

CABINET

16 APRIL 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Tuesday, 16th April, 2019

PRESENT: Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas

APOLOGIES: Councillor .

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors

IN ATTENDANCE:

336. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

337. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2019 were submitted. Subject to the amendment of a typographical error in minute number 334 they were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

338. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - FORECAST 2020/21 - 2022/23

The Chief Executive introduced the Medium Term Financial Strategy – Forecast 2020/21 – 2022/23 report which provided a detailed overview of the financial forecast, together with a high level forecast up to 2022/23. The report had been presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th April.

Following the County Council meeting on 19th February 2019 detailed work had been undertaken to refine the forecasts to reflect more updated information based on current intelligence. The high level projection, based on known issues and excluding national funding scenarios, showed that the potential budget gap had risen to £13.3m for 2020/21. A summary of the forecast and the changes to the position to that previously reported was outlined in the report.

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that the overall resources available to the Council before any changes in Aggregate External Finance and

Council Tax was £271.350m. The updated forecast and the revised budget gap was detailed in Table 1 of the report.

The report provided full details of the pressures relating to Schools and Education, which related to three main areas of Additional Learning Needs, Demography and Youth Justice, which had emerged since the report to County Council.

The Chief Executive added that the work the Council's cross-party working group would need to focus on centred on the evidence-based case for increased national funding consisting of three main building blocks:

1. Inflation protection against core costs;
2. High cost service pressures, e.g. Additional Learning Needs and Looked After Children; and
3. Re-raising the case that Welsh Government (WG) should properly fund the cost of implementing its own legislation.

In relation to WG funding its own initiatives, the Chief Executive particularly referred to the recent Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act from January 2019 which required local authorities to operate a SuDS Approving Body (SAB) to deal with surface water drainage matters relating to new developments and ensure compliance with new WG mandatory national standards. The implications for the costs were being worked through.

All Members concurred with the views of the Chief Executive, particularly that local authorities should not be expected to fund new WG legislation and that any new legislation should be funded directly by WG. The Chief Executive reiterated previous advice that had been given, that there were no further safe options for the Council to consider beyond the statutory provisions.

RESOLVED:

That the updated forecast be adopted as the basis for initial planning.

339. COUNCIL PLAN 2019/20

Councillor Mullin introduced the Council Plan 2019/20 report and explained that the Plan had been reviewed and refreshed for structure and content, with a move away from 'Improvement Plan' to a more corporate plan. This reflected some of the intent behind the new Local Government Measure which replaced the more prescriptive 2009 Measure.

The Chief Executive added that this was now a more rounded plan as it incorporated some of the more high profile operational services which the Council was looking to protect, such as Streetscene and Public Protection. Endorsement of the outline content was before Members today, with both Parts 1 and 2 being submitted to County Council for adoption in June.

The 'super-structure' of the Plan had remained the same as previous plans but now comprised an additional theme to make seven with supporting priorities.

The seven themes continued to take a long term view of ambition and work over the coming three years.

The Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer said work was progressing well on the longer term impacts of each sub priority within the Council Plan and the in-year actions. That detailed work would be shared with Members by way of an informal discussion with Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and a Member workshop.

Councillor Thomas and Butler welcomed the new theme with the priority 'Safe and Clean Communities'. Councillor Thomas also commented on the importance of the 'Green Council' theme and the sub priority on Active Travel which linked to the wellbeing of children.

Councillor Jones was pleased to see the sub priority 'health and wellbeing – workforce plan' which she said was essential for the Council's employees.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outline content of the Council Plan 2019/20 Part 1 be endorsed with all sub priorities being captured; and
- (b) That the timetable for adoption of both Parts 1 and 2 of the Council Plan 2019/20 be endorsed.

340. SPECIALIST HOUSING

Councillor Butler introduced the Specialist Housing report which set out the current work being undertaken in Flintshire to provide homes for people with specialist housing needs, identifying the scale of demand and the approach by partners to develop a holistic and equitable process.

Specialist housing, also called accessible housing, met the needs of a specific group of people including people with disabilities, primarily physical disabilities, and older people who became less mobile.

The aim of providing accessible homes through adaptations enabled people to live independently and where possible to remain in their own home. It was fundamental to the Equalities Act 2010 and the goals of the Well-being for Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 by contributing to a more equal Wales and healthier Wales.

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) explained that in 2017 Flintshire County Council developed a Specialist Housing Register which identified all the households where there was a physically disabled resident who required accessible housing. More recently households that required larger properties (i.e. 5 bedrooms or more) had also been included as there were few properties that could meet that particular need.

