

CABINET
14th FEBRUARY 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 14th February 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones and Billy Mullin.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officers (Organisational Change), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager and Enterprise and Regeneration Manager.

Paul Goodlad from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) was in attendance for agenda item number 8.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Dave Mackie and Mike Peers.

133. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Attridge declared a personal interest in agenda item number 6 – Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget 2017/18 and Capital Programme 2017/18.

Councillor Bithell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 20 – Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan.

URGENT ITEM

Councillor Shotton explained that an urgent item – Review of the Council's Household Recycling Centre Provision, would be considered following agenda item number 25. He explained that the report was confidential as it was commercially sensitive.

134. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 17th January 2017 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

135. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18

The Chief Executive introduced the Council Fund Revenue Budget 2017/18 report.

He provided background details to Stages One and Two which had been approved by County Council following consideration at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, to which all Members had been invited, and Cabinet meetings.

The options to balance the budget had been considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th January with the remaining budget gap being confirmed as £1.997m. The Committee had recommended that the proposed level of school investment be maintained in the final budget proposals.

Following a long campaign for an increased investment in Social Care, Welsh Government (WG) had confirmed that the charging cap limit for domiciliary care would be raised from £60 per week to £70 per week from 1st April 2017. For Flintshire that would generate an additional income of £0.238m in 2017/18. Also, an additional specific grant of £10m was also announced to support the rising costs of domiciliary care across Wales as part of the Final Local Government Settlement. Flintshire expected to receive around £0.430m of that grant. It had been confirmed that from 2018/19 the funding would be transferred into the Settlement. That reduced the budget gap to £1.329m.

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority had set an increase of 4% in its levy which, when taking into account regional population changes, Flintshire's annual increase would be 4.52%. That resulted in a cost pressure of £0.317m for which there was no provision in the current budget estimate. This increased the budget gap to £1.646m.

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that assuming that the current level of school investment was maintained then the closure of the budget gap came down to striking a balance between the level of Council Tax to be set and drawing upon reserves and balances. It was important to note that funding derived from Council Tax was recurrent funding which would assist budget setting in future years.

Councillor Shotton commented on the positive way in which the budget process had been undertaken with it being reported to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings at each stage. He proposed that the Council Tax did not rise beyond 3% and that reserves and balances be used to close the remaining gap which was supported.

Councillor Attridge thanked officers and Cabinet Members for the work that had been undertaken on the budget process. He reiterated previous comments that the Authority had not taken decisions to close things such as care homes and leisure centres but instead had looked at alternative methods of delivery for some services which in turn had seen them protected.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That stage one and stage two of the budget proposals for 2017/18 be re-affirmed;
- (b) That a method of closing the remaining budget gap be recommended to Council as “maintain the planned Council Tax rise at 3% as per the Medium Term Financial Strategy with the remaining gap at the figure as reported to be met wholly by reserves and balances; and
- (c) That the formal advice of the Section 151 Officer and Chief Executive, in making the above recommendation, be received and considered.

136. COUNCIL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 – 2019/20

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced the Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20 report.

The report had been considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee where it was supported and comments from that meeting were included in the report. On the Flintshire Bridge, Councillor Kevin Jones said that Welsh Government (WG) had been lobbied for some time to trunk the road which would see responsibility for maintaining the Bridge move from the Authority.

Details of the proposed investment schemes were outlined and Councillors Christine Jones and Bithell particularly welcomed the school and social care schemes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the allocations and schemes in Table 2 of the report for Statutory / Regulatory and Retained Assets sections of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20 be approved and recommended to Council;
- (b) That the schemes included in Table 3 for the Investment section of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2017/18 - 2019/20 be approved and recommended to Council;
- (c) That it be noted that the shortfall in funding of schemes in 2018/19 and 2019/20 at this point in the approval process is flexible. Options including a combination of future capital receipts, alternative grants, prudential borrowing or phasing schemes over several years will be considered during 2017/18, and included in future capital programme reports; and
- (d) That the development of a longer term Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan be noted.

137. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18

Councillor Brown introduced the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2017/18 & Capital Programme 2017/18 report.

The strategic context for the HRA budget setting included the following:

- The need to ensure the treasury management strategy continued to meet the Council's new and ongoing borrowing requirements;
- Delivery of a prudent plan for income maximisation;
- Setting a balanced budget with 3% surplus revenue over expenditure;
- Continued drive to ensure all service costs were efficient and that value for money could be achieved;
- Maximisation of revenue efficiencies to minimise the borrowing required to meet WHQS by 2020; and
- Delivery of new build Council housing.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the HRA budget for 2017/18 as set out in the Business Plan be approved and recommended to County Council;
- (b) That a rent increase of 2.5% (plus up to or minus £2) as set out in the Business Plan with target rents applied for new tenancies be approved;
- (c) That a garage rent increase of £1 per week and a garage plot rent increase of £0.20 per week be approved and recommended to County Council; and
- (d) That the proposed HRA Capital Programme for 2017/18 be approved.

138. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017/18 AND MID-YEAR REPORT 2016/17

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 and Mid-Year Report 2016/17 report.

The report had been presented to Audit Committee on 25th January where it was recommended to Cabinet and County Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 and the Draft Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2016/17 be approved and recommended to County Council.

139. WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT ON FINANCIAL RESILIENCE: SAVINGS PLANNING

Councillor Shotton welcomed Mr Paul Goodland from Wales Audit Office (WAO) to the meeting and invited him to present the WAO report.

Mr Goodlad explained that WAO had recently produced a report for Flintshire “Financial Resilience: Savings Planning”. He said he had pleasure in delivering such an overwhelmingly positive report to which the conclusion was “The Council’s financial planning framework was sound and it continued to strengthen its financial planning to better support future financial resilience”. One proposal for improvement was identified which was “to strengthen financial planning arrangements by ensuring that all savings proposals were sufficiently developed before the start of the financial year in which they were to be implemented”.

He commented on the success of the Authority in maintaining the levels of efficiencies identified at the start of the year.

The Chief Executive thanked Mr Goodlad and said this was a positive and helpful report. The proposal for improvement was recognised and he commented on the successful planning process for the current annual budget which built on past learning.

Following comments at Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Authority had been successful in timelier reporting of the budget by presenting it in three stages. On efficiencies, he explained that the Council’s aim in future years was likely to be 95%. He commented that not all local authorities reported with as much transparency as Flintshire where up to date budget information was reported each month. Mr Goodlad confirmed that many other local authorities that did not follow a similar process could adopt a similar good practice model.

Councillor Shotton thanked Mr Goodlad for his attendance and welcomed the positive report from WAO.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the Wales Audit Office report on the Council’s arrangements for financial savings planning which support the financial resilience of the Council be received and endorsed.

140. GROWTH VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE ECONOMY OF NORTH WALES

Councillor Butler introduced the Growth Vision and Strategy for the Economy of North Wales report.

North Wales had been invited to develop the strategy into a ‘Growth Bid’ for national investment. The regional work was running in parallel to the development and agreement of growth bids in selected regions of England and in South Wales.

Work was ongoing to prioritise the content of the strategy for inclusion in a formal bid and the six Councils had reached an outline agreement on a governance model for the regional economic strategy. The preferred regional governance model of a statutory Joint Committee was set out in the report.

The Chief Executive explained that similar reports were being submitted to Cabinet meetings at the other five local authorities. He added that technical legal work was underway in preparation for the scheme to progress following the Annual Meetings.

It was agreed that a discussion could take place at County Council on 1st March when the item on 'Regional Working and the White Paper - Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed' was considered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the preferred regional governance model of a statutory Joint Committee for further development be endorsed; and
- (b) That the newly elected Council be invited to enter into a statutory Joint Committee model with the five partner Councils, within the first three months of the new Council term, once a detailed constitution and inter-authority agreement was available.

