

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 DECEMBER 2024

Minutes of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 12 December 2024

PRESENT: **Councillor Bill Crease (Chair)**
Councillors: Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan,
Gladys Healey, Ian Hodge, Alasdair Ibbotson, Gina Maddison,
Billy Mullin, Vicky Perfect and Jason Shallcross
Substitute: Rob Davies (for Ant Turton)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Helen Brown (Cabinet Member for Housing &
Communities), Dave Hughes (Leader of the Council), Christine
Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services
and Wellbeing), Sam Swash and Andrew Parkhurst attended
as observers

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Linda Thew and Linda Thomas (Cabinet Member
for Corporate Services)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Richard Jones (Cabinet Member for Transformation
and Assets), Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for
Finance and Social Value), Glyn Banks (Cabinet Member for
Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Executive, Chief Officer
(Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Strategic Finance
Manager, Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets
and Democratic Services Manager

Corporate Manager - People and Organisational Development
(minutes 67-80)

Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration (minute 75)

Transformation Officer (minute 80)

Strategic Executive Officer and Strategic Finance Manager
(minute 81)

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services
Officer

67. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor Bill Crease as Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year be noted.

68. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR ([Link to recording](#))

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Jason Shallcross be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

69. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)** ([Link to recording](#))

None.

70. **MINUTES** ([Link to recording](#))

RESOLVED:

That the [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 be approved as a correct record.

71. **ACTION TRACKING** ([Link to recording](#))

The Democratic Services Manager presented a [report \(agenda item 6\)](#) on progress with actions from previous meetings together with a verbal update. He agreed to pursue responses to Councillor Ibbotson's queries from the November meeting on costs for transferring leisure and library services and additional costs for street lighting.

On that basis, the recommendation was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress which has been made.

72. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** ([Link to recording](#))

The Democratic Services Manager presented a [report \(agenda item 7\)](#) on the Committee's current Forward Work Programme and advised that an item on the Local Area Energy Plan would be added for January 2025.

In agreement with the Chair, the report previously requested by Councillor Coggins Cogan on lessons learned from the fire at Synthite Ltd would be scheduled in the next Forward Work Programme.

Councillor Ibbotson asked that the longstanding item on the acquisition of land for Flintshire cemeteries be scheduled for a meeting. He also requested that the Police & Crime Commissioner be invited to attend at a future date to discuss the Independent Custody Visitor scheme for North Wales.

Subject to those changes, the recommendations were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved, as amended; and
- (b) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

73. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2025/26 ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Finance Manager presented a [report \(agenda item 8\)](#) to update the Committee on the Council's revenue budget position for the 2025/26 financial year. He summarised the key headlines from the Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement (LGPS) received the previous day, as work continued on the implications.

During the debate, concerns were raised about the low settlement for Flintshire and the approach being taken to make representations for fairer funding. Officers responded to a range of questions on issues such as projected recycling income, school delegated budgets and tackling the underlying causes of deprivation.

The Chair encouraged Members to submit detailed questions in advance where possible, so that a full response could be given.

The recommendation in the report was supported, noting that Councillor Ibbotson voted against the motion.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2025/26 report, the comments made by the Committee be referred to Cabinet when it considers the report.

74. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25 (MONTH 7) ([Link to recording](#))

The Strategic Finance Manager presented the [report \(agenda item 9\)](#) on the 2024/25 month 7 position for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Officers noted the point made by Councillor Coggins Cogan that reference to 'efficiencies' in reports should be changed to 'cuts' to reinforce the scale of the Council's financial position. Councillor Johnson suggested that this could be reflected in the glossary to the report.

The Democratic Services Manager agreed to refer Councillor Gladys Healey's concerns about fly tipping in rural areas to the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

On further questions, separate responses would be sought from Social Services on the red rated efficiency for NEWydd Cleaning contract in respect of the approximate total value of the contract, the focus of negotiations and the potential to identify an alternative provider. On the last point, it was noted that the same TUPE costs would apply to an alternative provider.

