

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
19 OCTOBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held at Remote Meeting on Tuesday, 19 October 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Joe Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, 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, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Owen Thomas, Martin White, Andy Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Bob Connah, George Hardcastle, Cindy Hinds, Dennis Hutchinson, Rita Johnson, Colin Legg, and Tony Sharps and Carolyn Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Executive designate, Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Change, Head of Democratic Services, Strategic Performance Advisor, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officers

GUESTS:

Mrs Isobel Everett
The Rt. Hon Lord Jones of Deeside, PC and Lady Jones, JP, DL
Dave Barnes, Revenues & Procurement Manager
Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit Manager
Emma Cater PA to Chief Officer, Social Care
Amanda Davidson PA to Chief Officer, Education and Youth
Jane Davies Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning
Sara Dulson - Strategic Finance Manager
Debbie Fielder, Deputy Head, Clwyd Pension Fund
Jen Griffiths, Manager – Benefits
Claire Harrington, Principal Archivist
Damian Hughes - Senior Manager, School Planning & Provision
Susie Lunt, Senior Manager Integrated Services and Lead Adults
Craig Macleod - Senior Manager: Children
Lynne McAlpine PA to Chief Officer Housing & Assets
Lyn Phillips, Team Leader Democratic Services (Elections)
Joanne Pierce, Executive Officer
Denise P Price, Business Manager, Housing Asset Management
Jeanette Rock - Senior Manager Inclusion & Progression
Christopher Taylor - Strategic Finance Manager
Liz Thomas - Strategic Finance Manager
Karen Williams, Clwyd Pension Fund Administration Manager

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman asked all present to stand for a minutes silence in tribute to the late Sir David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West, following the recent tragic event of his death.

46. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021 were approved as a correct record, as moved and seconded by Councillors Chris Bithell and Ian Smith.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

48. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman presented his communications and commented on the following recent events: Shotton Walkers Group Reception, Mayor of Rhyl Town Council Civic Sunday, and Mayor of Flint Civic Service.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson to the meeting. The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced Councillor Ibbotson who had recently been elected to fill the vacancy for the Penyffordd Ward following the resignation of Councillor David Williams.

Councillor Ibbotson expressed his thanks to residents of Penyffordd, Penymynydd, and Dobshill for their support and confidence in electing him as their new representative. He paid tribute to former Councillor David Williams for his work and support of the local community. He spoke of the future challenges facing the Penyffordd Ward and gave a commitment to work tirelessly and with respect, in conjunction with Councillor Cindy Hinds, his fellow Member, to achieve the best outcomes for the residents of their Ward.

49. PETITIONS

None were received.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item by virtue of exempt information under Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

At this point, the livestreaming and recording of the meeting was paused.

50. CHIEF OFFICER, TEAM CAPACITY

The Chief Executive introduced a report to seek approval of a number of changes to the current operating model. He provided background information and reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report.

The Chief Executive Designate (Chief Officer, Housing and Assets) gave an overview of the current position and capacity in the Housing and Assets portfolio, and reported on the recommended proposals.

Members were asked to consider the proposals as outlined in the report.

In moving the proposals Councillor Ian Roberts spoke in support of the recommendations. Councillor Roberts paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Chief Executive Designate, and members of the Recruitment Panel for their diligent work. Councillor Billy Mullin seconded the motion.

Councillors Ian Dunbar and Chris Dolphin spoke in support of the proposals

Councillor Mike Peers said he supported the proposals in part, however, he expressed a number of concerns and proposed that the recommendations be amended as follows: that a Chief Officer for the Housing and Community portfolio be appointed. That an appointment to the post of Corporate Manager – Capital Programmes and Assets be deferred until after the Local Government Elections in May 2022; and that an officer from the existing Housing and Assets team be appointed on an interim basis for the intervening period. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Owen Thomas.

