

CABINET
10 JULY, 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 10 July 2012

PRESENT: Councillor J.B. Attridge (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: R.C. Bithell, H. Brown, C.M. Jones, R.K. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, W. Mullin and A.P. Shotton who arrived part way through the meeting

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: V. Gay, R.G. Hampson and P.G. Heesom

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of Assets and Transportation and Committee Officer

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R.P. Macfarlane declared a personal interest in minute number 30 because his home was in the Deeside Renewal Area.

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June, 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

23. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Cabinet Member for Environment advised that there would be a change to the order of business and that agenda item numbers 5 to 12 would be considered before agenda item number 4.

24. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management presented the draft Diversity and Equality Policy for approval which had been updated in line with guidance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission and incorporated changes in equality legislation brought in by the Equality Act 2010. The draft policy would be subject to wider consultation with stakeholders, members of the public and employees and trade unions. Following the consultation exercise, a revised draft would be presented to Cabinet for approval before publication.

The Chief Executive explained that the policy identified responsibilities of contractors and organisations that tender for and provide goods, works and services and facilities on behalf of the Council and the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Diversity and Equality Policy be endorsed for consultation.

25. PEOPLE STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management presented a progress report as at 30 May, 2012 on the delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan for 2009 – 2012.

The Strategy had been structured under five key themes that corresponded with the big strategic objectives for the Council and the associated challenges and priorities. The key themes had been branded as the '5 Cs' and were Customer, Change, Collaboration, Consolidation and Capacity.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided further details on the statement of the projects and actions outlined within the People Strategy Action Plan. A decision had been taken to delay all of the actions associated with the Organisation Design Change Programme to allow sufficient capacity to focus on delivering Single Status.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report of the current People Strategy Action Plan for 2009 – 2012 be noted.

Note: - The Leader of the Council chaired the remainder of the meeting.

26. ICT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management presented an update on progress with the implementation of the Corporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy. The Chief Executive reported that since the last strategy update report in November, 2011 on-going progress had been made in its implementation. Highlights included:-

- progression to a 3 star website in the UK wide Better Connected study;
- a joint contract with the other 5 North Wales Councils for the supply of laptop and desktop computers saving £600,000; and
- P2P system had been fully implemented across all Corporate Services for all purchase orders.

The current ICT Strategy was a 4 year Strategy from 2009 to 2013 and this year a full refresh of the Strategy would be undertaken. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be involved in the process with progress reports and final endorsement of the new Strategy by Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in the implementation of the Councils ICT Strategy be noted; and
- (b) That the proposals of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take a lead role in the planned review of the Strategy and in agreeing an action plan in response to the Wales Audit office proposals for improvement arising from their recent review of the service be supported.

27. LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced a report advising Members that Flintshire County Council was now the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) with the role of overseeing the management of flood risk from local sources, under the Flood and Risk Management Act. He sought approval to proceed with public consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), related Environmental Report and Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

There was discussion around the possible financial challenges facing the Council in taking responsibility for managing the risks of flooding from surface water runoff and it was acknowledged that in practice most Local Authorities had taken the lead in dealing with surface water flooding incidents prior to the changes contained within the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to finalise the draft Environmental Assessment and Flood Risk Management Strategy and issue out for public consultation between August and October 2012; and
- (b) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet following the public consultation process.

28. MENTAL HEALTH MEASURE

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced a report which gave an overview of the statutory requirements within the Mental Health Measure for Wales. The report also sought agreement, with partners, of a scheme for the provision of Local Primary Mental Health Support Services (LPMHSS) in North Wales, as required under Part 1 of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.

The Leader of the Council commented on the current difficulty in estimating resource implications and said that Flintshire County Council may need to make representations for additional resources from the Welsh Government (WG) in partnership with the Health Board.

RESOLVED:

That the scheme, as set out within the report, be approved.

29. FLINT MAISONNETTES

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced a report to seek approval to commence demolition of Flint maisonettes as a key component of the delivery of the Flint Masterplan.

The repairs team were recycling all fittings that could be re-used and the next phase in the process was to tender for demolition of the vacant blocks. The next phase of the housing component of the Masterplan was to finalise early proposals for replacement housing, both the numbers of homes, tenure mix and design style ready for consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure welcomed the report and the expressed view from the consultation events that new homes should reflect the old street patterns of terraced homes as far as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a budgetary provision of £250,000 be made available from the Housing Revenue Account surplus in 2011/12 to enable demolition;
- (b) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Housing to demolish vacant blocks of maisonettes and garages, subject to budgetary provision being made available on an annual basis; and
- (c) That delegated authority be granted for Right to Buy maisonettes to be repurchased following independent valuation to allow the demolition of blocks to proceed, subject to provision being made in the Council Fund (Community Services) Capital Programme.

30. PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced a report which sought support for a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy, which had been prepared with the support of the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It included proposals to introduce equity loans and also repayment loans at an interest rate of 4% for the first year.