141. DEESIDE PLAN

Councillor Butler introduced the Deeside Plan report which set out a vision for economic growth for the next 30 years. It identified the high level programmes of work needed to fulfil the aspirations for Deeside as a key element in regional economic growth and to ensure the maximum benefit to local people.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager explained that the plan had been developed to set out how the ambitions for economic growth for Deeside could be achieved, maximising the value of growth for local people and for the wider region whilst also protecting and improving quality of life. The purpose of the Plan was to:

- Create an ambitious high-level vision for economic growth in Deeside over the next 30 years;
- Set the principles for identifying future sites for development after Northern Gateway and Warren Hall, recognising the long timescales needed to do so;
- Ensure that transport infrastructure, economic development and land use planning were considered in parallel;
- Align future regional and local strategies and programmes;
- Build understanding of the needs of the area among decision-makers and businesses to encourage support; and
- Provide a tool for the Deeside Partnership, the Council and others to monitor progress.

Transport was highlighted as a particular priority in the Plan due to current challenges and its potential to constrain future growth. The priorities were:

- Maximise the value of regional transport infrastructure investments including the proposed Welsh Government improvements to the strategic road network around Deeside;
- Ensure that transport infrastructure improvements were planned alongside future development opportunities recognising that both processes could take several decades to come to fruition; and
- Support the shift from private car use to more sustainable forms of transport and grow the active travel infrastructure.

Councillor Shotton welcomed the report which would provide benefits and opportunities to the area and across the region. He explained that a 12 week consultation process was due to commence on 13th March on the A494/A55 improvement.

The Chief Executive added that information was due to be received from WG on the North Wales Metro Vision and connectivity.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Deeside Plan be approved;
- (b) That the transport proposals for Deeside be approved; and
- (c) That the Council respond to the forthcoming Welsh Government A494/A55 improvement consultation making a strong case for improvements that resolve congestion and facilitate the delivery of the Deeside Plan.

142. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Councillor Mullin introduced the Corporate Safeguarding Policy report which set out the work being undertaken to ensure that the Council fulfilled its safeguarding responsibilities.

The Chief Executive explained that the Wales Audit Office (WAO) had published a report in July 2015 'Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Council's'. They reported that corporate safeguarding responsibilities with local authorities across Wales were not always well understood and identified that corporate safeguarding responsibilities needed to be fully integrated with the work of other services.

Safeguarding was a wider concept than the protection of children and adults and dealt with the promotion of:

- Physical, emotional and mental health;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and leisure; and
- Contribution to society.

Safeguarding was a shared responsibility. Whilst Social Services was the lead service within the Council, everyone, whatever their role, had a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of children, young people and adults. Safeguarding had always been strong in Flintshire and an Annual Report would be submitted to Cabinet and would draw attention to the Council's performance in complying with Corporate Policy and Guidelines.

Councillor Christine Jones welcomed the report and commented on the amount of work that had been undertaken to date to strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet be assured that work was being undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding children and adults;
- (b) That the draft Corporate Safeguarding Policy be approved for wider consultation; and
- (c) That Cabinet receive annual reports on work carried out to improve corporate safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies.

143. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Councillor Mullin introduced the Welsh Language Standards report which provided details of the outcome of negotiating a new set of Welsh Language Standards for the Council with the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC).

The Chief Executive explained that the majority of the Standards were consistent with the commitments set out in the Council's Welsh Language Scheme and did not pose any significant problems for services. Some of the Standards had been more challenging and he explained that constructive discussions had been held with the WLC which had resulted in amendments, exemptions and deferred implementation dates to the Standards that were considered problematic, as set out in the report.

