

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
24 JUNE 2014

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24 June 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Glenys Diskin (Chair)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Hilary Isherwood, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Stella Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Ann Minshull, Tim Newhouse, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, David Williams, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Amanda Bragg, Alan Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Kevin Jones, Billy Mullin, Gareth Roberts, and Nigel Steele-Mortimer.
Chief Officer (People and Resources)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Organisational Change) Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Policy and Performance Manager, Corporate Finance Manager, Team Manager Committee Services and Committee Officer

The Chair welcomed the new Member for Flint Trelawny, Councillor Vicky Perfect to her first meeting.

1. PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed Andrew Jones, Manager and Headteacher of Ysgol Derwenfa in Flintshire, and representatives of the Flintshire Primary Schools football squad, Iestyn Hughes (Ysgol Merllyn, Bagillt), Tom Sparrow (Southdown, Buckley), and Henry Nash (Ysgol Bryn Coch, Mold).

The Chief Executive congratulated the Flintshire Primary Schools Football Team on their recent success in the Tom Yeoman Welsh Schools' Football Association's Festival for Under 11s. He referred to the squad's exceptional performance in winning all three competitions this year to become North Wales Champions, Champions of Wales and Phil Staley shield winners. He commented

that Flintshire Primary Schools held an outstanding record in the Tom Yeoman shield national Finals and had been Champions of Wales 15 times, North Wales champions 10 times and Phil Staley winners 6 times. He commended the players on their achievement and expressed appreciation on behalf of the County of Flintshire to the team, their families, and the management team.

Councillor Aaron Shotton expressed his congratulations and paid tribute to the dedication of parents, coaches, teachers and all involved who voluntarily gave their time and support. He spoke of Flintshire's pride in the achievement and said the squad were excellent ambassadors for the County.

Councillors Hilary McGuill, Mike Peers and Dennis Hutchinson also expressed praise for the high standards and dedication of the players and the management team. They thanked all involved for the achievements gained and said it was an excellent example of what Flintshire did well.

Mr. Andrew Jones said it was an honour to receive recognition for the team's achievements and thanked Members and officers for their words of appreciation and support.

2. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014 were submitted.

The Chair said she had been present at the meeting and asked that the minutes be amended to record this.

Councillor Richard Lloyd said the date the meeting was held in the first paragraph was incorrect and should read 30 April 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May were submitted.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above amendments, the minutes of both meetings be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chair's communications had been circulated to all Members before the meeting.

5. PETITIONS

Councillor Hilary McGuill submitted a petition from residents which requested a path to be built from the start of Bryn Road to the Argoed High School.

6. QUESTIONS

The Chair confirmed that none had been received.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chair confirmed that none had been received.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chair confirmed that none had been received.

9. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014/15

The Chief Executive introduced the report to seek adoption of the Improvement Plan 2014/15, which was a statutory requirement, for final publication by end of June 2014. He explained the background to the report and referred to the positive comments which had been made by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on the presentation and content of the 2013/14 Improvement Plan.

The Chief Executive reported that a review of the current priorities and sub priorities had been undertaken for 2014/15. The draft Improvement Plan had been presented for Member consultation by Overview and Scrutiny Committees (except Corporate Resources) and the final draft Plan 2014/15 presented to Cabinet for approval on 17 June 2014. The final published Improvement Plan would be available as a web based document published on the website by end of June 2014.

The Chief Executive and Policy Performance Manager delivered a presentation on the following main points

- choosing the in-year priorities
- Plan format
- priorities for 2012-2017
- following the Plan
- benefits of the approach so far
- 2013/14 Improvement Plan
- 2014/15 Improvement Plan
- positive feedback
- next steps

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) was invited to present on the priorities for Housing and Fuel Poverty. She referred to the relevant sub priorities

and explained the rationale, targets to be met in 2014/15, and risks to be managed.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) reported on the Priority for Skills and Learning. He referred to the sub priority of modernised and high performing education and commented on the need to continue to achieve better learning opportunities, outcomes and wellbeing for all children and young people. He also explained the need to support the national Welsh Government priorities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, make better use of education resources, and maintain effective and challenging governance arrangements in schools. He commented on the work to be undertaken in 2014/15 and risks to be managed.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood congratulated the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) on the initiative to deliver energy efficiency measures to Council homes, and on the conversion of homes in the Aston and Mostyn areas from oil to gas.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin also thanked the Cabinet Member and Chief Officer for the energy efficiency measures to be carried out in Flintshire and for the extra care units which had been provided in Holywell and Flint.

Councillor Clive Carver referred to the draft Improvement Plan which was appended to the report and queried the accuracy of the email address on page 70. He also raised a question around the availability of the Plan in an alternative language on request. The Policy and Performance Manger said she would check the email address and advised that the Plan would be translated and published in Welsh in accordance with the Welsh language policy and made available in other languages as required.

