

CABINET
12 JUNE 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 12 June 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chairman)

Councillors Bernie Attridge (Deputy Leader), Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Peter Macfarlane and Billy Mullin

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Haydn Bateman, Clive Carver, David Cox, Brian Dunn, Ron Hampson, Patrick Heesom, Dave Mackie, Carolyn Thomas and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of ICT and Customer Services and Committee Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C.M. Jones declared a personal interest in minute number 15 because a relative was employed by one of the Colleges concerned.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - A POSITION STATEMENT FOR MEETING THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced a report to provide an overview of the financial challenges facing the Council and a strategic overview of the Council's medium term financial planning framework and timetable.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Members for the work they had been undertaking around the financial challenges facing the Council since taking up their posts following the annual general meeting. The report set out the clear financial pressures, such as the impacts of Welfare Reform and the shared Welsh Government (WG) and Council commitments to increase schools and social care budgets. A great deal of work had been undertaken by officers to address the predicted budget gap but further work needed to be carried out urgently to meet the challenges ahead.

The Head of Finance reported that the forward projections provided by WG show increased in Aggregate External Finance (AEF) of 1.1% and 0.4% in 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively. The level of AEF funding to the Council over the proceeding two years had been reduced. Against the cumulative reduction in funding the Council needs to fund the pressures of growth, demographic growth and service demands, and the impacts of the economic downturn, to protect

services and find resources to fund Council priorities for improvement and service growth. Further discussions will be held with Members over the coming weeks on future financial pressures.

The Leader confirmed that early discussions would be held with the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to consider how best to develop and refine the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Chief Executive commented that Members had contributed well to the progress made through the MTFS and that this should continue through working together to set out the Council's priorities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the ongoing work on the Medium Term Financial Plan be endorsed; and
- (c) That no changes be made to the 2012/13 budget as set on 1 March, 2012 prior to discussions taking place over the coming months in the light of the more detailed financial forecast and clarity over Council Priorities under a new Council and Leadership.

4. SECONDARY SCHOOL - AREA REVIEWS

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the responses relating to the consultations for Secondary School area reviews held in March and April, 2012.

In the 2009 report on the strategic management of education in Flintshire, Estyn identified tackling school modernisation as a key recommendation. The Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy contained a number of criteria for the review of schools including the percentage of surplus places. Detailed in the report were the three secondary schools which had significant surplus places over 25%.

In December 2011 the County Council approved renewed consultation on a range of options in each area, which had been formulated by Members in the Workshops. The latest full reports from the consultation responses had been placed in the Members' Library and were available on the Council's website together with additional correspondence and petitions received that did not fit against the set criteria for the response forms. A summary of the responses were detailed in the report.

The Leader commented on a detailed summary of the Cabinet report, copies of which were circulated during the meeting. He said that there was an opportunity to improve education within Flintshire and confirmed that a further report would be presented to Cabinet detailing the next steps in each area review.

The Chief Executive said that the consultation meetings had been well attended and recognised by school representatives as well conducted. The improved consultation process had met the objective of restoring trust and confidence in the process.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reports relating to the consultation process be received; and
- (b) That a further report with regard to the next steps in each area review be commissioned.

5. FLINT MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure introduced a report to inform Members of the outcome of the Flint Masterplanning exercise and secure agreement for the use of the document to inform policy and funding priorities as the basis for regenerating the town.

The need for a Masterplan, to guide the physical regeneration of Flint, had been identified as part of the Town Action Plan Programme. Following the Town Centre Healthchecks Study in 2008 the Flint Town Partnership had been established and undertook a range of town centre improvement projects. Following an agreement by the Partnership in November, 2010 a working group had been set up and DTZ had been commissioned in August 2011 to produce the Masterplan which had been finalised in March, 2012.

The Masterplan provided a clear framework for both the regeneration of the town centre and the redevelopment of the maisonette sites and adjacent multi-storey car park. It would ensure that the redevelopment of the new housing sites was undertaken sensitively and appropriately, given the town centre location, with the objective being to recapture a sense of place that was based on the town's historic past. Copies of the Masterplan had been made available in the Members' Library.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the Flint Masterplan be approved;
- (b) That officers be authorised to develop further the project proposals; and
- (c) That the Masterplan be used to inform future Planning Policy development for Flint.

