

**CABINET**  
**17 JUNE 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 17 June 2014

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

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

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: Chris Bithell and Billy Mullin

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise, Chief Officer, Education and Youth, Chief Officer, Organisational Change, Chief Officer, Planning and Environment, Chief Officer Social Services, Corporate Finance Manager and Team Manager, Committee Services.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Helen Brown declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 16, Business Rate 'Retail' Relief and a personal interest in agenda item number 17, Private Sector Housing Renewal.

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**3. ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT FOR WALES AUDIT OFFICE**

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones and Mr Paul Goodlad from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) who were in attendance to present the WAO Annual Improvement Report 2013-14 for Flintshire County Council.

The Chief Executive explained that an updated version of the Executive response had been circulated which included details on schools maintenance backlog and out of county places.

Huw Lloyd-Jones introduced the Report which was in three sections:

1. The delivery and evaluation of services at Flintshire County Council in 2012-13 (updated where possible to reflect more recent developments)
2. Flintshire County Council's planning of improvement for 2013-14 and

3. Whether the Auditor General believed that the Council would make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15

Huw Lloyd-Jones made the following comments, full details of which were contained the Report:

- The Council had made good progress against the improvement priorities and improved its overall performance against the national indicators
- The Council had taken action to strengthen its approach to performance evaluation, but further work was required to harmonise its improvement planning and performance reporting arrangements
- The Council had enhanced its arrangements for planning and supporting improvement, but further action was required to provide the rigour necessary to cope with the challenges ahead
- The Council was likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15

In conclusion, Huw Lloyd-Jones said this was the best Report that had been presented to Flintshire County Council to date and that the Auditor General believed the authority was likely to meet the requirements of the Measure in making arrangements to secure continuous improvement. There were no new recommendations or proposals for improvement.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance thanked Huw Lloyd-Jones and Paul Goodlad for their attendance.

The Chief Executive added that the financial challenge facing the authority was not underestimated however Flintshire County Council had made progress in this difficult challenging time. Also, CIPFA had been invited to work with the authority on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the longer term.

On the Improvement Plan, the Chief Executive said this was a constantly evolving document which had focused officers and Members.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment asked if the WAO made representations to Welsh Government (WG) on the importance of local authorities receiving timely information on budgets to enable them to plan for the future. Paul Goodlad acknowledged the difficulties faced by local authorities but the extent to which the WAO could influence WG was limited, which had been recognised in the Annual Improvement Report.

The Chief Executive explained that the Annual Improvement Report would now be submitted to Audit Committee and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2013-14 published by the Auditor General for Wales be received; and

- (b) That the report be noted and the Council's response be received and agreed.

#### **4. WALES AUDIT OFFICE REGULATORY PROGRAMME 2014-15**

The Chief Executive invited Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones to present the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit for the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for the period 2014-15 and the fees for the performance and financial audit work programme.

Mr Huw Lloyd Jones explained that the main piece work to be carried out in 2014-15 was the Corporate Assessment, which was a review of the Council's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. The outcome of the Corporate Assessment would be a report that stated whether the Auditor General believed that the Council was likely to comply with the requirements of the measure.

On the fees for performance audit and financial audit work for 2014-15, Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones explained that there was a reduction of 9.4% compared with the fees for the previous year, with an explanation of the decrease outlined in appendix 2 to the report.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit for the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for the period 2014-15 be accepted; and
- (b) That the reduction in fees for the performance and financial audit work programme be noted.

#### **5. 2013/14 YEAR END IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING**

The Chief Executive introduced the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan monitoring reports for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Members were asked to note the following:

- The levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of high level activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;
- The performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and
- The current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them

A summary of overall progress against the high level activities was as follows:

#### **PROGRESS**

- Good progress (green) was being made in 55 (56%)
- Satisfactory progress (amber) was being made in 41 (42%)
- Limited progress (red) was being made in 2 (2%)

## OUTCOME

- There was a high (green) level of confidence in the achievement of 69 (70%)
- There was a medium (amber) level of confidence in the achievement of 28 (29%)
- There was a low (red) level of confidence in the achievement of 1 (1%)

Full details of the activities assessed as red, with an explanation of why that assessment was made, were contained in the report. Also detailed in the report was the assessment of the strategic risks and the level to which they were being controlled.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment expressed his disappointment in the non-achievement of 20mph advisory zones being placed outside schools, which he said was due to a delay in Welsh Government (WG) reviewing the compliance of the proposed signs with visual standards.

