

COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 SEPTEMBER 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Friday, 25 September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Geoff Collett, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson and Kevin Rush

APOLOGIES: Councillor: Brian Lloyd, Billy Mullin and Ian Roberts

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Dave Hughes, Cabinet Member for Housing; Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Housing & Assets), Housing & Assets Senior Manager, Housing Strategy Manager, Housing & Prevention Senior Manager, Revenues Manager, Benefits Manager and Business Performance Team Manager

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Facilitator advised that it had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the Labour Group. The Committee was advised that Councillor Ian Dunbar had been appointed to this role for the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor Ian Dunbar as Chairman of the Committee be noted.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Ron Davies nominated Councillor Ray Hughes as Vice-Chair of the Committee and this was seconded by Councillor Kevin Rush. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ray Hughes be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None were received.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July, 2020 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Dennis Hutchinson.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. EMERGENCY SITUATION BRIEFING (VERBAL)

The Chief Executive explained that the current situation was fluid. He and his Chief Officer colleagues would be ensuring that Members received short up to date verbal briefings at the start of the meetings. He also commented that it may yet be necessary to reinstate the situational briefings which had been delivered to members during the first six months of the emergency.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the report to receive the revised terms of reference for the Committee as agreed by Council. At the Council's Annual Meeting, Chairs had been appointed to the five Overview & Scrutiny committees within the new structure with amended terms of reference. Changes to the remit of this Committee included the removal of regeneration items to the Environment & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the addition of the following items:

- Property and Design Consultancy
- Valuation and Estates
- Facilities Services
- Community Assets
- Community Assets Transfer Programme
- NEWydd

RESOLVED:

That the terms of reference, as agreed by Council are appended to the report, be noted.

7. RECOVERY STRATEGY

The Chief Executive presented a report to provide the Committee with oversight of recovery planning for its portfolio areas as part of the strategy for the resumption of full democratic governance. Feedback from each of the Overview & Scrutiny committees on the risk registers, recovery priorities and revised performance indicator targets for their respective areas would be reported to Cabinet prior to publication of a full Recovery Strategy.

A presentation showing the handover from response to recovery covered the following points:

- Recommendations from Cabinet
- Objectives of the Recovery Strategy
- Response Objectives

- Examples of local achievements in Response
- Recovery - handover arrangements
- Regional and Local Recovery Structures
- Recovery Objectives - Services
- Recovery Activities
- Community Recovery
- Council Plan and Performance
- Democratic Governance of Recovery

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) and Senior Managers gave a detailed presentation on the risk register for the service portfolio which covered the following:

- Housing & Assets Risks
- Risk Allocation
- Risk Trend
- Financial
- Workforce
- Property and Assets
- Governance and Legal
- Homeless Prevention Services

The Facilitator suggested that Members consider risks of ongoing concern and how best to report them to the Committee to inform the forward work programme. She said that she would liaise with the Chairman, Chief Officer and Senior Management Team to populate the forward work programme for submission at the next Committee meeting.

In response to a question around void properties, the Housing & Assets Senior Manager advised that there were a broad range of void properties across the County, mainly 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

In response to a question around disabled facilities grants, the Benefits Manager advised that work had resumed on medium and large projects. She assured the Committee that the most urgent cases had continued during the emergency situation but outlined the nervousness of some people of having trades people within their home so they were working closely with these people. She also provided an update on the work undertaken with the Procurement Team to ensure greater involvement with contractors prior to work commencing at a property.

The Committee was asked to support the recommendations including the immediate recovery priorities identified in the report, alongside agreeing with the risk analysis and mitigating actions. These were moved by Councillor Ron Davies and seconded by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the full set of immediate strategic priorities for recovery of the portfolio as set out in the report be agreed, together with the risk analysis and mitigating actions both live and planned; and

- (b) That a forward work programme for the Committee be rebuilt for the remainder of the 2020/21 Council year with recovery planning at its core.

8. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.36 p.m.)

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Chairman