

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 JUNE 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Organisational Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 15 June 2015

PRESENT: Councillor David Roney (Chairman)

Councillors: Clive Carver, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Dave Mackie, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, and Carolyn Thomas

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Richard Lloyd (for Paul Shotton) and Vicky Perfect (for Mike Reece)

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)), and Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2))

ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Services Officer

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE (ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE)

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report to advise the Committee of its terms of reference. He advised that the creation of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee had simplified reporting lines, however, there was still a small element of shared responsibility as the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee also had a role in the development of Alternative Delivery Models (ADM) and in the overview of the Organisational Design and Change programme.

The Member Engagement Manager took the opportunity to remind Members of the workshop which was to be held on 29 June 2015 on Alternative Delivery Models.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

9. YEAR END IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) introduced a report to consider elements of the 2014/15 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring

Report relevant to the Committee. He advised that the following Improvement Plan sub-priority reports were attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2:

- Organisational Change
- Asset Strategy

The Chief Officer advised there were currently no high (Red) risk areas identified within the elements of the Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Committee.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) reported on the sub-priority report for Organisational Change and referred to structural reviews and alternative models of delivery. He highlighted the areas which had progressed well and areas where the measure had not been achieved as expected. He advised that a further detailed report on Alternative Delivery Models (ADM) would be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 28 September 2015.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2)) gave an overview of the sub-priority report for Asset Strategy. He reported on work and achievements during 2014/15 and referred to intensive work around the development of Community Asset Transfers. He also commented on the work undertaken to develop and integrate services to achieve a more community based approach and cited the Connects Centre in Connah's Quay as an example. The Chief Officer referred to implementation of the agile and mobile working policy in the Authority which enabled the workforce to work in different areas and referred to the change workspace initiative and the need for scanning and storage of appropriate documentation.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas raised questions around the ADM and acknowledging the need to achieve value for money asked if all services areas were being considered by the Authority, citing local service areas such as streetlighting, grass cutting, and play areas as examples. She asked further questions around the Independent Review and the workspace initiative and raised concerns around the retention and storage of records for future reference.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) responded to the questions concerning ADM and explained that the aim was to explore the feasibility of providing alternative delivery models that retained as many services and jobs as possible. He commented on the need to work with the Chief Officers and their teams responsible for service delivery to identify what would be possible in terms of protecting services and being more cost efficient; this may or may not require changes to be made. He said a report would be brought back to the Committee to update on progress following the Workshop to be held on 29 June 2015. The Chief Officer also responded to the queries and concerns raised by Councillor Thomas in relation to play areas and asset transfer.

Concerning retention and storage of documentation and records, the Chief Officer (organisational Change (2)) gave an assurance that work would be undertaken sensitively in conjunction with the Council's Archivist to determine what documentation and records needed to be retained by the Authority and for the benefit of Community Groups.

Referring to organisational change Councillor Robin Guest asked what were the projected dates for completing the phase 2 proposals. He referred to the integration of services to achieve a more community based approach and asked what had been done and what could be done to achieve a greater degree of involvement from other public services. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2)) explained that some services did adopt a public approach and some did not. He commented on discussions taking place around viability and said there may be a need for a local development plan. He commented that whilst the Authority was working hard to drive discussions forward there had not been a lot of interest back.

Concerning structural reviews of service areas, the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) advised that a number of services took a "top down" approach whilst other services were making changes in service delivery which were bringing about a structural review. In response to the comments and queries raised by Members, the Chief Officer explained that an update on how many structural reviews had been completed across the Authority and what the effects would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

On the subject of Community Asset Transfer (CATs) the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) said that over 65 expressions of interest had been received for a range of assets and covering all town and community Council areas. A total of six Expressions of Interest had been cleared to proceed to stage 2, Business Modelling and 5 had been passed. In response to Members questions he gave a brief outline of the conversion process and advised that the procedure would be faster in future following changes to the legal proceedings. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2)) commented on the organisational planning around asset transfers and gave a brief outline of how the Authority supported the process from expressions of interest to final decision for transfer. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) said the Authority would encourage Town and Community Councils to discuss with their communities about which assets might be capable of being taken on to sustain for the future and cited play areas and leisure centres as examples.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, commented that there was no assumption that "one size fits all" and said that open discussion and exchange of information was needed to determine what level of interest there was from Town and Community Councils, Community Groups and schools, and what support could be given by the Authority. He expressed the view that the current and future financial

