

CABINET
24TH SEPTEMBER 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24th September 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Dave Hughes, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Derek Butler.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Patrick Heesom.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

52. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

53. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND CORE SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Councillor Roberts introduced the report which provided the background to proposed capital investment schemes at Ysgol Brynford and Ysgol Croes Atti (Shotton site).

The report demonstrated how the Council was fulfilling its commitments to continually improve the sustainability of primary education in the County, and underpinned the commitment to Welsh medium education and also to rural schools.

Support was sought to bring together a number of key funding streams for Ysgol Croes Atti, as well as making an early commitment within the capital programme in order to maximise the much needed investment in the school. It would improve the learning environment both indoors and outside to ensure it was fit for the delivery of the new curriculum for Wales and provide the much needed wrap around care that parents needed.

Whilst the school building was structurally sound, further modifications were needed. They would help to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils to consolidate the existing childcare and early education provision and improve the outdoor spaces in particular, which were not fit for the purposes of a modern day curriculum or the wellbeing of learners.

The report outlined the funding received through the Childcare Capital Grant and the recycling of 21st Century Schools funding in light of Welsh Medium Capital funding to Ysgol Glanrafon. In order to maximise the funding and meet expenditure deadlines, it was proposed to bring forward the Council's financial contribution in the capital programme to enable the project to move forward at pace and achieve best value.

Regarding Ysgol Brynford, Cabinet resolved not to amalgamate Brynford and Lixwm schools last year and it was noted that Ysgol Brynford needed investment of approximately £1.3m to address some significant shortfalls in its accommodation. The school continued to thrive, was over-subscribed and delivered a quality learning experience but it was extremely challenging in the cramped conditions.

The school had been a beneficiary of the Welsh Government Childcare Grant of £500k, leaving a shortfall of £800k to complete the necessary works. With an expenditure deadline of 2021 to spend the Childcare Grant, it would again be expedient for the Council to bring forward its commitment made in the 21st Century Schools programme to deliver the much needed remodelling in one project and achieve best value.

Members thanked all officers involved in the work on the projects and welcomed the proposals.

The Chief Executive added that they were both critical projects to which significant funding was attached through the 21st Century Schools programme, Band B. Both he and the Corporate Finance Manager were comfortable with the proposals and the funding had been factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and approval be given to the projects at Ysgol Brynford and Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton to be included in the Capital Programme with costs apportioned over 2019/20 and 2020/21 funded by prudential borrowing and Welsh Government grant. The associated revenue costs will be built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2020/21 onwards.

54. OUTCOME OF ESTYN INSPECTION

Councillor Roberts introduced the report which provided an overview of the full inspection by Estyn that had been undertaken in June 2019, with the report being published on the Estyn website on 9th August.

He was delighted to present the report which celebrated the positive inspection of the Council's education services in Flintshire. It was a comprehensive review with a team of 12 inspectors interviewing senior managers, front line officers, headteachers and wider stakeholders.

Estyn found that, overall, pupils in local schools, including those entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs, made sound progress during their time in statutory education. Primary education in the County was particularly strong with the proportion of primary schools achieving excellent judgements for standards well above the Wales average. The effective working relationship between the Council and GwE was highlighted as a strength with appropriate support for schools leading to improvements in standards achieved by pupils.

The performance of vulnerable groups had improved over the last three years with the number of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, training or employment remaining low and provision for learners Educated Other than at School identified as good.

The report highlighted that most pupil's wellbeing was good across all phases of education and noted that the Council had strategies to improve their mental and emotional health in schools. The leadership and management of education services in Flintshire was noted as a strength with senior officers and elected Members sharing a clear vision for educational provision which was well reflected in corporate strategies.

A small number of recommendations were made in the report for ongoing improvement with which the Council agreed, and had already been identified in business plans by the Portfolio Team. They included continuing to improve the standards achieved by learners by the end of Key Stage 4, improving pupil attendance levels, and reducing the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. The report also recommended that the Council work with schools to keep deficit budgets under control.

