

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JANUARY 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NA on Monday, 9 January 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Dunn (Chairman)

Councillors: Clive Carver, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Brian Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton, Carolyn Thomas and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Billy Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management, Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Kevin Jones, Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1), Chief Officer (Organisational Change 2). (For minute no.45) Play Development Officer, and Public Open Space Manager. (For minute no.46) Libraries Development Manager.

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Committee Officer

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

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

45. PLAY AREAS, PLAY SCHEMES AND STRATEGIC PLAY FORUM UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Janet Roberts, Play Development Officer and Alan Roberts, Public Open Space Manager, to the meeting.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1) provided background information and gave a progress update. He reported on the Council's commitment to sustaining play activity in the County through continuation of

the revenue match funding for play areas and provisional allocation of capital funding through the capital programme to refurbish play areas and synthetic pitches. He advised that the Council would continue to maintain all play areas during 2017/18 and that one year of transition funding had been provided to enable play schemes to continue during 2016/17 after the cessation of the Welsh Government Grant from Families First.

The Chief Officer referred to discussions with Town and Community Councils around the need for sustainability of provision without funding and explained that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 January, would consider a proposal for one off support of an additional £40k to play schemes in 2017/18 to enable as many schemes as possible to be sustained going forward. The Chief Officer also explained that it had been agreed to re-establish the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum to co-ordinate play activity across the County.

The Play Development Officer took the opportunity to thank Members for supporting the play scheme programme and the agreement to re-invigorate the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum.

Councillor Robin Guest asked if the Committee could be provided with an update on the condition survey of equipped children's play areas. It was agreed that the Public Open Space Manager would provide a copy of the report for circulation to Members. Councillor Guest also commented on the need for Town and Community Councils to be informed as early as possible, and at least by end of December, of the Council's funding position to assist Town and Community Councils in their budget setting process.

Councillor Aaron Shotton spoke of the Council's commitment to sustain play activity in general in the County and welcomed the one-off support of an additional £40k funding made available through the Council's capital programme to continue provision of play areas and schemes in 2017/18.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas commented on the need for regular maintenance of play areas and recreation areas and the importance of formal and informal play. She referred to the match-funding scheme for maintaining play areas and said just one item of new play equipment for each play area would make a significant difference to each community.

During discussion Members sought clarification on the increased cost of providing play schemes to Town and Community Councils. Officers provided figures on the increase in cost per play scheme to Town and Community Councils without the additional £40k contribution from the Council and the reduced cost and net impact as a result of the contribution.

In response to a question from Councillor Andy Dunbbobin concerning the 'no ball games' restriction placed on some open spaces, the Play Development Officer explained that the removal of notices was being carefully considered in consultation with the relevant local communities.

The Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1) concluded that the Capital Programme would be going to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, and Council over the next few weeks. The £40k being put in for 2017/18 would not be sustainable for the future, but participation in the Play Scheme and the series of schemes which promotes the roles of Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED:

That the approach outlined to sustaining play activity in the County be supported

46. WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE 2015/16

The Chair welcomed Kate Leonard, Libraries Development Manager, to the meeting.

Councillor Chris Bithell, introduced the report to update the Committee on progress against Public Library Standards. He provided background information and reported on the performance of the library service against the Standards, as detailed in the report. Councillor Bithell reported that in 2015-16 Flintshire had met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and had partially met 1. This was expected to be 18 in the next return as all service points would offer Wi-Fi. He advised that the annual assessment of performance was appended to the report.

The Libraries Development Manager explained that the concerns which had been raised in the annual assessment were being addressed. She referred to the under use of ICT provision in some libraries and explained that progress was being made towards enabling service users to access Wi-Fi provision via their own equipment, for example laptop and tablets.

Councillor Dave Mackie asked if information could be provided to enable the Committee to compare the improvement in the performance of the library service between this year and the previous year. The Libraries Development Manager agreed to provide comparison data to the Committee.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas commented on the need to promote tourism and leisure services in Flintshire and suggested that libraries could take a more pro-active role in raising awareness.

Councillor Robin Guest commented that the public library standards report should be put to the Committee closer to publication to assist consideration of budget matters.

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change 1) advised that the New Library framework report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 6 February 2017.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee continues to support progress in developing the library service that will see an improvement in performance in 2016/17.

47. QUARTER 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/17 MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change 2) introduced a report to present the monitoring of progress for the second quarter of the Improvement Plan 2016/17 priority 'Modern and Efficient Council' relevant to the Committee. He referred to progress against the high level activities, as detailed in the report, and advised that there were currently no high level risk areas identified for the Committee.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to page 48 of the report and the risk of sustainability of Community Asset Transfers (CATs) in the early stages of development. He commented on the need for a financial contribution to be made by all the relevant Town and Community Councils where neighbouring residents continued to have use of the leisure facilities which were provided by a community asset transfer.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supports the progress made under Quarter 2 of the Improvement Plan for the Modern and Efficient Council.

48. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and drew attention to the items to be considered at the next meetings of the Committee to be held on 6 February and 13 March 2017. He reminded Members that it had been proposed that the next meeting of the Committee be held at Connah's Quay and it was agreed that he would make appropriate arrangements and inform Members of the venue in due course.

The following amendments and actions were agreed to the Forward Work Programme:

- that the public library standards report should be submitted to the Committee closer to publication.
- The New Library Framework report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 6 February 2017
- a follow up report on Community Asset Transfers to be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 March 2017

RESOLVED:

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

49. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.12 a.m.)

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Chairman