

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
13 NOVEMBER 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Flintshire County Council of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 13 November 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Carolyn Thomas (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Amanda Bragg, Helen Brown, Clive Carver, David Cox, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Brian Dunn, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Ted Evans, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Trefor Howorth, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Stella Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Peter Macfarlane, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Tim Newhouse, Mike Peers, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, David Williams, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Derek Butler, Peter Curtis, Rosetta Dolphin, Alison Halford, Hilary Isherwood, Rita Johnson, Ann Minshull, Ian Roberts and Owen Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain for minute number 85

85. THE ARMY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

The Chair welcomed Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain who were in attendance to provide a presentation on the Army's role in supporting the Government's Defence Policy.

Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain gave a detailed presentation on the following areas:-

- Introduction
- Background
- Resources
- Primary responsibilities
- Next steps
- The Army's core values
- Apprentice programme
- Equipment
- Care and Support networks
- Looking to the future

The Chair thanked Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain for the interesting and informative presentation.

Councillor R.G. Hampson commented on the good work of the Armed Forces and asked what financial incentive was in place to encourage members of the public to become members of the Territorial Army (TAs). Councillor I. Dunbar said that all Members were immensely proud of the Armed Forces and asked for the Officers views on working alongside the TAs as a result of financial cuts to the Armed Forces.

Major Miller responded that members of the TA's received £1,600 a year following completion of all necessary training. Over the past 10 years more than 20,000 reservists had been deployed and had worked very well alongside Armed Service personnel.

A number of questions and comments were raised on redundancies within the Armed Forces and the protection for Armed Forces personnel who had been made redundant. Major Miller provided details on the timescale for redundancies and the level of voluntary redundancies currently being dealt with.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge raised concern on a young person who had recently been made redundant from the Armed Forces but had only scored ten points when applying for Local Authority housing and asked that this case be reviewed.

Councillor A.P. Shotton thanked Councillor Mullin for requesting that the presentation be made to all Members and thanked Major Miller and Staff Sargeant Brain for the interesting presentation. He said that through on-going discussions he hoped that Flintshire would host a North Wales Armed Forces Day in the future and asked if information could be provided at a later date on the value the Armed Forces Covenant had brought across the UK.

Major Miller explained that details on the Armed Forces Covenant could be found on the Armed Forces website and said that she would provide further information following the meeting.

Following the presentation the Chair advised that there would be a 10 minute adjournment. The meeting re-convened at 3.00 p.m.

86. PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed representatives of the Benefits Team to the meeting. The Team has recently won a Bronze Award at the National Awards Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation 2012 in the Most Improved Team of the Year Category. The Benefits Team were the only Team to be shortlisted in the UK wide event and were awarded Bronze for demonstrating sustainable improvements over a series of local and national performance indicators. She thanked them for their hard work and for the improvements made to the service which benefited the residents of Flintshire.

The Head of Finance introduced the Team to Members. She thanked them for the improvements made to the service and said that she was pleased that their efforts had been recognised.

Councillor W. Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management thanked the Benefits Team for their hard work and congratulated them on their achievement. These comments were echoed by a number of Members.

87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been received.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

89. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair confirmed that copies of the Chair's Communication had been sent electronically to all Members. She commented on the many notable events which had been attended by Councillor A. Minshull, Chair of Flintshire County Council and the current level of money raised for her charity.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge thanked the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning for renaming the Flint Leisure Centre in honour of Olympian Jade Jones which had been welcomed by all residents of Flint.

90. PETITIONS

No petitions were submitted.

91. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chair confirmed that no Notices of Motion had been received.

92. QUESTIONS

The Chair confirmed that no Questions had been received.

93. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chair confirmed that no Questions had been received.

Councillor J.B. Attridge commented that some Members had not received Edition 2 of the minute book. The Chair suggested that any Member who had not received the minute book contact Democratic Services and that any question they had could be submitted to the next ordinary County Council meeting.

94. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR UPDATE

The Head of Finance introduced the recommendations made by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 16 October, 2012 on the Treasury Management Mid Year Report for 2012/13. The key points contained within the Treasury Management Mid Year Report were outlined within the report. On Landsbanki investments, Flintshire received an additional payment in October, 2012 taking the total received to date to £1.7m of the £3.40m original investment. The pattern of future distributions was not yet known.

Arrangements were being made for the annual Member Training Workshop on the 29 January, 2012 which would be hosted by the Audit Committee. All Members were encouraged to attend the Workshop.

Councillor W. Mullin thanked the Clwyd Pension Fund Manager and his team for their work in preparing the report and for managing the investments of Flintshire County Council. He also thanked the Audit Committee for the work undertaken in scrutinising the reports. He proposed that the County Council approve the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2012/13. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

Councillor M.J. Peers commented on the debt maturity profile and suggested that information on investment rates and penalties for early repayment be included in future reports. He asked for clarification on the figures shown under the interim investment and performance report and the self-imposed restrictions as detailed in the report.

The Head of Finance thanked Councillor Peers for his suggestion on investment information and said that this would be taken on board for future reports. She explained that the financial information shown within the interim investment and performance report differed because one of the figures referred to the position of the Council at the end of August 2012 and the other figure referred to the projected figure for the end of the 2012/13 financial year. She also explained that details of a longer term investment had been included within the report as this deviated from the Council's self-imposed restriction of investing for no longer than 3 months.

