

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
23 JULY 2015

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 23 July 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Amanda Bragg, Derek Butler, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Brian Dunn, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Dennis Hutchinson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull, Tim Newhouse, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, David Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley, and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Helen Brown, Clive Carver, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Hilary Isherwood, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Mike Peers, and Owen Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS:

(For minute No.33) Winston Roddick, CB QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales, Julian Sandham, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Sharon McCairn, County Chief Inspector – Flintshire, and Rhian Roberts, Policy Officer.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Member Engagement Manager; and Committee Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman referred to the recent deaths of Anne McGlade and Andrew Green, both of whom were Flintshire County Council employees, and asked all present to stand in silent tribute in their memory.

26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 23 June 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

28. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's communications had been circulated to all Members before the meeting. The Chairman reported on the positive outcome of the events attended.

29. PETITIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that none had been received.

30. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that none had been received.

31. QUESTIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that none had been received.

32. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Arnold Woolley had submitted the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council recommends to the Cabinet that they should establish a cross-group working party to examine the process and feasibility of introducing a dog DNA recognition information bank for dog owners within the County, in order to deal effectively with the ongoing most common complaint of ordinary citizens; namely that of the dog faeces fouling of pavements and other locations by that number of irresponsible dog owners who display no social conscience and thereby create a public nuisance and potentially endanger the health and well-being of residents in and visitors to the County”.

Councillor Woolley read out a statement in support of his request and emphasised the risks to public health and well being as a result of the ongoing problem of dog fouling in public areas. He outlined the need for a dog DNA recognition bank and said that dog DNA registration was not an annual requirement but a “one-off” process at a minimal/reasonable cost. He said the implementation of such a scheme would achieve significant savings for the Authority in terms of the cost and resources required to remove dog faeces, and to monitor and enforce sanctions against irresponsible dog owners.

Councillor Woolley thanked Councillor Bernie Attridge who had suggested an amendment to the Notice of Motion, to reflect that the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be asked to consider setting up a Task & Finish Group to look into the DNA testing of dogs.

Councillor David Roney spoke to second the Notice of Motion and said that a feasibility study would be welcomed. He commented on the one-off cost of dog DNA registration which he felt was not prohibitive to the general public and said that charitable bodies may also be able to provide financial assistance towards such cost in cases of genuine need. He reiterated Councillor Woolley's comments on the risk

to public health, and the financial savings and efficiencies that a dog DNA registration scheme would bring to the Authority.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was carried. Councillors Rita Johnson and Brian Lloyd voted against the Notice of Motion.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be supported and the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider the feasibility of canine DNA testing.

33. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORTH WALES

The Chief Executive welcomed and introduced Mr. Winston Roddick, CB QC, who had been invited to the meeting to discuss the role, impact and operation of the Police and Crime Commissioner and how the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Police and Crime Plan work with/for Flintshire in partnership.

Mr. Roddick thanked Members for their invitation and introduced Julian Sandham, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Sharon McCairn, County Chief Inspector for Flintshire, and Rhian Roberts, Policy Officer.

Mr. Roddick gave an overview of his role, powers, and responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales. He advised that he was the link between the professionals who delivered policing services and the public who received those services. He explained that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was unprecedented and that he had been elected to office two and half years ago. He said that he worked full-time and that his performance was scrutinised by the independent Police and Crime Panel. He had an overarching duty to secure an efficient and effective police force which demonstrated value for money and reduced crime. He referred to his four main duties which were to:

- Set out the priorities for policing in North Wales
- Decide the budget for North Wales Police
- Hold the Chief Constable to account; and
- Listen and respond to the public's views on policing

Mr. Roddick commented on his wish to nurture a solid partnership with Flintshire County Council and expressed particular appreciation for the support of the Chief Executive on community safety work. He commented on the need to work closely with partners to secure long term solutions to crime and disorder and referred to the many different types of organisations he worked with to ensure improved services to the people of North Wales. He advised that his role specifically involved working in partnership with the four Community Safety Partnerships in North Wales, the North Wales Safer Communities Board and the North Wales Regional Leadership Board.

Mr. Roddick reported on his vision and priorities for the future and the outcomes he sought to achieve which were security in the home, safety in public places, and a

visible and accessible policing service. He referred to the Police and Crime Plan which sets out the police and crime objectives, performance and accountability to deliver the required outcomes. He said the Plan must have regard for the national strategic policing requirements. The four police and crime objectives were:

- To prevent crime
- To deliver an effective response
- To reduce harm and the risk of harm
- To build effective partnerships

Mr. Roddick commented that in the current period of severe financial austerity North Wales Police faced significant financial challenges and delivery of the above objectives and the achievement of the outcomes were challenging.

Mr. Roddick commented on the consultation undertaken on the Police and Crime Plan and the Commissioner's expenditure plans. He reported that he had developed an integrated victims' strategy incorporating the key themes of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, and anti-social behaviour, with the emphasis on providing a comprehensive service to victims.

Addressing the question of funding for North Wales Police, Mr. Roddick explained that one of his main responsibilities was to set the annual precept and gave an outline of the process and the matters which were taken into account. He advised that to enable the Chief Constable to work effectively towards the above objectives he had proposed that the precept for 2015/16 was increased; this had meant a rise in council tax by 3.44%. He reported that North Wales Police was facing a 5.1% reduction in government funding for 2015/16 which was the fifth year of substantial cuts. The increase in the precept allowed the force to set up a new specialist team to address terrorism, child sexual exploitation, and cyber-crime.