## **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Cabinet Members note the sufficiency of actions taken to manage delivery of the Improvement Priority impacts; and
- (b) That the following be noted:
  - The levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of key activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;
  - The levels of performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and
  - The current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them

## **6. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014/15**

The Chief Executive introduced the Improvement Plan 2014/15 prior to its final publication in June. An addition to appendix 1 on improving road safety was tabled.

It was a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan. It was a statutory requirement for the County Council to adopt the Improvement Plan which would be submitted to the meeting on 24 June 2014.

The Plan presentation had previously changed and provided details for each of the priorities which were to have the most impact during the year. This had helped the organisation to concentrate on the outcomes where most immediate action was needed.

The draft Improvement Plan submitted to Cabinet on 13 May 2014 had been presented for consultation at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the exception of Corporate Resources, along with the accompanying targets for measures and milestone dates on which achievement would be measured. It would

be presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2014.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Improvement Plan 2014/15 be approved prior to adoption by Council and final publication in June.

**7. LOCAL SERVICE BOARD AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS END OF YEAR REPORT**

The Chief Executive introduced the end of year assessments for:

- The progress of the Local Service Board (LSB) Priorities and its key Strategic Partnerships and;
- The priorities for each of the Strategic Partnerships for the year ahead

The LSB had recently published its Single Integrated Plan which focussed on four priorities and supported the work of LSB related strategic partnerships.

The LSB had adopted four priorities which were:

- Priority 1: Lead by example as employers and community leaders
- Priority 2: People are safe
- Priority 3: People enjoy good health, wellbeing and independence
- Priority 4: Organisational environmental practices

All four priorities had detailed programme plans, governance and reporting arrangements and integrated with the Council's Improvement Plan. The Single Integrated Plan brought together those commitments and activities into one plan.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development commented on the RAG status and what did not go so well on the Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ). Although the authority shared its DEZ investment enquiries with Welsh Government (WG) on a monthly basis, communication was one way and investment enquiries and opportunities remained unreported in the council's data.

**RESOLVED:**

That progress made in the end of year reports be noted and the commitments for the current year as reflected in the Single Integrated Plan be endorsed.

**8. SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING BILL**

The Cabinet Member for Social Services provided an update on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the key implications and timelines for implementation.

The intended purpose of the Act was to enable the transformation of priority areas of social care, bringing about significant change in how services were delivered and to ensure they were sustainable.

The Act placed greater legal obligations on Local Authorities and Local Authority partners to: promote equality, improve the quality of services and the provisions for information and advice, provide service users and carers with a stronger voice and real control over the services they received and encourage a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.

Subordinate legislation including relevant regulations, codes and guidance would be drafted following the achieved Royal Assent which would provide further clarity on the requirements of the Act through 2014-15.

Full details of the proposed changes and updates were detailed in the report.

The Chief Officer, Social Services added that the Act required transformational change in the way the authority managed and commissioned services for vulnerable people. There was a need to ensure that vulnerable people had access to high quality services whilst at the same time needing to remodel more traditional models of care, and empower people and communities to take responsibility for their own wellbeing. This could not be delivered in isolation – the Council, the NHS, independent and voluntary providers of care and support and local communities would need to work together to turn the Act's ambitious plans and principles into an everyday reality.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the legislative changes and obligations associated with the Act be directed and overseen through the established Modernising Social Services Board;
- (b) That there be a sustained focus on how services are commissioned, provided and where appropriate integrated. The Council's response will also need to be informed as proposed regulations and guidance are received from Welsh Government; and
- (c) That a self-assessment be conducted against the new guidance/regulations when they are published, to be undertaken within three months of publication.

**9. CSSIW NATIONAL REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN WALES 2013-14**

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced the outcome of a national review of commissioning in adult social care. The review included an inspection of how well services for people with dementia and their carers were being commissioned in Flintshire.

The report for Flintshire was published on the CSSIW website on 16 April 2014 and was overall very positive about the services in place for people living with dementia in this authority.

The report identified a number of areas of best practice it found in Flintshire, namely

- the “Living Well domiciliary care team supporting people living with dementia using in-house domiciliary care staff and
- the North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS) as a model of best practice in supporting carers and families

Flintshire’s Community Care Brokerage Service was described as pro-active and commended for brokering Community Health Care packages in order to ensure that CHC and palliative care was provided in a timely way.

