

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
11 JANUARY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Organisational Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 11 January 2016

PRESENT: Councillor David Roney (Chairman)

Councillors: Clive Carver, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Brian Dunn, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton, and Carolyn Thomas

SUBSTITUTION:

Councillor Veronica Gay for Nigel Steele-Mortimer

ALSO PRESENT:

For Minute number 41 (Medium Term Libraries Plan – An assessment of the feasibility of the Community Asset Transfer of rural libraries)

Councillors: Richard Lloyd, Hilary McGuill and Tim Newhouse

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin

Councillor Bernie Attridge – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Aaron Shotton – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Chris Bithell – Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Kevin Jones – Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection & Leisure, Chief Executive, Chief Officers (Organisational Change) and Principal Librarian

IN ATTENDANCE:

Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Veronica Gay declared a personal interest in minute number 41 (Medium Term Libraries Plan – An assessment of the feasibility of the Community Asset Transfer of Rural Libraries) as she was a volunteer at the Sandy Lane Community Centre.

39. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 November 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Accuracy

Councillor Dave Mackie indicated that he had not declared an interest in the Connah's Quay Swimming Pool Community Asset Transfer as recorded in the minutes. Councillors Paul Shotton and Ian Dunbar indicated that they had both declared an interest but this was not reflected in the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the suggested amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

40. QUARTER 2 – MID YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the report to present the monitoring of progress for the second quarter of 2015/16 focusing on the areas of underperformance relevant to the Committee. He explained that CAMMS was a software programme for integrated planning, risk management and programme/project management and reporting.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed concern about the name of the software because of its similarity to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). In response to a comment from Councillor Mackie that such issues should be considered when naming software solutions, the Member Engagement Manager advised that CAMMS was the name of the company that had set up the software.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) explained that the high level risk area for the Committee related to the capacity and capability of the organisation to implement necessary changes. It covered three areas which were alternative delivery models (ADM), Community Asset Transfers (CAT) and property rationalisation.

Community Asset Transfer

The Chief Officer explained that 95 expressions of interest had been received which was a positive position to be in. A number of CATs were progressing through the legal phase of the process (stage 3) and the Chief Officer explained that a model legal document had been used to allow a less complex set of legal papers to be put forward which would also mean consistency across all CATs. Interested groups had been encouraged to seek their own legal advice but the overall objective was not to rewrite the model document; it was felt that simplicity and consistency was the best approach.

Alternative Delivery Models

A number of services such as leisure, facilities management and day care services were progressing to the financial business planning stage and it was anticipated that a review of ADMs would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in February 2016. Feasibility of a number of other projects was also

being considered. The Chief Officer commented on the need for support in relation to Social Enterprises and explained that the overall aim was to increase the numbers within Flintshire. He commented on the social enterprise in Sandycroft that had been established and detailed a number of other schemes that it was anticipated would progress to become social enterprises.

Property rationalisation

Work was continuing around consolidation of employees working in phases three and four of County Hall into phases one and two and on the finalisation of agreements with third parties that currently leased Council owned buildings.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented on Double Click, a recently established social enterprise, and asked for an update on how the project was progressing. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) welcomed the suggestion and indicated that the review report could also include the social enterprise for Mancot Library (Friends of Mancot Library). The aim of social enterprise was to continue the services that were of benefit to the community and the Chief Officer indicated that the report could also provide details of the differences that the social enterprises had made to the communities.

Councillor Ian Dunbar welcomed the ADM for Connah's Quay swimming baths and indicated that contributions from other Town & Community Councils were currently being sought. He sought clarification on the terms of the ADM and expressed the concern raised by Connah's Quay Town Council if funding from other Town or Community Councils could not be secured. He also referred to the Council building in Connah's Quay which was no longer in use and asked whether there were any proposals for development of the site. In response, the Chief Officer indicated that £65,000 of funding in year one was being provided by Flintshire County Council as part of the agreement for the Connah's Quay swimming baths and the aim was to reduce the funding over the following years, but it was also important to include some flexibility in years two and three of the business plan. On the Council building in Connah's Quay, the Chief Officer spoke of the regeneration opportunities for development of the area due to the site next to the building also being empty.

In welcoming the 95 expressions of interest for CATs, Councillor Paul Shotton queried whether this figure was similar to original predictions and asked whether the Council was adequately resourced in this area. The Chief Officer explained that the issue of capacity and capability to implement the necessary changes was a risk for the Council but as the schemes progressed there would be a need to review capacity and capability. The number of projects progressing through the legal process was currently 20 and was in line with the numbers originally anticipated but the Chief Officer added that the speed in which the projects progressed was not in the control of the Council.