All Members thanked everybody involved and welcomed the positive Estyn report, noting that the Council had also been asked to write up a case study on its particularly effective practices in supporting the early language development of children, which would be published on the Estyn website to positively impact the work of other local authorities.

RESOLVED:

That the Estyn report on education services in Flintshire be received and the findings acknowledged.

55. FLINTSHIRE FOOD ENTERPRISE AND THE FOOD POVERTY RESPONSE

Councillor Hughes introduced the report and business model for the new social enterprise business.

Food poverty was defined as 'people not having access to good fresh food by choice', and referred to the definition 'if you feed people well, they are more likely to get out of their crisis'. It was known that for every £1 spent on processed food, 37p was added for diet related diseases that required treatment later on.

The County Council and partners, Clwyd Alyn Housing and Can Cook previously decided to provide support to those who were most vulnerable and who did not have access to good fresh food. During the course of the Holiday Hungers campaign positive publicity was generated and over 17,000 meal were delivered to children in communities in the County who otherwise might have gone in need during that holiday period. Due to the success of the 2018 campaign, it was repeated and the response had been much bigger in 2019.

Since then the Council and its partners had been exploring a number of options which would see progress maintained through the development of a longer term and sustainable solution to food poverty.

The business model, which was attached as a confidential appendix, was for a new social enterprise business with the three partners having equal rights for the management and delivery of the operation. Food would be prepared in Flintshire through a number of hub locations with a main food preparation hub in the Shotton area.

The primary aim would be to reach and develop sustainable models for people to access good affordable fresh food, particularly linking in with work the Council did and services provided, such as:

- Domiciliary care and linking food provision with care services;
- Developing a transition programme from food aid to food purchase for vulnerable groups, i.e. homeless families;
- To link in with services which support residents and embed support around food provision within those services; and
- To use food provision as a catalyst to begin to tackle loneliness and isolation

Members welcomed the report and said it aligned to the Council Plan and being a Caring Council.

The Chief Executive thanked all of the officers involved in the project which would help to deal with social issues; the Council was keen to progress the project as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal be endorsed and supported for a new Social Enterprise model which will make a significant contribution to reducing food poverty in the Council; and

- (b) That delegated authority be provided to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, to approve the business plan, contracts and legal documents.

56. WASTE STRATEGY REVIEW CONSULTATION

Councillor Thomas introduced the report which proposed that the Council undertake a wide ranging public consultation exercise on the future provision of the waste and recycling service to better understand residents' expectations and behaviours, and set the future direction for the service provision.

In 2011 the Council introduced a Managed Weekly Collection service (MWC) which changed waste collections in the County from a weekly black sack and back door service, to weekly recycling and food waste collections, with fortnightly collections of non-recyclable waste. The change significantly improved the Council's recycling performance and due to the engagement and efforts of residents, the Council continued to perform well, with the recycling performance for 2018/19 confirmed at 69.16%. That was already above the 2019/20 target of 64% with the next significant target being 70% in 2025.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) said that the current recycling performance needed to be celebrated, but without operational and policy change, it was likely that performance would now stabilise and any future improvements in performance would become difficult to achieve. Whilst the current waste strategy did not come to an end until 2025, the target set within the document of 70% had been almost achieved and it was important that the Council started to plan for the future, considering what more could be done to increase recycling rates in the future and reduce residual waste.

The consultation would consider a number of aspects, including:

- Informing service users on current success;
- Informing service users on what happened to collected recyclable items;
- Explaining the need for a review to be undertaken;
- Gaining information on current recycling behaviours; and
- Consideration for future service change options that would maximise recycling potential.

In response to a question from Councillor Banks, the Chief Officer explained that the questionnaires would be available online for completion but a paper copy could be completed upon request. A number of community drop in events had been organised and feedback from those would be received.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet notes the current recycling performance and expresses thanks to the residents and employees for their performance; and

- (b) That Cabinet approves the commencement of a public consultation exercise on the Council's Waste Strategy and the future direction of the waste and recycling services and encourages residents to engage with the survey.