The report also recognised Flintshire’s contribution to the development of a Regional approach to commissioning through its work with the North Wales Regional Commissioning Hub and the development of a Regional Framework for domiciliary providers. It highlighted Flintshire’s focus on ‘quality and responsiveness of services’, noting positively that the authority did not commission 15 minute domiciliary care calls and described relationships with providers as “very positive and very collaborative”.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report, particularly the positive comment on Flintshire not commissioning 15 minute domiciliary care calls.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the findings from the CSSIW report be received and the development of an action plan detailing the response to the recommendations be supported;
- (b) That it be noted that a strong, reciprocal, partnership approach between BCUHB and the local authority will be integral to developing the action plan and ensuring that good quality support and care is available to people with dementia and their carers; and
- (c) That a progress report, and the final draft of the action plan, be submitted to Scrutiny and Cabinet in July for review and consideration.

**10. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Housing provided an update on the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire and sought support for the Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) and Local Spend Plan (LSP).

The local authority was required to develop a 3 year Commissioning Strategy that would inform the priorities within the Regional Commissioning Strategy. Local authorities in North Wales had developed 12 month Commissioning Plans to cover the transition period and allow time for reviewing of existing services, new developments and appropriate targeting of reductions.

The Commissioning Plan was appended to the report and detailed the proposals for how the grant would be allocated for the next year; this plan was set within the context of reduced funding. This would be replaced by a longer term strategy which would details the Supporting People Commissioning intentions.

The report provided full details of the reductions and how those reductions would be managed. Also detailed within the report were the national, regional and local developments and the LCP Priorities for 2014/15.

In response to a question from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise explained that Local Solutions, who now delivered the services that had previously been delivered by Save the Family, remained in the same building but they were responsible for delivering the services to local people.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the reductions to the Supporting People Grant be noted and the proposed approach to managing reductions be approved; and
- (b) That the Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan 2014-15 be approved.

**11. QUEENSFERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL – CHANGE IN AGE-RANGE FROM SEPTEMBER 2014, RESPONSES TO THE STATUTORY NOTICE**

The Chief Officer, Education and Youth informed Members of the response to the publication of the statutory notice relating to the change of age range of Queensferry Primary School from 4-11 to 3-11 years from September 2014.

No written objections had been received to the proposals which resulted in Cabinet having the authority to determine the proposal.

In response a question, the Chief Officer, Education and Youth said the decisions that were outstanding from the Minister on the proposals from the area review provision should be received before the summer recess.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposal to change the age-range of Queensferry CP School, Queensferry Campus, Chester Road West from 4-11 to 3-11 years from September 2014 be approved.

**12. 2013/14 YEAR END HEAD OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

The Chief Executive introduced the 2013/14 Year End service performance reports produced at Divisional level. The report covered the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and Members were asked to note the following:

- The progress updates for the Council Improvement Priorities that were not set as an in-year priority
- Service Plan progress
- Progress/performance against Corporate measures e.g. absence management
- The assessment of any regulatory reports and



- Performance against Improvement Targets, National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) and Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Year End Head of Service performance reports be received; and
- (b) That the following be noted:
- The progress updates for the Council Improvement Priorities that are not set as an in-year priority
  - Service Plan progress
  - Progress/performance against Corporate measures e.g. absence management
  - The assessment of any regulatory reports and
  - Performance against Improvement Targets, NSIs and PAMs

**13. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 12)**

The Corporate Finance Manager provided the latest revenue budget monitoring information for 2013/14 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 12 based on the most up to date information available.

The projected year end position on the Council Fund as estimated at Month 12 was:

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £3.152m less than budget (an increase of £0.937m on the £2.215m reported at Month 11)
- Projected contingency reserve balance at 31 March of £5.093m

On the HRA, the net in year expenditure forecast was £0.124m less than budget (£0.171m as at Month 11), with a projected closing balance at 31 March 2014 of £1.533m.

The table in the report showed a projected positive variance of expenditure against budget of £3.152m, which was an increase of £0.937m on the projected underspend of £2.215m reported at Month 11. The main reasons for the variances were detailed in the report.

The original budget column reflected in-year virements which had been approved in compliance with Financial Procedure Rules. All of the movements for Month 12 were summarised in appendix 1 to the report with detailed reasons for all variances by Directorate summarised in appendices 2 to 8.

As reported at Month 11, a number of carry forward requests had been reviewed during the month and been identified as requiring carry forward into 2014/15. Details of each request were contained in appendix 10.

The 2013/14 budget contained £5.331m of specific efficiencies and the table in the report summarised the current position in relation to the achievement of those

items. The analysis showed that it was projected that £4.213 (79%) would be achieved resulting in a net underachievement of £1.118m.

After bringing in the impact of the projected in year budget position the current projected level of the contingency reserve at the end of March 2014 was £5.093m.

On the HRA, there was an overall projected underspend of £0.124m and a projected closing balance at Month 12 of £1.533m, which at 5.36% of total expenditure satisfied the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%.

**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 projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (d) That the carry forward requests be approved.

