

CABINET
20TH MARCH 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 20th March 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin, and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officers (Organisational Change), Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, Senior Manager, Human Resources and Development and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Ian Roberts.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Patrick Heesom, Ray Hughes and Mike Peers.

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Attridge, Butler, Jones, Mullin and Shotton declared personal interests in agenda item number 11 – School Admission Arrangements 2019/10, as they were School Governors.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that Chief Officers would have a personal interest in agenda item number 14 – Revision of the Corporate Operating Model, and would leave the room. The Chief Executive would be supported on that item by the Senior Manager, Human Resources and Development.

Councillor Shotton advised that agenda item number 10, Flintshire Street Markets Review, would be considered first. Also, agenda item number 14, Revision of the Corporate Operating Model, would be considered last.

141. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2018 had been circulated with the agenda and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

142. FLINTSHIRE STREET MARKETS REVIEW

Councillor Butler introduced the Flintshire Street Markets Review report which summarised the outcomes of a recent review on the smaller street markets in Flintshire and recommended next steps.

The findings and conclusions of the review were outlined in the report, with proposals to close Flint street market, transfer the operation of the Connah's Quay street market to the Town Council and continue the operation of the Holywell street market on an interim basis whilst discussions with Holywell Town Council continued on future cost saving options.

Councillor Butler explained that across the United Kingdom street markets had declined in scale and vitality which was due to competition from large multi-national retail chains, supermarkets and on-line shopping.

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) added that the majority of the costs of operating street markets were staffing costs. Outlined in the report was the income generated by each market compared to its running costs during 2016/17. If approved, the operating deficit for markets would reduce by £21,000 each year.

Councillor Bithell commented on Mold street market which continued to contribute to the economic and social vitality of the town, however it was facing some strains. He stressed the importance of protecting the remaining markets. He asked, if there was a change to the pedestrianised area in Holywell, where the market would then be. The Chief Officer responded that it would be in Tower Gardens. In response to a question from Councillor Shotton, she confirmed that any future proposed changes to Holywell street market would be reported to Cabinet.

Councillor Shotton welcomed the decision of Connah's Quay Town Council to take on the operation of the street market.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet support the closure of Flint street market;
- (b) That the operation of the Connah's Quay street market be transferred to Connah's Quay Town Council, subject to confirmation from the Town Council and agreement of terms; and
- (c) That the operation of the Holywell street market continue on an interim basis, and discussions with Holywell Town Council continue on future cost saving options.

143. APPROVAL OF COSTS FOR BATCH 3 STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP) SCHEMES

Councillor Attridge introduce the Approval of Costs for Batch 3 Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) Schemes report which provided

information on the proposed schemes, including location, property types, design and layout and projected build costs.

The report also identified the preferred funding options and detailed the Development Scheme Assumptions against which the viability of schemes were measured and assessed.

The sites proposed, for the development of 92 new social and affordable homes were:

- Nant y Gro, Gronant;
- Former Council Depot, Dobshell; and
- Llys Dewi, Penyffordd (near Holywell).

The development of those sites for social and affordable housing was a strategic priority for the Council and the sites were pre-agreed for inclusion within the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme. It would bring the total number of properties approved by the Council to date, to 293.

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) explained that Welsh Government (WG) had made the Affordable Housing Grant (AHG) available to stock retaining Local Authorities who were developing new homes from 2018/19. Flintshire's indicative allocation was: 2018/19 - £1.9m; and 2019/20 - £1.2m. The grant covered up to a maximum of 58% of total scheme costs over a 30 year period. Where required the Council would consider the use of its shared equity, shared ownership receipts and commuted sum reserves to assist with funding affordable housing through the programme, where conditions allowed. The table in the report provided details of the projected costs for each of the proposed schemes, with the total projected Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing requirement being £9.823m.

Councillor Attridge added that the sites would require planning permission. For the Gronant development, concerns about the proposed scheme were expressed at the Community Consultation Event, in particular road accessibility. Those concerns were being considered by officers prior to Planning Committee consideration. He also said that it was the Council's commitment to provide affordable housing across Flintshire.