restraints presented a valuable opportunity to explore how services could be provided in the future.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed a number of concerns around community asset transfers. He commented that half of the Community Councils within the County had fewer than 2000 voters and therefore taking on any additional responsibility would need to be carefully considered. He raised concerns around the loss of expertise and the financial advantage of scale and said that communications were not as good as could be regarding CATs. He expressed the view that the “goal posts were changing” and said that some assets may have been looked at differently if information that was provided later had been made known earlier. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) acknowledged the comments and explained that the Authority was not seeking to delegate responsibility to Town or Community Councils but wished to encourage discussion and interest from such bodies and community organisations and groups, which may consider taking on an asset with support from the Authority or Town or Community Council. He cited community centres, community buildings, and libraries as being achievable and advised that some local authorities provided a professional service run from a community owned building.

Councillor Chris Dolphin raised concerns around match-funding for play areas and expressed the view that assets and services could be withdrawn or lost altogether if not taken on board by Town and Community Councils or community groups and referred to play areas and buildings as examples.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) explained there was a lot of positive interest in CATs. He commented that they could work well and that the Authority supported any firm expressions of interest with the provision of a business model; the process could take between 9 to 12 months.

In response to a further question from Councillor Dolphin concerning developments in relation to Wrexham County Council, the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2)) said discussions were continuing with Wrexham in line with Ministerial expectations. He commented that Flintshire was more advanced in its programme of CATs than Wrexham.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin spoke in support of social enterprise which he felt was a positive way to sustain services within the County so that the residents of Flintshire would not lose out. He commented on the assets which were owned by the Authority and let on lease and asked what would happen in this situation. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (2)) explained that the Authority intended to simplify the leasing process for the future. In response to the further comments made by Councillor Dunbobbin the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) advised that a number of Town and Community Councils were exploring the opportunities for Community Asset Trusts to form bodies to take on assets.

Councillor Richard Lloyd referred to the disposal of farms and asked if the Authority intended to increase the leases on farms. The Chief Officer

(Organisational Change (2)) reported that farm disposals continued to be progressed with some positive movement in sales leading up to the end of the financial year. He stated that overall the Authority's strategy remained consistent in terms of sustaining assets.

Referring to the subject of CATs, Councillor Robin Guest expressed concerns around the increasing financial pressures on Town and Community Councils and said that some contribution from the business rates needed to be considered for the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee formally receives the report but that the comments of Members be commended to the Policy & Performance team where necessary.

10. YEAR END CHIEF OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) introduced a report on the 2014/15 Year end Service Performance Reports produced at Chief Officer level for their respective portfolios. Copies of the detailed Year end Chief Officer Performance reports were attached at Appendix 1 for Organisational Change (1) and Appendix 2 for Organisational Change (2).

Members were invited to raise questions.

Councillor Clive Carver congratulated the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1) and his team on the Flintshire Record Office achievement as the first archive repository in North Wales to gain accredited status by the National Panel

Councillor Carver commented on the information that parish registers had been sent to DeepStore and expressed concerns that this may prohibit access to them by individuals undertaking research. In his response the Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1) explained that prior to sending to DeepStore records were digitised/microfiched. He advised that the primary records which were of most interest to the public and researchers were retained on site. The Chief Officer said he would provide further information to Councillor Carver concerning which records had been sent to DeepStore.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee formally receives the report but that the comments of Members be commended to the Policy & Performance team where necessary

11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the Forward Work Programme. He drew attention to the Alternative Delivery Model workshop to be held on 29 June 2015 to which all Members had been invited.

In response to a request from Councillor Carolyn Thomas the . Chief Officer (Organisational Change (1)) agreed to provide further information on the subject of play areas during consideration of the item on Community Asset Transfers which was scheduled on the Programme for the next meeting of the Committee on 21 July 2015.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme as submitted, with the verbal amendments be approved;
- (b) That the Member Engagement Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair be authorised to alter the forward work programme between meetings.

12. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00am and ended at 11.51am)

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Chairman