Councillor Ian Roberts spoke in support of the motion he had put forward and thanked Officers for their detailed responses to the questions raised by Members around salary costs. Councillor Roberts spoke against the proposal to defer the post of Corporate Manager – Capital Programmes and Assets until after May 2022.

A vote was taken on the amendment proposed by Councillor Mike Peers above. The amendment was not carried.

A vote was requested on the substantive motion which had been proposed by Councillor Ian Roberts as follows:

- (a) That the proposal for (1) a replacement Chief Officer for the Housing and Community portfolio and (2) a new post of Corporate Manager, Capital Programmes and Assets be supported: and
- (b) That the current Member Appointments Panel be re-convened for the appointment of the replacement Chief Officer post.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals for (1) a replacement Chief Officer for the Housing and Community portfolio and (2) a new post of Corporate Manager, Capital Programme and Assets, be approved; and

- (b) That the current Member Appointments Panel be reconvened for the appointment of the replacement Chief Officer post.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO RE-START THE LIVE STREAM FOR THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That following consideration of the confidential item the live streaming of the meeting be resumed to enable the press and public to view the remainder of the meeting.

At this point, the livestreaming and recording of the meeting was resumed.

51. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

The Chief Executive introduced a report on the Annual Performance Report 2020-21. He provided background information and advised that the Report had been presented to the meeting of Cabinet held prior to County Council and had been recommended to Council for approval. The Chief Executive drew attention to the areas highlighted for improvement and advised that performance against the Council Plan measures was positive overall.

Councillor Ian Roberts commented on the challenge of the global pandemic and said he was proud of the exceptional performance of the Council's employees in such difficult and unprecedented circumstances. He asked that Chief Officers forward sincere thanks to their teams on behalf of the County Council for their work.

Councillor Roberts formally proposed that the appreciation of all Members of the Council for the outstanding work undertaken by Officers and employees in all services be included as an additional recommendation in the report. Councillor Billy Mullin seconded the motion.

In endorsing the comments made by Councillor Roberts, Councillor Mike Peers paid tribute to the work of Schools and the support provided for children of key workers throughout the pandemic Referring to page 62 of the agenda and the long term planning for recovery of town centres, he noted that charges for car parking had been reintroduced but asked that town centres continued to be monitored and adjustments made as necessary to encourage footfall in the future. Councillor Peers drew attention to the social value information on page 63 of the agenda and the success of the Marleyfield Care Home facility which he said was to be applauded.

Councillor Ian Dunbar spoke in support of the work and services provided by the Housing and Assets team to support the residents of Flintshire.

Councillor Andy Hughes paid tribute to all employees in Social Services for their outstanding work during the pandemic.

The Chief Executive thanked Members for their support. He said that targets set for social value performance had been exceeded for the first 12-18 months and the Council was regarded as an exemplar authority by the Welsh Government and had been asked to mentor other authorities as a result.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Annual Performance Report 2020/2021 be approved; and
- (b) That the appreciation of all Members of the Council for the outstanding work undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic be passed to Officers and their teams in all Services.

52. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Ian Roberts referred to the recent tragic death of Sir David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West, and said the Labour Group considered that it would be inappropriate to discuss the Notice of Motion which called for the UK Government to continue with the £20 enhancement to Universal Credit at the current time. He proposed that the Notice of Motion be deferred to a future meeting. This was unanimously agreed by Members.

53. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

54. QUESTIONS

None were received.

55. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE BY COLIN EVERETT, OUTGOING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair of the Council invited the outgoing Chief Executive, Colin Everett, to speak. In his opening remarks the Chief Executive thanked Officers and colleagues in Democratic Services, Theatr Clwyd, Corporate Communications, and Picturehouse for their work in organising a technical and logistically complex meeting.