Councillor Shotton commented on the recent builds that had been completed in Leeswood and the Council's commitment to provide social housing across the County. Leeswood provided a good example of enabling local people to remain in a rural community.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the development of 92 new social and affordable homes at Llys Dewi, Penyffordd, Nant y Gro, Gronant and the Former Council Depot, Dobshell be approved;

- (b) That the use of prudential borrowing to the value of £9.823m (subject to final approval and verification) to fund the proposed development of the new Council homes be approved;
- (c) That the use of Affordable Homes Grant of £1.903m and shared equity reserves, shared ownership receipts and commuted sums of £1.722m in total be approved to contribute to scheme costs; and
- (d) That the proposals by NEW Homes to develop 17 affordable properties across the three sites (subject to NEW Homes Board approval) be noted.

144. BUDGET STAGE 2: REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES

Councillor Thomas introduced the Budget Stage 2: Review of Car Parking Charges report which proposed a final charging policy and a commencement date for car parking charges in Flint.

In December 2017 Council approved the Stage 2 proposals for the Council Fund Budget 2018/19 which included car parking charges. This was subject to several specific proposals being referred to Overview and Scrutiny for detailed scrutiny prior to further consideration at Cabinet. Car parking charges were discussed by members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which was open to all Councillors, on 16th January 2018 where a number of suggestions were made and detailed in the report. Some of the proposals made could not be accommodated, with the reasons why outlined in the report.

A joint meeting of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny and Environment Overview and Scrutiny had been arranged for 15th March 2018 where the Cabinet report detailing the proposals was discussed. This was a joint meeting as Corporate Resources was the lead Committee for budget scrutiny and Environment had the car parking policy and operations as part of its remit. A full list of the issues raised at that meeting were handed out to Cabinet Members with the responses given, including verbal feedback from the Democratic Services Manager. Following comments at the joint meeting, it was proposed to change the charge in the Appendix from 30p for 30 minutes, to 30p for 60 minutes. The impact on the budget would be £11k, however if annual permits were sold to businesses, this would generate a further £15k which would cover the impact. The Appendix provided details of all charges; the new charging arrangements would be advertised in each car park during April 2018 and would come into effect from 14th May 2018. In addition to that comment, the Joint Committee had also asked for a breakdown of management and maintenance costs for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and a full list of charged and non-charged car parks which had been provided.

The introduction of car parking charges in Flint had been delayed due to the general unavailability of car parking spaces in the town as a result of the town centre regeneration programme which was now close to completion. On street parking orders would be introduced on some roads in the area at the same time as the car parking charges. Subject to objections, the target date for introducing the new charging arrangements would be 21st May 2018.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that Town Councils may consider subsidising car parking charges in their area and any such proposal would be considered on merit and deliverability within the current car parking strategy.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a review of the revised car parking charges would take place in six months' time.

Councillor Shotton said the proposals had been considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committees twice with the initial proposals being changed following the comments made. He thanked Councillor Thomas, the Chief Officer and the officer team for the work on this which had been a long and emotive subject. The changes made to the original proposals demonstrated the willingness of the Cabinet to listen to comments from colleagues.

Councillor Bithell said he was concerned about the level of charges in Mold which were higher than the rest of the County. He also commented on the impacts to towns and the surrounding areas with car parking charges and the closure of some street markets. Councillor Thomas thanked him for his comments and reiterated that the car parking charges would be reviewed in six months' time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised car parking charges, as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved with an amendment to the charge for 30p for 30 minutes being extended to a 30p charge for 1 hour instead;
- (b) That the impacts of the new charging arrangement be kept under review; and
- (c) That the commencement date for charges in Flint, as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved.

145. INVITATION TO PREPARE A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Councillor Bithell introduced the Invitation to Prepare a Strategic Development Plan report which explained that the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs had written to all Local Authorities in North Wales inviting them for their views on the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the region.

The same letter had been sent to South East, Mid. and West Wales Local Authorities on the basis that each of those regions had either existing, or emerging, City Deal or Growth Deal proposals. The letter was appended to the report with a proposed response also being appended.

The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) said the Cabinet Secretary's letter made no mention of how, or who, would produce the SDP however it was a fair assumption at this stage that the Plan would be produced collaboratively by the region's Local Planning Authorities and there would be limited, if any, further resources provided at a regional or national level.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed response to the Cabinet Secretary as detailed in Appendix 2 be agreed.

146. URBAN TREE AND WOODLAND PLAN

Councillor Thomas introduced the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan report. The Plan examined the opportunities for tree planting, how it would be done and provided a best practice approach to the management of existing urban trees and woodland, including community and partnership working in its delivery.

She commented on the benefits of trees, such as improving health and wellbeing, providing shelter, shade and cooling and connecting people with nature. She explained that the Plan's vision was 'To have a diverse and resilient tree canopy cover throughout Flintshire's towns that is appreciated, managed sustainably, provides multiple benefits to people and the environment, and enhances biodiversity'.

To deliver the vision, the strategic objectives were:

1. To increase the amount of tree planting;
2. To manage trees sustainably;
3. To manage the risks associated with trees;
4. To promote biodiversity; and
5. To work in partnership.

The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) added that the Plan had set a target of achieving an urban canopy cover of 18% by 2011 from the current 14.5%, the seventh lowest in Wales. He explained that Broughton and Saltney were the two settlements in the County with the lowest canopy cover and the early stages of the plan would focus on increasing the amount of tree planting on sites that the Council maintained in those settlements.

Councillor Shotton welcomed the report and the Plan and commented on other groups that could attract funding independent of the Council such as lottery funding. This could help to accelerate the timescales in the Plan. Councillor Attridge said Wates Residential had a target of 150 trees to be planted by April as part of the Green Plan.

Councillor Jones commented on the excellent trees in Wepre Park and other smaller play areas, and the Forest Schools in primary schools.

RESOLVED:

That the vision, objectives and actions set out in the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan be agreed.

147. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18 (MONTH 10)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 (Month 10) report which provided the current revenue budget monitoring

position for 2017/18 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The report presented the position, based on actual income and expenditure, and projected how the budget would stand at the close of the financial year if all things remained equal.

The projected year end position was:

Council Fund:

- Net in year expenditure forecast an operating deficit of £0.375m;
- The overall projected in-year position now included £1.422m due to the change in accounting policy for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges as agreed by County Council on 1st March. This had the effect of eliminating the operating deficit with net spend projected to be £1.047 less than budget; and
- Projected Contingency Reserve balance as at 31st March of £8.119m although that reduced to £5.714m when taking into account agreed contributions for the 2018/19 budget.

Housing Revenue Account:

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £0.035m greater than budget; and
- Projected contingency reserve balance as at 31st March 2018 of £1.081m.

The reasons for the projected variances were summarised in the appendix to the report with key significant portfolio variances explained in the report.

The report covered the latest in year forecast by portfolio; significant movements between Month 9 and Month 10 budget; achievement of planned in-year efficiencies; tracking of in year risks and emerging issues; winter maintenance; inflation and reserves and balances.

At the recent Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, comments were made on the projected outturn for Out of County placements and charging across Wales, and the setting of realistic income targets in pest control.

The Chief Executive explained that additional grant funding of £0.428m was reported in the Older People service and was funding to contribute to additional expenditure incurred in Social Services due to winter pressures. On planned in-year efficiencies, 94% would be achieved which was 1% less than the agreed target. There was also a variance in Streetscene and Transportation due to the increased car parking charges only applying for 10.5 months this year instead of 12.

Councillor Shotton commented on the costs to the winter maintenance budget following the recent adverse weather conditions, which continued to put pressure on the winter maintenance budget. The service had already exceeded its number of turnouts and it was projected that spend would be £1.059m which exceeded the budget by £0.215m. However, that would be offset by the drawdown of a grant which was ring-fenced for rock salt.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31st March 2018 be noted; and
- (b) That the transfer of £0.250m from the contingency reserve be approved to an earmarked reserve to use as a contingency against any financial issues arising as a result of implementing different service delivery methods; and
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted.

