

**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 15 September 2016

**PRESENT: Councillor Clive Carver (Chairman)**

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Andy Dunbobbin, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Richard Jones, Brian Lloyd, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith and Arnold Woolley

**APOLOGY:** Chief Executive

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Billy Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management; Chief Officer (Organisational Change); and Chief Officer (Governance)

Mr. Paul Goodlad of Wales Audit Office

For minute number 36

Public Protection Manager - Community; Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator; Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator; Community Services Team Leader; with Chief Inspector Sharon McCairn of North Wales Police and Mike White of North Wales Fire & Rescue Service

For minute numbers 37 & 38

Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer

For minute number 39

Finance Manager - Corporate Accounting & Systems, Finance Manager - Technical Accountancy

For minute number 40

Senior Manager, Human Resources & Organisational Development

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

Councillor Paul Shotton declared a personal interest on Agenda Item 4 'Community Safety Partnership Annual Review', as a member of the Fire Authority.

**35. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 June 2016 had been circulated with the agenda.

### Accuracy

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin asked that his apologies be included on the minutes.

On minute number 28, Councillor Richard Jones clarified that reference to the 'double parking' ticket scheme should be changed to reflect that these were '2-part' tickets.

### **RESOLVED:**

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

## **36. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Public Protection Manager (Community) presented an overview of the Community Safety Partnership's activities and progress over the past 12 months, as reported to the Committee on an annual basis. She spoke about the effectiveness of the partnership, the role of the People Are Safe Board in overseeing operational activities and links with the Public Service Board. Details of work undertaken during 2015/16 were set out in the local activity plan.

A summary was given of crime and disorder statistics for 2015/16 and it was reported that the slight increase in victim-based crime in the county so far in 2016/17 mirrored the regional position. The focus on intelligence-led incidents would continue, making greater use of Statistical Process Control (SPC) charts to monitor performance.

The effectiveness of this multi-agency approach was praised by Councillor Paul Cunningham.

Councillor Richard Jones asked whether the reduction in anti-social behaviour figures was due to fewer reports. Whilst he had received feedback to issues raised with the Council, he was aware of frustrations amongst some members of the public who had been given no responses, which affected their willingness to report further incidents.

Chief Inspector Sharon McCairn pointed out the rise in anti-social behaviour figures since April 2016 following a change in the recording process. She said that calls logged with the Control Room were allocated an incident number which should be routinely given to the caller. She would look into why this was not the case but would encourage individuals to ask for the incident number. On reported drug-related incidents, assurance was given that the reliability and content of all intelligence was assessed to help build up a picture and decide on the appropriate course of action, however it was not feasible to act on every report.

The Public Protection Manager explained that the Council's Community Safety team had clear procedures in place to share intelligence with Police colleagues. Councillor Jones said that Members could liaise with the team on behalf of residents who had not received feedback. The Public Protection

Manager said that officers were expected to respond to those reporting incidents and would reinforce this message with the team. She agreed to speak to Councillor Jones following the meeting about the issues he had raised.

Following a request by Councillor Robin Guest, Chief Inspector McCairn agreed to provide the latest trend data on hate-crime incidents which had increased across the whole region.

Councillor Paul Shotton thanked the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and his team for their help in resolving a recent incident alongside the Police. He spoke about the involvement of Streetscene officers in sharing intelligence on crimes and referred to the 'Phoenix' initiative which helped young offenders to re-focus their lives in a positive way.

In respect of Councillor Jones' comments, Councillor Arnold Woolley was also aware of similar instances where outcomes had not been reported to complainants. The officers responded to queries on arrangements for Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) and the centralised approach for tackling serious and organised crimes through multi-agency links. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator agreed to provide details of the 'yellow card' scheme for juvenile anti-social behaviour and crime offenders, including how many had been issued. Mr. Mike White agreed to pursue a response to Councillor Woolley's enquiry submitted on the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service website over a week earlier.