On that basis, the recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (month 7) report, the comments raised by the Committee be referred to Cabinet.

75. FLINTSHIRE AND WREXHAM INVESTMENT ZONE ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Executive and Service Manager for Enterprise and Regeneration presented a [report \(agenda item 10\)](#) on the development of the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, which was one of only two in Wales. The report detailed the process through the five Government 'Gateways' with the aim of having all approvals in place to commence in April 2025.

Members spoke in support of Councillor Claydon's suggestion for a workshop to help Members understand the implications.

Following some concerns raised during the debate, the three recommendations were put to the vote in turn and carried, noting Councillor Ibbotson's request that his vote against all three be recorded. A further recommendation in favour of the Member briefing was supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports the identified Tax Sites (Deeside Gateway, Warren Hall and Wrexham Industrial Estate) and Retained Rates Areas (Deeside Gateway and Wrexham Industrial Estate);
- (b) That the Committee supports the proposed Governance Model;
- (c) That the Committee supports the Investment Zone Themes (Innovation, Skills, and Transport) and the high-level interventions, which will be refined as part of Gateway 4; and
- (d) That a briefing on the Investment Zone be arranged for all Members.

There was a brief adjournment at this stage of the meeting.

76. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair indicated that there would be a slight change in the order of business to bring forward agenda item 12.

77. COMMUNITY AND RECREATION ASSETS AUDIT REPORT ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets presented a [report \(agenda item 12\)](#) on the findings of the Internal Audit report on the Management of Community and Recreation Assets.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee confirms that there are no comments/observations to be fed back to a future meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.

78. EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE MID-YEAR UPDATE ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Manager - People and Organisational Development presented a [report \(agenda item 11\)](#) comprising organisational workforce data and analysis for the 2024/25 mid-year position.

During discussion, the Corporate Manager provided clarification on monitoring arrangements for agency worker spend including reports to Cabinet.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the mid-year Workforce Information Report for 2024/25.

79. 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 meeting as the following items were considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraphs 15 and 14 respectively of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

80. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented a report to consider the criteria for including projects in the Strategic Transformation programme along with a number of additional projects to be recommended for acceptance.

Whilst Councillor Claydon noted that social value was embedded in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, she requested that the project summary of P6 include specific reference as a reminder of this commitment.

On Recommendation 1, it was clarified that the acceptance criteria shown in Table 2 for moving a project to 'live' in the STP was either 1 and 4, or 2 and 4, or 3 and 4. On that basis, this was supported.

The Chief Officer responded to the concerns raised by Members on some projects and gave assurance that any changes to service standards would be considered in detail by the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet.

After further debate, Councillor Coggins Cogan proposed an amendment to Recommendation 2 to support progression of projects P2, P10, P6 and P20 and that a clearly defined brief on P12 be brought back to the Committee. He was seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey and on being put to the vote, this was carried.

Councillor Ibbotson requested that his vote against recommendation 2 be recorded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee recommends that Cabinet accepts the criteria used to determine which Projects qualify for inclusion into the Strategic Transformation Programme (STP), subject to the clarification given; and
- (b) That the Committee recommends that Cabinet accept four projects (P2, P6, P10 and P20), each having now met the criteria, to be included in the STP and that a clearly defined brief on project P12 be brought back to this Committee.

81. CAMBRIAN AQUATICS

The Strategic Executive Officer and Strategic Finance Manager presented a report to update Members on the financial position with Cambrian Aquatics.

An amendment to the recommendation was unanimously supported to reflect concerns about the lifespan of the building.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the content of the report and the financial request made by Cambrian Aquatics, the Committee provides the following feedback for Cabinet to consider:

The Committee recommends that Cabinet considers and takes advice on whether a building condition survey should be undertaken on the building to establish value for money.

82. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 2pm)

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Chair

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