

CABINET
18 DECEMBER 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 18 December 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: Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Patrick Heesom, Nancy Matthews and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Environment, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of ICT and Customer Services and Committee Officer

120. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council gave notice that there would be a change in the order of the agenda and that Agenda Item numbers 11 and 9 would be considered before Agenda Item number 4.

121. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member for Education declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item number 7: Review of Public Conveniences as he was a Trustee and Board Member of the Daniel Owen Centre, Mold. He relied on the exemption in paragraph 12 of the code of conduct and remained in the room during the discussion on the matter.

122. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 November, 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

123. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2013/14

The Leader of the Council presented the first draft of the revenue budget for the Council Fund for 2013/14 for initial approval for 1) further work and 2) presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout January, 2013.

The Leader of the Council commented on the financial challenges facing the Council and explained that following the Annual Council Meeting the current Administration had given a commitment to protect 'front line' services. He thanked Cabinet Members and officers for the work undertaken in preparing the draft revenue budget proposals which he said indeed protected 'front line' services and increased the base budget provisions for education and social services. He also commented on the Administration's commitment to protecting the core investment in local services, such as, bus travel and play schemes,

where there had been a reduction in grant funding from the Welsh Government (WG).

The Chief Executive outlined the aims of the draft budget for 2013/14 as detailed in the report and commented on this being a 'stepping stone' budget for the new Council being led by a new Administration. He confirmed that despite the interim nature of the budget there was a strong budget alignment with the 10 Improvement Priorities which had been re-adopted by the new Council within its Improvement Plan. He outlined the Council's previous success in setting balanced budgets whilst investing in key priorities, meeting growths in service demands and absorbing the cost impacts of inflation. The Council had achieved this through developing internal programmes of change and reform to make efficiencies, through collaboration and cost-sharing work with partners, and through service reviews and change.

The Head of Finance explained that the current projected budget gap for 2013/14 was £1.480m which included £1.063m recurring base budget and £0.417m for one-off and for time limited items. Details of the current budget proposals were summarised within the report. Work would continue on eliminating the budget gap over the coming weeks. This would be through the identification of further service efficiencies and the implementation of cost control measures.

The Head of Finance circulated a briefing note on the Final Local Government Settlement for 2013/14 which had been announced on the 11 December, 2012. The note provided further details around the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) which had been confirmed as a new responsibility for the Council. The Minister for Local Government had announced in the Final Settlement an additional £4.6m of additional funding across Wales to assist Local Authorities with the costs of introducing the CTS scheme and work was underway to assess the specific implications for Flintshire. The briefing note also provided details on the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) which had decreased by £0.120m. It was noted that for specific grants where only limited information had been received to date.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the report and outlined their own commitments to protecting 'front line' services.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that longer-term planning and decisions on the base budget allocations would be reviewed as an early priority for 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the Council Fund revenue budget proposals, which were in progress, and would be subject to consideration by Overview and Scrutiny in January, 2013 be endorsed.

124. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 TO 2022/23

The Leader of the Council presented a report to:-

- Propose the allocation of funding to the core capital programme in 2012/13 (with indicative allocations for future years); and
- Set out the work that had been undertaken (and continued), to develop a Council Fund Capital Strategy and 10 year Capital Programme for the Council.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the comments made by Members during the Capital Workshop held on the 22 November, 2012 had informed the report.

The Director of Environment explained that two of the key objectives of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) were to ensure that revenue and capital resources were used to achieve the Council's priorities and objectives. The aims of the Capital Strategy together with details on available capital funding were outlined within the report. The report also detailed that a further £4m was to be made available across Wales by the Welsh Government (WG) in 2013/14 under the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) for highway infrastructure, in addition to this, the WG had recently announced an extension of the LGBI to include schools, which would bring forward funding of £200m across Wales.

The Head of Finance reported on the total projected funding available over the 10 year period 2013/14 to 2022/23 which amounted to £108.516m. There was currently no general funding available to support new capital investment outside of the core programme schemes. Details of the 'core' capital block allocations were outlined within the report and at Appendix 2 of the report.

The Leader of the Council reported that a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been scheduled for the 31 January, 2013 to enable all Members the opportunity to consider the capital programme proposals as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work which had been undertaken (and continued) to develop a Council Fund Capital Strategy and 10 year capital programme be noted; and
- (b) The allocation of funding to the core capital programme in 2013/14 as shown at Appendix 2 of the report (noting the indicative allocation for future years), subject to input by Overview and Scrutiny be approved.