**14. PENSIONER DISCOUNT SCHEME**

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise provided information on the proposed implementation of a revised Pensioner Grant scheme in 2014-15 to those Council Tax payers in receipt of partial awards under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).

In 2013-14 the Welsh Government (WG) prescribed a new national grant scheme with a targeted approach to provide a grant to those pensioners who already received partial awards under the CTRS. In Flintshire, 2,233 households qualified for funding of up to £100, although some households received less due to their net Council Tax liability being less than £100.

The WG had decided that they would not operate a national grant scheme for 2014-15, however within the Revenue Support Grant they had included £201,700 identified for the funding of a pensioner grant scheme at the discretion of each authority. WG had not stipulated that the grant should be paid to pensioners; however a review of North and Mid Wales local authorities showed that all were proposing to pay the grant with the exception of Wrexham and Denbighshire.

Data analysis work had calculated that there were 2,204 households in Flintshire, who were in receipt of Council Tax Reductions and would qualify for funding. It was not possible to identify the number of pensioners who would qualify if restrictions on applicants were not introduced however statistics from 2012-13 indicated a minimum of 8,700 applicants which would reduce the grant to £23.18 per applicant.

The demands and funding availability had been assessed to produce criteria which were based on the continuation of the 2013/14 WG Scheme to ensure continuity and an equitable distribution of the grant, targeted to those taxpayers in most need of financial help.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the revised funding availability for a Pensioner Grant scheme be noted and that a scheme for Flintshire for 2014-15 be agreed;
- (b) That the following scheme as prepared by Revenues and Benefits Senior Officers be approved:

**Pensioner Grant Scheme**

- That the grant is only payable to pensioners who fulfil the criteria at the qualifying date of 30 June
- A maximum award of £95. The qualifying criteria is:
  - Either the claimant or the partner to the claimant has reached the age of 60 and is liable for Council Tax at a property which is deemed to be a 'sole and main' residence, and
  - The claimant qualifies for partial Council Tax Support, but not the maximum level of support on the qualifying date and there is a net liability to Council Tax (after any other discounts or reductions, for example single person discount or disabled banding relief)
  - Should the net liability be below the £95 maximum level of award then the credit to the Council Tax account will only be up to the net liability
  - The minimum award will be £10
  - Grant awards will be automatically credited to the Council Tax accounts of qualifying households during July 2014

**15. BUSINESS RATES 'RETAIL' RELIEF**

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise provided Members with details of a new Business Rates Relief scheme, providing a grant of up to £1,000 to 'retail' businesses during 2014-15.

Welsh Government (WG) had confirmed that £581,299 of funding was available to Flintshire County Council to award retail grants to approximately 725 businesses. In many cases the awards would be less than £1,000 given that many retail businesses were also entitled to Small Business Rate Relief and already paid less than £1,000.

Full details of the criteria for discretionary rate relief policy for retail relief were detailed in the report.

Cabinet Members commended the report which would support the continuation of town centre trading and said the scheme should be publicised as widely as possible.

## **RESOLVED:**

That the introduction of the scheme from 1 April 2014 be approved and 'retail relief' be awarded of up to £1,000 to qualifying businesses for the financial year 2014-15.

NB – Councillor Brown left the meeting during discussion of this item.

## **16. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL**

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the proposed revisions to the Private Sector Renewal and Improvement Policy, along with the rationale for the revisions.

The three areas of change included:

- Introduction of new loan products to support energy efficiency measures
- Introduction of the Welsh Government Property Improvement Loan Scheme
- Strengthening the criteria to access empty homes support

Current statistics suggested that 1 in 3 Flintshire households, which equated to 20,000 households, were in fuel poverty and tackling this was an Improvement Plan priority. The objectives were to provide benefits to Flintshire households and to the council, as well as being a self sustaining area of the service. External funding would be administered in a way that allowed it to be recycled, so that it could be reinvested in further energy efficiency initiatives. This would operate as an invest to save fund.

The focus of the energy efficiency programme in 2014/15 would be major gas infill schemes at Aston and Mostyn, where it was anticipated 233 council properties would be connected.

With that in mind, the Council was keen to provide an offer to private homeowners within those areas which would encourage them to connect to the gas main. Money from the WG Arbed ECO top up scheme had been secured which would be used to fund the new loans, full details of which were contained in the report.

