

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
14 FEBRUARY 2017

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 14 February 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Curtis (Chairman)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Hilary Isherwood, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGill, Ann Minshull, Billy Mullin, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Chris Dolphin, Brian Dunn, David Evans, Alison Halford, Richard Jones, Tim Newhouse, Ian Roberts, Owen Thomas and David Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Organisational Change 2), Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1), Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Corporate Finance Manager, Finance Manager (Technical Accountancy), Acting Finance and Accountancy Manager, Finance Manager, Housing Asset Manager, Committee Officers, and Father Roberto for prayers.

76. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2016 had been circulated with the agenda

Accuracy

Councillor Carolyn Thomas referred to her comments on page 7, item 69, and said that she had also sent a copy of the petition to the local Member of Parliament, local Assembly Member and the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure asking for funding following the collapse of GHA coaches. She said she was aware that some funding from the Welsh Government had been provided but that this was not sufficient to cover the financial outlay by the Council to continue a bus service. Councillor Thomas emphasised the need for rural areas to continue to receive a bus service in the future.

Councillor Neville Phillips queried why Father Roberto had not been recorded as present at the meeting. The Chair explained that it had been previously agreed by Members that payers would take place prior to the start of the meeting, however, he acknowledged the point made by Councillor Phillips and had no objection to the minutes being amended to record Father Roberto as being present.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Healey declared a personal interest in the following item as he was a governor of Castell Alun High School. Councillor Kevin Jones also declared a personal interest as he was Chair of Governors as Ysgol Glan Aber. Councillors Ray Hughes and Ron Hampson also declared personal interests in the following item.

Item 6: Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin declared a personal interest in the following item. Councillor Hilary McGuill also declared a personal interest in the following item as a Board Member of NEW Homes.

Item 7: Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2017/18

78. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's Communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. The Chairman said he had enjoyed and valued the visits from schools and hoped that these would continue and expand to visits from secondary schools.

Councillor Richard Lloyd thanked the Chairman for his contribution to the Mayor's parade in Saltney.

79. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18

The Chief Executive introduced the report to provide the recommendations of the Cabinet for the Council Fund Revenue Budget 2017/18. He gave background information and referred to the stages in the budget setting process which had been beneficial in forward planning. He reported that Stage One of the budget proposals for the service portfolios were approved by Council on 15 November 2016, and Stage Two proposals for corporate financial stewardship were approved by Council on 6 December 2016. In addition they had been given prior approval by the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2016.

The Chief Executive and Corporate Finance Manager gave a joint presentation which covered the following areas:

- budget strategy
- Budget Stage One – portfolio business plans
- Budget Stage Two – Corporate Financial Stewardship
- remaining budget gap after stages one and two
- limited options to close the budget gap
- Domiciliary Care funding
- Council Tax
- school investment
- council tax and use of reserves and balances
- budget risks and issues
- professional opinions
- the future

Councillor Aaron Shotton thanked the Chief Executive, the Corporate Finance Manager and his team, Chief Officers and their teams, for the significant work undertaken during this period of unprecedented austerity and challenge on public services in preparing the budget for the next financial year. He also thanked Members for the unified approach they had taken to protect critical key services and the robust and appropriate scrutiny which had been undertaken. He commented on the national case which had been made by Flintshire at national level, not only for Flintshire but on behalf of the local government 'family' over the pressures around social care and the additional funding which had been received in the final Settlement as a result. He commented on the developing national health crisis in England which was symptomatic of the underfunding of the social care system and said that despite the pressures faced this year Flintshire had seen protection of social care budgets and a £3.2m increase in budget.

Referring to the recommendations from Cabinet to close the gap and balance the budget Councillor Shotton said he was grateful for the 1.34% increase in school budgets and said that it was appropriate that reserves should be utilised to meet the remainder of the budget gap and that Council Tax be set at 3%. He said that he believed that the purpose of reserves was to defend public services during difficult financial times. In summary he commented on the need for a change in strategy at United Kingdom and Welsh Government level on the future funding for local government services.

Councillor Mike Peers reiterated the views expressed by Councillor Shotton and commented on the difficulty faced by Council to try to maintain services under budgetary pressures which would present greater challenges in the future. He supported the 3% increase in Council Tax and use of reserves and welcomed the protection of education and social care service budgets.

Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the 1.34% (£1.2m) uplift in school budgets in the current period of austerity and commented on the difficulty experienced by schools dealing with reduced budgets and particularly secondary schools which were under considerable pressure with some in a deficit position.

In response to a request from Councillor Clive Carver on the Domiciliary Care Funding the Chief Executive explained that the current cap was set at £60 per week (chargeable cost to the client) and would be increased to £70 per week from April 2017. He went on to explain that the difference if collected from all the current client bases on 1 April 2017 would result in £0.238m extra income. The cap would increase each year by £10 per year until it reached £100 and would provide additional income for the Council each year.

In response to a question from Councillor Robin Guest on the proposed increase in Council Tax and the use of reserves to bridge the 'gap' the Corporate Finance Manager referred to the advice given at the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny meeting held on 20 January 2017. He confirmed that £0.699m had already been approved and had been met from Reserves and the additional £0.317m would need to be met from Reserves which would take it higher than the £2m he had quoted as a guideline figure for high risk. The Chief Executive commented further on the use of reserves and referred to the budget consequences of the Apprentice Tax Levy and the Fire Authority's significant uplift in year.

Councillor Gareth Roberts commented on the financial pressures to be addressed in the future. He referred to the Standard Spending Assessment and expressed the view that the Council Tax should be increased to 5% to raise the income needed to protect services, and said that the Council's reserves were currently as low as prudently possible.

Councillor David Healey supported the 3% increase in Council Tax. He congratulated the Chief Executive and Officers for their commendable achievements in protecting service areas in view of the severe austerity measures imposed. He welcomed the uplift of 1.34% in school budgets and the protection of social care budgets. He also took the opportunity to commend the Chief Executive and Officers on the foresight to consider the alternative delivery models and develop a strategy for community asset transfers to maintain services and avoid the closure of facilities. He also congratulated the Town and Community Councils and Community Groups which had "stepped up to the challenge" to maintain such services for local communities

Councillor Christine Jones expressed her thanks for the investment and protection of social care services which would enable the Council to negotiate fair increases in care fees with providers.

On being put to the vote the recommendations from Cabinet were carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council maintains the planned Council Tax rise at 3% as per the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with the remaining gap at the figure as reported to be met wholly by reserves and balances to balance the budget.

80. COUNCIL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 – 2019/20

The Finance Manager – Technical Accounting, introduced a report to present the Council Fund Capital Programme for the period 2017/18 – 2019/20 for approval. She advised that Cabinet, at a meeting held prior to County Council today, had considered and recommended the proposals contained within the Cabinet report which was appended to the report and the proposals had also been considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2017.

The Finance Manager – Technical Accounting explained that Cabinet had adopted a Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan in February 2016 and that the report built on that strategy and sets the Council Fund Capital Programme for 2017/18 and 2019/20. She advised that there were three parts to the strategy and gave a joint presentation with the Chief Officer (Organisational Change 2) which covered the following areas:

- 3 part Council Fund Capital Programme
 - statutory/regulatory
 - retained assets
 - investment
- estimated available funding
- proposed allocations
- proposed investment
- summary (generally funded) capital programme
- dealing with any shortfall in funding
- specifically funded schemes
- summary capital programme

Councillor Aaron Shotton thanked the Chief Officer (Organisational Change 2) and the Finance Manager – Technical Accounting for their presentation. He spoke of the need to remain optimistic about the future and to maintain ambitions so that Flintshire continued to be an area where people aspired to live and work. He commented on the ambitious capital programme for infrastructure and schools investment during the next four years and referred to the proposals within the Programme for improvements to leisure centres and libraries, the commitment to protect future learning disability day care schemes in the County and the replacement of the existing Glanrafon centre in Queensferry.

Councillor Shotton also commented on the capital investment proposed for schools which he said was a statement of intent to address some of the key issues affecting schools and was in addition to the 21st Century Schools Investment Programme. He also commented on the pressures and demand for social care and said the need for additional bed capacity within residential care homes was acknowledged. He added there was a commitment and ambition not only to protect the Council's existing care home provision but to potentially increase capacity through new build in the County.

