

CABINET
24TH APRIL 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24th April 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin, Ian Roberts and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Strategic Programmes), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Chris Bithell.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Patrick Heesom and David Wisinger.

160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

161. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

162. COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19

Councillor Mullin introduced the Council Plan 2018/19 report which explained that the Plan was being reviewed and refreshed to reflect the key priorities of the Council.

An all Member workshop had been arranged for 29th May 2018 when the draft Plan content would be shared along with key target areas for national measures. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had the formal role of reviewing the Plan, which would be undertaken with the benefit of the Member workshop.

The Chief Executive added that this was a report on process and a verbal update had been provided at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week. The Council Plan would then be presented to Cabinet and County

Council on 19th June for adoption which would meet the statutory deadline of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the continuation of the outline structure of the Council Plan 2018/19 be approved; and
- (b) That the process for engaging Members in the development of the Plan be approved.

163. FLINTSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD: WELL-BEING PLAN FOR FLINTSHIRE 2017/23

The Chief Executive introduced the Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB): Well-being Plan for Flintshire 2017/23 report which provided an overview of the work of the Board and the development of the Plan.

The Plan had been developed alongside the Council Plan and provided a strong alignment and 'fit' with the priorities. The Plan was being submitted to County Council later that day for adoption.

The PSB was made up of senior leaders from a number of public and voluntary organisations. All worked well together demonstrating creativity, willingness and accountability within a strong leadership framework

A recent Member workshop had been held where positive comments had been received.

RESOLVED:

That the Well-being Plan be endorsed as both a statutory partner and as the lead partner for co-ordinating the Plan prior to adoption by the County Council.

164. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY – FORECAST 2019/20

Councillor Shotton introduced the Medium Term Financial Strategy – Forecast 2019/20 report which provided the first detailed overview of the financial forecast for 2019/20.

The Chief Executive explained that the report had been submitted to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week where an early forecast of the budget for 2019/20 was welcomed and appreciated. A comment had been made on how proposals could affect groups of people when budget solutions for services were looked at. Given the budget process was starting early, this would enable any implications to be considered. He added that resources from Aggregate External Finance (AEF) and Council Tax were shown at the same level as 2018/19 at this stage for comparative planning purposes.

A report was being submitted to the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee later that week on the budget process and the potential options for reporting.

The Corporate Finance Manager highlighted the impacts on the budget forecast, which were detailed in full in the report. The areas were: use of reserves 'dropping out'; workforce costs; social care demands; school costs; and corporate/inflation. This resulted in a projected budget gap of £10.6m.

Councillor Attridge emphasised the importance of urgent meetings with Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) to highlight the pressures that the Council faced. He felt they needed to lead for the Council on the lobbying that would be required. Members supported the comments of Councillor Attridge, adding that whilst capital funding grants were welcomed, it would be easier for Councils to plan budgets if such money was available at the earliest opportunity. A comment was also made on additional burdens being placed on Councils that were unfunded, such as the Additional Needs Measure, which should be funded nationally.

The Chief Executive commented on the impact of the teacher pay award which was not included in the forecast as the sector view was it should be a nationally-funded cost pressure. He added that if Welsh Government (WG) supported a modest increase in AEF and the market led social care pressures and other selected cost pressures, the Council could be two thirds to closing the budget gap. On workforce, he said there was now limited resilience in many service areas. However, he was pleased to report that the Council had one of the lowest rates of sickness levels in Wales which was due in large part to staff dedication.

Councillor Shotton concluded that Members could take strength from the fact the budget process was starting earlier which provided the opportunity and time to work with all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the updated forecast be adopted as the basis for initial planning.

165. DRAFT WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY

Councillor Mullin introduced the Draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy report which presented the draft five year Strategy for Flintshire for approval prior to wider consultation.

The Strategy identified how the Council could work with partner agencies and others in the community such as Town and Community Councils and businesses.

The Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer explained that the Strategy had been presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week where it was supported and endorsed.

The Chief Executive commented on clarification that was sought at that meeting on the data in table 3 of the appendix and explained that the information was obtained

from census data. It was accepted that how the census questions had been structured would be reviewed. He added that the Welsh Language Commissioner had provided positive comments on the Council's Strategy with the Council being respected for what it had achieved.

Councillor Butler commented on the number of Welsh speakers in Flintshire being higher than many other authorities across Wales which was pleasing. In response to a comment from Councillor Thomas, The Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer explained that Council reception staff wore a badge to identify them if they were a Welsh speaker and dialogue in Welsh was encouraged.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy be approved for consultation;
- (b) That the consultation process and timetable be approved; and
- (c) That the final version of the plan be recommended for adoption in July 2018.

166. CHESHIRE FLINTSHIRE ACCESS ROAD STUDY

Councillor Thomas introduced the Cheshire/Flintshire Access Road Study report which highlighted that a number of road and rail schemes had been identified in the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) "Unlocking our true potential" prospectus. They were considered essential to unlock future development and drive growth in the MDA area.

Following dialogue between Welsh Government (WG), Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC), and Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC), it had shown that there was considerable interest in broadening the initial analysis of a potential future scheme to consider the options, implications and longer-term joint benefits of a revised alignment.

It was believed that an alternative route could provide greater opportunities to improve connectivity on both sides of the border and enable improved access to new and emerging development sites. These included Hawarden, Broughton and the existing retail park, Warren Hall as well as potential sites that may be considered beyond the current planning horizons. The potential alignment could also help reduce congestion on the Chester inner ring-road and at the A55/A483 Posthouse junction.

As local Members representing both wards in Broughton, Councillors Butler and Mullin welcomed the report which they felt had been needed for a number of years.