125. SELF-EVALUATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2012

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the draft 2012 self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People. He explained the purpose and process of the self-evaluation as detailed in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Education commented that Flintshire continued to be one of the highest performing Local Authorities in Wales on indicators at Key

Stages 3 and 4. He also commented on a number of other areas where improvements continued to be made, such as, school attendance and education opportunities for young people. He outlined areas where improvement was needed and said that the self-evaluation would assist Members, Head teachers and governing bodies in concentrating on areas where improvement was most needed.

The Director of Lifelong Learning highlighted further improvements, such as, the outcome performance for secondary school pupils which were amongst the highest across Wales. He also said that Flintshire had been recognised as improving the number of Members overseeing school improvements in individual schools.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report and commented on the school bandings which had been published, showing positive results for schools in Flintshire. He said that it was important that the Council focused its attention on the areas where improvement was needed and welcomed the Cabinet Member for Education's comments on this. He also referred to earlier discussions and again highlighted the increased budget proposals for education.

The Chief Executive welcomed Cabinet Members' comments and highlighted the strong working relationship between the local authority and individual schools across Flintshire. Flintshire was an education authority which showed its capability to support and achieve performance and improvement.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved;
- (b) That the Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning, via consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education be authorised to finalise and submit the self-evaluation document.

126. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling presented an update on the progress made within the waste collection service, six months after the service review. He provided a detailed update on current service performance explaining that the number of missed collections had fallen to 80 for every 100,000 collections made each week. In addition to the recommendations within the Action Plans, the following changes had been made to the new service:-

- The service had been rolled out to all Flats in the County;
- A 'Scatter' round had been introduced to properties with difficult access points' and
- Saturday collections had been piloted.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling also provided a detailed update on feedback received on the service together with the anticipated efficiencies for 2012/13. He said that the service had now stabilised

and the staff and workforce were making great efforts to ensure that the service operated at the levels residents and Members would expect of it.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Cabinet Member for the detailed update and welcomed the continued collection of side waste.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made within the service since the service review in March, 2012 be noted; and
- (b) That the current arrangements at the Council's Household Recycling Centres (HRC) sites remain at the current level, subject to a further report, once the impact of opening the proposed new Sandycroft HRC site and the information from the Welsh Government research project could be assessed.

127. STREETSCENE REVIEW

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment presented an update on the outcome of the review of the Streetscene service six months after its launch in March, 2012. He provided a detailed update of progress on each of the following objectives:-

- Improving Customer Access to the Service
- Raising Public Awareness of the Service
- Operational Changes to deliver a more joined up Service
- Depot Rationalisation

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment also outlined the Service Standards for Streetscene which had been in operation since its launch and were shown at Appendices 2 and 3 for approval by Cabinet. A further report on progress of the Streetscene service would be presented to Cabinet during the 2013/14 financial year.

The Chief Executive reported that there was a commitment to more frequent services in areas prone to localised flooding e.g. gully cleaning where severe weather was forecast.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Action Plans for the service as shown at Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (b) That the Councils Grass Cutting Policy as shown at Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (c) That the Streetscene Standards as shown at Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and
- (d) That a further report on the progress of the service be presented to Cabinet during the 2013/14 financial year.

128. REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment presented a report to seek approval for the revised delivery arrangements for the Council's Public Convenience Service. Options for the revised service provision were outlined within the report together with the outcomes as shown at Appendix 1.

The Leader of the Council said that consultation would be carried out with Town and Community Councils on taking over maintenance of the sites proposed for closure.

RESOLVED:

That the future delivery option for each of the Public Convenience Facilities as shown at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

129. FLYING START STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 - 2015

The Cabinet Member for Social Services presented a report to seek approval for the proposed expansion of the Flying Start programme in Flintshire. The proposed areas for expansion in Flintshire were outlined within the report and were areas identified as having the highest concentration of 0-3 year olds living in income benefit households.

The Director of Community Services welcomed the proposed expansion and commented on the positive impacts in the areas where Flintshire Flying Start was currently delivered.

In response to a question on future funding, the Chief Executive explained that the expansion of the Flying Start Programme was part of the Welsh Government Programme for Government and, therefore, he did not envisage a reduction in future grant funding.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals for the expansion of the Flying Start Programme in Flintshire be approved.

The Leader of the Council gave notice of an adjournment. Following a 15 minute adjournment the meeting reconvened at 11.20 a.m.

130. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management presented the 2012/13 Quarter 2 service performance reports produced at Divisional level for the period July to September 2012 together with the updates, progress and assessment included within the performance reports. He provided further information on the areas of high risk identified in the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) and the work undertaken to address those areas.