57. YEAR-END COUNCIL PLAN MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

The Chief Executive introduced the report which presented the monitoring of progress in the Council Plan at the end of 2018/19.

The monitoring report for the 2018/19 Council Plan was a positive report. It showed 92% of activities being assessed as having made good progress, and 89% on track to achieve the desired outcome.

Performance indicators showed good progress with 70% on target, 20% were being monitored and 10% off track. Risks were also being successfully managed with the majority being assessed as moderate (64%), minor (14%) or insignificant (11%).

The report had been submitted to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would form the basis of the statutory report to County Council in October.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the levels of progress, performance and risk in the Year-end Council Plan 2018/19 monitoring report be noted and endorsed; and
- (b) That Cabinet be assured by plans and actions to manage the delivery of the 2019/20 Council Plan.

58. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2019/20 (MONTH 4)

Councillor Banks introduced the report which provided the first detailed revenue budget monitoring position for 2019/20 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account for the new financial year and presented the position, based on actual income and expenditure, as at Month 4. The report projected how the budget would stand at the close of the financial year if all things remained unchanged.

The projected year end position, without new actions to reduce cost pressures and/or improve the financial return on efficiency planning and cost control was:

Council Fund

- An operating deficit of £2.983m – a reduction of £0.118m from the deficit figure of £3.101m – reported in the Interim Revenue Budget Monitoring report in July 2019; and
- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31st March 2020 of £1.886m.

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in-year revenue expenditure forecast to be £0.081m higher than budget; and
- A projected closing balance as at 31st March 2020 of £1.242m.

Both the Council and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) continued to campaign and lobby Welsh Government (WG) for specific additional national funding for high demand –high cost services. The increasing demands of Out of County/Children’s Services care continued to provide significant challenges.

The Corporate Finance Manager provided details of the major variances; tracking of in-year risks and emerging issues; achievement of planned in-year efficiencies; other in-year issues; MTFS impact and risks; reserves and balances; and earmarked reserves.

The Chief Executive added that this was the first year to see such large overspends and work was being undertaken with portfolios to determine if non-essential expenditure could be halted in year, but he emphasised that this would be a one off. The impact on the following year would be significant. On Out of County Placements, the situation was unpredictable and there was a further call from WG to meet the budget requirement for the Council. He appealed to WG that any in-year underspends should be targeted to Out of County Placements across Wales.

The report had been submitted to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, alongside two exception reports on the overspend in Out of County Placements and Streetscene and Transportation and Councillor Banks thanked the Committee for receiving the information with realism.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report and the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31st March 2020 be noted;
- (b) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (c) That a budget virement within Social Services to realign the budget to meet current service needs be agreed.

59. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2019/20 (MONTH 4)

Councillor Banks introduced the report which summarised changes made to the Capital Programme 2019/20 since it was set in February 2019 to the end of Month 4 (July 2019), along with expenditure to date and projected outturn.

The Capital Programme had seen a net increase of £27.844m during the period which comprised of:

- Net increases in the programme of £15.914m (Council Fund (CF) £15.390m, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £0.524m); and
- Introduction of Carry Forward from 2018/19 of £11.930m (CF £11.930m, HRA £0.000m).

Actual expenditure was £15.106m.

The Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19 final outturn position, for the 3 year budget set in February 2018 ending in 2020/21, reflected a deficit of £1.187m.

The combined current deficit position of the Capital Programme, for the 3 year budget set in February 2019 ending in 2021/22 was £1.230m. That was in advance of any additional capital receipts or other funding being generated in year.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall report be approved;
- (b) That the carry forward adjustments in paragraph 1.16 be approved; and
- (c) That the funding of schemes from the current 'headroom', re-profiling of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) budget be approved, and if required, funding for flooding impact on the Highway Network.

60. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Councillor Banks introduced the report which presented the draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19 for recommendation for approval to Council.