Councillors Bithell and Mullin commented on the success of improving Welsh language in Flintshire schools.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the successful outcome for Flintshire County Council on negotiated Standards within the final Compliance Notice be noted and endorsed;
- (b) That the Welsh Language Standards be fully supported; and
- (c) That a further report on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, which is a requirement of the Standards and will raise the profile and strengthen the Welsh language in Flintshire be invited.

144. DIGITAL STRATEGY

Councillor Mullin introduced the Digital Strategy report which replaced the Council's existing IT strategy.

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that it was a different approach to the existing strategy as it sought to encompass all of the Council's strategic aspirations for the IT service, the Council and the whole of the county. It included strategic objectives relating to issues such as economic development and community development alongside objectives on IT service delivery.

An all Member workshop on the strategy was held on 16th December 2016 and it was also considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th January 2017. Both broadly supported the approach proposed within the strategy and gave helpful feedback on the critical factors needed to ensure a successful implementation.

An annual action plan would feed into the corporate resources strategy in order to build a clear strategic picture of demand versus capacity. That in turn could then be debated at Programme Boards within the Council and appropriate resources allocations made at that time.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed digital strategy be adopted.

145. TRADE UNION (WALES) BILL

Councillor Shotton introduced the Trade Union (Wales) Bill report which invited a response to the consultation.

The Chief Executive explained that the purpose of the Bill was to dis-apply certain of the provisions of the Trade Union Act 2016, which was passed by the UK Government, in Wales. The Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee of the National Assembly for Wales was scrutinising the Bill and had invited responses to its call for evidence.

The deadline for responses was the end of the week. However, given the recent Notice of Motion to County Council on the Bill he suggested that Cabinet provide an initial response with a full response then being given following the meeting of County Council on 1st March where it could be debated in full. This was supported. He also suggested that a joint response could be provided from the Council and Trade Union which was also supported.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet make an initial response to the consultation with a full response being provided after County Council on 1st March 2017.

146. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 (MONTH 9)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Capital Programme Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 9) report which summarised changes made to the Capital Programme since Month 6, along with expenditure to date and projected outturn.

The Capital Programme had increased by £0.573m in the period due to:

- Introduction of additional Welsh Government grant funding for Private Sector Renewal (£0.175m)
- Vibrant & Viable Places (VVP) additional grant funding from Welsh Government (£0.100m)
- Introduction of Section 106 Funding Play Area Equipment (£0.120m)
- Other Aggregate Increases (£0.178m)

Actual expenditure to Month 9 was £43.277m with a projected outturn of £60.224m which was an underspend of £0.896m. Resources available for funding future capital expenditure was c£3.873m, all of which had been allocated to fund capital schemes in 2017/18 onwards as part of setting next year's capital programme.

During the quarter additional Early Identified Rollover (EIR) of £1.063m had been identified which reflected reviewed spending plans across all programme areas; those committed amounts had been identified as now required to meet the cost of programme works and/or retention payments in 2017/18.

The report had been discussed at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week with no issues being identified.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall reported be approved; and
- (b) That the rollover adjustments be approved.

147. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17 (MONTH 9)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 9) report which provided the latest revenue budget monitoring position for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account based on actual income and expenditure. The report projected how the budget would stand at the close of the financial year if all things remained equal.

The projected year end position, without any further action to reduce cost pressures or to identify new efficiencies was:

Council Fund

- The net in year position comprised of an operating deficit of £0.799m; a decrease in the deficit of £1.011m from the position reported last month which was due to a number of factors, the most significant being the cost recovery of joint funded care packages within Social Services;

- The overall projected in-year position included £2.886m due to the change in accounting policy for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) as agreed by County Council. This had the effect of eliminating the operating deficit and net spend was projected to be £2.087m lower; and
- Projected contingency reserve balance of £5.279m.

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £0.037m higher than budget; and
- Projected closing balance as at 31st March 2017 of £1.061m.

The report covered significant budget movements; programme of efficiencies; inflation; reserves and balances; and an overview of the Housing Revenue Account. A permanent budget realignment within the Social Services portfolio was recommended for implementation ahead of completion of the Month 10 budget monitoring report.

