

CABINET
23 APRIL 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 23 April 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chairman)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones and Billy Mullin

APOLOGY: Councillor Peter Macfarlane.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Ron Hampson, Patrick Heesom, Dave Mackie and Carolyn Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance

216. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance advised that agenda item number 6, Welsh Government Consultation on the European Structural Funds and Rural Development Plan Programmes 2014-2020, would be considered as the first item following declarations of interest and consideration of the minutes.

217. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. M. Jones declared a personal interest in agenda item number 21, Shotton Infant and Junior Amalgamation.

218. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

219. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROGRAMMES 2014-2020

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the current set of programmes (2007-2013) would come to an end in 2014 and development of the next Programme (2014-2020) was underway at the European, UK and Wales level. The Welsh Government (WG) had issued draft proposals for their approach to the next Programme and responses were due on this consultation in

late April. Concurrent with this was the review of Assisted Areas throughout Wales, where State Aids could be offered to eligible investment projects.

WG had set out the activities that it intended to support through the Programme in East Wales, details of which were in the report. For the Rural Development Plan (RDP), WG had indicated that it would ensure a more flexible approach by removing the restrictive framework of Axes and Measures used in the 2007-2013 Programme.

The proposed responses to the Structural Funds consultation and the RDP consultation were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the current Welsh Government consultation on the programmes be noted and the proposed responses to Welsh Government be approved; and
- (b) That the bid for continued Assisted Area designation in Flintshire and the work with appropriate partners within the region to achieve this be supported.

220. DESIGNATION OF CITY REGIONS IN WALES

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance provided an update on the review of establishing City Regions in Wales and the position on the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) area.

In early 2012, Dr Elizabeth Haywood was appointed to consider the potential for establishing City Regions in Wales. Whilst rejecting the case for a City Region, based around Wrexham, Deeside and Chester, the Report by Dr Elizabeth Haywood made four recommendations with implications for the MDA and the cross-border economy:

- To become a real strategic force in the region, the MDA will need to be given relevant powers and funding. It will also need to change its structure, to incorporate strong private and education (HE/FE) sector membership.
- The MDA should have the authority to develop a cross-border labour market plan, and to develop and deliver a regional skills agenda
- The MDA should take the lead in promoting the region for investment purposes, making a virtue of its cross-border nature and rejecting the existing tendency to focus marketing on one side of the border or the other
- There should be a Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh Government and UK Government covering cross-border transport planning (binding on independent bodies such as Network Rail), with the MDA, or Taith and the Cheshire Local Transport Partnership, having a statutory role to be heard on proposals of regional significance.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance said that whilst it was disappointing that Dr Haywood was unable to accept the evidence presented, the recommendations made, if approved by the Minister, did represent a

considerable advance on what was currently in place. The new arrangements, particularly the proposal to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between UK and Welsh Governments on cross border working would enable the MDA to tackle a range of key issues that it was currently unable to. These included road and rail investment, public transport, skills and labour market planning and investment plans for further and higher education.

The Chief Executive said the Haywood recommendations represented a considerable step forward for the MDA and would allow the organisation to become an increasingly effective player in driving forward the local economy. The report also vindicated the approach taken by the Council, since it was a founder member of the MDA and the recommendations should be supported on the basis that the MDA was deserving of special status even if it did not conform to a City Region accepted definition. As part of the recognition, the Council would expect the MDA to be given equal importance as the two proposed South Wales City Regions (Cardiff and Swansea), equal funding benefit in economic development and infrastructure investment and equal marketing and promotion as a location for business growth. Importantly, Wales – UK Government co-operation and joint infrastructure planning would be required in recognition of the cross-border area span of the MDA geography.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Haywood Report be noted and the draft response set out in 3.02 be approved.

221. EU STATE AID NEW UK ASSISTED AREAS,AN UPDATE ON THE LATEST SITUATION

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance explained that most of Flintshire's main economic centres were within the designated Assisted Area, giving access to state aids for eligible development. Such designations were reviewed by the EU every seven years and such a review was currently underway. Retaining Assisted Area status was considered to be an essential part in retaining the long-term economic health of the County.

The report provided information on the position regarding Flintshire's Assisted Areas designation and identified a strategy to ensure that Flintshire retained designation for the period to 2020.

The current proposals from the Commission were not the final version, which would not be published until April 2013. Crucially, this gave an opportunity for further lobbying.