During the discussion on the report:-

- the Members of the Housing Renewal Task and Finish Group were thanked for their involvement; and

- it was suggested and agreed that an action group could be developed to identify empty properties above shops and encourage the property owners to develop them to accommodate young people.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy, including the proposals to introduce equity loans and repayment loans at an interest rate of 4% for the first year be supported.

31. ESTYN ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced a report which detailed the progress made with implementation of the Action Plan following the 2011 Estyn Inspection of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People (LAESCYP).

Progress with implementation of the action plan would be monitored by an Estyn team in early 2013.

The Leader of the Council said that the new Administration was committed to dealing with the concerns raised as part of the Estyn Inspection in October, 2011. He also reported that a special Cabinet meeting would be held on 17 July, 2012 on the rise of County Council to select preferred options for further consultations in each of the three designated areas of Holywell, Connah's Quay/ Queensferry and Buckley/Mynydd Isa/Mold as part of the Secondary Schools area reviews.

RESOLVED:

That the progress with implementation of the Estyn Action Plan be noted.

32. 2011/12 PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND 2012/13 PRIORITIES

The Chief Executive introduced a report which:-

- explained that under the Local Government Measure Councils were required to set their Improvement 'Objectives' or priorities annually at the earliest convenient point in the financial year;
- set out that the second year's performance (2011/12) of the Outcome Agreement had been completed and a self assessment of performance against the actions and measures had been undertaken; and
- sought Member endorsement to the approach taken in setting the Improvement Priorities for 2012/13 and the re-audit of the correct priorities for on-going review.

The Leader of the Council said that the priorities of the new Council would be in line with the social, economic and financial challenges ahead. He commented on the Comprehensive Spending Review, the outcome of which was not known at this time and the need to improve inward investment

through the Deeside Enterprise Zone to assist in the creation of jobs and apprenticeships for young people.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made against the Outcome Agreement for 2011/12 be noted;
- (b) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet following the evaluation of the Outcome Agreement for 2011/12 by the Welsh Government;
- (c) That the progress made in achieving the priorities of the Improvement Plan in 2011/12 be noted;
- (d) That the approach to setting the Improvement Plan for 2012/13 be endorsed; and
- (e) That the current priorities for on-going review be re-adopted.

33. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 (OUTTURN)

The Head of Finance introduced the Capital Programme Outturn information for 2011/12. This report had been submitted to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 July, 2012.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure thanked the Head of Finance for the way in which the information had been presented to Members which he said was much clearer to understand.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved.

34. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 (MONTH 2)

The Head of Finance introduced an update on revenue budget monitoring for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

At such an early stage in the financial year, projecting the outturn position on a number of budgets was challenging, particularly when they were demand led. Detailed within the report were some of the potential risks/financial pressures that had been identified to date that may affect the financial position. A detailed report on the projected outturn for the Council Fund and HRA as at the end of the first quarter (Month 3) would be presented to Cabinet in Month 3.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

35. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2011/12 (OUTTURN)

The Head of Finance presented a report to inform Members of the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account Outturn for 2011/12 (subject to Audit) and the impact on the respective level of reserves as at 31 March, 2012. The figures had been included in the Draft Statement of Accounts 2011/12 which would be reported to Audit Committee on 17 July, 2012.

The significant in-year variances at final outturn were detailed in the appendices to the report. The net General Fund underspend of £2.835M was made up of £1.287M underspend on services, increased by a £1.548M underspend from Central and Corporate Finance.

Appendix 7 to the report detailed the movements during 2011/12 on unearmarked reserves and the level of contingency sum available. As a result of those movements the final projected Contingency Reserve at 31 March, 2012 was £0.992M. This took into account the ringfencing of £1.500M to support Organisational Change costs approved at the Cabinet meeting held on 12 June, 2012 and the use of £0.973M approved in the 2012/13 budget.

The final outturn for 2011/12 on the HRA was an underspend of £0.737M and showed a final closing balance of £1.857M which at 7.35% of the total expenditure satisfied the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the Council Fund Contingency Sum, as at 31 March, 2012 detailed in Section 5 of the report be noted; and
- (c) That the final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account, detailed in Section 6.03 of the report, be noted.

35. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS – ACTUALS 2011/12

The Head of Finance presented the 2011/12 (actual) prudential indicator figures, as required under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

While the authorised limit for external debt for 2011/12 had not been breached, it had been necessary for the Head of Finance to use the delegated authority to effect movements between the separately identified limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities during the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved.

36. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2011/12

The Head of Finance presented the draft Annual Treasury Management Report for 2011/12. It provided a review of the treasury management function in 2011/12 which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee on 25 June, 2012. Currently the Council had received around £2M of the £3.7M invested in Landsbanki and it had been indicated that there would be a 100% return subject to future exchange rate fluctuations.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Treasury Management Annual Report for 2011/12 be approved and recommended to Council.

37. COUNCIL TAX GRANTS FOR PENSIONERS

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management introduced information and recommendations on the continuation of a Welsh Government (WG) Grant Scheme in 2012-13 that would enable the Council to operate a local scheme to provide financial assistance to pensioners to pay their Council Tax.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Head of Finance for taking the necessary action to secure the grant funding to enable the Council to operate such a scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the Pensioner Grant Scheme in 2012-13, as detailed in the report be adopted.

