

**CABINET**  
**15 APRIL 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 15 April 2014

**PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)**

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Christine Jones and Kevin Jones

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Billy Mullin

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Environment, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of ICT and Customer Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Team Manager, Committee Services

**208. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were received.

**209. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**210. SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN 2012-2017**

The Chief Executive introduced the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) 2013-2017 newly adopted by the Flintshire Local Service Board (LSB) which complemented the Council's Improvement Plan.

Welsh Government (WG) required LSBs to produce a SIP and by following WG Guidance for Integrating Plans and Partnerships 'Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery' (June 2012), Flintshire incorporated the following statutory plans into a single and consolidated SIP:

- Flintshire County Vision – 2009 to 2019
- Making a Positive Difference Plan – 2011 to 2014 (Children & Young People's Partnership)
- Community Safety Strategic Plan – 2011 to 2014
- Good Health, Good Care Strategy – 2011 to 2014 (Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership)

The guidance provided a framework for local authorities and other planning bodies to meet their statutory planning responsibilities and balance WG priorities with local priorities and choice.

The first priority of the Single Integrated Plan was “Leading by example as employers and Community Leaders”. Within that priority a commitment had been made to the adoption of the ‘Employers’ Promise’, which was officially signed and adopted by all Local Service Board partners on 3 April 2014 and would be presented to the County Council meeting on 30 April. The innovative ‘Employers’ Promise’ was appended to the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 be endorsed and that support be continued on its delivery of outcomes both as a partner to the Local Service Board and through the Council’s Improvement and other principal plans.

## **211. DELIVERING HOME ADAPTATIONS**

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which sought approval of a new Policy on the provision of major adaptations in Flintshire County Council’s family houses and upper floor flats.

The budget for home adaptations within Council housing was £850k for major adaptations and £150k for minor adaptations totalling a budget of £1m which was always fully spent. When comparing the level of annual budget provision in Flintshire to other social landlords, spend was consistently higher than many other organisations. With the number and complexity of adaptations required increasing, a focus on considering re-housing to a more suitable property had been taken over the last two years where appropriate. The basis of that had been taking a considered approach where adaptations cost over £10k.

Level access showers in family housing seriously affected the future ability to let a property when it became vacant. Young families would not accept a house with a level access shower as there was no facility to bathe children, the result of which was often the need to remove the level access shower and reinstate the bathroom which could cost an additional £4.5k. There was a need to reduce the number of level access showers which were provided in family houses and upper floor flats.

Within the proposed Policy for Council housing, when determining whether it was right to adapt a property, or propose that the tenant relocated to a property better suited to their needs, the following points were considered on a case by case basis, whether:

- The applicant occupied a property that was scheduled for modifications, or major refurbishment within the next two years
- The resident was actively seeking re-housing
- The adaptation requested was not structurally practicable
- There were properties within the same community which were already adapted, or could be adapted more cost effectively

- The property was under-occupied
- Extensive adaptations were requested (over £10k)
- Suitable alternative accommodation could be provided within a reasonable timescale, which the housing service deemed to meet the needs of the household, following the recommendations made in the Occupational Therapy assessment
- The future ability to let the property would be adversely affected
- The tenant had made an application to purchase the property under the 'Right to Buy' scheme
- The tenancy was less than 12 months old and/or the tenant failed to declare that they, or a member of their family had a pre-existing disability, where it was reasonable to do so i.e. those with an enduring condition

Members welcomed the report and the progress made towards the future delivery of council house adaptations.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed policy be approved regarding the adaptation of family houses and upper floor flats within the Council's housing stock.

**212. PEOPLE STRATEGY 2014-2017**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided a progress report on the delivery of the People Strategy for 2009-12, extended to 2014, to conclude the current strategy as at March 2014. Members were advised on the key themes and priorities for the next People Strategy for 2014-2017 prior to the full review and development of the new strategy.

Over the last five years the Council had made significant achievements in delivering projects under the strategy, which was structured under the five key themes of Customer, Change, Capacity, Consolidation and Collaboration.

The Council was undergoing significant organisational change to better meet changing circumstances, save money and better use senior talent to modernise the organisation. Services within the Council needed to be improved and transformed at a faster pace, whilst protecting high performance. Planning for such change would require modernisation to be lean, productive, efficient, resilient and high performing.

The new People Strategy would support the organisation by developing and embedding leadership values and behaviours and managing the transition from the current to the future service models with a focus on organisation design principles, positive cultural change, talent management, sustainability and high performance and productivity. The main priorities for 2014 were detailed in the report.

The priorities for the next three years, under the new People Strategy, were proposed to be within three themes of: Employee Development and Talent Management; Employee Performance and Productivity; and Health and Wellbeing.