The Chief Executive highlighted the summary of the Council's overall assessment where good progress was being made in 35 of the 66 secondary priorities and satisfactory progress being made in the remaining 31. He provided further information on the areas of high risk explaining that the risk around leisure revenue funding had been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure said that an action plan was being developed and implemented to manage the leisure revenue funding in-year deficit which would see the risk improve.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That any specific issues outlined within the report which may require management action and/or referral be referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration; and
- (b) That the performance reports be noted.

131. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 (MONTH 6)

The Head of Finance presented the latest budget monitoring information (Month 6) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2012/13.

It was reported that the projected year end position, as estimated at Month 6, was a net overspend of £0.714m on the Council Fund and a net underspend of £0.349m on the HRA. The in year over/ (under) spends as detailed in the report reflected a number of risks and assumptions. The Head of Finance explained that it was the intention of Management to contain the currently projected variation within the overall agreed Council budget for the year. As part of the ongoing work to develop the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), opportunities to generate efficiencies were being explored including those that might have a positive impact on the 2012/13 projected outturn.

The Head of Finance provided an explanation on the likely future requirement to provide for Flintshire County Council's share of liability relating to a scheme of arrangements set up with Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd (MMI) in 1992.

The Cabinet Member for Housing reported that as a result of the projected underspend within the HRA, the number of kitchen replacements had been increased to 1,600 together with the number of bathroom replacements almost doubling. Cabinet welcomed this information and asked that it be provided to the local press to inform tenants of the additional works being carried out.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Cabinet Member for Housing for the update and commented on the positive impact this would have to show Flintshire County Council's commitment to meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the management actions being taken to address the projected overspend be noted;
- (b) That the Council Fund contingency sum (overdrawn balance) as at 31 March 2013 (paragraph 5.02) be noted; and
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 6.03) be noted.

132. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13 (QUARTER 2)

The Head of Finance introduced the latest capital programme information for 2012/13 (Quarter 2) which detailed the cumulative information relating to each programme as shown in Appendix A of the report.

The Leader of the Council commented on the current economic climate which was impacting on anticipated capital receipts. This was a key challenge for future Capital Programmes as the situation was likely to continue until the economy improved.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved.

133. CORPORATE DEBT POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management presented a report to seek approval for the introduction of a Corporate Debt Policy for the collection of Sundry Debt Invoices, Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing and Council Tax Benefit overpayments and Housing Rents. The report had been presented to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who endorsed its introduction at a meeting held in November, 2012.

The Head of Finance explained that the Policy, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, had been developed to adopt best practice to ensure that all monies due to the Council were collected quickly and in a consistent manner. A Fair Debt Policy was currently being finalised and would be presented to Cabinet in February, 2013 following consideration of the Policy by the Welfare Reform Programme Board in the New Year.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Debt Policy be approved.

134. TOWNS CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure presented a report to inform Cabinet of the range of current capital investment programmes that would benefit the town centres in Flintshire. The report provided a summary and purpose for each of the investment programmes.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report and commented on the investments outlined for the town centres of Flint and Buckley as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the capital investment programmes benefiting towns in Flintshire be noted.

135. WELSH GOVERNMENT HIGHWAY PRUDENTIAL BORROWING INITIATIVE

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment presented a report to seek approval for the Council's bid to Welsh Government (WG) for highway maintenance funding through their Prudential Borrowing initiative for the financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15. The first year's bid for funding were agreed by the Council's Executive in February, 2012 and the bids for Years 2 and 3 of the scheme were required to be submitted to the WG by the end of December, 2012.

All Cabinet Members welcomed the report. The Chief Executive said that there was scope to explore further with the WG similar future Prudential Borrowing initiatives for shared central-local service priorities.

RESOLVED:

That the outline bid for the second and third year of funding from the Welsh Government under the Prudential Borrowing initiative as set out in paragraph 3.02 of the report be approved.

136. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment presented a report to provide an update on the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in Flintshire and to establish an 'Off-street' Parking Policy for the County. Contained within the report were documents relating to Contravention Codes, Residents Permits and Disabled Parking Bays attached at Appendices A, B and C, all of which required approval from Cabinet.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment provided additional information around the proposals to use the Wales Penalty Processing Partnership (WPPP) to process all Parking Contravention Notices, the nomination of a Councillor to serve on the Adjudication Joint Committee and the historic inconsistency in the way the Council's car parks were managed across the County. In moving the report, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment proposed an amendment to the recommendations outlined within the report, that Cabinet approve the 'Off Street' Parking Policy shown in Appendix D, subject to the views expressed during the Scrutiny process in January, 2013 and a review of all car parks listed against the criteria set out in paragraph 10 of Appendix D, with consideration of any temporary exemptions for special reasons. Following the Scrutiny process it was also proposed that a further report be brought back to Cabinet on Appendix D to finalise the proposals.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling said that the Council should be mindful of the sensitivity around estate parking and said that this would need further consideration in the future.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the list of Contravention Codes and Polices on Residents Permits and Disabled Parking Bays shown in Appendices A, B and C be approved;
- (b) That the 'Off Street' Parking Policy shown in Appendix D be approved, subject to the views expressed during the Scrutiny process in January, 2013 and a review of all car parks listed against the criteria set out in paragraph 10 of Appendix D, with consideration of any temporary exemptions for special reasons;
- (c) That the Summary Business Case shown in Appendix E be approved for submission to the Welsh Government, as a formal request for Civil Parking Enforcement powers to be conferred upon Flintshire County Council;
- (d) That the use of Wales Penalty Processing Partnership (WPPP) to process all Parking Contraventions Notices (PCNs) be approved;
- (e) That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to finalise all detailed aspects of the process, including the matters listed in paragraph 3.09 of the report;
- (f) That the Cabinet Member for Environment, or their nominated substitute, be approved as the Council's representative on the Adjudication Joint Committee outlined in paragraph 3.04 of the report; and
- (g) That a further report be brought to Cabinet on Appendix D, to finalise the proposals.

137. WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the Council's Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report for 2011-12 together with the response of the Welsh Government (WG) to the report. A copy of the Council's submission and the WG response had been made available in the Members Library and on the Council's website.

The Council was achieving 5 of the 9 Standards in full and was partly achieving 4 of the Standards. Further information on the partly achieved standards were detailed within the report. The Welsh Government assessment of the report noted some informative in performance compared to 2010-11.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet note the Welsh Public Library Standards Report for 2011-12 and response of the Welsh Government; and

- (b) That Cabinet endorse the actions outlined in 5.01 of the report to enable the Council to improve its performance against the Standards.

138. INCLUSION SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to inform Cabinet of progress on implementation of the Inclusion Service Review Programme.

Following the October, 2011 LAESCYP Inspection, the Council undertook a review to ensure that it meet the needs of all pupils. This was having a positive impact in supporting pupils with speech and language needs and those with hearing impairment in cluster-based mainstream schools. Further details of the aspects of the review programme which had been completed to date were outlined within the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That progress in relation to the Inclusion Service review programme be noted; and
- (b) That the commission development of a project initiation document for the next phase of the programme be considered in January, 2013.

139. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF PENYFFORDD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report to seek approval to begin consultations with the school communities with regard to amalgamation of the infant and junior schools to form a primary school. The agreed policy of the Council was to amalgamate infant and junior schools whenever appropriate, and the amalgamation of Penyffordd infant and junior schools would see the completion of the planned programme.

The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that the existing infant and junior schools were on separate sites; therefore the new school would be on a split site. Evidence showed that where appropriately organised and managed this did not have a negative impact on the outcomes of the school as demonstrated by other primary schools on split sites, and example of which is at Mynydd Isa.

Consultations would be undertaken in the New Year with staff, governors, parents/carers and the community following which a further report detailing the responses to the consultation would be presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the process of consultations to be undertaken by officers early in the New Year be approved.

140. UPDATE ON YSGOL RHES Y CAE

The Cabinet Member for Education provided an update on the outcome of the statutory process to the proposed closure of Ysgol Rhes y Cae following publication of the notice of closure published on the 16 October, 2012.

Two objections had been received following publication of the notice and details of the objections were presented in the report. In line with current legislation any formal objections have to be determined by Welsh Ministers, therefore the decision making process had been transferred to the relevant Minister.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Cabinet Member for Education for the update and said that the Cabinet would await further information following the decision of the relevant Minister.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That Cabinet await the decision made by Welsh Minister on the proposal.

141. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

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

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Lifelong Learning Leisure Services Tariff 2013

142. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - THE 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 paragraph 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

143. RESTRUCTURE OF HOUSING SERVICE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the proposed restructure for the Housing Service Senior Management Team, detailing the reason a review had been undertaken and the financial impact of the proposed restructure.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet support the proposed restructure of the Housing Services Senior Management Team.

144. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 12.26 p.m.

145. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

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Chairman