The UK Government was intending to make further representations to the Commission on this matter, and similar representations were expected from several other Member States. The following actions were recommended in order to present the strongest case for retaining Assisted Area designation:-

- Continue to lobby the British MEPs who were working to change the position
- Raise the matter with local AMs and MPs

- Work through the WLGA to secure a meeting in Brussels with Commissioner Almunia
- Meet with representatives of the CBI, EEF, Chamber and key local employers to develop a shared approach
- Raise the issue with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Board of the Mersey Dee Alliance asking for support for the Council's views
- Work with the lead officials in Business, Innovation and Science (BIS) (and where appropriate the devolved administrations) to co-ordinate tactics and detailed arguments to be put to the Commission

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and the approach set out in paragraph 3.07 be approved.

222. WELFARE REFORM AND HOUSING POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Cabinet Member for Housing sought approval for the implementation of a series of amendments to current housing policies that were necessary for the Neighbourhood Housing Service to be able to respond proactively to the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 23 January 2013, received a report detailing the measures that the Council was implementing to mitigate, as far as practical, any increase to homelessness. The Committee supported all the recommendations within the report and proposed an additional recommendation that the Council's housing stock should be based upon an applicant's housing need.

The report detailed three areas for consideration: Supporting tenants; Housing Policy Review and Registered Social Landlords.

Members paid tribute to how Flintshire County Council staff, and the Cabinet Member, had responded to the Welfare Reform Act, in particular being proactive, offering timely advice to tenants and the continued commitment to offer stock on a housing need basis.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals on how the Neighbourhood Housing Service intends to proactively support tenants who are under occupying be approved;
- (b) That the creation of two additional posts on 12 month fixed term contracts (Welfare Reform Response Officer and Neighbourhood Housing Officer) be approved;
- (c) That changes that are required to the allocation and rent arrears policies as set out in appendices 2 and 3 be approved;

- (d) That delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member and Director to amend the policy (set out in appendices 2 and 3) following the outcome of consultation be approved; and
- (e) That proposals to implement closer and improved working practices with registered social landlords, as set out in appendix 4, be approved.

223. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT (DHP) POLICY 2013/14

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced the report which sought approval and adoption of Flintshire County Council's revised Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy for 2013/14.

DHP could be used to give people extra help and support with their housing costs. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) annual funding for DHP was £20m up to April 2011. To help authorities manage the impact of the reforms DHP funding increased to £30m in 2011/12 and to £60m for 2012/13 across England and Wales and for the remainder of the Spending Review.

DHP funding was designed to help in the short term. It was a cash limited budget and each application was assessed on need and personal circumstances. DHP was a payment of last resort or in an emergency; it was hoped that with proactive intervention and help, that other alternatives would be found to help customers in difficulty. Such work would be undertaken by officers in Housing Benefits, Housing and Welfare Rights and the Welfare Reform Operational Team.

The overall budget to support households for 2013/14 in Flintshire was £544,645.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the DHP Policy for 2013/14 be adopted; and
- (c) That quarterly reporting to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, as set out in 3.12 of the report, be approved.

224. FAIR DEBT POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced the Fair Debt Policy which was primarily a customer focused policy to assist those in financial difficulty owing single and multiple debts to the Council.

The purpose of the Policy was to establish guidelines on how the Council would recover debts owed. A framework was set out for a consistent and sensitive approach to the recovery of debts and importantly, it aimed to offer customers who experienced payment difficulties with practical payment solutions.

The introduction of the policy would ensure that the Council continued to fulfil its responsibility to maximise the collection of council tax, rents, corporate debt and housing benefit overpayments.

The draft Policy was submitted to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 18 April 2013 and their comments recommended for inclusion in the Policy were the insertion of the following:

11. Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

- 11.1 The Council is also committed to dealing effectively with compliments, concerns or complaints that occasionally arise through the recovery of debt and in our dealings with customers.
- 11.2 The Council will adopt the Corporate Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy to put right, wherever possible, any concerns or complaints that may arise in administering the Fair Debt Policy.

RESOLVED:

That the Fair Debt Policy, as set out in the Appendix, be approved with the inclusion of the additional paragraph relating to comments, compliments and complaints (outlined above), circulated at the meeting.

225. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Housing provided an update on the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire and sought approval for the Flintshire Supporting People Commissioning Plan.

The Supporting People Strategy highlighted that Flintshire was expected to face significant reductions to the Supporting People Grant allocation, details of which were in the report. In order to make the best use of available funding, Flintshire planned to take forward a number of short term pilot projects during 2013/14 which were identified as 'off-the shelf' projects that could be implemented at short notice in order to utilise non-recurring underspend.

RESOLVED:

That the Flintshire Supporting People Commissioning Plan be approved.

