

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
20 OCTOBER 2020

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Tuesday, 20 October 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Marion Bateman (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Sian Braun, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Paul Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Ian Roberts, Tim Roberts, Kevin Rush, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Martin White, Andy Williams, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Social Services), Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Manager for Human Resources & Organisational Development, Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer, Strategic Performance Advisor, Accountant - Clwyd Pension Fund, Head of Democratic Services, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officers

12. MINUTES

Minutes - 9 September 2020

The minutes were approved, subject to an amendment by Councillor Peers on minute 5(v), as moved and seconded by Councillors Dunbar and Jean Davies. On the same item, officers agreed to share the protocol for non-Committee Members speaking at Overview & Scrutiny meetings, noting that Members would need to request access to remote meetings if they wished to attend.

Minutes - 29 September 2020

The minutes were approved, subject to an amendment by Councillor Peers on minute 10, as moved and seconded by Councillors Bithell and Dunbar. As an outstanding action on the same item, Councillor Peers' request to liaise with officers to clarify wording would be followed up.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the two amendments, both sets of minutes be approved as a correct record.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Officer (Governance) said that a personal interest would be recorded for all Members on the Schedule of Remuneration (agenda item 11).

Councillors Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Ian Dunbar, Billy Mullin, Hilary McGuill, Ted Palmer, Neville Phillips, Kevin Rush, Aaron Shotton, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas and Andy Williams all declared a personal interest on the Pay Policy Statement (agenda item 9) due to closely associated people employed by the Council.

Councillor Aaron Shotton declared a personal interest on the reference in the report on the Member/Officer Protocol (agenda item 12).

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson declared a personal interest on the Annual Performance Report (agenda item 7) as a bus service provider.

14. RECOGNITION OF AWARDS FOR LOCAL RECIPIENTS IN THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST

The Chair took pride in paying tribute to six local recipients of awards in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List published on 10 October. These were Rt. Hon. David George Hanson, Councillor David Evans, Eric Harries Peake, Bethan Sian Reece, John Challenger and Robert Alan Forrester. She said that the recipients had received a letter from the Council to recognise their achievements and would be invited to attend a formal ceremony at County Hall once normal service resumed.

Her sentiments were echoed by Councillor Ian Roberts and other Members who congratulated the recipients.

15. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair took the opportunity to remind everyone of the forthcoming national 'fire-break' announced by the First Minister, in which she thanked the people of Flintshire for their co-operation in dealing with this difficult situation.

The Chief Executive gave a full verbal update on the situation. He and the Leader of the Council continued to be involved in collective national discussions with Ministers and civil servants on the next steps. He said that whilst some services were required to close for the period of the fire-break, other services under local discretion would continue where possible. All Members would be kept updated on a weekly basis and were encouraged to contact the Chief Executive directly if they wished to seek clarification. He was thanked by the Chair for his work throughout the emergency situation.

The Chair also paid tribute to Lord Barry Jones whose 50 years of public service was to be recognised by re-naming the Council Chamber at County Hall in his honour. As this event had been cancelled due to the emergency situation, a formal celebration of his achievement would be organised at a future date.

16. PETITIONS

Councillor McGuill presented a petition on behalf of residents of Moel View and Overdale in Mynydd Isa to address parking safety concerns. A petition was also presented by Councillor Connah on behalf of residents of Prince William Gardens in Mancot to address parking safety concerns.

In line with the usual process, the petitions would be passed on for the relevant Chief Officer to respond to the main proposer. The annual report on the outcomes of petitions submitted during the year would be received in April 2021.

17. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20

The Chief Executive introduced the report to endorse the 2019/20 Annual Performance Report, as recommended by Cabinet, to achieve publication by the deadline. This was a statutory report providing a retrospective overview of performance against priorities in the 2019/20 Council Plan, showing positive progress against key activities and performance indicator outturns.

The Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer and Strategic Performance Advisor gave a presentation covering the following:

- Performance Overview 2019/20
- Progress against Council Priorities
- Progress against Sub-Priorities
- Highlights
- Areas for Improvement
- Well-being of Future Generations
- Performance Overview - Council Plan
- National Overview
- Performance Overview
- Next Steps

The performance overview demonstrated that good progress over recent years had been maintained in 2019/20. The four areas identified for improvement continued to be monitored, with progress already made on tackling homelessness and sickness absence.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Carolyn Thomas and seconded by Councillor Mullin. As Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside, Councillor Thomas paid tribute to the achievements in those areas. She thanked the Streetscene team and residents for strong performance against recycling targets and highlighted a range of positive outcomes such as the pothole patching programme, the delivery of highway schemes and various initiatives undertaken by the Countryside team. She also welcomed the work on climate change/carbon reduction which was a priority of the Council.

Councillor Richard Jones thanked the officers for the positive report. He said that in his view there should be more alignment between the objectives in the Well-being Plan and Council Plan which could be more in line with portfolios. In noting the expected downturn on the condition of A and B roads, he acknowledged that the improvement in C roads could be due to their inclusion in the pothole patching programme.

In response, the Chief Executive said that work had started on the Council Plan 2020/21 and these comments would be fully taken into account. The meeting in December would provide an opportunity to consider the format on how best to deliver the intent, content and values behind the Council Plan. Officers would provide clarification on the differing number of public accountability measures (PAMs) following the meeting.

During the item, a number of Members commended the range of achievements and thanked officers for their work during the pandemic.