Councillor Ron Hampson welcomed the investment in learning disability day services and the planned replacement of Glanrafon and extension and remodelling at Arosfa. Councillor Christine Jones also spoke in support of the investment scheme proposals concerning Glanrafon at Queensferry, and Arosfa

in Mold, which provided valuable and much needed facilities for vulnerable adults and children with physical and learning disabilities.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas welcomed the investment in schools and the introduction of a programme of toilet upgrades in both primary and secondary schools. She also expressed appreciation for the investment to upgrade play areas and emphasised the importance, citing good health as an example, of providing the opportunity for children to have local access to amenities to enable them to play outdoors. Councillor Thomas welcomed the investment in Castell Alun High School to bring the school building up to standard which would remove the need for mobile classrooms on site. She also commented on the issue of appeals at Castell Alun High School and referred to the concerns raised around capacity and asked if further clarification could be provided on the matter of capacity.

Councillor David Healey also welcomed the investment of £4.6m in Castell Alun High School including the removal of mobile classrooms and the refurbishment of school toilets.

Councillor Kevin Jones spoke in support of the proposed investments concerning Glan Aber Primary School. He also gave an update on investment and progress concerning the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and confirmed that both the Mold and Buckley sites were on track for completion and re-opening before Easter. He added that the proposed new site to replace the existing Flint and Connaught's Quay sites was subject to finalising the details of ownership and planning processes. Confirmation had been received that further funding to support completion of the three sites to a high quality had been received which would enable Flintshire recycling figures to further improve in the future.

Councillor Chris Bithell also welcomed the proposed investment for school extension and remodelling which he said would address a number of long standing schemes and cited the refurbishment of school toilets, removal of mobile classrooms, and replacement of synthetic sports pitches, as examples. He also commented on the proposed modernisation of schools in the County which would take place under the 21st Century Schools Programme and cited proposed investment schemes at Connaught's Quay High School and Ysgol Penyffordd, Abbots Lane.

Councillor Mike Peers expressed thanks on behalf of the residents of Buckley to Councillor Kevin Jones and the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) for their lobbying case and successful bid for funding for HRC sites from the WG. He also commented on the information contained in the appendix to the report that in the future the Council would need to use its own land assets to attract greater capital funds and sought clarification of the criteria, strategy, and scrutiny arrangements, around use of land assets. He also asked if information could be provided on the assets that the Council planned to dispose of between now and 2018/19 to generate the capital receipts which were referred to in the report.

The Chief Officer, Organisational Change, responded to the points raised around the Council owned assets and advised that there were various types of

assets and there was not one fixed criteria for asset disposal. He explained that the Council's assets were being used on many levels and gave examples. Referring to the matter of capital receipts and the £2.2m projection referred to in the report the Chief Officer said that due to commercial sensitivity he would provide further clarification to Councillor Peers following the meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin concerning funding for school play areas Councillor Aaron Shotton provided clarification that the £0.887m capital allocation referred to in Table 2 of the report was new funding in addition to the existing revenue budget. In response to the further questions raised by Councillor Dolphin the Chief Executive confirmed that the revenue match funding would remain in place.

Councillor Derek Butler referred to the Council's partnership in the North Wales Economic Growth Strategy and said this would have a significant impact on the ambition and vision for the whole of Flintshire for the future. He commented on the need to co-invest in the Strategy with the Welsh and United Kingdom governments and the need to identify opportunities to realise assets. The Chief Executive said there was significant United Kingdom and Welsh Government investment at stake and that there was an expectation that the six local authorities would co-invest and co-borrow. He said this would be a positive pressure for capital borrowing going forward.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood welcomed the investment in Castell Alun but expressed her disappointment concerning the lack of support for Ysgol Llanfynydd and Flint Mountain. She spoke of the Council's "lack of vision" and the importance and need to retain rural school provision.

Councillor Neville Phillips raised the issue of the lack of car parking facilities at schools and said this needed to be addressed in the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Councillors Veronica Gay and Richard Lloyd outlined the need for capital investment to be made at St. David's High School, Saltney.

Councillor Arnold Woolley sought an assurance that any land owned by the Council and disposed of was sold with a view to realising its full market potential.