Following concerns raised by Councillor Marion Bateman, the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator agreed to provide local and regional data on domestic violence incidents against men. Flintshire was one of the first Authorities in the UK to highlight this problem, resulting in the opening of the first refuge in North Wales specifically for men. The team was working with the Welsh Government and Home Office on publicity campaigns to highlight this important topic and encourage more individuals to come forward and report incidents.

Councillor Brian Lloyd thanked the partnership for their work on a gang-related issue in his ward. Chief Inspector McCairn referred to the monitoring role of the local 'Safer Neighbourhoods' teams.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin asked if the Armed Forces community were represented on the multi-agency board. The Public Protection Manager advised that whilst this was not the case with the People Are Safe Board, there were powers to co-opted additional members from the voluntary sector in addition to the statutory members required by legislation. Councillor Dunbobbin referred to Armed Forces representation on a North Wales group with the local Health Board. The Public Protection Manager agreed to meet with the Council's representative and would advise Councillor Dunbobbin of the outcome. She went on to speak about the sharing of information with Social Services.

Councillor Ron Hampson sought progress on tackling dog fouling in the county, making reference to Wrexham's success with prosecutions. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator agreed to liaise with the relevant Streetscene officer.

In response to comments from Councillor Jones about the approach to joint enforcement of PSPO and Community Protection Notices, it was explained that this would form part of the consultation process. Councillor Jones also felt it important that any limitations on enforcement due to a lack of Police resources should be documented and reported to the Committee.

Councillor Paul Shotton commented on the need to raise awareness of gang and drug-related incidents with schools and through the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner who was due to attend the November meeting.

The Chairman said that some members of the public may opt not to verbally report issues for fear of retribution. Chief Inspector McCairn detailed a range of alternative communications for lower-level issues. For enquiries submitted on the website, the Chairman suggested it might be helpful for the person to receive an automatic acknowledgement. Chief Inspector McCairn also asked for data requests to be notified in advance, to enable responses to be provided.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work of the Community Safety Partnership be commended.

**37. ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**

The Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer introduced the Annual Improvement Report summarising audit work by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) since the last report in March 2015. She welcomed the positive conclusion by WAO in recognising continued improved performance within priority areas, despite increasing financial pressures.

Members' attention was drawn to the summary of conclusions for performance, resources and governance and the assessment of performance in 2015/16 against the previous year which reflected that most national indicators had been achieved. The latest data for the period showed that 63% of national indicators had been met across Wales.

In presenting the report, Mr. Paul Goodlad of the WAO acknowledged the context in which Local Authorities had to operate, with increasing challenges such as financial constraints and growing demand from service users. He described the report as mainly positive with further work highlighted in a number of areas, but had no specific concerns to raise with the Committee. It was acknowledged that the Council was continuing to work on areas requiring strengthening and the Action Plan gave assurance that progress was being made on previous recommendations.

Councillor Paul Shotton congratulated officers on the report's conclusions. In response to a query on benchmarking, Mr. Goodlad explained that overall performance at other councils had not been as positive as that in Flintshire, although some councils had improved strongly in certain areas.

On a Council IT issue, Councillor Richard Jones referred to the recent refresh of Members' iPads for accessing agendas and felt that clear information should have been provided on moving information on iAnnotate.

In response to Councillor Paul Cunningham's query on the Action Plan, Councillor Aaron Shotton explained that the WAO recommendation was for Group Leaders to engage with their Members on the Member Development Scheme. He suggested that this could be included as a future agenda item for the Group Leaders' meeting with progress monitored through the Democratic Services Committee.

Councillor Marion Bateman said that she was unaware of the scheme which led to Councillor Aaron Shotton providing information on a number of schemes, both internal and external. The Chief Officer (Governance) spoke about the Council's scheme which was available to all Members and offered to re-circulate information if required. The Member Engagement Manager pointed out that information on development opportunities was regularly circulated but that attendance was variable. Councillor Arnold Woolley referred to poor attendance at a recent workshop on Equalities.

