

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
27 JANUARY 2015

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 27 January 2015

PRESENT: **Councillor Glenys Diskin (Chair)**

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Amanda Bragg, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Tim Newhouse, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, David Wisinger and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Alan Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Cindy Hinds, Ann Minshull, Billy Mullin, Ian Roberts, Ian Smith and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Democracy and Governance Manager, Corporate Finance Manager, Finance Manager and Team Manager – Committee Services

76. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

78. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chair's communications had been circulated to all Members before the meeting. The Chair thanked all Members for their well wishes whilst she had been poorly.

The Chair welcomed the Flintshire County Council apprentices who were in attendance to observe meeting protocol and decision making processes as part of their studies at Coleg Cambria.

79. PETITIONS

Councillor Mike Reece submitted a petition from residents objecting to the installation of speed humps on the High Street in Bagillt.

80. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Democracy and Governance Manager confirmed that none had been received.

81. QUESTIONS

The Democracy and Governance Manager confirmed that none had been received.

82. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Democracy and Governance Manager confirmed that none had been received.

83. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor David Roney:-

“This Council resolves to follow other Councils and other European Countries in rejecting the European Union (EU) Commission’s Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) scheme, and calls upon the Prime Minister to use his veto to reject the proposed Treaty in order to protect the residents and businesses of Flintshire from this threat to any future chance of ethical and fair trade.

This Council instructs its Chief Executive to write to Flintshire MPs and AMs to ask for their active support in opposing this scheme”.

The Notice of Motion was formally proposed by Councillor Roney and seconded by Councillor Peter Curtis.

Councillor Roney detailed the background to the Notice of Motion and explained that the TTIP was a Treaty being negotiated in secret between the EU and the United States (US), and it had been specifically engineered to give multinational companies what they wanted: the dismantling of all social, consumer and environmental protection and compensation for the companies for any infringement of their assumed rights.

In his view one of the greatest dangers of TTIP was that it would open up Europe’s Public Health, Education and Water Services to US companies and it could mean the privatisation of the NHS. He also referred to how TTIP would open the door for widespread GM foods.

He believed the biggest threat that TTIP brought was Investor-State Dispute Settlements (ISDS) which allowed unelected companies to sue

governments if those governments' policies caused the company to lose profit. Phillip Morris were suing the Australian government for making plain packaging mandatory – there were suing Uruguay for increasing the size of the graphic health warnings on cigarette packets.

The litigation was pursued in tribunals known as ISDS's. Such an ISDS agreement was also core to the EU's planned TTIP agreement and would see US multinationals sue European governments in such areas as regulating tobacco, health and safety and quality controls.

He concluded by asking that Members support the Notice of Motion to protect the people who they represented, and fight to keep TTIP out of the UK.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas thanked Councillor Roney for the Notice of Motion and also Councillor Arnold Woolley who had previously circulated information to all Members.

Councillor Curtis supported the Notice of Motion unconditionally, concurring that TTIP was a huge threat to the NHS.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Aaron Shotton, also supported the Notice of Motion which was a national issue and one which would affect the residents of Flintshire. He added that he felt certain companies should be publically owned, such as the energy companies and said if the Prime Minister signed the proposed Treaty then public ownership of such bodies would become essentially impossible.

Councillor Derek Butler also spoke in support of the Notice of Motion citing that the Treaty would greatly affect the rights of workers and the potential damage to the NHS.

Councillor Bernie Attridge requested a recorded vote and was supported by the requisite nine other Members. On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was carried.

For the proposal:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Amanda Bragg, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Tim Newhouse, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas and David Wisinger

Against the proposal:

Councillors: Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Matt Wright

Abstentions:

Councillors: Clive Carver, Jim Falshaw and Alison Halford

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be supported.

84. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Chief Executive introduced the report which explained the requirement to adopt the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 by 31 January 2015.

Within the Regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there was limited discretion given to the Council to apply additional elements that were more generous than the national scheme, details of which were outlined in the report. The Council's recommended approach to the available discretions were to continue to apply them as follows:

1. Not to increase the "extended payment period" to more than four weeks when an applicant started work. This rule acted as a good incentive measure under CTRS and it made sense to maintain it in line with the Housing Benefits (HB) Extended Payment Rules, which were also set at four weeks. The projected cost of this measure for 2014/15 was £20,098 and the approximate cost for 2015/16 would be £20,700.
2. To continue to disregard all War Disablement and War Widows Pensions as income. The projected cost of this measure for 2014/15 was £42,870 and the approximate cost for 2015/16 would be £44,156.
3. To maintain the standard three month backdating provisions for working age customers when a good reason for failing to claim earlier was shown. This reflected the current position with regard to CTRS and HB. The projected cost of this measure for 2014/15 was £62,502 and the approximate cost for 2015/16 would be £64,377.

Councillor Aaron Shotton moved approval of the recommendations, which was duly seconded, citing his support for the three discretions as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the laying of The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 be noted; and
- (b) That the Scheme as set out in 3.02 of the report be adopted and the recommendations to maintain the discretionary payments be approved.

85. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2014/15

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2014/15 for approval and thanked all Members who had attended the recent Treasury Management training.

The report was considered at Cabinet on 20 January 2015 following the recommendation of the Audit Committee on 10 December 2014 which considered the report in detail.

Councillor Aaron Shotton moved approval of the recommendation which was duly seconded.

Councillor Mike Peers asked for clarification on the interest costs associated with debt which he said differed from those in previous reports. The Finance Manager said it was a profiled budget, with more costs being incurred in the second half of the year than in the first. She confirmed that the remainder of that budget would be paid in the coming six months bringing the total paid in line with budget and amounts reported previously. The Chief Executive added that in future reports, end of year projections and accruals would be included for ease of reference.

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2014/15 be approved.

86. INABILITY TO ATTEND MEETINGS DUE TO ILLNESS

The Democracy and Governance Manager introduced the report for the authorisation of temporary absence of Councillor Billy Mullin from attendance at formal meetings.

Councillor Ian Dunbar moved approval of the recommendation which was duly seconded.

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, sent best wishes to Councillor Mullin.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mullin's absence from meetings be approved.

87. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the public and 2 members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.35 pm)

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Chair