226. REGIONAL CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) SERVICE

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced the report which was for consideration of the North Wales regional proposal for an integrated public closed circuit television monitoring (CCTV) system based on a twin monitoring centre model.

The Chief Executive provided the background to the report and explained that in 2009, the six North Wales local authorities and North Wales Police commissioned a project to assess the feasibility of an integrated regional service for CCTV for public spaces, in support of crime prevention and detection and community safety.

In Flintshire there was a complex set of local service level agreements with town councils where costs of some localised service provision was shared.

The proposed regional model which was appended to the report was a fully-integrated regional service with the technical 'joining up' of the existing six equipment rooms with two control rooms surveying and responding to the transmitted images.

Across North Wales, the CCTV services currently cost £2.12m per annum. The capital requirement to set up a twin centre monitoring service was estimated at £2.067m. A bid for £2.4m had been made to the new Regional Collaboration Fund (RCF); if the bid was successful, the funds would cover the capital costs of the project and other costs. The collaboration had already been allocated Invest to Save (I2S) funds by Welsh Government, which was a repayable loan. The current position was that the previous and the new Minister for Local Government and Communities did not support a capital grant allocation from the RCF and instead, encouraged the region to access I2S. All six Councils and North Wales Police believed that capital grant funding was required to support the business case.

Without an RCF capital grant, the level of base cost would not be affordable without guaranteed income levels to subsidise costs and the project did not guarantee value for money for future years post 2014. A decision to prioritise the CCTV service for significant additional investment during a period of severe budget pressure, solely based on the option of a regional service, would be outside of a wider process of setting priorities as part of the Council's plans and Medium Term Financial Plan and was not advised as a comparative investment choice. Other Councils in the region had reached a similar position and shared a disappointment that available national capital grant was not being prioritised for the project.

Members expressed their concern that the RCF grant had not been supported for such a valuable service of crime prevention and detection and community safety and felt contact needed to be made with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable to review Police investment in the local CCTV network and service as part of reviewing further options.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That in balancing the benefits and risks of a local and a regional model for future CCTV services, the proposed regional model should not be supported as offering value for money and being in the best interests of the Council unless significant non-repayable national capital/revenue funding is awarded;
- (b) That the proposed regional model cannot be supported and the Council considers its options for a future service including a continuing local service and a sub-regional option with one or more councils and North Wales Police;
- (c) That the Council scope the second phase review in partnership with North Wales Police and other partners as set out in 3.16 of the report; and

- (d) That the Council invite the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable to review Police investment in the local CCTV network and service as part of reviewing future options.

227. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY CHANGES - POST-16

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the outcome of the consultation on proposed changes to the discretionary post 16 home to school transport policy.

Free transport for post 16 students was provided under the existing policy to the nearest educational sites offering the combination of courses that the student wished to follow, which had resulted in recent years in the provision of transport to sites in Cheshire and Lancashire. The proposals for changing the post 16 transport policy related to reducing the number of sites to which free transport would be provided; no other changes were being proposed.

During the consultation process, 194 responses were received on the proposed changes. Of those who strongly disagreed with the proposals, a number of the comments showed either a misunderstanding of the proposal or a need for re-assurance or clarification and responses to issues raised were outlined in the report. Also, there was a Frequently Asked Questions document on the Council's website and in the Members' Library.

As a result of the feedback the implications of no longer providing free transport to the current Yale College site in Wrexham were reviewed and it was felt that transport to this site should continue where it was the nearest provider. This would reduce the efficiency savings originally estimated however monitoring of student numbers throughout the year would take place to ensure efficient use of vehicles.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed changes to the Home to School post 16 transport policy as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report be approved; and
- (b) That post 16 transport to Yale College be continued.

228. REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment outlined the proposals for a review of the County's subsidised bus and related services.

From 1 April 2012, Welsh Government (WG) had announced that they would be making changes to the way it subsidised bus services and community transport in Wales. In relation to North Wales, this would mean a reduction from £33m to £25m for the next financial year.

Subject to the announcement, a transitional funding period was agreed by the Minister, subject to a Review of the future funding of bus services across Wales. It was confirmed that for the remainder of the 2012/13 financial year, a

cut of approximately 9.5% would apply, from 1 October 2012, which equated to a 19% reduction in bus funding for the second half of the financial year.

A set of criteria was required to help shape the review in order that it could be used consistently, to determine and prioritise the level of Council intervention. A draft Policy was considered by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2013 and Members' comments were incorporated into a revised Policy which was appended to the report, which, subject to approval, would be used as the basis for the review of subsidised bus services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to bus funding from 1 April 2013 be noted;
- (b) That the Policy (appendix 2) be approved; and
- (c) That it be noted that a review will be undertaken in accordance with the Policy and that a further report be brought to a future Cabinet meeting on its conclusion.