Councillor Robin Guest commented that attempts by Group Leaders to generate interest on training sessions were not always successful and that this was an issue in the Council. He went on to refer to required attendance levels for mandatory types of training and approaches taken by other councils to hold agreed regular training slots.

Councillor Billy Mullin thanked Mr. Goodlad for the report and welcomed the positive conclusion.

**RESOLVED:**

That having considered the report and the Council's response to it, the Committee is assured by the contents of the Annual Improvement Report.

**38. QUARTER 1 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT 2016/17**

The Corporate Business & Communications Executive Officer presented the update report to consider progress towards the delivery of the impacts set out in the 2015/16 Improvement Plan, focussing on the areas of under-performance relevant to the Committee during the first quarter of 2016/17. An update on the amount of efficiency targets achieved was circulated to Members.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Robin Guest on the trend status showing a downturn in 50% of key performance indicators. The officer had no concerns at this stage and gave explanation on the context as only two of the seven indicators had decreased - one on efficiency targets and the other on sickness absence narrowly missing the target. Councillor Guest also felt that the use of arrows did not show the whole picture and should be reviewed. This was noted by the officer who also agreed to look at consistency and to include commas in figures as requested by the Chairman.

Following comments from the Chairman on the latter indicator, it was explained that the aspirational target of 9.60 was over the longer term and that officers were liaising with the supplier of the reporting software to review headings to help with clarity of the document. The Chairman also felt that the use of double-ended arrows could appear confusing to which the officer replied that the glossary in the report could explain more clearly about the terms used.

Councillor Arnold Woolley suggested that switching to a clock system would help to show the direction of trend more clearly.

Councillor Richard Jones said that the 'red' status on achieving efficiency targets did not give enough detail and that meeting the target was the only way to show improvement. It was explained that 86% of efficiencies were expected to be met, which was a good level, and that the 'red' status reflected the fact that some efficiencies were not predicted to be achieved.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received.

**39. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17 (MONTH 4) AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING (MONTH 4)**

The Finance Manager - Corporate Accounting & Systems introduced the reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2016/17 at Month 4, which were to be submitted to Cabinet. These were the first monitoring reports for 2015/16 and had been produced using new software and submitted at an earlier stage.

Revenue Budget Monitoring (Month 4)

The overall year end position on the Council Fund was forecast to be £2.081M higher than the budget. This amount would be reduced by an additional transport grant of £440K and conscious decisions on a number of proposed changes, leaving a true unpredicted working deficit of £0.780M. Explanation was given on the withdrawal of a £250K planned efficiency target for 2016/17 which would be mitigated by increased recycling and reduced landfill over the longer term. Delays in the completion of complex negotiations on essential car user allowances had resulted in an in-year £211K shortfall, with a positive recurring impact as the full year efficiency from 2017/18 due to exceed the target. Attention was drawn to the risks in the report, including current and future cost pressures in residential and domiciliary care, which remained despite the achievement of additional funding to meet the in-year inflationary fee increases from within the independent sector.

Councillor Aaron Shotton welcomed the more timely information as a result of the Month 4 report being the first to be produced from the new Collaborative Planning system; this meant that the Committee was considering Month 4 as opposed to Month 3. On efficiencies, he said that detailed negotiations on the essential care user scheme were needed to reach a satisfactory outcome. He shared details of the timeline for the Local Government Provisional and Final Settlements and referred to the different phased approach

on budget consultation this year which had received a mainly positive response from Overview & Scrutiny. All Members had been invited to the special meeting of the Committee on 28 September with a view to taking budget proposals through Council at an earlier stage.

The Chairman tendered his apologies for the special meeting and spoke about the need for more accuracy on predicted efficiencies. Councillor Aaron Shotton said that consideration was given to timing, for example part-year proposals such as essential car user allowances along with monitoring progress on Community Asset Transfers.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Arnold Woolley on the challenges around social care funding. Councillor Aaron Shotton referred to the increasing ageing population and discussions with Welsh Local Government Association on social care pressures across Wales.