It was proposed that two additional conditions be inserted in respect of empty homes, which included a minimum period the property must remain tenanted after support was provided. This would be two years, or until the loan was released. The minimum period would rise to five years for those owners accessing grant support. A further condition relating to the need for owners provided with financial support to consent to their property being managed by a social lettings agency would also be inserted.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the introduction of a new Energy Efficiency loan product, to help deliver gas infill in communities across Flintshire be approved, and delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise to operate the scheme;
- (b) That the introduction of the WG Property Improvement Loan initiative be approved and the final terms and conditions of the scheme be delegated to the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise and the Chief Officer, People and Resources; and
- (c) That the additional clauses to be added to the Empty Homes assistance be approved, relating to the minimum period of rental being two years for a loan and five years for a grant and that the owner must consent to the property being managed by the Council's chosen social lettings agency.

**17. TACKLING PRIVATE LONG TERM VACANT HOMES – ENFORCED SALES POLICY**

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced an Enforced Sales Policy and sought approval for its use.

There were currently circa 450 long term vacant homes in Flintshire which had reduced over the previous two years. Flintshire County Council had a long and successful history of tackling long term vacant homes and had provided support to owners of empty properties for approximately 12 years, which was reflected in the relatively low number of empty properties, in comparison with other parts of Wales.

Legislation had recently been used by Manchester City Council, the Law of Property Act, which allowed Council's to force properties into auction where there was an outstanding debt. Full details of the proposed enforced sales policy were contained in the report and in the appendix to the report.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and the enforced sales policy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed enforced sales policy, and its use, be approved.

**18. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP POLICY**

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the Housing Service's proposed Responsible Pet Ownership Policy.

It was a requirement in both the current tenancy agreement and the proposed one that written permission must be obtained from Flintshire County Council to keep a pet or animal. However, some customers had complained that there was a lack of consistency in the decision making process.

It was therefore intended that the Responsible Pet Ownership Policy would provide the Neighbourhood Housing Teams with a clear framework for decision making so that there was a more consistent approach across the whole county.

The policy had been developed through feedback from residents who had reported animal related problems, through a Member workshop and in consultation with the Tenants Federation. Details of the implementation issues, legal framework, application process, decision making, enforcement and community animal welfare footprints scheme were contained within the report.

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise emphasised that the policy would be applied going forward and not retrospectively.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be noted and the proposed policy be approved; and
- (b) That the policy only be applied going forward and not retrospectively.

**20. COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES**

The Cabinet Member for Housing sought approval of the proposed heating charges to the communal HRA properties in 2014/15.

On 21 May 2013 Cabinet agreed to spread the 2013/14 heating increase over two years. Tenants paid 75% of the recommended increase from October 2013 and the remaining 25% to be applied in July 2014 in addition to any inflationary increase to bring charges up to the recommended level. The phasing of those charges over two years meant that tenants would incur an additional charge of £0.68 on average on top of the standard inflationary increase in 2014/15.

The heating rates for 2014/15 showed that Flintshire County Council would incur no inflationary increases to the current charges therefore it was proposed to only implement the agreed phased increase to tenants in July 2014. The table in 3.05 of the report set out the recommended heating charge increases for 2014/15 based on actual costs to the Council in 2013/14 and heating estimates for 2014/15.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure suggested that an advisory note be sent to tenants to advise them on being aware of the heating they used which was accepted by the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That there will be no inflationary heating increases for 2014/15; and
- (b) That the phased increase of heating charges to tenants takes place from July 2014.

## 21. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

The Chief Executive introduced a revised Flexible Retirement Policy for approval which was one of a number of policies that were being updated.

Under the current policy there was no minimum amount that an employee could request to reduce their hours or salary and consequently, the benefits of flexible retirement were not maximised from the Council's perspective. To remedy that, the Council was recommending a new criteria for the approval of Flexible Retirements and a revised policy. The following revisions were recommended:

- To reduce contractual working hours/salary by at least 20% (or equivalent to 20% reduction)
- Reduction of hours/salary must apply for 12 months after implementation date
- An employee must give an indication of their planned or projected retirement date

Following the implementation of the new Operating Model and the Chief Officer team, the consideration of Flexible Retirement applications would take place via a recruitment panel involving the relevant portfolio Chief Officer, the Chief Officer for People and Resources and the Chief Finance / S151 Officer.

Flexible Retirement applications would be considered in accordance with the criteria detailed in the report.

The revised policy stipulated that the Council would only consider applications where there was no service requirement to backfill reduced hours and where identified savings would be released to the corporate centre.

### RESOLVED:

That the Flexible Retirement Policy and associated procedures be supported and approved.

## 22. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

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

- Deeside Naval Club, Chapel Street, Connah's Quay – Release of Restrictive Covenant
- Grant of Easement at Land at the Head of St Mary's Drive, Northop Hall
- Drury Lane – Proposed Traffic Calming

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

There were two members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 11.20am)

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**Chairman**