

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 MAY 2021

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Wednesday, 19 May 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Ron Davies, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson and Kevin Rush

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Sean Bibby (for Geoff Collett), Rob Davies (for Helen Brown) and Patrick Heesom (for Brian Lloyd)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor David Wisinger was present as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing); Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets), Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager - for minute number 56 and Managing Director of NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd - for minute number 58

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

54. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 were approved as a correct record, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Kevin Rush.

The minutes of 10 March 2021 were also approved as a correct record, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Mared Eastwood. On minute number 48, Councillor Patrick Heesom said that some communities were also affected by tenants of private rented accommodation failing to maintain their properties. His request for a future item on this would be actioned by the Facilitator.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

55. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the latest Forward Work Programme for consideration, including changes since the previous meeting. Meeting dates for the 2021/22 municipal year would be populated once the Schedule of Meetings had been agreed by Council. All actions arising from previous meetings had been completed.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Ron Davies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

56. COMMENCEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

The Strategic Policy Advisor introduced a report on the Council's preparations for the commencement of the socio-economic duty. This was a statutory requirement upon relevant public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager gave a joint presentation covering the following:

- What is the Socio-economic Duty and what does it do?
- Key terms
- Inequalities of outcomes
- Examples of poverty
- Demonstrating due regard - audit trail
- Meeting the duty - what we are doing
- Better outcomes
- Case study

The Benefits Manager welcomed the legislation in helping to support work on tackling poverty which was one of the priority areas in the Council Plan. The presentation highlighted the additional obligations required across the public sector in discharging the Duty which did not necessarily incur extra costs. Early consideration and consultation was key in ensuring that voices were heard and evidence gathered.

The Chairman thanked officers for the presentation and in response to a question was provided with information on the consultation process to collate and understand data to inform service delivery.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor Patrick Heesom expressed his concern that the Duty had not been prioritised by the Welsh Government for earlier implementation. His view was shared by Councillor Ron Davies who seconded the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee is assured of the Council's preparedness in meeting the new duty.

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

Exclusion of the press and public was moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Ron Davies.

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

58. NEWYDD CLEANING & CATERING

The Managing Director of NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd presented an update on the impact of the emergency situation on the Business Plan for NEWydd Cleaning & Catering Services.

In providing an overview of performance in 2020/21, the significant pressures arising from the national emergency situation were highlighted along with the development of new service delivery models to meet the needs of service users and ensure the safety of employees. An updated business plan was shared to support business recovery and rebuilding for future years.

The Chairman thanked the Managing Director for his detailed report.

Councillor Patrick Heesom said that the report reinforced the challenges arising from the emergency situation. In referring to the importance of maintaining supply of free school meals, his request that local Members be kept informed of any changes was noted by the Managing Director.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Patrick Heesom.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the changes made to the Business Plan and Strategic Objectives of the business which have been severely impacted by the pandemic; and
- (b) That the Committee notes the achievements of NEWydd during this most difficult year and supports the business through its recovery phase and onwards towards the plans for growth in future years.

59. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 11am and ended at 12 noon)

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Chairman