

CABINET
14TH DECEMBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 14th December 2021.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, and Billy Mullin.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, Strategic Performance Advisor, and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Ian Dunbar and Patrick Heesom.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Derek Butler.

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

79. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2021 were submitted and confirmed as a correct.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

80. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND ANNUAL BUDGET 2022/23

The Chief Executive introduced the report which provided an update on the additional budget requirement for 2022/23 in advance of receipt of the Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement and the formal budget setting process.

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that an additional budget requirement of £16.750m was reported to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. All cost pressures were considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September and October and all were supported with no recommended changes. At Cabinet in October, Members were advised of an updated additional budget requirement of £18m due to various changes, the most significant of which being the increase in Employer National Insurance contributions from 1st April 2022. Since then, further work had been undertaken on pay and inflation assumptions and notification had been received of

the draft budget increase from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The impact of those, and other adjustments to existing cost pressures, had increased the additional budget requirement to existing cost pressures and had increased the additional budget requirement to £20.696m as detailed in Table 1 in the report. Changes to additional budget requirements from Stage 1 in July were detailed in Table 2 in the report.

The report also advised that the revised minimum additional budget requirement for 2022/23 of £20.696m equated to an uplift in Welsh Government (WG) Grant of a minimum of 7%.

This was in line with other Councils across North Wales and a letter to WG had been sent by the six North Wales Council Leaders and Chief Executives in advance of the Provisional Settlement which was appended to the report. The Settlement was due to be received on 21st December 2021.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised additional budget requirement and changes to cost pressures be received and noted; and
- (b) That the solutions strategy and the required increase in Aggregate External Finance funding prior to the receipt of the Provisional Settlement be noted.

81. COUNCIL PLAN 2021/22 MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that it presented a summary of performance at the mid-year point.

The Chief Executive said that it showed that 70% of activities were making good progress with 73% likely to achieve their planned outcomes. 53% of the performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets, with 2% being closely monitored and 20% were currently not meeting target. The remaining 25% accounted for measures which were new and being monitored as a baseline year.

The Strategic Performance Advisor added that the report was an exception-based report and concentrated on under-performance against target.

Councillor Roberts wished to place on record thanks to all staff across the Council for the efforts made during the pandemic, adding that services would also continue to run throughout the Christmas period. The Chief Executive concurred with those comments and said the authority owed the staff an extreme debt of gratitude. All Members also paid tribute to all staff.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following be endorsed and supported:
 - The overall levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of activities within 2021/22 Council Plan

- The overall performance against 2021/22 Council Plan performance indicators
- (b) That Members be assured by plans and actions to manage the delivery of the 2021/22 Council Plan and by the explanations given for those areas identified where underperformance had been identified.

82. DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that it showed the key priorities of the Council for the five year term of the new administration. The Plan was subject to annual review.

The 2022/23 Draft Plan had been reviewed and refreshed for content following on from the response to the pandemic and the Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remained the same for 2021/22 however there were some developments with sub-priorities.

The 'super-structure' of the Plan continued to be aligned to a set of six Well-being Objectives. The six themes continued to take a long term view of recovery, ambition and work over the next two years. The outline of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions was appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the developed themes and priorities of the Council Plan 2022/23 Part 1 draft be agreed.

83. HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Councillor Hughes introduced the report which provided an annual update on progress towards meeting the priorities set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019/24.

The Housing Strategy had an action plan that set out three priorities with key areas for action within each priorities:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes.

Each of the priorities were detailed in the report, along with how those priorities would be addressed in the action plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Progress Action Plan October 2021 be noted.

84. ESTABLISHING THE CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE FOR NORTH WALES

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 gave Ministers the power to create a new type of regional body called a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). Ministers had mandated the creation of four CJsCs across Wales, with each having the same four functions: economic well-being; preparing a Strategic Development Plan; transport and improving education. The precise governance arrangements for each CJC were to be settled by the body itself.

The Chief Executive added that the CJC for North Wales was created on 1st April 2021 and its functions would come into force on 30th June 2022. It must set its outline budget for its first year of operation by the end of January 2022. It was therefore now necessary for the CJC to outline its governance arrangements. The economic well-being function encompassed the purpose for which the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) was created. The strategic planning and transport functions would influence the NWEAB's role as well and so it was important that the new body took account of, and dovetailed with, the existing regional governance structures. Proposals for the governance structure were appended to the report.

The Chief Officer (Governance) added that Snowdonia National Park Authority was an additional voting member of the CJC, but only on matters relating to the strategic planning function and its budget.

Councillor Johnson welcomed the report, particularly the Councils and the CJC having concurrent powers in relation to promoting economic well-being, and the wider duties which underpinned the proposals.

In response to a question from Councillor Bithell on there being a requirement for a host authority for strategic planning, and one for strategic transport, the Chief Executive explained that Flintshire currently worked strategically on transportation so the required skills were available if Flintshire was asked to be the host authority for strategic transport.

Councillor Banks also welcomed the report and asked if it would be a future topic for a Member workshop. The Chief Executive explained that this was an evolving piece of work and reports would be submitted on a regular basis to Overview and Scrutiny and to Cabinet.