Councillor Robin Guest sought clarification on whether there was an automatic process of demolition for Council buildings no longer in use, such as the one in Connah's Quay, and asked whether an assessment of the commercial value of buildings was carried out. On the issue of capacity and capability of the organisation to implement necessary changes, Councillor Guest felt that it was difficult to identify the amount of staff required to complete the process at the start of the project and queried whether, given the speed at which expressions of interest were being received, the service was resourced appropriately. In response, the Chief Officer spoke of the expressions of interest that had progressed for some libraries and leisure centres and commented on the need to be proactive to ensure adequate resources were in place. He felt that there was a need to review the approach for open space and play areas. The Chief Executive commented on the learning by all parties as the process of CATs was a new experience for the Council.

On the issue of disposal of sites, the Chief Officer explained that assessments were undertaken to establish whether a building was surplus to the needs of the Council and if so, a review of market interest was carried out. Where there was no interest, the disposal strategy would be considered.

Councillor Glenys Diskin asked that her thanks to the officers for their work and support in taking forward the CAT for Mancot Library be recorded in the minutes. The project was currently at stage 3 of the process and the significant amount of help and support that had been received from officers had been welcomed and appreciated.

Councillor Chris Dolphin spoke of the consideration by Town and Community Councils to take on a range of buildings and play areas and queried whether there was a fund-raising strategy in place as he felt that some Town & Community Councils would not have spare monies to be able to take on the responsibility of such facilities. Councillor Dolphin also referred to Holywell Leisure Centre. The Chief Officer commented on the projects to transfer play areas that were already progressing and of others that Town & Community Councils were considering. He spoke of a play area grant scheme that was in place but said that it was important to review how successful the scheme was. He explained that a group had been established to consider a business plan and the feasibility of transferring the leisure centre. It was felt that it would require a range of partners to achieve this which could provide a combination of sources for income streams for the project.

Councillor Ron Hampson sought clarification on social enterprises in place for people with learning disabilities. The Chief Officer commented on ADMs and the social enterprise model to identify work opportunities and added that a review report would be submitted to the Committee in February 2016 before being considered at a future meeting of Cabinet.

Councillor Clive Carver referred to the dates reported in the CAMMS document and queried whether the completion date of December 2015 for the

nine CATs referred to on page 18 had been achieved. He added that some areas of the report had been updated on 18 November 2015 but raised concern that a date for the completion of the report was not shown. In response, the Chief Executive explained that the report covered the period April to September 2015 but it had been updated in November 2015 where appropriate. The Chief Officer confirmed that none of the nine CATs had been achieved by 31 December 2015 but it was anticipated that they would be completed in January or February 2016. He added that completion by the end of December 2015 was not a target in the improvement plan but was an internal target. The CATs were nearly complete but it was difficult to specify a final date as the speed of the process was out of the control of the Council. There was a high degree of confidence that completion would be by the end of March 2016 as a number of the schemes were at the stage three which was the legal document stage. The Chief Executive said that the narrative in the report provided the up to date information for Members of the progress made and suggested that any problems with the CATs would have been identified at the early stage of the process. Councillor Carver raised concern about timings due to the problems that had been experienced in the transfer of the Hawarden allotments.

Councillor Aaron Shotton felt that the aim of CATs was to find alternative ways of saving services that the Council could not continue because of budget cuts and added that the progress made was positive. It was a learning curve for the Council and it was important to provide support for those involved and ensure flexibility in the dates shown to allow schemes to progress. Councillor Diskin commented on the length of time that the business plan had taken to complete for Mancot Library and added that the business plan had to be completed by the group concerned and she did not feel that it was possible to set a date for this.

In summing up, the Member Engagement Manager said that the comments and questions raised had included the following:-

- a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the options for social enterprises
- whether there were sufficient resources for completion of CATs
- The process was a learning curve for all parties involved
- Capacity to be reviewed
- Thanks had been given by Councillor Glenys Diskin for the support that had been provided to the Friends of Mancot Library group
- Fund-raising strategy
- A report on ADMs would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

41. **MEDIUM TERM LIBRARIES PLAN: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FEASIBILITY OF THE COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF RURAL LIBRARIES**

Councillor Chris Bithell introduced a report to provide feedback on the feasibility of community asset transfers for libraries in the areas of Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney.