In response to a question on the format of the report, the Head of Finance explained that the report submitted to County Council was the final version and that she would take on board Members comments that the word 'draft' should be removed in future.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest asked if the deposits received from Landsbanki included interest on the amount originally invested. The Head of Finance explained that the deposit received was the capital investment and did not include interest.

In response to a question on the transfer of the Treasury Management Function, the Head of Finance explained that as part of the Finance Function Review, responsibility for the managing of the Treasury Management Function was being transferred to the Strategy and Technical Team within Corporate Finance. This would not impact future reporting on Treasury Management.

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2012/13 be approved.

95. 2013 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES

The Chief Executive introduced the revised proposals for the Boundary Commission's 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales and advised on the process and timetable for submitting representations in response to the revised proposals. A summary of the revised proposals were attached at Appendix 1 of the report with full details being made available in the Member Services Library, each of the Group Rooms and on the Council's website.

The only material change was the name of the Dee Estuary proposed constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recommended that "the name of the county town of the county forming the larger part of the constituency is an appropriate name for the constituency and that therefore the proposed constituency be named Flint". Written representations on the revised proposals were invited during the consultation period between the 24 October and 19 December, 2012. The Commission had asked those who wish to make representations to bear in mind those previously considered and to only submit new representations.

Councillor W. Mullin proposed that the County Council note the report, process and timetable for submitting representations on the revised proposals. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council note the report, process and timetable for submitting representations on the revised proposals.

96. UPDATING THE CONSTITUTION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable Members to consider updating changes to the Council's Constitution pursuant to recommendations from the Constitution Committee. The proposed changes to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Constitution were detailed in the report. Proposed changes to Article 19.02, as agreed by the Constitution Committee were shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council proposed that the changes recommended by the Constitution Committee to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Council's Constitution be approved. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

RESOLVED:

That the changes recommended by the Constitution Committee to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Council's Constitution be approved.

97. REVIEW INTERNAL MEMBER FORA

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable Members to consider a recommendation from the Constitution Committee as part of the ongoing review of internal Member fora.

Most of the internal Member fora were undertaking or advising upon Executive functions which were the responsibility of Flintshire's Cabinet. In relation to such Member fora any Council decision could only be a recommendation to the Cabinet who had the final decision on whether such Member fora should continue or not. Attached at Appendix 1 of the report was a list of the internal Member fora and the recommendation on whether or not it should continue.

The recommendations of the Group Leaders and Constitution Committee on the following Member fora were detailed within the report:-

- Member Development Working Group
- Development Plans Panel
- Social Services Representation and Complaints Review Panel
- Land Disposal Panel
- Agricultural Panel

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council welcomed the report and proposed that the County Council support the recommendations within the report with an amendment that the arrangements outlined to replace the Land Disposal Panel and Agricultural Panel be amended to reflect that where there was a dispute between the local Member and officers on the disposal of land this would form part of a report to Cabinet. The proposals were seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge. The Chief Executive added that officers would ensure that a response had been received from a local Member before a decision on the disposal of land was proposed and this should be added to the changed procedure. The proposed changes by the Leader of the Council would be outlined within the future Cabinet report.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest spoke in support of the proposals but raised concern that not all the information requested by the Constitution Committee on the roles and responsibilities of member fora had been supplied. The Chief Executive said that reminders would be sent out to ensure that all the information requested would be available early in the new year for decision.

Councillor H.G. Roberts proposed an amendment that the membership of the Planning Protocol Working Group be increased to allow all Members of the Planning Committee to sit on this Group. The proposed amendment was not seconded.

Councillor M.J. Peers commented that all Members should be made aware of proposed land disposals in particular adjoining ward Members. He also commented that there would be no mechanism to call-in any decision made on the disposal of land valued at less than £250,000 and asked for clarification on the statutory safeguards in place for the disposal of land.

The Chief Executive explained that where an asset was disposed competitively this would be advertised. Depending on the locality of the land adjoining ward Members could also be consulted on any proposed land disposals and these issues would be addressed within the future Cabinet report. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services commented that currently a decision to dispose of land valued at less than £2m could not be called-in. He also explained that under the Local Government Act 1972 proposed disposal of public open spaces needed to be advertised in the local press.

In summing up, Councillor Shotton thanked Members for their comments and concurred with the concerns raised by Councillor Guest that not all information requested had been supplied and said that this matter would be taken on board to ensure that appropriate decisions could be made on the future of other Member fora.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Member Development Group be discontinued and that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly;
- (b) That the recommendations as outlined within sections 3.05 to 3.08 of the report which related to Cabinet functions be noted; and
- (c) That the arrangements outlined to replace the Land Disposal Panel and Agricultural Panel be amended to reflect that where there was a dispute between the local Member and officers on the disposal of land then the matter would need to be decided by Cabinet.

98. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor R.J.T. Guest, Chairman of the Constitution Committee presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 which detailed the work of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

He thanked the Head of Overview and Scrutiny and his Team for preparing the report and welcomed future engagement through overview and scrutiny on the effectiveness of regional collaboration projects. He proposed that the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be approved. This was seconded by Councillor J. Johnson.

Councillor R.C. Bithell commented on the good work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and concurred with the comments on the scrutiny of regional collaboration projects. He asked if the names of the Members who sat on the various Task and Finish Groups could be added to the updates within the report. The Chair explained that the names of Members who sat on various Task and Finish Groups were shown at Appendix 3 of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be approved.

99. **DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 1.00 p.m. and ended at 3.19 p.m.

100. **ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were two members of the press present.

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Chair