Councillor Robin Guest commented on changes which were made to the 2013/14 Improvement Plan following adoption at County Council last year. He sought assurance that there would be no changes to the 2014/15 Improvement Plan if formally adopted by Council at today's meeting. The Chief Executive stated that there would not be any changes in the Plan during the year unless specifically agreed by Members. He explained that the detail of each of the sub priorities would change as it was a "living" document but reiterated that there was no intention to change the Plan unless a significant issue occurred during the year.

Councillor Mike Peers welcomed the improved format of the Plan. He commented that Appendix 1 had not been included when the final draft had been presented to Cabinet for approval and that Appendix 3A may be replicated in the Annual Report. Councillor Peers referred to the reference to future funding around the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) on page 39 and asked that this be reviewed to provide greater clarity for the general public. He also commented on the managing of risks and asked how these would be monitored, citing the WHQS by 2020 as an example.

Councillor Peers raised further queries around progress and investment in the eight Town Centre Masterplans to meet local priorities and need and asked who would deliver and monitor the programme. He asked further questions

around street lighting and town centre repairs. Referring to the sub-priority of fuel poverty and the need to install energy efficient measures into Council homes, Councillor Peers expressed the view that more detail was needed on the changes across Flintshire not just Deeside. In response to the concerns and questions raised by Councillor Peers, Officers provided more detail around the monitoring of housing contractors and the stipulations around the Deeside Renewal Grant.

Councillor Alison Halford expressed concerns on the use of mobile classrooms and the challenges faced by schools due to long term use. The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) advised that there had been progress in terms of the removal of mobile classrooms which were no longer required, however, the key priorities for investment in the 21st Century Schools programme focussed on situations where a major change in the quality of education for children could be achieved.

Councillor Richard Jones referred to the 2013/14 Improvement Plan and raised a number of concerns that changes had been made following adoption by Council. He expressed the view that once agreed the 2014/15 Plan should not be changed during the year. The Chief Executive emphasised that the Improvement Plan 2013/14 itself had not been changed in year, however, the supporting performance measures had been published at a mid-year point as this had been the first year of the new planning format. This year the Plan and the measures were being published together. Should there be any need to amend the Plan in-year, an event which was not planned but might arise, the Plan would only be amended by formal member approval.

Councillor Aaron Shotton commented on the importance of the Plan in setting out the Council's priorities and aims for 2014/15. He referred to the past and future financial challenges for the Council and stressed the need to remain ambitious. He outlined the priorities concerning housing and economic growth and referred to the need to monitor progress in those specific areas.

Councillor Neville Phillips referred to page 67 of the draft Improvement Plan and commented that the asset strategy made no reference to the future of the Elfed High School, Buckley. The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) explained that planning work was ongoing with the Headteacher at the School and referred to issues around sustainability of Post 16 education. The Chief Officer also commented on the need to ensure continued provision for young people aged 11-16 going forward. He commended the work and commitment of the School Governing Body and said he would provide more detailed information in a written response to the Governors.

Councillor Hillary McGuill commented on the intention to share the plan and provide feedback to partners, workforce, public and businesses. She asked if there would be a facility for individuals to make comment when they viewed the Plan online and said that she would like to be able to see the remarks made. Officers explained that feedback would be provided mid-year and agreed to pursue the suggestion that individuals be given the opportunity to provide feedback online.

Councillor McGuill questioned the need to commission a further stock condition survey, commenting that one was undertaken two years ago. The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) explained that the previous survey had not covered 100% of the council housing stock. The current position was around 40-50% and work would be ongoing during the next few years to achieve the 100% target. She advised that the survey provided the opportunity to evaluate the investment required by the Council to bring all council housing stock up to the Wales Housing Quality Standard.

Councillor McGuill asked the Chief Officer (Education and Youth) whether consideration had been given to the use of modular construction in schools as an alternative to the cost of providing mobile classrooms. The Chief Officer confirmed that modular construction was used and cited use in new school build as an example. He stated that the Council would be further developing its expertise in this area.

Councillor Paul Shotton expressed his congratulations to the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) on the achievements around improved housing for tenants and on the Extra Care provision. He also expressed appreciation and support for the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network and the continued development of the Communities First job clubs. He referred to the successful development of the library and heritage centre at Connah's Quay and the opening of the new Connects centre. In response to a comment from Councillor Shotton the Chief Executive agreed to provide statistics around the use of the Connects Centres in Flint and Holywell.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood raised a query concerning changes to planning and development policy concerning the application of developer contributions (S106 Agreements) and increased support for education. It was agreed that the Chief Officer (Education and Youth) would provide a written response to the question.

RESOLVED:

That the Improvement Plan 2014/15 be adopted.

10. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Members considered a report on the Council's political balance calculations following the by-election resulting in the election of Councillor Vicky Perfect.

RESOLVED:

That the revision to political balance as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed.

11. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00p.m. and ended at 3.30p.m.)

Chair