6. 2011/12 Q4 AND YEAR END SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS AND OVERVIEW

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced the 2011/12 Quarter 4 and Year End service performance reports produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council. The report also detailed the draft end of year position of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) and progress made against the Improvement Target Action Plans and actual performance outturns against the targets.

Copies of the detailed Quarter 4 (January to March 2011) / Year End performance reports were available in the Members' Library and on request.

The Chief Executive provided details on the analysis undertaken for 45 of the 48 Improvement Targets which showed that 25 had achieved green status and drew Members attention to the four high risk areas as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That red performance areas outlined within the report be referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for management action;
- (b) That the draft year end position of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenged (SARC) contained within the performance reports be noted; and
- (c) That the progress made against the Improvement Target Action Plans and actual performance outturns against the targets as contained within the performance reports be noted.

7. CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK 2012/13

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced a report to advise Members of the changes to the National Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) for 2012/13.

The Chief Executive reported that guidance for the National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) and Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) for 2012/13 had recently been released by the Welsh Government (WG) and the Local Government Data Unity respectively. A summary of the changes were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the changes to the National Performance Measurement Framework for 2012/12 be noted.

8. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2011/12 (MONTH 11)

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the revenue budget monitoring information at Month 11 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which had been updated for the latest information available. The next budget monitoring report to Cabinet would be the Final Outturn on 10 July, 2012.

Members were asked to note the projected year end position as estimated at Month 11 which was a net underspend of £2.266m on the Council Fund and a net underspend of £0.497m on the HRA. The significant in-year projected variances to date were detailed in Appendices 2-6 for the Council Fund and Appendix 8 for the HRA. The most significant Council fund underspend was within Community Services which was projected to be £1.932m, however, a large proportion of that was in relation to a planned underspend within Social Services

for Adults in preparation for the Transforming Social Services for Adults review where efficiencies of £1.2m has been assumed in the 2012/13 budget.

For the HRA, the overall projected underspend of £0.497m represented an increase of £0.107m on the position reported at Month 9. The HRA showed a projected closing balance at Month 11 of £1.617m which at 6.4% of total expenditure satisfied the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%.

On Council fund unearmarked reserves, Appendix 7 detailed the level of contingency sum available. It was recommended that £1.500m of the available Contingency Reserve be ringfenced in 2012/13 to support organisational change costs. In each case, where investment was needed to improve services or make change to secure efficiencies, a business case would show the costs to be incurred, the change to be achieved and the 'payback'.

The Leader reported that the underspend of £0.118m within Environment was after the transfer of the underspend of £0.245m on Winter Maintenance to a reserve. The underspend had occurred as a result of lower salt usage in 2011/12 and had been set aside to mitigate the effects of any adverse weather in 2012/13.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the carry forward requests actioned under delegated powers be noted;
- (c) That the Council Fund Contingency Sum available as at 31 March, 2012 be noted;
- (d) That the ringfencing of £1.500m for investment in change be approved; and
- (e) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted.

9. BUSINESS RATES - WRITE OFF

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced a report to request authorisation to write off a single business rates debt amounting to £62,492.68.

The Head of Finance provided details on the write off and explained that there would be no financial implications to the Council or to local taxpayers in relation to the write off of bad debts for business rates since the Council collected business rates on behalf of the Welsh Government (WG) through a National Collection Pool in Wales.

RESOLVED:

That the write off of a debt amount to £62,492.68 relating to business rate charges for the period between 1 April 2011 to 14 February 2012 be approved.

10. SINGLE STATUS

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced a project update and assurance report on the delivery of the Single Status and Equal Pay Projects.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development explained that a workforce communication had been issued to all employees on 8 February, 2012, outlining the new timetable, the key milestones for completion and the target implementation date. Since that time considerable progress had been made in delivering the workstreams of the project and a further workforce communication had been issued in early May, 2012 to update employees on progress made and the next steps in the project plan.