The Chief Executive said that when he joined Flintshire County Council in 2007, the Authority did not have the regional or national influence it deserved. He spoke of his brief on appointment which was to bring new energy, professional leadership, and make positive change happen. Today there was recognition from many sources including the First Minister, other Cabinet Ministers, and national commentators, that Flintshire County Council was a strong, high performing and innovative Council, providing leadership to other authorities and organisations, and the best authority in Wales for partnership working.

The Chief Executive gave a brief synopsis of his career in local government service which had spanned 40 years. He said that Flintshire County Council would hold a special memory for him and he had been privileged to serve its residents and local communities. He then gave a short presentation which highlighted a few of the many achievements and notable events during his period of office. He felt that the Authority was in a confident, resilient, and able position to move forward in the future under the new leadership of Neal Cockerton, Chief Executive designate.

In his closing comments, the Chief Executive said that the future was good for North Wales; and its location, landscape, heritage, and economy was unique. He had

enjoyed living in North Wales during his time as a public services leader and was confident that it would recover well from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to be a safe place to live and work.

The Chief Executive expressed thanks to the current and former Chairs of Flintshire County Council, Leaders of the Council, Group Leaders, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees, and Members, for their support. He also thanked senior officer colleagues, Chief Officers, Service Managers, and the Chief Executive team for their support and companionship throughout the last 14 years. He commented on his personal plans for the future and said he would make a return visit when the opportunity arose.

The Chief Executive welcomed Lord Barry Jones and Lady Janet Jones to the meeting. He paid special thanks to Lord Barry Jones for his personal support as a mentor. He paid tribute to his work and personal qualities and in summarising said he was the embodiment of advocacy for Flintshire and its people. In recognition of his service as a Member of Parliament for 50 years, the Chief Executive asked Members to stand in tribute to Lord Barry Jones.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to his successor Neal Cockerton, the incoming Chief Executive, and referred to his personal qualities and exemplary work ethic and values. Neal Cockerton thanked the Chief Executive for his counsel, mentoring, guidance, and professional support. He also passed on the thanks of the Chief Officer team, the workforce, and partner organisations, for his strong leadership throughout some of the most challenging events to be faced by the Council. He spoke of the Chief Executive's relationship with Welsh Government and regional partners which was key to the delivery of transformational and intergenerational programmes and would leave a lasting legacy in the region. The incoming Chief Executive presented a short introductory film which briefly set out his thoughts and aspirations for the future of the Council.

The Chairman presented a gift to the outgoing Chief Executive to mark his retirement on behalf of Members and work colleagues.

Councillor Ian Roberts said the Council owed a debt of gratitude to the outgoing Chief Executive. He spoke of his leadership and resilience, and his personal qualities of friendship, kindness, and the support offered to Members when needed. He commented on the challenge of many years of austerity and severe budget restraints which were faced by the Council under the Chief Executive's leadership and the unprecedented demands of the Covid-19 pandemic which followed. He spoke of the importance of an effective working partnership between officers and Members and thanked the Chief Executive for his ability to work with Members to achieve best outcomes for the Council as a substantial direct provider of services. In conclusion Councillor Roberts asked Members to join him in standing ovation to the Chief Executive.

Councillors Mike Peers, Marion Bateman, Clive Carver, Carol Ellis, Aaron Shotton, and Neville Phillips paid tribute to the Chief Executive, referring to examples of his unseen work in response to the needs of others and for the benefit of Flintshire and its residents, and thanked him for his service and dedication. Members wished him well for the future and also wished the incoming Chief Executive every success in his new role.

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the Chief Executive with a leather bound 'Memory Book', which had been put together by a team of officers, and incorporated memories, expressions of goodwill, and anecdotes from Members, Officers, and professional colleagues across Wales. The book had been hand-stitched and bound in leather with gold letter tooling by Mark Allen, Senior Conservator with the North Wales Archives service. He invited the Principal Archivist to explain the process behind the volume. The Chief Executive expressed his appreciation to all who had contributed to the Memory Book which he said he would treasure.

56. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.05 pm)

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Chairman