As required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Annual Report was reviewed by Audit Committee on 10th July 2019 and would be presented to Council on 22nd October 2019 subject to Cabinet recommendation for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19 and the Draft Mid-Year Report 2018/19 be approved and recommended to Council.

61. BUS LANES IN FLINTSHIRE – LIMITATIONS ON USE

Councillor Thomas introduced the report which confirmed which vehicle types would be permitted to use the new bus lanes on the B5129 between Queensferry and Shotton, and the enforcement arrangements which would be put in place to manage the usage of the new infrastructure.

The Council was delivering various bus priority measures as part of its Integrated Transport Strategy, which supported the Welsh Government (WG) aspirations for a regional 'North East Wales Metro', promoting a sustainable transport solution, which would successfully integrate all modes of transport, whilst maintaining

and promoting a sustainable, affordable and environmentally friendly public transport service, with links to all of Flintshire and the wider region.

The work also aligned with the high level interventions contained within the WG approved *North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan 2015-2020*, which included:

- Encouraging sustainable travel;
- Improved links to employment and access to services;
- Public transport infrastructure improvements; and
- Quality partnerships on key bus route corridors.

As part of the work, Cabinet approved the construction of dedicated bus lanes, with work on the scheme commencing in January 2020.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) added that the Council required specific approval from WG to enable the legal powers to enforce on the dedicated bus infrastructure, including the use of the bus lanes by non-authorized vehicles. The Council had formally applied to WG to obtain the necessary authority to carry out such enforcement.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the limitations on vehicles authorised to utilise the proposed bus lanes on the B5129 be approved; and
- (b) That the enforcement arrangements on all other bus lanes and bus priority measures at key locations across the corridor be approved.

62. ALL WALES CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME – REPLACEMENT OF TRAVEL CARDS (BUS PASSES)

Councillor Thomas introduced the report which provided an update on the process and timelines for the Concessionary Travel Card replacement project.

Transport for Wales (TfW) had been consulting with all national stakeholders and local partners on their intention to re-issue around 750,000 Concessionary Travel Cards across Wales by the end of December 2019.

The new style cards had been issued to all new applicants since June 2019, with the full roll out of replacement cards being recently commenced. Following problems with the volume of traffic on the TfW website, their website capacity had been increased and would be available for use the following week. Paper applications could be completed by residents visiting a Connects Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the process to re-issue Concessionary Travel Cards to all eligible residents of Flintshire be noted.

63. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

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

Housing and Assets

- **Aster Hope Domestic Abuse Floating Support**

This five year contract ran until August 2018 where a year extension was approved to run up to August 2019. This variation is to extend the contract further by 7 months and possibly up to 19 months (in total) if required. Supporting People asked for the original 1 year extension (31/08/18 – 31/09/19) before it was decided to do a Floating Support Consortium tender. This contract fits into the Floating Support Consortium so Supporting People are requesting to bring it in line with all other extensions agreed.

Planning, Environment and Economy

- **Annual Increase in Food Safety and Standards Fees and Charges**

Increase in fees for food hygiene re-rating inspections and also for ship sanitation inspections.

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

64. FLINTSHIRE FOOD ENTERPRISE AND THE FOOD POVERTY RESPONSE (CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX TO AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 6)

Noted.

RESOLVED:

That the appendix be noted.

65. ALIGNING RED BOOK 'CRAFT' PAY TO THE COUNCIL'S PAY MODEL

Councillor Mullin introduced the report which provided an overview of the impact of implementing the second year (2019) of the two year National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement (2018/19 – 2019/20) using the national model.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in reviewing the Pay Model to incorporate the requirements of the 2nd year of the National Pay Award be noted and welcomed; and

- (b) That the Chief Executive be invited to conclude negotiations with the Trade Unions and agree and implement a revised pay model using his delegated powers provided that the new pay model meets the tests as set out in the report, including a positive Equality Impact Assessment.

66. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 12.15 p.m.).

.....
Chair