

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
26th SEPTEMBER 2016

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Monday 26th September 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Curtis (Chairman)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Brian Dunn, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Hilary Isherwood, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Kevin Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Ann Minshull, Billy Mullin, Tim Newhouse, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Owen Thomas, David Williams, Sharon Williams and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Phil Lightfoot, Neville Phillips, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas and Matt Wright

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Organisational Change), Chief Officer (Planning & Environment), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Finance Manager - Strategy and Technical and Team Manager – Committee Services

Mr John Herniman and Mrs Amanda Hughes from Wales Audit Office.

31. COMMEMORATION AND TRIBUTES TO THE LATE CHIEF OFFICER (PEOPLE AND RESOURCES), HELEN STAPPLETON

The Chairman invited tributes to the late Chief Officer (People and Resources), Helen Stappleton, who had sadly lost her battle with an illness. Councillors Shotton, Peers, Sharps, Mullin, Carver and Mathews spoke of Helen who was both a friend and a colleague. Helen had been a loyal and committed employee for whom public service was an integral part of her family, with her late father being a past Councillor. Colleagues commended the way in which she tackled her illness, which was with energy, optimism and positivity. Her smile lit up any room and she would be dearly missed by all at Flintshire County Council. Thoughts and prayers were with her family. Councillor Marion Bateman spoke on behalf of Helen's family who had passed on their appreciation to Helen's colleagues for the support given to Helen and her family.

32. PRESENTATIONS

The Chairman welcomed the following to the meeting to receive presentations:

Connah's Quay Nomads FC

In recognition of their fantastic achievement in reaching the second qualifying round of the UEFA Europa League. Councillor Kevin Jones congratulated the team who had made huge progress over recent years. He also praised the work of the Manager Andy Morrison, Vice Chairman John Gray and Hospitality Manager Roma Gray, all of whom were in attendance. Councillor Paul Shotton congratulated the team and the forward looking club which had a long history of football in the town of Connah's Quay.

Flintshire County Council's Academi

Shortlisted in the Best Employment & Equality Initiative APSE 2016 Service Awards. The Academi was innovative and provided learning opportunities that encouraged learning and development in a dynamic workforce. Councillor Mullin congratulated the team and wished them good luck for the Awards.

Rhian Evans

Overall winner of the Leadership in the Public Sector Category of the Leading Wales Awards 2016. Councillor Bithell spoke on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor Christine Jones, who said Rhian was highly respected in the Mental Health Service at Flintshire and the award was well deserved.

33. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2016 had been circulated with the agenda.

Accuracy

Apologies – to read “Billy Mullin”, not Brian.

Apologies to be recorded for Cindy Hinds.

Declaration of Interest to be recorded for Councillor Bithell as a Member of the Theatr Board.

Councillor Roney asked for an update following his Notice of Motion on the Abolition of free Theatr Cymru tickets. The Chief Executive explained that a report would be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 18th October 2016.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Aaron Shotton and Paul Shotton declared personal and prejudicial interests in agenda item number 16, Establishment Structure in Democratic Services.

Councillors Newhouse and Ian Roberts declared personal and prejudicial interests in agenda item number 11 – Notice of Motion.

35. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Brian Lloyd, who had attended a number of functions on his behalf. He commented on the moving visit from children from Chernobyl and the Ukraine and thanked the staff at Clwyd Theatr Cymru for their hospitality during the visit.

He paid tribute to the successes of Jade Jones in the recent Olympic Games and to Beverley Jones and Sabrina Fortune in the recent Paralympic Games respectively. Beverley Jones who finished 4th in the discus category would be invited to a future meeting of the Council. Councillor Ian Roberts, on behalf of Flint Town Council, thanked the Chief Executive, Delwyn Evans and Gillian Watkins from Corporate Communications, and officers from Streetscene for their hard work in organising the homecoming event for Flint's double gold-medal Olympian Jade Jones.

36. PETITIONS

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

37. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

38. QUESTIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that a question had been received from Councillor Carver.

Councillor Carver asked "Can the Cabinet Member for Environment please advise when the Queensferry Roundabout alterations will be completed".

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Attridge explained that a response had been circulated to all Members. That response read "The contracted works on Queensferry roundabout commenced on 15th February 2016 with a planned contract period of just over 12 weeks and a proposed completion date of 11th May 2016. Inevitably on a scheme of such complexity undertaken on one of the busiest inter-changes in Flintshire, the contractor encountered a number of circumstances and site conditions, which would not have been identified at the design stage. These included: Underground utility equipment which was not recorded and which needed protecting; and additional road surfacing works which only became apparent once work had commenced on site. The traffic signals were finally commissioned on 24th May which represented a total delay of 13 days from the original programme and the cost of the additional works required a further £45k from Capital funds. It was important that all the work needed on the site was completed in the one visit, given the disruption any work on this junction caused to motorists and local businesses.

Councillor Carver asked a supplementary question of “As recent as today, the Council’s website and previous press releases have stated that besides other improvements, such as the widening of the roundabout to create extra running lanes, there will be signalisation of all of the approaches to the Queensferry roundabout. Northbound traffic from Hawarden on Gladstone Way A550, has to take its chance since as soon as roundabout traffic stops, traffic from the B5129 takes precedence over traffic from the A550 and this remains so until B5129 traffic is halted due to the roundabout traffic flow. I have already seen the aftermath of one accident at this junction. What happened to the planned signalisation of the B5129 Chester Road East which connects what I believe is the largest factory in the UK (if not Europe) to that roundabout and similarly the signalisation of Gladstone Way A550 Birkenhead – Dolgellau trunk road? The two trunk roads seem to have missed their planned signalisation”.

Councillor Attridge said he would provide a written response to Councillor Carver.

39. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

40. NOTICE OF MOTION

(i) The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Tim Newhouse

“In 2012 the General Teaching Council for England was abolished by the UK Government, saving teachers and the government tens of millions of pounds. The equivalent quango in Wales, the Education Workforce Council (EWC) costs teachers approximately £1.7 million per year and costs the Welsh Assembly about £6.9 million. This Council calls on the Welsh Assembly to abolish the EWC and spend much of the £6.9 million annual saving on far more important priorities in education”. Abolishing the EWC will also mean that teachers will no longer have to pay an annual registration fee, which is important in times of wage restraint”.

Councillor Bithell moved an amendment which read “We recognise the importance of having systems to safeguard learners and to maintain and improve standards of conduct across the education workforce. We recognise the importance of the workforce having access to high quality training and development opportunities to improve teaching and learning. Noting the current Welsh Government consultation on fee models for funding the Education Workforce Council (EWC), we call upon the WLGA and WG to work to ensure that the EWCs work is undertaken as efficiently as possible and to consider alternative funding models to the current and proposed individual subscription approach”. Councillor Aaron Shotton seconded the amendment.

Councillor Bithell spoke to the amendment saying when he was a teacher a professional body had been fought for to provide teachers with the same level of support afforded to other professional bodies such as lawyers and medical staff. In addition, since the abolition of the General Teaching Council for England, two similar

bodies had since been set up in its place. He commented on the importance of such a body which he did not support the abolition of.

Councillor Newhouse sought clarification that Councillor Aaron Shotton would ask Welsh Government if a EWC was required at all. He agreed to the majority of the amendment with the removal and inclusion of some words as shown below so that it read:

“We recognise the importance of having systems to safeguard learners and to maintain and improve standards of conduct across the education workforce. We recognise the importance of the workforce having access to high quality training and development opportunities to improve teaching and learning. Noting the current Welsh Government consultation on ~~fee models for funding~~ the Education Workforce Council (EWC), we call upon the WLGA and WG to work to ensure that **these are the EWCs** ~~work is~~ undertaken as efficiently as possible and to consider alternative ~~funding~~ models to the current ~~and proposed individual subscription~~ approach”.

Councillor Bithell agreed with the revised amendment as suggested by Councillor Newhouse as did Councillor Aaron Shotton as the seconder to the amendment.

Councillor Peers said that if staff did not register they could lose the right to practice which he did not agree with. The aims of the EWC as set out in the 2014 Bill was to improve the standards of teaching which he said there was no proof of but it did cause hardship for teachers. It was unfair to make staff pay for something that was compulsory. He explained that the registration fee was £45 and to assist towards that WG paid £33 to each teacher. He supported the amendment.

Councillor Matthews said the registration was the same as required for other professions such as accountants and nursing staff, enabling teachers to be a member of a professional body. She felt there was not enough information on the work of the EWC in order to take a decision.

Councillor Isherwood said if the Notice of Motion was successful in WG then the savings should be ring-fenced to Education.

Councillor David Williams, as a teacher in England, said he personally had not felt the benefit of the General Teaching Council for England which he said acted in a similar way to Unions.

Councillor Newhouse thanked Councillor Bithell for the amendment and Councillor Shotton who would take the Notice of Motion to WG.

On being put to the vote, the amendment, including the removal and inclusion of some words by Councillor Newhouse, was carried.

(i) The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Andy Dunbobbin

“The EU referendum and language used around the refugee crisis is surrounded by myths. There has been a move to dehumanise the positive contributions by migrants. We have seen verbal and physical abuse in public places and graffiti on buildings. We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country. We, Flintshire County Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable. Flintshire County Council will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia. We reassure all people living in Flintshire that they are valued members of our community.”

Councillor Kevin Jones said that as active members of the Community Safety Partnership, Flintshire worked closely with the Police, Health Board, Probation, Fire Service and voluntary sector organisations, in an attempt to raise awareness around such crimes, and also to promote the greater reporting of incidents. Flintshire also followed the Welsh Government’s ‘Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents - A Framework for Action’ which outlined their strategy for addressing Hate Crime in Wales. It included three objectives on prevention, supporting victims and improving the multi-agency response and was supported by a Delivery Plan. The levels of hate crime were low in Flintshire. According to information from North Wales Police, over the past 12 month period 30 incidents were reported; during the previous 12 months the figure stood at 26.

The Chief Executive asked if the purpose of Councillor Dunbobbin’s Notice of Motion was for the Council to reinforce its current policy, to which Councillor Dunbobbin clarified it was.

Councillor Healey thanked Councillor Dunbobbin for the important Notice of Motion which provided a clear statement that racism, xenophobia and hate crimes would not be tolerated.

Councillor Bithell said a similar Notice of Motion had been considered at Mold Town Council, adding that the Police and Crime Commissioner had stated that North Wales Police would not tolerate any crimes of this sort.

Councillor Dolphin felt by discussing such a topic gave credence to the issue, citing that the increase in such crimes since the referendum was low and the relevant policies were already in place.

Councillor Peers welcomed the reinforcement of the current policy, including working with the Community Safety Partnership.

On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amended Notice of Motion on the Education Workforce Council be supported; and
- (b) That the Notice of Motion in support of condemning racism, xenophobia and hate crimes be supported.

41. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015/16

The Chief Executive invited the Chairman of Audit Committee, Councillor Newhouse, to provide any feedback from the Audit Committee that had met that morning.

Councillor Newhouse said he formally recommended the Statement of Accounts to County Council. A draft of the Accounts had been considered at Audit Committee two months previous and the final version came with a very positive report from the Wales Audit Office (WAO).

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that none of the issues raised the previous year had re-occurred which was testament to staff across the Council. He also thanked WAO for the way in which the audit had been conducted.

The WAO report highlighted 3 new issues, each of which had been addressed with full details being provided in the report:-

- Valuation method used to revalue Council Houses;
- Investigations into the Council's potential liabilities at former waste disposal sites; and
- Accuracy of pension records within the Clwyd Pension Fund.

John Herniman from WAO was welcomed to the meeting. He reiterated the comments of the Corporate Finance Manager and commended the Finance team for the Accounts that had been presented. If approved, he was able to offer an unqualified opinion.

In response to a comment from John Herniman, the Chief Executive provided assurance that the Accounts Governance Group would continue to meet. He reiterated the comments by the Corporate Finance Manager on the three reported issues adding that the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee would be receiving the report on its accounts the next day.

Councillor Peers asked if any financial contribution was expected on the cost of the abandoned premises in Sandycroft. He also asked for details of the Flintshire County Council Group as referred to in appendix 2 to the accounts. On exit packages, he sought assurance that if an employee left the Authority with a redundancy payment they would not be re-employed within a given time frame. The Chief Executive explained that the expenditure on the site in Sandycroft was in year; the total spend would be greater as work was still ongoing with a project closure date of the end of the calendar year to be followed by site disposal. The Council would meet the slight

majority of the cost supported by a grant of £700,000 from Welsh Government. The voluntary redundancy package included a clause that if an employee was made redundant they could not return to the Authority for a specified time period.

On Group Accounts, the Corporate Finance Manager explained that they related to the NEW Homes accounts which the Council was required to report on.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the final version of the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 be approved; and
- (b) That the Letter of Representation – Flintshire County Council, and the Letter of Representation – Clwyd Pension Fund, be approved.

42. SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION TO STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015/16

The Finance Manager – Technical Accountancy introduced the supplementary financial information which accompanied the Statement of Accounts 2015/16.

Councillor Carver thanked the Finance Manager for the way in which the information was presented which was in an easier to read format.

Councillor Peers asked if table 2 in future reports could include theoretical hourly costs. The Chief Executive said it should be possible to provide the daily rate.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

43. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the Annual Governance Statement which the Council was required to produce as part of its final accounts.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Governance Statement, as part of the Statement of Accounts, be approved.

41. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2015/16

The Corporate Finance introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16 following the recommendation of Cabinet and consideration by Audit Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2015/16 be approved.

The Chief Executive explained that it was David Webster’s last meeting as he was leaving to commence employment with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. He thanked him and wished him well for the future.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting.

42. ESTABLISHMENT STRUCTURE IN DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report which detailed a proposed structure in Democratic Services. The structure would affect the democratic service and under the Local Government Measure 2011 those changes must be approved by both the Democratic Services Committee and County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to Democratic Services be approved; and
- (b) That it be noted that the Democratic Services Committee designated the Democratic Services Manager post as the Statutory Head of Democratic Services, and that it be approved that the delegated authority of the Democracy and Governance Manager be transfer to the post of Democratic Services Manager.

43. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and no members of the public present.

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 4.15pm)

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Chairman