The report was about the second stage of the implementation of the Medium Term Libraries Plan agreed by Cabinet in March 2015 to ensure sustainable libraries infrastructure for the future based on a combination of hubs, mobile and housebound provision. The new community library hub based in Deeside Leisure Centre was progressing and would be open by March 2016 and the transfer of Mancot Library was also moving forward. The second stage was to consider the feasibility of the rural libraries and it was reported that positive interest in the transfer of Hope and Mynydd Isa library services had been expressed. There had not been any interest from Saltney Community Council in progressing the CAT but both Ward Members had asked for an extension of time for consideration of a CAT. Work was ongoing with the interested parties to support them through the process and Councillor Bithell gave thanks for the enthusiasm that had been shown by those involved in the establishment of a CAT for the Mancot Library and their determination that the service should continue. It was anticipated that the completion of a CAT for the Hope and Mynydd Isa Libraries could be finalised during the original timeframe of April to June 2016.

The Chief Officer spoke of the two options for a CAT based on Welsh Government guidance which was for the community to operate a book stock and IT equipment with no professional library input or the community buy back professional librarians and/or access to the library management system (LMS). He explained that the mobile library service would continue to operate and another option for the renewal of books was the book collection service, for those unable to access a hub or mobile library service, which could hold 75 books and a community play group which could have 30 books. The option of the community purchasing the LMS and the assistance of professional librarians was the most expensive at £15,000 to £30,000. The Chief Officer provided details of the LMS and explained that it had to be operated by professional library staff because of data protection issues.

Hope

Support had been expressed by Castell Alun High School to work with the community to enable the library to be open to the community during school hours. It was also reported that the local Ward Member had asked for the retention of a professional library service. Interest in a CAT had been expressed by 'Friends of Hope Library Group' and Hope Community Council. During the formal consultation process, a request had been received that Flintshire County Council provide 108 hours of library service at Hope Library during the schools holidays. The Chief Officer felt that the completion of a CAT was feasible and could be achieved in the timeframe of April to June 2016.

Mynydd Isa

The Chief Officer explained that a meeting had been held with the local Community Council to discuss a range of issues and interest in a CAT had been received from Caffi Isa. A second stage business plan for the CAT had been approved and the application was progressing well.

Saltney

An expression of interest was received early in the process but during the formal consultation stage, there had not been any requests to consider progressing a CAT. Requests had been made for an extension of time but at this stage it did not appear that a CAT was feasible for Saltney Library.

The Chief Officer explained that the total savings of £88,000 were reported for the three libraries and the key risks were reported in paragraph 4.01. Following a query from the Chairman about the library service staff ending their employment in the libraries in April 2016, the Chief Officer confirmed that if it was feasible that a CAT could be achieved between April and June 2016, then the professional library service would not be removed until the opportunity had been given for the CAT to be successful.

The Chairman exercised his discretion to allow Councillor Hilary McGuill to speak as Local Member on Mynydd Isa Library Service.

Councillor McGuill said that the library was well used and she welcomed the enthusiasm of those willing to take the library service forward but said that a key consideration was the book stock and how it could be accessed. Information had been provided that those unable to use the mobile library service or hub, such as residential homes, could have 75 books and play groups could access 30 books but Councillor McGuill queried how new books could be accessed. The purchase of the LMS at £5 per head would total £30,000 for Mynydd Isa and this was not affordable as part of the CAT. Councillor McGuill sought clarification on whether the LMS was outsourced and felt that the option should be in place to link the LMS to community libraries if renegotiation of the contract took place with Welsh Government (WG). She welcomed the comment that the library staff would not be terminated on 31 March 2016 if there was the possibility to achieve a CAT but reiterated her concerns about the inability to access the County Library book stock.

The Chief Officer spoke of other options for renewal of book stock for the community library such as the gifting of books from those in the community and discussions could also take place with the Welsh Book Council on how to access donations. A consideration could be given by the local Town or Community Council to make a contribution for the purchase of new books each year; Hawarden Community Council was considering a donation of £2,000 to Mancot Library to renew the book stock. The Chief Executive advised that he could undertake discussions at a national level on whether the Welsh Book Council could work with WG on the provision of donating books to community libraries.

Councillor Clive Carver expressed concern about the £5 per head charge for the use of the LMS and queried whether this was the system operating in school libraries. He was unaware of the donation of £2,000 from Hawarden Community Council referred to earlier and suggested that it had not been discussed or agreed. He also indicated that he had been advised of a closure date for Hawarden Library but had not been informed by Flintshire County Council of the date.

The Chief Officer advised that the school library service was separate to the main service and did not use the LMS. For the CAT for Hope, it was suggested that the provision of the library could continue to use the school library system which was already in place. Discussions on the closure of Hawarden Library were due to take place in the coming weeks and a date had not yet been confirmed.

Councillor Veronica Gay referred to the issue of provision of a library in Saltney. She said that proposals put forward in 2013/14 had not been acted upon and an expression of interest submitted in February 2015 had not been responded to. Consideration of a CAT had been made by Saltney Town Council in November 2015 but it was felt that the timescale of April to June 2016 was not achievable. Councillor Gay said that there were a number of community groups willing to be involved in the scheme but a proposal had not been submitted to date. She asked that the issue of Saltney Library be deferred and that the Committee carry out a site visit to consider the options available to the community. She added that savings of £100,000 were achievable and would still enable a library service to be provided in the community. Councillor Gay suggested that a deferment of 12 months would allow all interested parties to carry out discussions on taking the proposals forward. The Chief Officer explained that this report was not making a final decision on the timescale and that officers were willing to carry out discussions with any interested parties to establish whether agreement could be reached during the proposed timescale of April to June 2016. The Chief Executive indicated that a meeting could be facilitated with interested parties but that this must be achieved within a reasonable timescale. He suggested that a meeting could be held within the next four weeks to establish whether an agreement could be reached and the situation could then be reviewed. Councillor Gay welcomed the suggestion for a meeting but indicated that she still felt that it was necessary for the Committee to carry out a site visit and that she was awaiting a response to an email she had submitted in December 2015. The Member Engagement Manager suggested that the community meeting be held before the Committee carried out the site visit. In referring to the current location of the library, Councillor Gay spoke of the financial drain on the Council.

The Chairman also allowed Councillor Tim Newhouse, Local Member for Hope, to address the Committee. In referring to paragraph 1.04, Councillor Newhouse sought clarification on what was meant by a 'professional library service'. The Chief Officer explained that it referred to the number of hours of operation by the professional library during the school holidays. Councillor Newhouse explained that he had asked for a librarian to

staff the library for 108 hours during the school holidays and not for the retention of the professional library service at £5 per head, as reported. He also felt that paragraph 1.08 implied that if a CAT was not feasible, then the library in Hope would close even during the school term. The Chief Officer responded that he was confident that the CAT could be achieved and the Chief Executive commented on the need to identify whether the progression of the CAT was sustainable or not. He added that the service could be at risk if the CAT could not progress and that it was not possible to give a guarantee that Hope Library would not close. In response to a comment from Councillor Newhouse about whether the library would continue to operate during the school term, i.e. 40 weeks of the year, the Chief Executive said that this was an option for consideration by the community if the CAT was not achievable.

Councillor Mike Reece indicated that a stock of books may be available from Bagillt Library which had closed some time ago as a county library and was now run as a community library. Councillor Paul Shotton sought clarification on whether it was possible for an extension to be applied to consider options for Saltney Library.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed significant concern at the amount of information that had been received at the meeting that had not been included in the report. He concurred with the importance of being able to rotate book stock and sought clarification on how schools were able to access county books when they did not use the professional library system at a cost of £5 per head. In response to the comment about additional information being provided, Councillor Aaron Shotton said that the details were provided to ensure that the Committee had the most up-to-date information before them when considering the report. He added that there were a number of innovative solutions that the community could explore to enable their book stock to be renewed, some of which had already been mentioned earlier. On the issue of the school library system, the Chief Officer advised that the school operated its own management system for its books and did not use the LMS referred to in the report. The Principal Librarian said that most schools operated their own management system and the extension of this to support the community was being explored by Castell Alun High School. She advised that it was recommended that books were replaced every nine years but added that community libraries may also not need to stock as large a range of books as a county library. The Principal Librarian advised that grants that were not available to county libraries were an option that community libraries could consider to enable the restocking of books. The county libraries also offered the option of electronic books which could be accessed for free from anywhere by members of the library.

Councillor Bithell commented on the alternative ways of providing a library service and re-stocking books and identified Bagillt library as an example of a community run library that was working well. The Chief Executive also suggested that a number of libraries could work together to share their library stock.