229. REVIEW OF THE RESPONSE TO THE RECENT SEVERE WEATHER

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which summarised the operational response of the Council and its partners to the recent severe late winter weather in March and outlined the measures and costs of recovery and repair, and to invite Member comment to complete a local debrief and learning exercise.

The Chief Executive explained that North East Wales had, according to records, suffered the heaviest and most prolonged snowfall for around 30 years. The prolonged and repeated snowfall, along with freezing temperatures, caused severe disruption and considerable damage to roads, boundaries, trees and buildings.

The Council responded by enacting its business continuity plans for critical services and worked with its partners, including Health and the emergency services, to prevent and manage incidents and to ensure safe passage for emergency vehicles.

Overall, the response of the Council was effective in exceptional climatic conditions. A number of operational teams performed exceptionally with dedication to maintain critical services.

The costs of the operational period were considerable and would exceed budget provision. The costs of the recovery period would equally be considerable, in particular road repairs, boundary fence reinstatement and tree repair and clearance, and council housing repairs. All costs would need to be met corporately as a special incident. However, contact had been made with Welsh Government (WG) for possible financial assistance under the national emergencies scheme.

Members praised the work of the staff across the services and it was agreed that feedback should be given. Members also praised the work of the general public who came to the assistance of others and also the external contractors who had been employed to assist.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the debrief report be noted;
- (b) That elected Members of town and community councils be sent a copy of a debrief report with the options for structured feedback to share experiences and possible future solutions to support the business continuity plans; and
- (c) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader be given delegated authority to authorise additional expenditure, within overall available resources, for the emergency costs of the operational and recovery phases.

230. SETTING PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR 2013/14

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced the report for the endorsement of the review of targets by:-

- Reclassifying targets to reset Improvement Targets
- Endorsing the targets set for 2013/14
- Endorsing the aspirational targets

He explained that the new set of Improvement Targets would be incorporated within service plans for 2013/14, with details of the changes to the national performance data sets for 2013/14 being shown. It was also noted that further in-year challenge would be undertaken.

The Chief Executive added that the review of categorisation and setting of targets had been undertaken by Heads of Service. Briefings including a challenge of those proposals had been undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Chairs during March 2013.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the review of targets be endorsed by:-
 - Reclassifying targets to reset Improvement Targets
 - Endorsing the targets set for 2013/14
 - Endorsing the aspirational targets
- (b) That the new set of Improvement Targets be incorporated within service plans for 2013/14;
- (c) That the changes to the national performance data sets be noted;
- (d) That it be noted that further in-year challenge will be undertaken as a result of:-

- Proposed changes to specific target sets;
- Particular stepped annual targets and aspirational targets;
- Development of the Improvement Plan 2013/14 and on-going review and integration of business and performance systems

231. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 (MONTH 10)

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance provided Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 10) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in 2012/13.

The Head of Finance explained that the projected in-year underspend at Month 10 on the Council Fund was £1.305m. The projected net underspend on the HRA was £0.491m. It was important to note however that the projection in the report did not take into account any additional costs associated with the extreme weather conditions at the end of March, the impact of which would be reported in future monitoring reports.

The significant in-year projected variances to date were detailed in the appendices to the report, including reasons for the variances and the actions required to address each variance. The significant changes for the Council Fund from Month 9 were detailed in Appendix 1.

Appendix 7 detailed movements to date on unearmarked reserves and the level of contingency sum available. As a result of the movements the current projected level of contingency reserve at the end of March 2013 was £0.894m.

On the Housing Revenue Account there was an overall projected underspend of £0.491m and a projected closing balance at Month 10 of £1.346m.

There was one request for a carry forward of underspend, details of which were in the report.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment expressed his concern on the continuing monthly overspend on the Leisure budget and questioned whether the income projected by Alliance Leisure was attainable. The Chief Executive said officers shared the concerns of Members and an emergency budget review meeting had been held the previous week with further meetings required.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the Council Fund contingency sum as at 31 March 2013 be noted;
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (d) That the request for carry forward of underspend to 2013/14 be approved.

232. COMMUNITY REVIEW

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced the report which detailed the guiding principles for the proposed community review.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services added that on 12 March 2013, all Town and Community Councils were written to, seeking their views on the draft guiding principles for the review. The responses received were appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the community review be commenced;
- (b) That the guiding principles of the review be as in appendix 2; and
- (c) That the consultation on the first formal stage be as indicated in paragraphs 3.02 and 3.03 of the report.

