

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
20 JUNE 2017

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 20 June 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Lloyd (Chairman)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Sian Braun, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Bob Connah, David Cox, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Andrew Holgate, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Joe Johnson, Paul Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Mike Lowe, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Martin White, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, Chris Dolphin, David Evans, Ron Hampson, Dave Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Owen Thomas and David Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive; Deputy Monitoring Officer; Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise); Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation); Chief Officer (Social Services); Chief Officers (Organisational Change); Chief Officer (Education & Youth); Senior Learning Advisor Foundation Phase; Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer; Democratic Services Manager; Team Leader - Democratic Services and Committee Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman asked all those present to join him in a minute's silence to commemorate the recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower in London.

15. PRESENTATIONS

Building and Engineer Awards 2016 - Public Sector Project of the Year

The Chief Executive welcomed Chris Hunt and John Haime from the Council's Design Consultancy Team along with the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) and Chief Officer (Organisational Design) in recognition of Treffynnon Holywell Learning Campus winning the above award. The project had been widely recognised as a ground-breaking design and had set new standards in best practice in the use of Building Information Modelling.

As Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Ian Roberts congratulated the team on its achievement on the project which was an asset to the whole of Flintshire. The officers and team were also thanked by Councillor Chris Bithell, the former Cabinet Member, who spoke of his pride in seeing the development of

this exciting project. As the former Mayor of Holywell, Councillor Ted Palmer offered his congratulations to those involved.

Annual Apprentice Awards 2017

Heather Johnson, the Learning & Development Manager, was accompanied by Flintshire trainees who were successful in the following categories:

Foundation Trainee finalists - Leah Newton (overall winner), Rebecca Jones and Ryan Varker.

Flintshire Trainee of the Year finalists - Alex McLaren (overall winner), Rachel Pearson and Tara O'Boyle (who was unable to attend the meeting).

Special award in memory of Helen Stappleton - Sophie Ellis (overall winner).

The Chief Executive commended that all the finalists' achievements across a range of Council services were celebrated.

Councillor Aaron Shotton offered congratulations to the winners and acknowledged the valuable contributions of all apprentices. He spoke about the opportunities available for the development of young people through the apprenticeship scheme, which was a key priority for the Council.

Councillor Mike Peers praised the Council's apprenticeship scheme and the opportunity for Members to recognise those achievements.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 February, 1 March and 18 May 2017 were submitted.

Minutes - 18 May 2017

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin pointed out the omission of Councillor Chris Dolphin's comments and was advised that the minutes of committee meetings were a summary of discussions and not a verbatim record.

As a point of accuracy on minute number 8(E), Councillor Chris Bithell stated that the Chairs of the Community & Enterprise and Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committees were Councillors Ron Hampson and David Healey respectively.

On minute number 7: Flintshire County Council's Elections of 7 May 2017, Councillor Mike Peers said that the minutes did not convey his comments that the First Minister's remarks on Independent candidates were "distasteful and derogatory" and asked that his original wording be used. The Chief Executive agreed that the minutes should be changed accordingly.

On minute number 5: Appointment of Leader of the County Council, Councillor Peers felt that the minutes did not accurately reflect the comments made by Councillor Tony Sharps in respect of him "joining the Labour group along with his Independent group" as shown in the webcast recording of the meeting.

It was confirmed by the Chief Executive that the Independent group was not affiliated to any other political group on the Council, irrespective of the wording used to show support for the Leader during that discussion. The political groups on the Council were as recorded in the membership forms submitted, which in turn informed the political balance arrangements.

Councillor Sharps strongly disagreed with the point raised by Councillor Peers and said that he did not state he was a member of the Labour party. He had spoken of the need for a minority group to support the Labour group to give them the majority on the Council in order to demonstrate the stability needed to face future challenges. As Leader of the Independent group, he had given this support whilst stating that the group would retain its name and allow its membership to have a free vote on any issue.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed that the minutes of the three meetings be approved, subject to the two amendments in minute numbers 7 and 8(E) of 18 May 2017. This was duly seconded and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the two amendments on minute numbers 7 and 8(E) of 18 May 2017, the three sets of minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that a personal interest would be recorded on behalf of all Members present in respect of Agenda Item 12 'Schedule of Remuneration'.

During discussion on the next agenda item, Councillor Neville Phillips declared a personal interest as his daughter-in-law was a member of the Elections team.

18. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's Communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

Councillor Neville Phillips wished to place on record his thanks to all those who had been involved in working on the recent Elections.

Reserves Day 2017

The Chairman read out a statement to reflect the Council's support and recognition of the valuable contributions made by employees who were

Reservists. The Council was proud to show support for the Armed Forces community by raising the Armed Forces flag on Reserves Day on 21 June 2017.

Assurance Statement on Tower Blocks

The Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) gave a brief statement following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in London. Whilst not seeking to speculate on the issues surrounding that incident, the statement sought to give assurance and information on arrangements in Flintshire following the briefing note recently issued to Members. The Chief Executive thanked Members for their support and praised the senior Housing team for their prompt response in providing support and guidance to tenants of the tower blocks in Flintshire, which was a primary objective for the Council. He reported on a range of actions including a review of procedures and arrangements for monthly checks/controls in those buildings. In addition, the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service had confirmed their confidence in the Council's robust procedures and would be working alongside officers to manage risks.