The households on the Specialist Housing Register were also on the wider Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) register and had been banded accordingly. A breakdown of the 51 households on the Specialist Housing

Register was provided in the report. The Specialist Housing Group met on a monthly basis to look at the register and identify possible options to find suitable accommodation for each case. Since 2017 a total of 47 households had been rehoused into more suitable accommodation with a further 6 provisionally allocated.

Two case studies outlined in the report demonstrated where providing accessible homes made a difference to people's lives.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the report, in particular the inclusion of households that required larger properties.

In response to a comment from Councillor Thomas, the Chief Officer explained that the Council had a significant number of bungalows in its stock. At times some did require adaptations and he emphasised that the aim of providing accessible homes through adaptations enabled people to live independently and where possible remain in their own home for as long as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the work of the specialist Housing Group in reducing the number of people on the specialist housing register be noted and supported.

341. ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

Councillor Thomas introduced the Environmental Enforcement report which provided clarity on the approach to enforcement activities in the County in the future.

Following a recent review of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Service, the Council's own Enforcements Officers had resumed responsibility for the enforcement of all low level environmental crimes, such as littering and dog control.

During the review the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that consideration should be given for Town and Community Council's to fund additional Enforcement Officers within their area. The Council would contact all Town and Community Council's to offer the opportunity to fund additional officer time in their wards.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that Enforcement Officers were responsible for patrolling across the county and it was scheduled to ensure all areas received a reasonable level of enforcement presence. The enforcement areas covered by the team were:

- Littering;
- Dog fouling;
- Car park management;
- On road parking enforcement;
- Fly tipping;
- Side waste enforcement; and
- Abandoned car removal.

Councillor Bithell expressed some concerns on the new arrangements as he felt it was a retrograde step to more recent enforcement actions that had been carried out when a private company had been undertaking enforcement actions. He also said some smaller community councils would not be in a financial position to fund additional services but accepted that, as it was a request from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that they could receive a report back and it could be reviewed.

In response to a comment the Chief Officer clarified that this was clarification of the current policy, including the zero tolerance approach.

Councillor Butler said that residents in communities needed to take responsibility and take pride in where they lived. Councillor Thomas responded that residents needed to work with the Council and a balanced approach between education and enforcement would be taken.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the protocol detailed within the report for low level environmental crime offences and the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog control offences be approved; and
- (b) That it be approved that Town and Community Council's be given the opportunity to support additional Enforcement Officers in their own areas.

342. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE B5129 BETWEEN THE DENBIGHSHIRE AND CHESTER WEST AND CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BORDERS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE BUS JOURNEY TIMES

Councillor Thomas introduced the report which explained that the Council was currently delivering various elements of the Flintshire Integrated Transport Strategy which supported Welsh Government's (WG) North Wales Metro Project.

The project included works to improve bus journey times along the B548/B5129 which was a key bus route through the county, linking to both Denbighshire and Cheshire West and Chester. There were a number of improvements planned as part of the project which included bus priority measures at key signalised junctions.

A public consultation process had recently ended on the proposal to construct multiuse bus and cycle lanes along a stretch of B5129 in Deeside which formed part of the overall project. As part of the preparation works traffic modelling studies had been completed which indicated a significant reduction in bus journey times of up to 8 minutes in each direction at peak times, whilst having little detrimental impact on the existing car journey times along the route.

The work would lead to extra congestion in the area whilst the work was carried out but the long-term benefits would help to secure the future of public transport in Flintshire and ease tailbacks around Deeside Industrial Park.

Councillor Jones welcomed the report and planned improvements which she said were long overdue and should be extended as to Airbus in Broughton. Councillor Butler concurred and said it was critical to employment opportunities and the improvement to traffic movements.

RESOLVED:

That the utilisation of Welsh Government Transport Grant funding to construct the proposed multiuse bus and cycle lanes on the B5129 between Shotton Lane and Queensferry be approved.

343. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19 (MONTH 11)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/19 (Month 11) report which provided the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2018/19 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The report presented the position, based on actual income and expenditure, as at Month 11 of the financial year if all things remained unchanged. The report was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th April.

The projected year end position, without new actions to reduce cost pressures and/or improve the financial return on efficiency planning and cost control was:

Council Fund

- An operating surplus of £0.931m (£0.743m at Month 10); and
- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31st March 2019 of £8.715m, which, when taking into account the agreed contributions for the 2019/20 budget, reduced to £6.494m.