The Chief Executive explained that the report had been considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week where a discussion had taken place on retrospective MRP.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31st March 2017 be noted, and the work on actions and options for mitigating action be supported;
- (b) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (c) That a budget virement within Social Services be approved.

148. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2017/18 TO 2019/20

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Prudential Indicators 2017/18 to 2019/20 report which provided details on the following:

- Prudential Indicators for Capital Expenditure;
- Prudential Indicators for Affordability;
- Prudential Indicators for Prudence; and
- Prudential Indicators for External Debt and Treasury Management.

RESOLVED:

That the following be approved and recommended to County Council on 14th February 2017:

- The Prudential Indicators for 2017/18-2019/20; and
- Delegated authority for the Corporate Finance Manager to effect movements between the separately agreed limits within the authorised limit for external debt and the operational boundary for external debt.

149. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION – 2017/18 POLICY

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) – 2017/18 Policy report.

As part of the budget strategy for 2017/18 officers critically reviewed the Council's 2016/17 MRP Policy and recommended that changes were made to parts of the policy. Detailed reports were considered at Cabinet, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and County Council. Changes to the 2016/17 and the 2017/18 Policy were approved at County Council in December.

The report restated the revised 2017/18 policy as part of the suite of 2017/18 budget setting reports being considered by Cabinet and County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following be approved and recommended to County Council for Council Fund (CF) outstanding debt that:-
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in financial year 2017/18 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing fixed as at 31st March 2016. The calculation would be the 'straight line' method over 50 years;
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing from 1st April 2016 onwards. The calculation would be the 'straight line' or 'annuity' (where appropriate) method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure was likely to generate benefits; and
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded from unsupported (prudential) borrowing or credit arrangements.
- (b) That the following be approved and recommended to County Council for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outstanding debt:-
- Option 2 (Capital Financing Requirement Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2017/18 for all capital expenditure funded by debt.
- (c) That the following be approved and recommended to County Council that MRP on loans from the Council to NEW Homes to build affordable homes through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) (which qualified as capital expenditure in accounting terms) be as follows:-
- No MRP be made during the construction period (of short duration) as the asset has not been brought into use and no benefit was being derived from its use; and

- Once the assets were brought into use, capital repayments would be made by NEW Homes. The Council's MRP would be equal to the repayments made by NEW Homes. The repayments made by NEW Homes would be classed, in accounting terms, as capital receipts, which could only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt which was a form of MRP. The capital repayment / capital receipt would be set aside to repay debt, and was the Council's MRP policy for repaying the loan.

150. SELF EVALUATION OF EDUCATION SERVICES

Councillor Bithell presented the Self-Evaluation of Education Services report which was an annual assessment against the framework for Local Authority education services established by Estyn.

The prime purpose of self-evaluation was to lead to service improvements, including outcomes achieved by learners. The process of self-evaluation was continuous and an embedded part of Local Authority work with the emphasis always being on evaluation of the impact of each aspect of provision on the standards and wellbeing of learners.

The report outlined the perceived strengths along with key issues and challenges and had been constructed with input from Local Authority officers, GwE partners and school representatives. Full details were contained in the appendix to the report.

Councillor Shotton welcomed the report and commented on the commitment of the cabinet to the protection of education in Flintshire. He also welcomed the data on the percentage of learners leaving school without a qualification and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) which at 1.3% in 2015 the proportion of Year 11 NEETS was lowest in Wales and lowest ever Flintshire figure for the second consecutive year.

RESOLVED:

That the evidence in relation to the latest draft self-evaluation be received.

151. SUPPORTING LOCAL PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN

Councillor Brown presented the Supporting Local People Commissioning Plan report which presented the spend plan for 2017/18. It aligned with the priorities laid out within the Supporting People local Commissioning Plan 2016/18.