The Chief Officer provided details on a range of fire safety measures already installed in individual properties and communal areas of the Council's high-rise tower blocks, along with regular testing and inspection regimes. In low-rise properties, further work would be undertaken to develop the comprehensive risk assessments which were in place. Information on the quality and types of any external wall insulation (EWI) fittings on these properties would be shared publicly. Residents had been reassured about the actions being taken and the procedures in place, and would be able to seek further reassurance through the sessions due to be held at Flint Fire Station at which officers would be present.

Councillor Ian Roberts thanked officers for the statement and expressed his gratitude to all those involved in engaging with and reassuring residents in his ward. These sentiments were echoed by Councillor David Cox and by Councillor Billy Mullin as the Cabinet Member with responsibility for health and safety.

In response to a query from Councillor Kevin Hughes, the Chief Officer provided explanation on the evacuation procedures to be used in the event of an incident in a high-rise building which were based on the standard prescribed practice (Stay Put). These would be undertaken in conjunction with the preventative measures and risk assessments already in place.

19. PETITIONS

None were received.

20. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

21. QUESTIONS

None were received.

22. RECOGNITION OF IAN BUDD

The Chief Executive led the tributes to recognise the contributions of Ian Budd, the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) who was due to leave the Authority to join Powys County Council. A number of significant achievements were highlighted on working with schools and sixth forms, and key roles on out of county placements and the Youth Service. In particular, Ian's achievements had helped to increase Flintshire's ranking amongst the top performers in Wales in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training. Ian's dedication was recognised and he was well regarded not only in Flintshire, but on a national level, having worked with partner organisations and contributing to the development of education in Wales.

As the former Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Chris Bithell wished Ian well in the future. He praised Ian's service to both Flintshire and North Wales, along with his commitment to driving forward service improvements. He spoke about Ian's calm approach in tackling challenging issues and providing sound advice, and highlighted achievements on post-16 education and maintaining positive relationships with officer teams and school leaders.

In expressing his gratitude, Councillor Aaron Shotton commended Ian's professional dedication to improving education, particularly citing positive outcomes on Key Stage 2 results. He praised his calm manner during difficult times and said that the widespread respect for Ian reflected on the Council.

As the current Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Ian Roberts added his thanks for Ian's contributions and his particular focus on achieving the best for Flintshire learners. He also extended congratulations to Claire Homard in her interim appointment.

Further tributes were given by Councillor Marion Bateman who expressed appreciation for the support given to Ysgol Sychdyn; Councillor Tony Sharps in respect of the modernisation of Deeside Leisure Centre; Councillor Mike Peers who commended the support given to displaced school workers and for policy changes to maximise planning educational contributions; and Councillor Hilary McGuill for seeking improvements for learners.

Following a presentation made by the Chairman on behalf of the Council, Ian thanked everyone for their comments. He spoke of his pride in working with colleagues to raise standards and secure opportunities for children and young people to achieve their potential. He welcomed the proposed Notice of Motion on developing a Youth Council for Flintshire and thanked Members for their support and commitment to public services.

23. NOTICE OF MOTION

Two Notices of Motion had been received from Councillor Aaron Shotton:

(i) New Build Council Housing

'The HRA (Housing Revenue Account) borrowing cap is set for Wales by the UK Government. The borrowing cap limits the level of

debt that a Local Authority HRA can accrue. It is an artificial figure which bears no relation to the capacity within HRA accounts to fund the revenue costs of borrowing. If the borrowing cap were raised councils could build more homes to meet rising local need. The current borrowing cap, when applied to our County, enables this Council to build around 200 new Council homes. For illustration an additional £25m rise in the borrowing cap, could build a further additional 200 new council houses by 2020.

Motion: Flintshire County Council calls upon the UK Government to take urgent action and lift the HRA borrowing cap in Wales, enabling this Council to build more Council housing and alleviate the crisis of housing demand, whilst supporting local economic growth in Flintshire.'

In support of his Motion, Councillor Shotton spoke about the Council's significant achievements on council house building and on helping to secure an end to the HRA subsidy system. He said that the Motion would enable Flintshire to lead the campaign to lift the borrowing cap in Wales to allow the Council to continue to build high quality housing to meet demand.

This was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

Councillor Patrick Heesom thanked the Leader for his Motion and for his representations on the HRA subsidy system. He referred to the shortage of houses in the private sector and the need for more rented properties to meet demand. He said there was concern that the private sector did not appear to want to meet the level of housing supply needed.

Whilst acknowledging the intent of the Motion, Councillor Mike Peers referred to the legislation and pointed out that borrowing limits for all housing stock-retaining councils in Wales had been part of a collective agreement. He therefore proposed the following amendment: 'Flintshire County Council calls upon the Wales Government and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to engage with the UK Government to review the HRA borrowing cap in Wales, to allow the opportunity to consider building more council houses and alleviate the crisis of housing demand, whilst supporting local economic growth in Flintshire.' He said that once the outcome was known, the Council would be in a position to assess the affordability of further borrowing.