The next report to Cabinet would advise on the outturn position and was not anticipated to significantly change between now and year-end unless there was a late change to demand led services.

The improvement in the projected outturn would have a positive impact on the projected availability of reserves at year end. This would help to safeguard the Council against the known risks in 2019/20. The advice on the amount of reserves which could have been drawn down would have remained unchanged at the stage of setting the annual budget even with the improved position.

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in-year revenue expenditure forecast to be £0.067m lower than budget; and
- A projected closing balance as at 31st March 2019 of £1.165m.

The report covered the Council Fund projected position; position projected by portfolio; social services; tracking of in-year risks and emerging issues; achievement of planned in-year efficiencies; other in-year issues; reserves and balances; earmarked reserves and requests for carry forward of funding.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31st March be noted;
- (b) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted;
- (c) That allocations from the contingency reserve for investment in change and to operate a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Approving Body (SAB) be approved; and
- (d) That the carry forward request outlined in the report be approved.

344. WALES AUDIT OFFICE (WAO) AUDIT PLAN 2019

The Chief Executive introduced the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Audit Plan 2019 report.

External auditors were required to carry out an audit to discharge their statutory duties as Auditor General and an audit plan had been prepared for the Council which set out their proposed audit work for the year along with timescales, costs and the audit teams responsible for carrying out the work.

RESOLVED:

That the Wales Audit Office report be noted.

345. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Education and Youth

- **European Social Funding Programme – TRAC 11-24. To support young people aged 11-24 disengaging with education and most at risk of becoming Not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET).**
The funding provided via the European Social Fund, known as TRAC 11-24, is designed to support the development of an appropriately skilled, agile and resilient workforce. This is consistent with the requirements of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The programme will provide dedicated and bespoke support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET because of challenges that result in them potentially disengaging from mainstream educational provision. The report seeks approval that Flintshire County Council accepts this grant funding to enable bespoke provision to be made for vulnerable learners so they can receive the support they need to remain in education, employment and training and improve their life chances.

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council (Broughton Hall Road, Broughton) (One Way Traffic) Order 20-**
To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed One Way Traffic Regulation Order on Broughton Hall Road, Broughton.
- **The Flintshire County Council (Carmel Road, Gorsedd Village and Pant Y Wacco and roads adjacent) (30mps Speed Limit) Order 201x**
To advise Members of an objection received for the proposed 30mph speed limit on Carmel Road, Gorsedd Village and Pant Y Wacco.
- **The Flintshire County Council (Cymau Road, Abermorddu) (30mph and 40mph Speed Limit) Order 201x**
To advise Members of an objection received following the advertisement of the proposed 30mph and 40mph on Cymau Road, Abermorddu.
- **The Flintshire County Council (Various Unnamed Road, Unnamed Lanes and Trem y Foel, Rhes y Cae, Holywell) (30mph Speed Limit) Order 201x**
To advise Members of an objection received following the advertisement of the proposed 30mph Speed Limit Way on various unnamed roads, unnamed lanes and Trem y Foel, Rhes y Cae, Holywell.
- **The Flintshire County Council (Station Road, Sandycroft) (40mph Speed Limit) Order 201x**
To advise Members of an objection received following the advertisement of the proposed 40mph Speed Limit Way on Station Road, Sandycroft.
- **The Flintshire County Council (A5026 and A5151 and Crown Estate, Lloc, Holywell) (50mph Speed Limit) Order 201-**
To advise Members of an objection received following the advertisement of the proposed 50mph speed limit on the A5026 and A5151 and Crown Estate, Lloc.

Housing and Assets

- **Housing Benefit Overpayment – Write Off**
The customer reported a change in their circumstances in 2014, twice in writing and once over the telephone. The housing benefit claim was not amended to take the change into account until 2019. As the overpayment has been caused by an error of the Local Authority's and the customer could not reasonably have been expected to know that she was being overpaid, the overpayment is non-recoverable in accordance with Housing Benefit Regulations.

Governance

- **Microsoft Licensing Solutions Provider (LSP) Services**

The contract is for a supplier to provide Microsoft Licences, including advice and guidance to ensure that the Authority is correctly and optimally licenced. The original procurement was undertaken via a mini competition through lot 2 of the NPS Framework Agreement for ICT Products and Services. The original contract was for a 3 year period. In March 2019 Flintshire will need to sign a new 3 year contract with Microsoft, this will allow the Council to continue to use Microsoft

products. If the Council does not sign in March then the licences will cost an additional £70,000 over three years.

346. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

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Chairman