In response to a question from Councillor Shotton, the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Countryside) explained that Flintshire County Council was an equal contributor to the study and any final route options would be reported back to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the joint commission with Welsh Government, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington County Borough Council to engage a specialist partner to make recommendations on the preferred routing option for a potential new cross-boundary highway scheme be approved; and
- (b) That a further report detailing the outcome of the study once the work is completed be submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Attridge chaired the meeting from this point on

167. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18 (MONTH 11)

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 (Month 11) 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 next report on the Council's financial position to Cabinet would be on 17th July and would be the final outturn position following the closure of the 2017/18 accounts.

The projected year end position was:

Council Fund:

- Net in-year expenditure forecast an operating deficit of £0.109m;
- 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 £1.531 less than budget; and
- Projected Contingency Reserve balance as at 31st March of £8.353m although that reduced to £5.948m 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 10 and Month 11 budget; achievement of planned in-year efficiencies; winter maintenance; inflation; reserves and balances and requests for carry forward of funding.

On the Contingency Reserve, the Corporate Finance Manager explained that at the Council budget meeting on 20th February 2018 an amount of £0.900m was included within the projected level of prudent reserves for invest to save funding to help achieve future efficiencies. After taking into account the allocation of £0.550m for the Digital Strategy – Digital Customer project, it was recommended that the remaining £0.350m be ring-fenced also for that purpose.

A report to Cabinet on 26th September 2017 on the North Wales Economic Growth Deal Bid Progress recommended delegated authority to authorise an initial revenue contribution from 2017/18 expenditure for the detailed development of the Growth Deal Bid, up to a maximum of £0.050m. It was recommended that it be funded from the Contingency Reserve.

A recent incident resulting in hazardous waste substances having to be removed safely from a property in Flintshire highlighted the requirement for funding to meet any unforeseen emergency remediation and related support requirements. A contribution of £0.050m from the Contingency Reserve was recommended to be earmarked for that purpose.

Councillor Thomas commented on the adverse weather conditions continuing to put pressure on the winter maintenance budget however she was pleased to announce that a recent grant of £125,000 had been received from Welsh Government (WG).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31st March be noted;
- (b) That a transfer of £0.900m from the Contingency Reserve for invest to save projects, of which £0.550m had been allocated to fund the digital strategy be approved;
- (c) That a transfer of £0.050m from the Contingency Reserve to fund the contribution towards the detailed development of the Economic Growth Bid be approved;
- (d) That a transfer of £0.050m from the Contingency Reserve to a ring-fenced reserve to meet any unforeseen emergency remediation and support costs be approved;
- (e) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (f) That the carry forward requests included in Appendix 6 be approved.

168. ADOPTION OF 2018/19 BUSINESS RATES HIGH STREET RATE RELIEF SCHEME

Councillor Mullin introduced the Adoption of 2018/19 Business Rates High Street Rate Relief Scheme report which outlined the Welsh Government's (WG) scheme which was designed to provide high street retailers with temporary rate relief.

The Chief Officer (Strategic Programmes) explained that eligibility for the WG backed scheme was based on a two tier system, providing relief of up to £750 to retail high street businesses with rateable values between £12,001 and £50,000 that had seen increases in their business rate liability as a result of the 2017 national revaluation. It also provided relief of up to £250 for smaller retain high street businesses with rateable values of up to £12,000.

Members welcomed the scheme to reduce the impact of the 2017 revaluation for some businesses.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2018/19 Welsh Government grant scheme for High Street Rates Relief in line with provisions contained in section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 be adopted;
- (b) That the automatic awards, without application forms, to those qualifying businesses that can be easily identified through Business Rate records be approved; and
- (c) That awards to any remaining businesses that may be eligible following receipt of a valid application form be approved.

169. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

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

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council – Riverside Park and Stoneleigh Close, Garden City. Proposed Prohibition of Waiting at Any Time.**
To advise Members of an objection received following the advertisement of proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on Riverside Park and Stoneleigh Close, Garden City.
- **The Flintshire County Council – Alexandra Road and Victoria Road, Mold (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 13) Order 201.**
To advise Members of objections received following the advertisement of Alexandra Road and Victoria Road, Mold (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 13) 201.

- **The Flintshire County Council – Liverpool Road, Alltami Road, Higher Common Road, Buckley and Church Road, Buckley (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 7) Order 201.**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places Amendment No. 7 Order, which introduces No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on Liverpool Road, Alltami Road, Higher Common Road and Church Road, Buckley.

Organisational Change

- **Community Asset Transfer, Holywell Scout Group**

The transfer of Holywell Scout Headquarters including the land shown edged in red on the plan.

- **Land Fronting Ffordd Llanarth, Connah's Quay – Exclusivity Agreement**

The prospective purchaser intends to enter upon the land by way of Licence to carry out extensive intrusive site investigations and infrastructure surveys over a period of time. It has been agreed to enter into an Exclusivity Agreement with the prospective purchaser on order that the works can go ahead. *(This delegated report is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing the information until such time as the commercial arrangements have been finalised).*

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).

170. THE SALE OF INDUSTRIAL LAND AT WEIGHBRIDGE ROAD, DEESIDE

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) introduced the Sale of Industrial Land at Weighbridge Road, Deeside report which provided details of the site and the capital receipt anticipated from the site disposal.

In response to a question from Councillor Attridge, the Chief Officer (Governance) explained that planning application matters should not be discussed by the Cabinet; they would be discussed in due course by the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the sale of approximately 15.48 acres of land shown edged and hatched black on the plan be approved.

171. 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 10.45 a.m.)

.....
Chair