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) commented on the importance of the services and was pleased to explain that Welsh Government (WG) recognised the value of continuing to fund low level preventative support services which helped to reduce pressures on more expensive specialist health, care and homeless services and the protection of the grant for 2017/18 was welcomed.

Details of the spend proposals for 2017/18 were outlined, in particular the continuation of funding of the Male Refuge in Flintshire, which evidence had demonstrated was a much needed service for North Wales, and the continuation to fund the homeless prevention posts.

RESOLVED:

That the Supporting People Programme Grant Spend Plan for 2017/18 be approved.

152. NEW CHILD CARE OFFER

Councillor Christine Jones introduced the New Child Care Offer report which provided details of Flintshire's successful bid to become an early adopter of a pilot free child care scheme.

By the end of 2021 the Offer would provide working parents with 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks of the year. That included 10 weeks within the school holiday period with the aim of supporting families with quality flexible and affordable childcare.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the pilot of the scheme which would support economic regeneration and reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work reducing a family's risk of poverty.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) explained that the scheme would provide the opportunity to 441 children in Year 1 (September 2017 – September 2018) which built on an initial cohort of 75 to 100. The criteria of eligibility was outlined in the appendix to the report.

Councillor Shotton commented that the scheme was significant for working parents and for those wanting to return to work and explained that the initial implementation would take place in Buckley.

RESOLVED:

That Flintshire, as an early implementer of the offer, maximising the opportunity of a grant worth £1.552 million, supporting the full roll out of the scheme across Flintshire, benefitting up to 441 three to four year olds and their families, be endorsed.

153. DOG DNA SCHEME AND THE INTRODUCTION OF DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS

Councillor Attridge introduced the Dog DNA Scheme and the Introduction of Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders report which recommended replacing the current Dog Control Order with a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which would cover all open space in the County.

The existing Dog Control Order only required owners to remove their dog's faeces from public areas however creating a PSPO provided an opportunity for additional enforcement activity against other designated offences, such as the

complete exclusion of dogs or a requirement to keep dogs on a lead on certain classifications of open space, such as children's play areas, marked sports pitches or other formal recreation areas.

A number of activities were considered at an all Member Workshop and at Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would promote responsible dog ownership and help reduce the level of dog waste which currently blighted the open space and amenity land in the County. A recommendation was made to Cabinet that the activities detailed in Appendix 2 to the report should be adopted, where it was practical to do so.

On dog DNA, a Task and Finish Group had been established to investigate the potential of a dog DNA scheme and the findings were presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Both the Working Group and the Committee concluded that whilst there were merits in the proposals, further development work was required before the initiative could be adopted and that the pilot should not be taken forward at this point.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that the new PSPO permitted the Council to undertake enforcement activities on land not owned by the Council and therefore each Town and Community Council would be asked if they wished the Council to undertake those duties on land within their ownership, as part of the consultation process.

In response to a question from Councillor Bithell on dogs being kept on a lead at all times, Councillor Attridge explained that it was considered at the Workshop but was not recommended as responsible dog owners would be penalised because of the minority. It was about zero tolerance and implementation of the PSPO by Enforcement Officers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work carried out by the Dog DNA Task & Finish Group be noted and appreciated but a pilot scheme is not approved at this point;
- (b) That the implementation of a Dog Control Public Space Protection Order, containing the controls specified in Appendix 1, be approved, subject to a local consultation process; and
- (c) That the introduction of the additional measures detailed in Appendix 2, to further reduce the instances of dog fouling in the County, be approved.

154. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION

Councillor Kevin Jones introduced the Review of the Council's Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Provision report which provided an outcome of the HRC review on the progress made to deliver the final elements of the more localised HRC solution which had been previously endorsed by Cabinet. It included details of the proposed new HRC site located at Rockcliffe in the north of the County.