The Chief Officer (Governance) added that the report was being considered by all six Councils and so was in a common format to ensure consistent presentation of the issues to each Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board be agreed in principle to be transferred by way of a delegation agreement to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on condition:

- a) that the statutory framework that the Welsh Government are developing allows for the delegation of the relevant executive functions to a Corporate Joint Committee
 - b) that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee agrees to the establishment of a Sub-Committee, with membership to be agreed with the Councils, to undertake the functions of the Economic Ambition Board
- (b) That the transition be agreed in order to achieve a streamlined governance model, avoiding duplication. A further detailed report on the framework for implementation will be presented to a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet.

85. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22 (MONTH 7)

Councillor Johnson introduced the report which provided the latest detailed revenue budget monitoring position in 2021/22 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account for the financial year and presented the position, based on actual income and expenditure, as at Month 7.

The report projected how the budget would stand at the close of the financial year, without new actions to reduce cost pressures and/or improve the financial return on efficiency planning and cost control was:

Council Fund

- An operating surplus of (£0.655m) (excluding the impact of the NJC pay award which would be met by reserves) which was a favourable movement of (£0.428m) from the surplus figure of (£0.227m) reported at Month 6
- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31st March 2022 of £6.543m

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in-year revenue expenditure forecast to be £0.539m higher than budget
- A projected closing balance as at 31st March 2022 of £3.933m

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that the report also detailed the position by portfolio; significant variances that month; achievement of planned in-year efficiencies; emergency funding, unearmarked reserves and earmarked reserves.

During 2021/22 to date, additional cost claims under the Hardship Fund for April to October had totalled £6.192m and Quarter 1 and 2 Income Loss claims were £1.096m, which included claims for Aura, Newydd and Cambrian Aquatics.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the estimated financial impact on the 2021/22 budget be noted; and
- (b) That a budget virement of £2.731 for Centralised Utility Costs from the Housing and Assets Portfolio to Central and Corporate Finance be approved.

87. FLINTSHIRE MICRO-CARE PROJECT

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that, like many local authorities, Flintshire faced pressures in meeting the increased demand for social care, with a growing older population and care agencies finding it difficult to recruit and retain employees. Delivering care into more rural parts of the County could be particularly problematic.

Following a feasibility study a pilot Micro-care enterprise had been established to innovatively tackle the problem of the supply of care and the authority had been successful in bidding for funding from both Cadwyn Clwyd and the Welsh Government (WG) to support the implementation of the project.

Micro-care enterprises were defined as small companies with five employees, many of which were sole traders, providing care or care-related services to the citizens of Flintshire. The pilot scheme to date had successfully supported 22 individuals to set up and operate as an independent care business. In September 2021, those businesses were delivering to 79 clients and delivered an average of 497 hours of care, support or well-being. Of the 497 hours, 420 were for personal care and 77 hours were for well-being type services e.g. cleaning, shopping and companionship.

The scheme had met all its key performance indicator targets for both funders and due to its success had been funded for a further 12 months by WG Foundational Economy Fund for 2021/22. That would be used to continue the Micro-care scheme and grow the number of micro businesses established and delivering care across the county.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce said that following an early evaluation of the scheme it had been identified that Micro-care in Flintshire was already making a significant contribution to the care market. It was creating sustainable jobs and more localised care solutions for people. Feedback from clients, families and Council officers had been extremely positive.

The Chief Executive complemented the service for the innovative initiative which created resilience in a market that was under pressure and welcomed that it would add value to the community.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the report which demonstrated that suitable care services for individual needs would be provided. He asked how training would be provided for the people undertaking the work and the Senior Manager – Children and Workforce explained that quality training had been developed and the service would ensure it was fully rolled out.

RESOLVED:

That progress made in rolling out the innovative Micro-care pilot and the positive contribution the scheme was making in meeting the demand for care in Flintshire continue to be supported.

88. CASHLESS PAYMENT SOLUTION FOR CAR PARKING

Councillor Banks introduced the report and explained that since the county wide introduction of car parking charges in 2015, the only method of payment for parking was at a pay and display machine located within the car park. Those machines only offered a coin payment solution which required the customer to have the correct amount of money to purchase their pay and display tickets as the machines could not dispense change.

To improve the customer experience, there was an option to introduce a cashless payment solution as an alternative to pay and display machines and to complement the existing cash payment method. This was a pay by phone solution which had already been introduced in all other North Wales authorities' car parks and it offered a secure way of paying for parking via the internet, SMS, telephone or by an app on a smartphone.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) added that there was a requirement for the customer to register with the service provider as a first time user. The solution provided a convenient method of payment on the day, but the customer could also extend to longer stay parking options, such as to a week or a month, and a season ticket.

Customers would not have to display a parking ticket and could pay to extend their stay without having to return to their car by paying a small fee.

There was no initial set up fee and the signage and back office system were provided free of charge. Coin payments would continue to be accepted in all car parks.

Councillor Johnson welcomed the report and the information on other towns and cities where the app could be used.

RESOLVED:

That the implementation of a cashless payment solution for car parking charges be supported.

89. 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

- **Community Asset Transfer, Holywell Public Convenience, Tower Gardens, Holywell**
This relates to the Community Asset Transfer of Holywell public convenience. Tower Gardens, Holywell.

Streetscene and Transportation

- **Disposal of Surplus Building**
Declaring Surplus to Requirements – