

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
28 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Tuesday, 28 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Joe Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, 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, Martin White, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Derek Butler, David Cox, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Rita Johnson, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas and Andy Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Head of Democratic Services, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officers

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 were approved as a correct record, subject to apologies recorded for Councillor Andy Williams, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ian Dunbar and Paul Shotton.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2021 were approved with apologies recorded for Councillor Richard Jones, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ian Dunbar and Ralph Small.

RESOLVED:

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

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

On the advice of the Chief Officer (Governance), a personal interest was declared on the Clwyd Pension Fund and Wales Pension Partnership (agenda item 7) for the following members of the Clwyd Pension Fund:

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Rob Davies, Mared Eastwood, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Joe Johnson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Dave Mackie and Ian Smith.

A personal interest was also declared by the following whose family members were in the Clwyd Pension Fund: Councillors Chris Bithell, Ted Palmer, Kevin Rush, Ralph Small and Ian Smith.

37. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

In presenting his communications, the Chairman thanked attendees of the Civic Service in Holywell. The Vice-Chair, Councillor Mared Eastwood, commended the new art installation to mark the 125th anniversary of Shotton Steelworks.

38. PETITIONS

None were received.

39. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES: 2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES - INITIAL PROPOSALS

The Chief Executive presented a report on the initial proposals for Parliamentary constituencies in Wales following the review by the Boundary Commission for Wales. The review was based on a recommended 73,393 electors per constituency (UKEQ). Whilst this would reduce the number of constituencies across Wales, Flintshire remained largely protected. The proposals for Flintshire set out the composition of wards to form the constituencies of Delyn and Alyn & Deeside with a suggestion that the latter be officially renamed Alun a Glannau Dyfrdwy. The proposals were subject to a public consultation period ending on 3 November 2021.

Councillor Mike Peers questioned why Brymbo and Minera, rather than wards within Delyn, should be brought into Alyn & Deeside to achieve the UKEQ and he questioned the rationale for changing the name of that constituency. In response to a query, the Head of Democratic Services clarified that the report reflected current electorate figures pending the outcome of the review by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Councillor Chris Bithell raised concerns that the principles of the review were not being applied consistently across Wales. He was concerned that the proposals for Flintshire could be detrimental in breaking long-established links between existing communities, for example between areas such as Mold, Argoed and New Brighton. He said that incorporating wards from Denbighshire could present challenges in forming cohesive areas within the Delyn constituency and that a reduction in the number of MPs in Wales would impact negatively on representation of Wales and its position in the UK.

In response to comments on other Local Authorities, the Chief Executive said that Ynys Môn may be considered an exceptional case due to its geographical isolation as an island and its close community ties. On links

between existing communities, he said that community ties at local level would continue as the County Council representation was unaffected.

Following a query by Councillor Neville Phillips, the Chief Executive confirmed that the proposals for Parliamentary constituencies did not affect County Council boundaries.

Councillor Richard Jones pointed out that the UKEQ of 77,373 was an average figure of the range set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. He said that the review should have been an opportunity to focus on better representation at local level and he spoke against the principle of creating larger areas of responsibility which might put smaller political parties at a campaigning disadvantage due to scale, and erode representation for electors/residents. He shared Councillor Bithell's concerns about consistency of the review across Wales.

The Chief Executive suggested that the comments raised be collated in a draft response for consideration at a special meeting with Group Leaders in October. This would enable a detailed collective written response to be submitted from the Council within the deadline.

Councillor Ian Roberts spoke about the complexity of reviewing constituencies and the importance of the Council responding to the proposals. He moved the recommendation including the suggestion made by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive responded to concerns raised by Councillor Tony Sharps on the representation of constituencies within the UK Parliament.

Having been moved, the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Billy Mullin. When put to the vote, the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the initial proposals for the constituencies of Delyn and Alyn and Deeside be noted and that a draft response comprising Members' comments be shared with Group leaders to agree a formal response from the Council.

40. CLWYD PENSION FUND AND WALES PENSION PARTNERSHIP

The Chief Executive presented a report for the Council to approve amendments to the Constitution, Financial Procedure Rules and Pension Board Protocol with matters relating to the Clwyd Pension Fund, and to approve amendments to the Inter Authority Agreement with the Wales Pension Partnership. The changes comprise were recommended to Council by the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee.

As Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee, Councillor Ted Palmer moved the recommendations which reflected minor but important changes. He was seconded by Councillor Haydn Bateman.

In response to questions from Councillor Mike Peers, the Chief Executive provided clarification on the appointment of an independent expert Allocator to manage Private Markets.

The Chief Officer (Governance) provided background on the proposed change in arrangements to transfer responsibility for the write-off of pension fund bad debt from Cabinet to the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amendments to the Inter-Authority Agreement shown in Appendix 1 be approved; and
- (b) That the amendments to the Constitution, Financial Procedure Rules and Pension Board Protocol shown in Appendix 2 be approved.

41. BECOMING A COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) presented a report for the Council to become a non-awarded member of City of Sanctuary. This network had developed to become an international movement to which Flintshire could contribute through its strong history of supporting refugees and build upon the launch of Flintshire City of Sanctuary in 2018. The recommendation for the Council to become a non-awarded member of the movement represented a commitment to sign up to the vision and values of the movement whilst working towards the award.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Ian Roberts said that the values and principles of the movement were shared by the County. He was seconded by Councillor Christine Jones.

Also speaking in support, Councillors Hilary McGuill and Chris Bithell expressed their pride in the County's support for refugees and those seeking sanctuary.

The recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Council becomes a non-awarded member of the movement and in doing so, signs up to the vision and values of City of Sanctuary.

42. SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND MEETINGS DUE TO ILL-HEALTH

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the report for the Council to approve the continued absence of two elected Members, on compassionate grounds, as provided for under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

He took the opportunity to highlight the support and counselling service available to Members and employees.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor Ian Roberts confirmed that he had been in contact with both Members and suggested that the Chairman write to wish them a speedy recovery on behalf of the Council.

In seconding the proposal, Councillor Mike Peers highlighted the importance of recognising the support available in such situations. He said that the Council may wish to consider the impact upon Members holding special responsibilities who may find themselves in this position.

Members in need of support were urged to contact the Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance) or Head of Democratic Services.

Councillor Patrick Heesom wished to record his appreciation for the support given to both Members.

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Council approves, on compassionate grounds, the continued absence of two Members from meetings due to their ill health; and
- (b) That Council notes that the Head of Democratic Services will be re-circulating details of the Carefirst Employee Information and Counselling service to all Members.

43. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

44. QUESTIONS

None were received.

45. NOTICE OF MOTION

None were received.

46. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.10pm)

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Chairman