148. A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Councillor Jones introduced the A Place to Call Home report which followed the Older People's Commissioner Care Home Review in November 2014.

The review looked into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes in Wales and whilst the review confirmed that residential care was a positive choice for many people, and one that enhanced their quality of life, there were also improvements which could be made to improve the 'lived experience' of many residents.

The report included 43 action points, some of which local authorities were responsible for. Since the publication of the report, Flintshire had been developing strategies to improve the experience and quality of life for people living in Flintshire care homes and the work was reviewed by the Commissioner in 2017. The Commissioner found that Flintshire was "Sufficient" in the 15 areas of the review; this was the highest category that could be awarded so it was a positive evaluation for the Council.

Councillor Shotton welcomed the views of the Commissioner and the recognition of good practice. It gave the Council confidence in its ambitions which included the increase in bed provision at Marleyfield in Buckley.

Councillor Bithell also welcomed the report and complimented staff for the achievement. In response to a question, the Senior Manager – Children and Workforce explained that the remaining homes to carry out 'Creating a Place Called Homes, Delivering What Matters' were independent businesses and were being encouraged to engage.

Councillor Jones wished the Commissioner well as her term of office ceased in April.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the content of the Flintshire's 'A Place to Call Home? – Impact Analysis' report be noted;

- (b) That details of ongoing actions and initiatives underway within Social Services to continue to enhance the quality of life of residents in Flintshire care homes be noted; and
- (c) That the letter of response to the Older People's Commissioner be approved.

149. SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2019/20

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced the School Admission Arrangements 2019/20 report which advised of the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise on the admission arrangements for September 2019.

The current admission arrangements had been in place since 2003 and the majority of parental preferences, 96%, continued to be met.

There were no changes proposed to the admissions oversubscription criteria however the opportunity had been taken to review and clarify some of the wording. The revised wording was outlined in the Appendix and summarised as:

- Home address – clarification that it was the parents' responsibility to reach agreement on the preferences expressed in an application;
- Distance – the definition of how distance was calculated had been updated to reflect current practice; and
- Waiting lists with a number of points being clarified.

The opportunity had also been taken to amend admission numbers for two schools to reflect changes in accommodation. They were Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold and Broughton Primary School.

Applications for places were made using the Council's on line system and this was working well. Assistance was provided by Council staff for any parents experiencing difficulties completing or submitting the online form. 100% of applications were now received online however paper copies of application forms would continue to be made available upon request.

Councillor Thomas asked that it be reiterated to parents that free school transport was only available to the nearest school which the Chief Officer confirmed would happen. In response to a comment from Councillor Thomas on schools becoming full, the Chief Officer explained that the School Place Planning Team used a recognised model for the potential yield any new developments would bring. If a school was full, an alternative place would be offered and there was also the option to appeal.

Councillor Bithell commented on the importance of informing parents of the need to put down more than one preference on the application form, and explaining that by doing so it would not affect their first place application.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed admission arrangements for 2019/20 be approved.

150. COUNTY HALL DEMOLITION, RELOCATION AND MASTER PLANNING – BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced the County Hall Demolition, Relocation and Master Planning Business Case Development report.

The detailed report provided information on County Hall and Unity House, Ewloe, redevelopment of the remaining County Hall campus, Theatr Clwyd and workforce engagement. Full details of each element were outlined in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Bithell, the Chief Officer (Organisational Change) explained that it was the aim to have Unity House occupied by the end of the year. On the number of car parking spaces, work was underway on increasing the hardstanding area to increase the number of spaces. On the impact to the town of Mold, he explained that the administration core of the Council would remain in County Hall and Llewynegrin Hall would also remain.