233. SCHOOL MUSIC SERVICE REVIEW OF BUSINESS MODEL

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced the proposed operating model to protect and develop the Flintshire Music Service, with a three year funding commitment by the Council from 2013/14-2015/16.

The purpose of the Flintshire Music Service was to enhance the quality of life for the people of Flintshire by working in partnership to increase the quality and range of music services offered within a safe environment. All children and young people should be able to access music education that inspired, engaged, challenged and supported them within their communities.

The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that, as at present, the service would be available to low income families through a remissions policy for learners who qualified for free school meals. Schools would be able to apply for remission funding through the County Council.

Schools would be offered a menu of services on a non-profit making basis, which would include:

- Instrumental teaching to all school age ranges
- Curriculum support on a commissioned basis and in partnership with GwE Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service
- Provision of County Schools' Orchestras, Bands, Choirs and ensembles
- Education concerts/workshops
- Provision and maintenance of all types of instruments; and
- Advice on all aspects of music education

Schools would select and control the range of services they wished to purchase on an annual basis. They would be required to notify the Music Service about their detailed requests early in the preceding summer term in 2013 (and

during the Spring term in future years), to enable appropriate staffing levels to be in place for September.

The Chief Executive added that the commitment of the Council to protect and sustain the service for a three year period had to be matched by a commitment by the schools community both to fund the service as set out in the report and to work within the business model of advance pupil planning and support.

RESOLVED:

That the operating model for the Flintshire Music Service as set out be adopted subject to (1) effective implementation of the business model changes set out in 3.01 and (2) a matched commitment by the schools community.

234. FLINTSHIRE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

The Director of Lifelong Learning said the report sought approval and resolution to adopt the Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Play Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan be approved. Reports would be submitted to Welsh Government (WG) as being formally approved and Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 be made available on the Flintshire County Council Website in accordance with WG requirements; and
- (b) That it be approved that the Council continues to work with WG to identify strategies for them to fund expectations under the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan from 2014 onwards.

235. HAWARDEN INFANT AND JUNIOR AMALGAMATION

The Cabinet Member for Education provided details on the proposed amalgamation of Hawarden Infants and Rector Drew Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Junior Schools to form a new through Primary school on the same site.

The decision of Cabinet on 19 February 2013 was that a statutory notice be published in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government. That notice set out the intention of the Authority to close the existing infant and junior schools as of 31 August 2013 and to open the new school, in the existing buildings on 1 September 2013.

No objections, during the statutory one month period, were received. As a result, the determination of the proposal could be made by Cabinet without reference to Welsh Ministers.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to effect an amalgamation of the existing Infant and Junior schools to form a new through Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary school

on the existing site and utilising the existing buildings from September 2013 be approved.

236. SHOTTON INFANT AND JUNIOR AMALGAMATION

The Cabinet Member for Education provided details on the proposed amalgamation of Shotton Infants school and Taliesin Junior school to form a new through Primary school on the Taliesin Junior school site.

The decision of Cabinet on 22 January 2013 was that a statutory notice be published in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government. That notice set out the intention of the Authority to close the existing infant and junior schools as of 31 August 2014 and to open the new school, in its new building on 1 September 2014.

No objections, during the statutory one month period, were received. As a result, the determination of the proposal could be made by Cabinet without reference to Welsh Ministers.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to effect an amalgamation of the infant and junior schools to form a new through primary school on the Taliesin Avenue site from 1 September 2014 be approved.

237. PENYFFORDD INFANT AND JUNIOR AMALGAMATION

The Cabinet Member for Education informed Members of the outcome of consultation meetings and the responses to the consultation in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Penyffordd Abbot's Lane Infant School and Penyffordd Junior School from 1 September 2013.

In accordance with Flintshire County Council's policy to amalgamate infant and junior schools to provide all-through primary schools, the consultation process was initiated by the announcement that one of the Headteachers would be retiring at the end of the 2012/13 academic year.

The consultations at Penyffordd would mark the final pair of schools to be consulted, with regard to amalgamation. All other Flintshire infant and junior schools were either amalgamated or in the process of amalgamation.

Discussions were held initially with the Headteachers and Governor representatives, prior to approval of Cabinet, to carry out the full consultations in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government (WG). Consultation meetings were held for Governors, staff and parents/pupils on 7 February 2013. Copies of the response forms and letters from the consultation meetings were in the Members' Library.

RESOLVED:

That the report and written representations to the consultations be considered and publication of the statutory notice to amalgamate the schools with effect from 1 September 2013 be approved.

238. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were 3 members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 12.10 pm)

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Chairman