Mr. Roddick explained that whilst there had been a reduction in most types of crime in North Wales, some victim based crimes remained unreported and he cited domestic abuse and sexual exploitation as examples. He reported that he had established a Victim Help Centre to help victims of crime and invited his deputy Mr. Julian Sandham to report on the Centre. Mr. Sandham added that the fully bilingual Victim Help Centre went live on 1 July 2015 from its base at police divisional headquarters in St. Asaph. It covered the whole of North Wales and aimed to improve the way victims of crime were looked after in the region. The Centre was a one-stop service for victims and replaced the former Victim Support owned arrangements and brought together the support services of North Wales Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. Victims were either given direct help and support or were signposted to specialist services according to need.

In conclusion, Mr. Roddick reported on some of his main achievements since taking up office and cited as examples a reduction in crime, the alignment of strategic objectives and strategic plans, setting up of a dedicated team to address crime in rural areas, and the protection of children at risk and victims of domestic abuse and hate crime. He referred to the positive data provided by the England and Wales Crime Survey and reiterated his comments that North Wales was a safe place to live, work

and visit. Mr. Roddick also gave an assurance that the precept was being “spent appropriately and spent to good effect”.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Roddick for his detailed presentation and Mr. Sandham for his presentation on the Victim Help Centre. He invited Members to ask questions.

Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the recovery of proceeds of crime from criminals and asked if North Wales Police was proactively pursuing this. In his response Mr. Roddick explained that the statutory responsibility for enforcing an order made by the Court was the responsibility of the prosecuting authority not the Police, however, it was his view that money recovered from those who committed crimes in North Wales should go back to the local communities to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Paul Shotton raised concerns around the reduction in the number of police constables and commented on the use of police community support officers (PCSOs). He also referred to the under-reporting of some crimes and asked what measures would be taken to improve the situation. Mr. Roddick responded to the concerns raised and referred to data published by the Police Federation. He reported on the number of staff lost between 2010-2014 for North Wales Police which was the least in England and Wales and the fourth least for police officers. This has been achieved in the main through natural wastage. He referred to the effective role of the PCSOs which was highly valued by the general public and provided a valuable point of liaison with the Police force. On the issue of reporting of crime, Mr. Roddick said he was pleased that instances of reported crime were rising as he positively encouraged victims of crime to make a complaint.

Referring to the role of PCSOs, Councillor Nancy Matthews said that their attendance at Community Council meetings was invaluable and cited an example where there had been no attendance to the disappointment amongst Community Council members.

Councillor Ian Roberts expressed his regret that the timing of the presentation had not afforded Members sufficient opportunity to raise the further questions they would like to have asked. It was agreed that Mr. Roddick would be asked to provide a written response to any further supplementary questions submitted by Members.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received; and
- (b) That Mr. Roddick be asked to provide a written response to any further supplementary questions submitted by Members.

34. FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report on the proposed updated Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) for approval following consideration by the Audit Committee and Constitution Committee. He provided background information and

referred to the key considerations in the report. He explained that once approved the FPRs would be published on the Infonet and a programme of awareness raising would be implemented with all staff needing to complete a training session to ensure they are aware of the responsibilities they have in the adherence of the FPRs.

RESOLVED:

That the updated financial procedure rules as detailed in appendix A to the report be approved.

35. REQUEST TO CHANGE THE NAME OF A COUNCIL

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to enable Council to consider a proposal from Gwernaffield Community Council to change its name to Gwernaffield and Pantymwyn Community Council. He provided background information and referred to the key considerations as detailed in the report. The Chief Officer reported that Councillor Adele Davies-Cooke, Ward Member for Gwernaffield, had advised that she fully supported the proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the change in the name of Gwernaffield Community Council to Gwernaffield and Pantymwyn Community Council be approved.

36. SCHEDULE OF MEMBER REMUNERATION

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to consider amending the format of the Council's Schedule of Member Remuneration to reflect recent guidance issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales ("The Panel"). He provided background information and referred to the main considerations. He explained that a recommended revised Schedule of Member Remuneration seeking to combine the best parts of the Panel's proforma and the Council's existing schedule was appended to the report.

The Chief Officer advised that the Constitution Committee at its meeting on 1 July 2015, had resolved that the new format be adopted. The Committee had asked that the additional responsibilities of those Members receiving allowances from public and other bodies be explained and the Schedule had been amended to reflect this.

RESOLVED:

That the new format of the Schedule of Member Remuneration as agreed by the Constitution Committee be adopted.

37. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to consider a recommendation from the Constitution Committee to amend the terms of reference for the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He provided

background information and referred to the key considerations. He explained that an amended version of the terms of reference for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee was appended to the report.

Councillor Ian Roberts advised that the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee had requested that it be notified of any future issues arising around dual use leisure centres. He requested that when items are submitted to the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee relating to dual use leisure centres and libraries located on school premises, that the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee be kept fully informed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the inclusion of references to Value for Money and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan within the terms of reference of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as shown in appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (b) That the Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1) be requested to keep the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee informed of any future items submitted to the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee relating to dual use leisure centres and libraries located on school premises.

38. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press present.

(The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 4.10pm)

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Chairman