The Chief Executive summarised and responded to the issues which had been raised by Members and referred to the need to address concerns around the reporting of asset sales, the local position around admission and appeals concerning Castell Alun High School, investment in St. David's High School, Saltney, funding for future school investment and area reviews, funding for HRC sites, and funding for leisure.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council approves the allocation in Table 2 (paragraph 1.07) of the Cabinet report at its meeting held on 14 February 2017, for Statutory/Regulatory and Retained Assets sections of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20;

- (b) That the Council approves the schemes included in Table 3 (paragraph 1.20) of the Cabinet report at its meeting held on 14 February 2017, for the investment section of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20;
- (c) That the Council notes the shortfall in funding of schemes in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 as set out in the Cabinet report at its meeting held on 14 February 2017. That the options to address this including a combination of future capital receipts, alternative grants, prudential borrowing or the re-phasing of schemes will be considered during 2017/18, and updates provided to Members in future capital programme monitoring reports; and
- (d) That the development of a longer term Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan be noted.

81. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) introduced the report on the final proposals for the HRA Revenue and Capital budget for the 2017/18 financial year, including proposed rent increases which were considered by the Cabinet at a meeting held prior to County Council today.

The Chief Officer and Acting Finance and Accountancy Manager gave a joint presentation which covered the following key areas:

- content
- self financing
- 30 year business plan
- Housing Revenue Account
- other income
- service charges 2017/18
- HRA efficiency proposals
- HRA investment decisions/cost pressures
- HRA capital Programme 2017/18
- funding for HRA capital programme 2017/18
- council house building programme

Councillor Helen Brown thanked Members for their work in scrutiny of the HRA Capital Programme and also expressed thanks to the Tenants and Residents Association for their work and input.

Councillor Paul Shotton, referred to the Welsh Quality Housing Standard (WQHS) 2012 and commented on the aspiration to build 200 new council homes in five years. He cited the building of new council homes in Connah's Quay, Flint, Mold and Leeswood, which he said set an example to Wales and the United Kingdom. Councillor Paul Cunningham also congratulated the Council on the work and foresight in building council homes in Flintshire. Councillor Andy Dunbobbin reiterated the views expressed by Councillors Shotton and

Cunningham and expressed his thanks to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) for the excellent work carried out.

Councillor Aaron Shotton spoke of the Council's record investment in its council housing stock; both existing and rebuild. He also referred to the WQHS investment improvements and the environmental and exterior works and the impact that the improvements would have for the benefit of Flintshire residents and communities. He referred to the £7m investment in new council house build and the aspiration to build 200 new council homes in the next few years and the need to lobby the national government to lift the borrowing cap on the number of new homes which the Council could build. He spoke of the clear demand for council houses locally and at national level and the impact on people's lives and welfare.

Councillor Richard Lloyd thanked Councillor Helen Brown and Officers for the improvement works undertaken in his Ward. He raised the issue of garage plots which he said had been neglected and needed to be addressed.

In response to a concern raised by Councillor Clive Carver the Chief Officer provided clarification on the costs arising concerning water rates commission, and court costs.

Councillor Marion Bateman asked how many Flintshire owned properties for senior residents were sited on unadopted roads and commented on the Council's duty of care. The Chief Officer explained that there were a number of unadopted roads on Flintshire estates which were a challenge due to the cost of maintenance and adoption and said she would provide further information to Councillor Bateman on this matter following the meeting.

Councillor Neville Phillips raised a query around service charges and asked if the charge included the cleaning of windows. The Chief Officer explained that one of the reasons for not proposing any further service charges was because there was further consultation and work to be undertaken around service charges with tenants. She advised that there was a charge for new tenants for window cleaning but not for existing tenants.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the recommendations of Cabinet from its meeting held on 14 February 2017 as set out in the report attached to the Council report.

82. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2017/18 TO 2019/20

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to present to Council the recommendation of the Cabinet in relation to the setting of Prudential Indicators for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20. He provided background information and advised that the Prudential Code sets out the indicators that must be used and the factors that must be taken into account in preparing such. Further details were contained in the appended report to Cabinet.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Council approve the Prudential Indicators for 2017/18 – 2019/20 as detailed in Section 1 of the report to Cabinet on 14 February 2017; and
- (b) That Delegated Authority be given to the Corporate Finance Manager to effect movements between the separately agreed limits within the authorised limit for external debt and the operational boundary for external debt (paragraphs 1.19 – 1.20 of the report to the 14 February 2017 meeting of Cabinet).

83. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017/18 AND MID-YEAR REPORT 2016/17

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to present the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 for approval and also the Treasury Management Mid-year review 2016/17 for approval.

The Corporate Finance Manager provided background information and advised that at a meeting of the Audit Committee on 25 January 2017, Members reviewed the Strategy and the Mid year review and recommended to Cabinet that the Council approved both. Cabinet received and approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee. The Cabinet report which includes both appendixes was appended to the report.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations as outlined within the report. This was duly seconded by Councillor Chris Bithell.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the following documents be approved:

- Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2016/17

84. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION - 2017/18 POLICY

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to seek Council approval in setting the annual policy for prudent Minimum Revenue Provision for the repayment of debt, which local authorities were required to do each year. He advised that Cabinet had considered and approved a detailed report in respect of the setting of a prudent Minimum Revenue Provision for the repayment of debt which was appended to the report.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations as outlined within the report. This was duly seconded by Councillor Chris Bithell

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members approve for the Council Fund:
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in financial year 2017/18 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing fixed as at 31 March 2016. The calculation will be the 'straight line' method over 50 years.
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing from 1st April 2016 onwards. The calculation will be the 'straight line' or 'annuity' (where appropriate) method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded from unsupported (prudential) borrowing or credit arrangements.
- (b) That Members approve for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA):-
- Option 2 (Capital Financing Requirement Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded by debt.
- (c) That Members approve that MRP on loans from the Council to NEW Homes to build affordable homes through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) (which qualify as capital expenditure in accounting terms) be as follows:-
- No MRP is made during the construction period (of short duration) as the asset has not been brought into use and no benefit is being derived from its use.
 - Once the assets are brought into use, capital repayments will be made by NEW Homes. The Council's MRP will be equal to the repayments made by NEW Homes. The repayments made by NEW Homes will be classed, in accounting terms, as capital receipts, which can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt which is a form of MRP. The capital repayment/capital receipt will be set aside to repay debt, and is the Council's MRP policy for repaying the loan.

85. CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to agree the appointment of co-optees to the Standards and Audit Committees.

The Chief Officer provided background information and advised that the term of office for two co-opted members ends in May 2017. He explained that both members were eligible to be reappointed for a further term and thereafter they must stand down. Both members had worked diligently in their roles and had made a beneficial contribution to the governance of the Council, however, only the member on the Standards Committee was willing to be reappointed. The Chief Officer said there was a need therefore for a recruitment process for a replacement co-opted member on the Audit Committee.

Councillor Aaron Shotton asked that a letter of thanks be sent from the Chairman, on behalf of the Council, to Paul Williams for his hard work and efforts on the Audit Committee.

Councillor Mike Peers commented on the cost of advertising vacancies in the local press, as outlined in the report, and asked if a more efficient and cost effective option was available, citing advertisement on the Council's own website as an example. The Chief Officer clarified the position on how the lower and higher costs may be incurred and explained that the legislation was specific in that it required the Council to advertise the vacancies through the press in a local newspaper and not only through the internet. He explained that the vacancies would be included on the Council's website to maximise the opportunities for suitable candidates to consider and apply.

Councillor Ian Dunbar paid tribute to Paul Williams and expressed thanks for his valuable contribution to the work of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Council reappoints Rob Dewey to the Standards Committee for 4 years:
- (b) That the Chairman sends a letter of thanks on behalf of the Council to Paul Williams for his work and efforts on the Audit Committee; and
- (c) That Council advertises for a new co-optee on the Audit Committee and that applications be interviewed by a panel consisting of the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Audit, the section 151 Officer, and the Monitoring Officer.

86. THE SIX MONTHS RULE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to seek the Council's approval for the continued absence of two Members. He explained that where a Member had been, or it is likely that they will be absent from a meeting for a period of six months, the Council is able to approve the absence. He advised that two Members were currently in a position where they had not been able to attend a meeting for several months and it was therefore recommended that the Council approve their absences until the end of the life of this Council.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the absence of Councillors Alex Aldridge and Alison Halford be approved until the end of the life of this Council.

87. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and two members of the public present.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.44 pm)

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Chairman