The Chief Executive added that the sustainability of the Theatr was important to maintaining the vibrancy of the town. Llewynegrin Hall could be considered for multiple use and Theatr Clwyd was also considering more commercial activities. There could also be the opportunity for a shared public services building.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the use of the negotiated financial sum received upon expiry of the lease as part of the unconditional dilapidations payment be approved;
- (b) That the allocation of funding within the Council's Capital Programme for the demolition of phases 3 and 4 of County Hall when sufficient capital receipts become available be noted;
- (c) That approval be given to progress the appointment of a development partner for the redevelopment of the County Hall campus, with further reports being brought back to Cabinet as this process makes progress; and
- (d) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Organisational Change) and the Chief Officer (Governance) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to complete the appointment of a contractor, named in the confidential appendix, for the design and development and construction works at Theatr Clwyd in line with this report and subject to being satisfied that the specific actions required and identified in the report are satisfied prior to the completion of the appointment and the procurement process.

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 paragraphs 14 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

151. NEWYDD CATERING AND CLEANING REVIEW OF PROGRESS

Councillor Mullin introduced the NEWydd Catering and Cleaning Review of Progress report. The company was nearing the end of the first years trading and the report provided details on how the transition had developed, and the intended direction of the business into year 2.

Councillor Attridge proposed that NEWydd attend future Cabinet meetings when there is an item relating to them on the agenda, which was supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the NEWydd Business Plan for the financial year 2018/19 be approved;
- (b) That the progress of NEWydd in having a strong first year of trading be noted and welcomed; and
- (c) That NEWydd attend and present to future Cabinet meetings when the item is on the agenda.

152. AURA LEISURE AND LIBRARIES REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduce the Aura Leisure and Libraries Review of Progress report which provided a review of progress of the first part year of operation, a copy of the proposed Business Plan for April 2018 – March 2019, and an update from the Partnership Board meeting held between Flintshire County Council and Aura Leisure and Libraries on 22nd February 2018.

Councillor Attridge proposed that Aura Leisure and Libraries attend future Cabinet meetings when there is an item relating to them on the agenda, which was supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Aura Leisure and Libraries Business Plan for the year 2018/19 be approved and delegated authority be provided to the Chief Officer, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Education, that only if the financial projections cannot be achieved, to implement one or all of the three contingency projects detailed in the report;
- (b) That the release of revenue funding to Aura Leisure and Libraries for the year 2018/19 totalling £3.773m be approved; and

- (c) That Aura attend and present to future Cabinet meetings when the item is on the agenda.

153. REVISION OF THE CORPORATE OPERATING MODEL

The Chief Executive introduced the Revision of the Corporate Operating Model report which made recommendations for the following:

- Permanency of the arrangements for the management of the portfolio of the Chief Officer (People and Resources) and the deletion of the vacant post from the organisational structure;
- To start a recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent Chief Officer (Education and Youth);
- The redistribution of the responsibilities of the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) amongst the remaining Chief Officer Team and the deletion of that post from the structure;
- The transfer of some functions between the two existing Chief Officer (Organisational Change) posts to create a single position of Chief Officer (Strategic Programmes); and
- The re-designation of three of the remaining Chief Officer positions.

He thanked all the Chief Officers for their support in developing the proposals which saw opportunities being provided for individuals.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised Chief Officer Team structure as proposed by the Chief Executive be endorsed for implementation;
- (b) That the advice of the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service that this revised model will be sufficient for the management of the Council, its functions and its duties be noted and accepted as an assurance;
- (c) That the Council embark on the recruitment for the appointment of a permanent Chief Officer (Education and Youth) through the established recruitment process involving a Member Appointments Panel;
- (d) That the roles and delegations of the current post of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) be realigned according to the revised model;
- (e) That a single post of Chief Officer leading strategic and organisational change be created in the revised model;
- (f) That the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to make immediate adjustments to the supporting portfolio management structures beneath the Chief Officer positions, as is expedient to ensure service performance and continuity, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the respective Cabinet Members; and

- (g) That the above changes be reflected in an amended version of the Constitution as necessary.

154. 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 9.30 a.m. and ended at 12.02 p.m.)

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Chair