38. CHILDREN'S SERVICES INSPECTION

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced the outcome of the inspection in March 2012 of Children's Assessment and Care Management within Flintshire County Council's Social Services for Children.

The inspection had scrutinised a random selection of case files, undertaken interviews with children, young people and their families and carers together with a range of professional workers. The findings had been positive as detailed in the summary of the report.

The report was welcomed and the following were thanked for their efforts:-

- Councillor C.A. Ellis, the previous Executive Member for Social Services;
- the Head of Children's Services for the improvements that continued to be made within the Service; and

- the Senior Management Team who had been recognised within the report as providing an excellent Service for vulnerable people and who were committed to supporting and safeguarding children and young people.

The Head of Children's Services commented that a further review of the Council's assessment and future provision for fostering was due to be carried out in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services said that there was a need for Members to take responsibility as corporate parents and asked that all Members be encouraged to attend training events.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the inspections be accepted and the action plan, as detailed in the appendices to the report, be approved.

39. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE – MID YEAR REVIEW

The Chief Executive introduced a mid year overview on progress of the Strategic Partnership and priorities for each of the Strategic Partnerships together with the key milestones for the year ahead.

The Leader of the Council said that the priorities of the new Council around apprentice schemes would fit in well with the Local Service Board opportunities to assist in creating quality jobs in Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the mid year review of the Strategic Partnerships be noted; and
- (b) That the key priorities and work programmes to achieve them be supported.

40. FOOD SERVICE PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling introduced the Food Service Plan for Flintshire County Council, which detailed the service delivery programme for the period 1 April, 2012 to 31 March, 2013. The Plan also included a review of the Service Plan 2011 and therefore could not be finalised until all the statistical data and all other information had been compiled and reviewed for the previous year.

He also commented that it was anticipated that the number of businesses requesting a Rescore Visit under food hygiene legislation would increase over 2012/13 prior to new legislation being introduced which would introduce the Local Authority being able to charge the food business for Rescore Visits.

RESOLVED:

That the Food Service Plan 2012/2013 be approved.

41. NEW LEGISLATION CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF THE SUPPLY OF SINGLE USE CARRIER BAGS BY SELLERS OF GOODS IN FLINTSHIRE

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling introduced a report to inform Members of The Climate Change Act 2008, The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Wales Regulations 2010 and the additional powers of civil sanction granted to the Authority by the legislation. The report also sought approval for delegated powers to be granted to the Director of Environment to appoint and authorise officers of the Trading Standards Service to enforce the new legislation in Flintshire.

It was noted that there was no provision within the legislation to require retailers to donate the profit to any good cause though this had been strongly encouraged by the Welsh Ministers and there was support for the encouragement of larger national companies donating the profit to good causes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the provisions of The Climate Change Act 2008 and The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Wales) Regulations 2010 be noted;
- (b) That the additional powers of civil sanction granted to Flintshire County Council by the legislation be noted; and
- (c) That delegated powers be granted to the Director of Environment to appoint and authorise officers of the Trading Standards Service to enforce the new legislation in Flintshire.

42. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information report on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted.

The actions taken were as set out below:-

Finance	Write off for May, 2012. Carry forward requests arising from Month 11 Budget Monitoring 2011/12 to be incorporated into the 2011/12 final accounts process.
Community Services	Restructure of Housing Asset Management following advice from the JEQ Unit.

Environment Amendment to the charge to reopen an 8ft grave, bereavement service. 10% increase from £295 to £325.

Lifelong Learning Museum accreditation – collections management framework 2012/15. The framework replaces the previous Collection Management Plan and is required for Museum accreditation.

Museum accreditation – approval of the Flintshire Museums Services forward plan 2012/15.

43. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 and 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

44. DISPOSAL OF A 2 ACRE SECTION OF THE SITE OF THE FORMER BELMONT SPECIAL SCHOOL, BUCKLEY TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE

The Cabinet for Environment introduced a report to seek approval to a reduction in the purchase price of the site from that approved by the Land Disposal Panel in October, 2008 and ratified by the Executive in November, 2008.

RESOLVED:

That the revised purchase price of £550,000 for the Freehold interest in the site, subject to a 60% overage be approved.

45. THE DISPOSAL OF PLOTS 1 & 3 GLOBE WAY, BUCKLEY AND THE UNADOPTED SECTION OF GLOBE WAY AND ASSOCIATED LAND STRIP

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced a report to seek approval for the disposal of Plots 1 and 3, Globe Way, Buckley and for the disposal of the unadopted section of Globe Way and associated landscape strip, shown in the appendices to the report.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to the disposal of Plots 1 and 3, Globe Way, on the basis of the proposed approach outlined in the report.

46. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 11.37 a.m.

47. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were two members of the press and two members of the public in attendance.

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Chairman

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT

MEETING: CABINET	DATE: 10 JULY 2012
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillor R.P. Macfarlane	Private Sector Renewal Policy	30.