On the Single Status Agreement, the Chief Executive explained that implementation would be on 1 June 2014 following the 'Yes' vote in the recent ballot. Both he and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment expressed their thanks to all employees involved in the Single Status project and to the Trade Unions for their hard work and contribution to bringing about a successful resolution to the Single Status ballot.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the achievements made in relation to delivery of the current People Strategy be noted;
- (b) That the immediate priorities for 2014 be noted and endorsed; and
- (c) That the intention to draft a new People Strategy 2014 to 2017, following the leadership restructure in May 2014, be noted.

**213. ICT STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Head of ICT and Customer Services provided an update on progress of the implementation of the corporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy.

The Council's ICT Strategy defined the use of ICT to support the Council's priorities and services and was supported by an action plan with key milestones and allocated lead officer responsibility.

The ICT Strategy was due a major review in 2013/14 but that would now take place later in 2014 following the implementation of the IT Service Review outcomes and the new Council Operating Model to ensure that it was strategically and operationally aligned, reflective of organisational priorities and continued to act as an enabler and a catalyst for change within the organisation.

Full details of progress with major ICT projects were detailed in the report.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance particularly welcomed the mobile app which had been launched in September 2013 and allowed customers to contact the Council on Apple, Android and Blackberry devices with Flintshire being the first Council in Wales to offer a fully bilingual app available for use across the range of mobile devices.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress being made in the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy be noted.

## **214. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 10)**

The Head of Finance provided the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 10) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2013/14.

The projected year end position on the Council Fund, as estimated at Month 10 was:

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £2.151m less than budget (an increase of £0.170m on the £1.981m reported at Month 9)
- Projected contingency reserve balance at 31 March 2014 of £4.792m

On the HRA, the net in year expenditure forecast was £0.089m less than budget (£0.155m as at Month 9).

The table in the report showed an increase of £0.170m on the underspend of £1.981m reported at Month 9. The main items contributing to the £0.170m variance were the identification of efficiencies under the Corporate Administration review (£0.142m), improved trading and reduced costs in Leisure (£0.056m) offset by overall increased costs in Out of County placements of (£0.035m) made up of increased costs in Lifelong Learning of (£0.073m) and reduced costs in Children's Services of (£0.038m).

The report also provided details of various requests to carry forward funding into 2014/15 for specific items, details of which were contained in the report.

Following a question from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, the Head of Finance explained that whilst the report was based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 10, the report did provide the best projection to year end which would be explained in the opening paragraph of future reports.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31 March 2014 be noted;
- (c) That the final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (d) That the carry forward requests be approved.

## **215. REGIONAL TECHNICAL STATEMENT**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the First Revision to the North Wales Regional Technical Statement (RTS) for the strategic

provision of aggregate minerals and provided details on the implications for Flintshire and other local authorities within North Wales.

The revision of the RTS required political endorsement by a majority of the respective Councils that made up the North Wales region to allow it to be published and used for preparation of aggregate policy within Local Development Plans (LDP) and reviews, or the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as was appropriate.

The provision of minerals for house building, highways, infrastructure, commercial and industrial development was a major factor in economic growth.

The Director of Environment explained that each authority had to contribute to an apportionment for hard rock and sand and gravel for the duration of their LDP's and beyond. In many instances, there were sufficient existing permitted reserves of aggregate but where there was a shortfall, additional allocations would need to be made. The RTS recommendations took into account the location of rock deposits, environmental and sustainability factors, and the location of markets.

Flintshire maintained landbanks of permitted reserves however they were insufficient to meet the recommended apportionment. The recommendation was to make additional minimum allocations of 3.84m tonnes of hard rock and 1.4m tonnes of sand and gravel to provide required apportionments into the future.

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### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the First Revision of the North Wales Regional Technical Review be endorsed; and
- (b) That the departure from published planning policy and guidance be noted and that clarification letters will be issued by the Welsh Government in the interim until the policy and guidance is revised.

## **216. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

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

### **Corporate**

Relocation of Flintshire CAB from Existing 'Annexe' Buildings in the Curtilage of Terrig House to Terrig House Main Building

Business Rates – Write Offs

Corporate Debt – Write Offs

Organisational Change Strategy Consultancy Support – Part 2

**Community Services**

Entering into a Private Sector Leasing Agreement for a 7-bedroom Property in Queensferry to Provide Interim Accommodation for Individuals Who Have Been Homeless

**Environment**

Agricultural Estate Management – Disposal of Part of an Estate

Transfer of Freehold Interest – Buckley Baths – Community Asset Transfer

Granting of Lease of Carmel Village Hall (Community Asset Transfer)

Sale of Land to the Rear of 127 Princess Avenue, Buckley

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

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 10.15am)

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**Chairman**