Councillors Shotton and Attridge indicated acceptance of the amendment put forward by Councillor Peers.

Following a question from Councillor Kevin Hughes on borrowing levels and implications, the Chief Executive explained about the self-financing model operated by the Council and the need to remove the borrowing cap to enable continuation of viable council house building.

Speaking in support of the Motion, Councillor Gladys Healey commended the Council's progress on council house building and praised the Housing team for its work on tackling homelessness.

The Chief Executive said there was widespread support for the removal of the borrowing cap in acknowledgement of the need for increased council house building to keep up with demand.

On being put to the vote, the Motion, as amended, was unanimously supported.

(ii) Developing a Youth Council for Flintshire

'A local Youth Council is a democratic organisation created, run and developed by young people for young people. They exist to represent the views of young people at a local level giving young people the opportunity to have a voice, to discuss relevant issues, engage with decision-makers and contribute to improving the lives of young people within their communities. Developing a Youth Council with formalised reporting links to this Council will enable young people to be directly involved in the decisions being made that affect them.

A Youth Council will enable Young People to:

- Voice their concerns
- Participate in local government
- Be empowered to take decisions and action to improve their local community.

Developing a Youth Council will enable the County Council to:

- Truly represent the whole of the community
- Become more vibrant, modern and dynamic
- Encourage more young people to vote and engage in public service
- Improve services to young people.

Motion:

'This Council supports the establishment of a Youth Council for Flintshire to discuss relevant issues, engage with decision-makers and contribute to improving the lives of young people within the County.'

In providing background information to his Motion, Councillor Shotton explained that the aim was to establish the principle of a Youth Council and progress through the Improvement Plan. There were many good examples of Youth Councils across the UK, and the development of such a forum in Flintshire would add to the range of current opportunities for young people to have their voices heard.

This was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

Speaking in support of the Motion, Councillor David Healey referred to the potential for town/community councils to identify ways of engaging with young people to reinforce community resilience and for dedicated resources to provide guidance to young people.

Other Members supporting the Motion were Councillor Heesom who welcomed the leadership element to youth provision, and Councillor Veronica Gay who spoke about current town council engagement with young people. Suggestions were made by Councillor Hilary McGuill to include a member of the Youth Council on the Public Service Board at a future stage and by Councillor Peers on co-ordination with other Youth Councils.

Whilst agreeing with the principle of the Motion, Councillor Clive Carver was unable to support it in its current form as he felt more consideration was needed to ensure the sustainable involvement of young people to achieve the right outcomes for all. In response, the Chief Executive advised that the aim was to agree the principle of a Youth Council as natural progression to the current arrangements, with the details to be subject to discussion and input by young people.

Councillor Chris Bithell was supportive of the Motion which sought to build upon local arrangements across the county.

On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amended Notice of Motion on New Build Council Housing be supported as follows: 'Flintshire County Council calls upon the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association to engage with the UK Government to review the HRA borrowing cap in Wales, to allow the opportunity to consider building more council houses and alleviate the crisis of housing demand, whilst supporting local economic growth in Flintshire.'; and
- (b) That the Notice of Motion on developing a Youth Council for Flintshire be supported as follows: 'This Council supports the establishment of a Youth Council for Flintshire to discuss relevant issues, engage with decision-makers and contribute to improving the lives of young people within the County'.

24. FLINTSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (WALES) 2015

The Chief Executive and Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer presented the report which asked Members of the new Council to note the statutory legislative duties and re-adopt the Council's Well-being

Objectives (following their previous adoption within the statutory deadline) for future review.

A presentation was delivered covering the following areas:

- Overview
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Well-being Assessment
- Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB)
- Roles of PSBs and Local Authorities
- Current and Emerging Flintshire PSB Priority Themes
- Future Strategy - Well-being Plan
- The Council's Well-being Objectives

Background information was shared on the seven well-being goals which underpinned the Act which would be achieved through partnership working. The Council's Well-being Assessment would help to inform the priorities for inclusion in the Well-being Plan - which was described as a partnership strategy - and required publication by May 2018.

The statutory bodies and voluntary representatives forming the PSB membership had made good progress on partnership working. The Chief Executive agreed to put forward Councillor Hilary McGuill's earlier suggestion for the inclusion of a Youth Council representative once this had been established. He also agreed to make a recommendation for a local business representative, as suggested by Councillor Mike Peers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members note the statutory duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and recognise the role of the Public Services Board in meeting them; and
- (b) That the Well-being Objectives presented to the previous Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the pre-election period be re-adopted.

25. SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION

The Democratic Services Manager presented the draft Schedule of Remuneration for 2017/18 following appointments made to 'senior salary posts'. To enable the Council to complete and publish the Schedule by the statutory deadline of 31 July 2017, permission was sought for the Democratic Services Manager to add the names of the two missing co-optees of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee before publication. Whilst one had recently been received, the second name would be advised at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the completed Schedule of Remuneration for 2017/18, as attached to the report, be approved for publication; and

- (b) That the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to add the names of the final co-optees to the schedule before publication.

26. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 4.10pm)

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Chairman