Councillor Mackie felt that Flintshire rate payers all paid for a library service with a good stock of books but because of the financial situation, the number of outlets and access to book stock was reducing. He said that groups were willing to take on the running of a community library but he could not understand why the book stock could also not be included in a CAT and felt sure that a system could be identified to allow this to happen. The Chief Officer explained that the mobile and housebound service would still be available but the LMS could only be operated by professional librarians and the cost of this was unsustainable for CATs. The Principal Librarian detailed how the LMS operated and how this tracked where each book was situated. Councillor Aaron Shotton understood the frustration of Councillor Mackie about the book stock but reminded the Committee of the need to save 30% through the Medium Term Plan for libraries. The Chief Executive suggested that further information be provided to Members on the LMS and possible book replacement solutions. He explained that the system covered all libraries in Wales and the ongoing cost was proportionate to use. Councillor Bithell said that even in the worst case scenario, Flintshire would meet the Welsh Government standard of providing libraries to 75% of the population within 2.5 miles.

Councillor Robin Guest welcomed the fact that the introduction to the report had been provided by the Cabinet Member, Councillor Bithell and thanked him for doing so. He said that the key factor in the continuation of the service was the provision of books and book lending. He added that even though final details of options for two of the three libraries were not yet known, he felt that there was a high level of confidence that a large stock of books could be accessed. He suggested that the figure of 100 new books through the collections service be included in the resolution of the Committee. The Chief Officer clarified that through the managed collections service, 30 books were available to play groups and 70 to library users who could not access the mobile service or hub. This information had not been included in the report as the service was already available to community libraries. Councillor Guest also welcomed the suggestion for additional information to be provided on the library service.

The Chairman allowed Councillor Richard Lloyd to address the Committee. He said that the library was currently in a prominent position in Saltney but was situated in a portakabin and he felt that if the service was to be moved to the building where the community centre and youth club were housed, then it may not be as well used. The cost of £41,000 to provide the service could not be met by Saltney Town Council. He added that a CAT for the community centre and youth club was being considered by Saltney Town Council.

In response to a query from Councillor Carver about the need for the compliance with the Data Protection Act, the Chief Officer indicated that there was a requirement that only professional library staff could administer the LMS. Councillor Carver suggested that different levels of access could be provided on the LMS to allow those operating a community library to be able to operate the information held on the system. In response to a further

comment from Councillor Carver, the Principal Librarian explained that anyone could access the book stock on line but information on library customers could only be recorded and used through the LMS. She added that the new library system that was due to be introduced would have different levels of access but it had not been confirmed whether the new system would be used in Flintshire. The Member Engagement Manager said that he would consider the comments in his role as Chair of the Data Protection Team and discuss them with colleagues. The Chief Executive said that WG guidance had been followed when considering the options but even if access could be given to community libraries, there would still be significant cost implications which may be unsustainable for the groups concerned.

Councillor McGuill welcomed the comments that had been made at the meeting, particularly about the ability of community libraries to be able to access 100 new books. Councillor Gay said that the current library in Saltney was leased and was situated on land that the Council did not own. The suggested location within the community centre and youth club building was on a bus route and may raise awareness of the library service.

The Chief Officer advised that there were certain requirements about how a library could operate but said that the discussions and comments made would allow a model to be created that could be used as a solution for library options for other communities in the future.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the assessment of the feasibility of Community Asset Transfers for the libraries in Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney, in particular the formal consultation with communities be received, subject to:
 - (i) the holding of a meeting with interested parties in Saltney within the next four weeks;
 - (ii) the provision of the information requested on the operation of the Library Management System; how it currently relates to book stock and acquisitions and how it could be developed for the future;
 - (iii) the increase in the 'lent book stock' to community operated libraries being set at 100 books
- (b) That the Committee's views on the feasibility of Community Asset Transfers and alternative acceptable solutions for the three libraries is noted and referenced by the officers in further developing solutions.

42. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

He detailed the items reported for consideration at the 15 February 2016 and sought clarification on whether the further information on the Library

Management System and book stock requested earlier could be submitted to that meeting. It was agreed that the information would be sent to the Committee as soon as possible rather than waiting until the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting scheduled for 14 March 2016 was to be held off-site at a venue that had been transferred under Community Asset Transfer. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) suggested that this could be at a library. He also suggested that a report on the area of play be considered at the meeting in March 2016. The Member Engagement Manager added that the Quarter 3 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report would also be submitted to that meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme, as amended at the meeting, be approved; and
- (b) That the Member Engagement Manager, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and officers, be authorised to vary the work programme between meetings.

43. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the public and one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.24 pm)

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Chairman