Initial negotiation discussions had commenced in May, 2012 with Trade Unions on the design of a new pay and grading structure, terms and conditions of employment and Equal Pay. The detailed pay modelling exercise was due to begin in June, 2012.

The Chief Executive provided further details around the workstreams as detailed in the report. The project timetable gave an implementation date of November, 2012 with a ballot, which will be organised by the Trade Unions, expected to take place in September, 2012 and will give employees who are Trade Union members the opportunity to vote on the proposed agreement. Member Workshops will be arranged in due course to bring all Members up to date on the delivery of the Single Status and Equal Pay Projects.

The Leader commented that this was a complex issue and needed to be progressed to enable the Council to move forward. He provided details on the potential cost of the proposed Single Status Agreement and the settlement of Equal Pay claims which would be an additional financial challenge to the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the project update be noted.

11. WORKFORCE INFORMATION QUARTER 4

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced an update for the fourth quarter / whole year end of 2011/12.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided details on the following areas:

- Establishment
- Headcount
- Agency numbers
- Turnover
- Diversity
- Absence

In particular, she commented on the average number of agency workers and the associated expenditure which had reduced month on month. She also commented on the attendance record which had been slightly down compared to the same quarter last year. The Cabinet Member confirmed that key issues highlighted in the report would continue to be addressed.

The Leader welcomed the detailed information and said that it was appropriate for such detailed information to be considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee with future Cabinet reports only providing headline statistics.

RESOLVED:

That the Workforce Information Report for the fourth quarter / whole year 2011/12 be noted.

12. REVIEW OF OPTIONS - YSGOL RHES Y CAE

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to seek approval for officers to renew consultation with relevant groups on options for the future of Ysgol Rhes y Cae.

In line with the Council's School Modernisation Strategy, approved by the Executive in October, 2009 a review of any school that had more than 25% surplus places and had fewer than 15 pupils should be reviewed. Ysgol Rhes y Cae currently had a surplus of 80% and a total of 9 pupils. A report seeking approval for officers to review the school and consult on options had been submitted and approved by the Executive on 21 September, 2010. An initial three meetings had been held with staff, Governors and parents of pupils and feedback from the meetings together with written responses had been made available in the Members' Library. As the original consultations had been carried out in October, 2010 it was reasonable to require a new consultation process.

The Cabinet Member detailed the key issues for consideration as shown in the report, commenting particularly on the Educational Impact Assessment, Sustainability Assessment and Community Impact Assessment. In response to some of the comments made during the initial consultation, the possible increase in population of the village was not backed by the Local Development Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the consultation relating to the options outlined within the report be approved with a clear preferred option to propose the closure of the school in accordance with the statutory process.

13. AMALGAMATION OF SHOTTON INFANTS AND SHOTTON TALIESIN JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to seek approval for officers to carry out a series of consultations relating to the proposed amalgamation of Shotton Infant and Taliesin Junior School.

In accordance with the Flintshire County Council policy for amalgamating Infant and Junior Schools wherever possible, officers had liaised with the Headteachers and Chairs of the respective Governing Bodies to discuss proposals to amalgamate the two schools to provide an all-through Primary School, on the site of the present Ysgol Taliesin. The submission of a bid to replace the existing schools partly funded by the School Buildings Improvement Grant with a new school building had been approved by the Welsh Government (WG) in 2010.

Subsequent meetings with the full Governing Bodies of the schools and with staff indicated that there was a general support for an amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools to form a through Primary School. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management spoke in support of the report and commented on the successful amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools at Broughton.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a period of consultation with staff, Governors and parents of both Shotton Infant and Taliesin Junior Schools in relation to the proposed amalgamation be approved; and
- (b) That the outcome of the consultation period be related back to the Cabinet in a subsequent report.

14. REPORT ON THE AMALGAMATION OF HAWARDEN INFANTS AND RECTOR DREW VA JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to seek approval for officers to carry out a series of consultations relating to the proposed amalgamation of Hawarden Infant and Rector Drew Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Junior School.