Councillor Paul Shotton commended the team at Hwb Cyfle day care service in partnership with Home Farm Trust, together with the completion of construction work at Connah's Quay High School.

Whilst noting the success of the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), Councillor Peers suggested that the Housing Strategy and Planning teams give detailed consideration to addressing the lack of affordable housing supply by the private sector. He asked about progress with the development of the North Wales Procurement Framework which was due to be live by August 2020. In response, the Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) shared a message in which he said that this referred to a new construction framework using local Welsh contractors to build housing for SHARP and that the contract was now live.

Councillor Dunbar praised the Council's house building programme and work to tackle homelessness. When asked about the impact of Covid-19 on those areas, the Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) gave a brief update and was pleased to report significant progress by the team in reducing the number of rough sleepers. Councillor Dunbar and the Chair extended their own thanks to the Chief Officer and his team for their work on this.

As Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor Christine Jones expressed her pride in Hwb Cyfle and also praised the development of the Microcare model in rural areas and the Mockingbird initiative to support foster carers. She thanked all employees for their part in making Flintshire the first Dementia-Friendly Council in North Wales.

As Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection, Councillor Bithell commended strong performance on food safety standards and planning applications. In response to Councillor Peers' comments, he said that Housing and Planning colleagues were proactive in negotiating affordable housing supply by the private sector.

Having been moved and seconded, the recommendations were put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That the 2019/20 Annual Performance Report be approved, as recommended by Cabinet.

18. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2019/20 for approval, following consideration by the Audit Committee and Cabinet. He drew attention to the key points of the report and confirmed that the Treasury Management function had operated within the limits detailed in the Strategy for the period. To assist in developing the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, a training session with the Council's treasury management advisors would take place remotely on 9 December 2020. To accommodate requests from some Members, officers would look at the possibility of an additional evening session.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Chris Dolphin who thanked the Corporate Finance Manager and his team for their work. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Glyn Banks who encouraged all Members to attend the forthcoming training session.

Councillor Peers noted the allocation of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans for NEW Homes and asked about plans for the balance. The Corporate Finance Manager said that the loans had been taken out to take advantage of current low interest rates to meet the Council's requirement for long-term borrowing and were not allocated to specific capital projects.

Having been moved and seconded, the recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2019/20 be approved.

19. UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2020/21

The Chief Executive introduced the report on the annual Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 which summarised the current approach to pay and remuneration within an organisational, regional and national context. It was a statutory obligation to publish the Pay Policy Statement each year within the deadline. The latest Equal Pay Audit was also shared for information.

The Senior Manager for Human Resources and Organisational Development said that some sections had been re-written to improve the flow of the report and that deferral of the report from earlier in the year had enabled the 2020 pay award data to be incorporated as well as national changes. She provided an overview of the main changes including an additional section on a cap on public sector exit payments which she confirmed was to be implemented on 4 November 2020. More information on the impact to the authority would be shared at a later date.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Mullin and Palmer who both thanked the team for their work.

Councillor Peers referred to discussion at the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee on the timely responses by officers to Members' queries and asked whether this was a consideration in the annual and mid-year appraisals of Chief Officers. The Chief Executive said that he was responsible for conducting all Chief Officer appraisals which covered all performance objectives for the respective portfolios. He reiterated the advice that any issues of under-performance should be reported either to himself or the Customer Services Manager, as set out in the agreed protocol, in order for them to be actioned.

Having been moved and seconded, the recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 be approved and the latest Equal Pay Audit be noted.

20. FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the proposed Financial Procedure Rules which had been updated following minor amendment by the Audit Committee and Constitution & Democratic Services Committee.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Chris Dolphin thanked the Corporate Finance Manager and his team for their work. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Banks.

Councillor Richard Jones noted references to value for money and asked how this could be effectively measured, which he suggested could be discussed further by the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CROSC). The Chief Executive gave an example where the rules were applied by evaluating quality and value for money when awarding contracts. He said that work on capital investments could be explored in more detail at CROSC.

RESOLVED:

That the updated Financial Procedure Rules be approved.

21. SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION FOR 2020/21

The Head of Democratic Services presented the Schedule of Remuneration for 2020/21 for approval prior to publication. The report sought authority to update the Schedule by adding the names of the Audit Committee Chair and the nominated co-optee on the EY&C Committee once those appointments had been confirmed.

As agreed at the recent meeting of the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee, the Council would be complying with Determinations 9 and 10 of the

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report by offering laptops to Members together with a broadband allowance or 'MiFi' device.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Phillips who thanked the Chief Officer and Head of Democratic Services. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Michelle Perfect.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the completed Schedule of Remuneration for 2020/21, as attached to the report, be approved for publication; and
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to add the names of the Chair of the Audit Committee once appointed and the co-optee on the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee once nominated.

22. REVIEW OF MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the updated Member/Officer Protocol which set out how the nature of the relationship between elected Members and employed officials should work. The Protocol had been updated following review by the Standards Committee and also reflected the results of work on case handling and the Flintshire Standard. An updated version of the Protocol had been circulated which incorporated amendments by the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee at its most recent meeting.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Phillips and seconded by Councillor Paul Johnson.

RESOLVED:

That the amended protocol be approved.

23. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

24. QUESTIONS

None were received.

25. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

None were received.

26. NOTICE OF MOTION

None were received.

27. **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 4pm)

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Chair