure agency workers were only used in appropriate circumstances.

The Council noted that the proposed recruitment policy had been developed in conjunction with the new Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) and the Establishment Control procedure as part of the wider modernisation of the Human Resources processes.

The Council was informed that a subsequent review of the draft policy had identified an anomaly concerning probationary periods which had now been clarified and, a minor revision had been made.

The Chief Executive mentioned the main considerations in developing this policy and these were detailed in the report.

Councillor A. P. Shotton indicated that he welcomed the report but enquired if there was any provision in the report to prevent influence from a member of any secret society having undue influence in the recruitment process.

The Chief Executive indicated that there was nothing specific at this stage in the policy but that it was always subject to revision.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposed Recruitment Policy as detailed in the report and as recommended by the Executive, be approved; and
- (b) That the Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources and Operational Development be given delegated authority to make any minor revisions to the draft Policy which may arise as a result of changes in operational or legislative requirements.

**48. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, previously circulated, which updated the Council on progress of the implementation of the first phase of the changes to the Senior Management Structure.

By way of background, the Chief Executive explained that the Council had received regular progress updates since approval of the business case for

change on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and the finalised structure and post titles, roles and responsibilities on the 19<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

The Chief Executive gave an update on the appointments made as part of the first phase and explained that the functions and services from the Directorate of Community and Housing were in the process of transferring to the new Directorates of Community Services and Environment with an apportionment of support services to each Directorate. Efforts were being made to communicate the changes and minimise disruption to services and anxiety amongst the workforce during a period of transition.

The Chief Executive also commented that the review of pay and grading for second tier officers was nearing completion and that the outcomes would be reported to County Council at the end of October as scheduled.

The second tier posts which were occupied by internal acting up arrangements or external interim management arrangements would be advertised for competitive recruitment once the pay and grading review had been completed and decisions made by Council.

On the post of Head of Housing, the Chief Executive explained that a temporary appointment had been made and that Maureen Harkin would be responsible for Housing Management and Maintenance Services and oversee continued modernisation and improvement in those services.

The Council also noted that the four corporate heads of service post were being reviewed as part of the review of pay and grading for the second tier. These posts would be subject to a matching process or competitive recruitment process depending on the outcome of the review, the extent of any change to the existing posts on the structure and the circumstances of the individuals affected.

The Chief Executive indicated that a full report would be made to the Executive on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008 on the proposals for the second phase of organisational change. The second phase would involve:

- proposed corporate organisational design and change management method and approach which would set out how and why change would be achieved and how consultation would be managed.
- those areas of Council function and service to be subject to specific review and design.

Functions and services were been selected for proposed review against criteria including the opportunities for greater integration as a direct consequence of phase one of organisational change; current performance and the scope for improvement; the scope for improved efficiency and productivity; the demand for services and public expectation; and external change (e.g. Government policy, market forces). A number of the functions and services

intended for review had been listed in the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007 report to Council, others had been referred to in Council documents including Assessment of Strategic Risk and Challenges and the Regulatory Plan.

The Chief Executive reported that the corporate method and approach, when endorsed, would be shared for discussion with Trade Union colleagues and inherent in that method and approach, early consultation would be offered on the reasoning for and the objectives of the specific review proposed for the selected functions and services.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the first phase was being implemented according to the agreement of Council within the timescales and budgets set for the change programme. The second phase was being developed for approval.

Councillor A. P. Shotton asked the Leader of the Council if he could provide details of the cost relative to the interim appointment of Head of Housing, particularly if the cost of that post was more expensive than that of previous postholders. The Leader indicated that he did not have that information with him but would be pleased to research it and provide the necessary information. The Chief Executive indicated that it had been the intention to fill the post on a permanent basis but it had not been possible to do so. He explained that the current interim postholder was an outstanding candidate and provided significant information relative to her recruitment and the terms of her employment. The Monitoring Officer explained that the interpretation of law on the data protection rights of individuals employed as consultants had recently changed with a subsequent effect on freedom of information requests. In the circumstances he advised it was inappropriate to provide such information as a matter of course and it would have to be formally considered in the light of guidance received.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**49. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.50 pm.

**50. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

There were four members of the press and public present.

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Chairman

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

<b>FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008</b>
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<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MIN. NO. REFERS</b>
Councillors: B..Dunn, H.T. Isherwood, N.M. Jones, H.J. McGuill, C.J. Dolphin, C.A. Thomas	Post Office Closures – North Wales	