Following the retirement of the Headteacher from Rector Drew Voluntary Aided School in Easter 2012, officers liaised with the Anglican Diocesan Director of Education, Headteacher of the Infant school and Chairs of the respective Governing Bodies to discuss the immediate interim arrangements for the management of the Schools, and the proposal to consider the amalgamation of the two Schools. Subsequent meetings with the full Governing Bodies of the Schools and with the Staff indicated that there was a general support for an amalgamation to form an all-through Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School, which would occupy the existing accommodation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a period of consultation with staff, Governors and parents of both Hawarden Infant and Rector Drew Junior Schools in relation to the proposed amalgamation be approved; and
- (b) That the outcome of the consultation period be related back to the Cabinet in a subsequent report.

15. **REPORT ON THE AMALGAMATION OF DEESIDE COLLEGE & YALE COLLEGE**

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to inform Cabinet of the response to the consultation over the proposed amalgamation of Deeside College and Yale College. The response had been agreed by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Education prior to the meeting due to the need to respond by the deadline of 24 May, 2012.

The Director of Lifelong Learning drew Members attention to the Council's observations as detailed in the report. Whilst supportive of the principles underpinning the merger proposal, there were some key areas in which the Council would expect and need clarification and involvement as both a key partner to the college and as a 'champion' on behalf of learners.

RESOLVED:

That the principle of the merger of the two Colleges be supported noting that there were also key risks to be addressed.

16. **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

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

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Corporate	Merger of the North East Wales and North Wales Central jurisdictions into a single coronership for Flintshire, Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy.
	Amendment to Internal Audit staffing structure – increase the establishment by 0.3 FTE.
	Amendment to Corporate Finance staffing structure – following a request from the potholder, reduction of Insurance Advisor post from 1 FTE to 0.6 FTE (saving of £17,020p.a).
	Write Offs for February and March 2012.
	Creation of a temporary post – Programme Manager – Welfare Reform for 12 months. The position will be offered as a secondment opportunity.
Environment	Changes to fees and charges – Public Protection (Pest Control) 2012/13. Amendment to 2012/13 fee to £39.98 following an incorrect fee listed in 2011/12 of £35.35 when it was £38.82.

Proposed puffin crossing B5126, Mold Road, Connaught Quay. One unresolved objection – recommended to be overruled.

Proposed dedication of Council owned land as a public footpath in the vicinity of Flint Point, Flint.

Community Services

Social care charges for adults – uplifted using the formula previously agreed by the Executive

Domiciliary & day care rates (including direct payments).

Care fee rates – Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils, together with care home owners and Care Forum Wales have developed a North-East Wales Methodology to inform the calculation of fair fees. Rates have been set using that methodology.

The joining of two properties (27 & 29) Strand Walk into one property for one family with a disabled child.

Letting of vacant warden property at 1 Glan y Morfa Court to Age Concern who wish to lease the property for 10 years at an agreed annual rent.

Disposal of Canton Depot, Bagillt, Holywell which has been declared surplus to requirements.

Lifelong Learning

Library Fees and Charges – Proposed Amendments 2012-13.

17. 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 paragraph 15 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

18. COMMUNITIES FIRST FUTURES

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure introduced a proposal for the future round of Communities First in Flintshire, following the

Welsh Government's rejection of the Council's original two cluster bid, which had been approved at the Executive meeting on 27 March, 2012.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred to the deadline for the bids as outlined within the report. Due to the timescale needed for bids to be submitted, he explained that there was provision in the Council's Constitution for an urgent decision to be made to avoid delay caused by a possible call-in, if agreed by the Cabinet and the Chair of the Council.

The Director of Environment highlighted slight amendments to sections 2.02, 3.01 and 3.09 of the report. The Cabinet Member detailed the background to the report and in highlighting the considerations undertaken, provided detail on the revised proposals.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals of the Council's revised bid be approved;
- (b) That the indicative staff structure for the two clusters as shown Appendix E of the report be approved in principle;
- (c) That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure to amend the bid, to reflect any detailed comments from the Welsh Government; and
- (d) That the decision be urgent, and should not be subject to call in, because delay would cause the Council to miss the deadline to submit its application for funding.

19. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 11.03 a.m.

20. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were two members of the press and two members of the public in attendance.

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Chairman