Councillor Paul Shotton acknowledged the potential for in-year changes and referred to the success of Community Asset Transfers.

Councillor Richard Jones expressed concerns about the scale of the efficiencies shortfall which could not continue year on year. He wished to convey to Cabinet the importance of setting achievable efficiencies and that these should be scrutinised in detail to establish valid reasons and protect the budget, as would happen in the private sector. In relation to cemeteries, he said that Town and Community Councils should have been consulted prior to them setting their precepts.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) advised that there had been some degree of slippage on Community Asset Transfers due to the detailed legal process involved.

Responding to comments on in-year changes, Councillor Aaron Shotton referred to the Council's actions taken in response to the collapse of GHA Coaches.

#### Capital Programme Monitoring (Month 4)

The Finance Manager - Technical Accountancy presented a summary of changes to the Capital Programme between February and July. Changes in 2016/17 had resulted in a revised budget of £59.131M and explanation was given on changes in relation to increased data storage and the Strategic Housing & Regeneration Programme (SHARP). An update on capital expenditure reported a projected underspend of £15K and an early identified rollover of £67K reflecting reviewed spending plans. An update on pressures included a new pressure of £45K in relation to improvements at the Queensferry roundabout.

Following comments from the Chairman and Councillor Richard Jones, the Finance Manager agreed that information would be provided on the technical reasons for additional spend on design changes at Queensferry roundabout.

In response to a question from Councillor Ron Hampson about the Council's building in Ewloe, attention was drawn to the in-year receipts in Table 6

of the report. The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) reported that the building was being marketed for disposal and that details of all operational costs under the Council's control would be provided, in response to the Chairman's request.

Councillor Aaron Shotton reminded Members of the positive outcome of negotiations on household recycling centres involving the Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy and officers with Welsh Government colleagues.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/17 Month 4 report be approved;
- (b) That the Capital Programme Monitoring Month 4 report be approved; and
- (c) That the Committee wishes to impress upon the Cabinet the need to learn to be more realistic about the achievement of efficiency savings, some of which may not be wholly within the Council's control.

**40. APPRAISALS UPDATE**

The Senior Manager, Human Resources & Organisational Development provided a verbal update on appraisals since the item in July. She reported continued improvements in the completion of appraisals in Corporate Services, with those previously scheduled now completed. The introduction of light-touch appraisals for large groups had proved effective. Since April, the level of completed appraisals had risen from 23% to 57% including exceptions for individuals on long-term sickness absence maternity leave etc. Over 71% of appraisals had been completed in Social Services, which was a significant improvement. The team was planning to conduct random sampling so that qualitative data could be used alongside quantitative data. It was hoped this would help confirm that meaningful objectives were being set and that appropriate support was in place.

Councillor Arnold Woolley circulated copies of an article on managing appraisals which he felt would be useful to note.

Councillor Richard Jones gave a reminder that the Chief Executive had agreed that 100% should be the aspirational target for completing appraisals and therefore further improvement should be expected by the end of the year. The Manager said that it was the expectation to achieve 100% over the ten month period, allowing for those exceptions referred to.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be received.

**41. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

In presenting the Forward Work Programme for consideration, the Member Engagement Manager gave a reminder of the special meeting on 28 September to which all Members were invited.



The following actions were agreed:

- The Quarter 1 improvement report to be taken off the October meeting.
- The Member Engagement Manager to email Members asking that questions for the Police & Crime Commissioner be submitted in advance of the November meeting.
- Members to be notified which of the scheduled budget meetings in December would proceed. A reminder was also given of the special Council meeting on 15 November to consider the provisional budget settlement.
- The Member Engagement Manager to schedule the item on risks to changes in grant funding, as requested by Councillor Richard Jones at the previous meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme, as submitted, be approved with amendments; and
- (b) That the Member Engagement Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, should this be necessary.

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

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.30 pm)

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**Chairman**