Following the Welsh Government (WG) report, Cabinet approved proposals to improve the current HRC facilities in Buckley and Mold within the footprint of the existing sites and along the lines to the existing facility in Sandycroft. Construction was underway and was expected to be completed by the end of March 2017.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that an extensive search had been undertaken to identify a potential site in Rockcliffe to replace the Flint and Connah's Quay facilities. The proposed site was directly between the two existing facilities and discussions were ongoing on a potential lease. Details of the lease were contained within agenda item number 25 which was a Part 2 report in order to maintain commercial confidentiality.

Councillor Kevin Jones was pleased to report that WG had listened to the lobbying case for a capital bid for funding for the required works with the majority of the funding being approved.

Councillor Attridge thanked Councillor Kevin Jones and the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) for the work undertaken on the HRC review, in particular the success of obtaining the majority of the funding for the works.

RESOLVED:

That the plans to develop a new HRC site in Rockcliffe to replace the existing facilities in Flint and Connah's Quay be approved.

155. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Revenues

- **Business Rates Write Offs**

Financial Procedure Rules (section 9.6 – Income and Expenditure) stipulated that any individual debt between the values of £5,000 and £25,000 should be reported to the Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance Manager / Section 151 Officer) for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance. The schedules, which were summarised by the category of write off involved 2 Business Rates accounts where the overall debt for each company was greater than £5,000.

- **Council Tax Write Offs**

Financial Procedure Rules (section 9.6 – Income and Expenditure) stipulated that any individual debt between the values of £5,000 and £25,000 should be reported to the Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance Manager / Section 151 Officer) for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance. The delegated powers form detailed 1 council tax account where the overall debt was greater than £5,000.

RESOLVED:

That the actions taken under delegated powers be noted.

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 for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

156. ACQUISITION OF A LEASE FOR LAND FOR THE PROPOSED USE AS A HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE (HRC)

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced the Acquisition of a Lease for Land for the Proposed use as a Household Recycling Centre (HRC) report.

The report provided details on the negotiations underway for the acquisition of the land to facilitate construction of the HRC site.

RESOLVED:

That subject to Contract, Cabinet approval and planning permission being granted, for a 25 year Lease of the above land to enable the construction of a Household Recycling Centre (HRC) at the location illustrated on the plan.

157. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION (URGENT ITEM)

Councillor Kevin Jones introduced the urgent report on the Review of the Council's Household Recycling Centre (HRC) provision which provided additional information on the procurement arrangements for the construction of the new HRC facility in Rockcliffe.

The report proposed that the Council enter into competitive dialogue with the successful contractor engaged following a previous tender exercise for the Buckley and Mold facilities for the construction of the final facility in Rockcliffe.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to enter into dialogue with the contractor currently engaged to undertake the reconstruction works at the HRC sites in Buckley and Mold be approved, and to agree comparative rates for the construction works at the Rockcliffe site; and
- (b) That the Commissioning Form for the contract works be approved.

158. DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER EUTICALS CHEMICAL PROCESSING FACILITY AT SANDYCROFT

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced the Disposal of the Former Euticals Chemical Processing Facility at Sandycroft report which sought disposal of the site and liabilities.

RESOLVED:

That the disposal of the site to Qualitech Environmental Services Limited at nominal consideration be supported.

158. LEISURE, LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODEL – STAFFING STRUCTURE PROPOSALS

Councillor Kevin Jones introduced the Leisure, Libraries and Heritage Alternative Delivery Model – Staffing Structure Proposals report which focused on implementation of the Leisure and Libraries restructure at tiers 3 and 4 within the new company in order to provide an optimum, efficient, and fit for purpose structure in readiness for the proposed transfer in July 2017.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Design Principles for the restructure be agreed;
- (b) That the tier 3 and 4 management structure for Leisure and Libraries detailed in the report, subject to minor changes that may need to be made following the grading of the posts, to ensure the structure remains within the agreed budget, be agreed; and
- (c) That the recruitment to the management tiers commence during February and March 2017.

159. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 12.07 p.m.)

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Chair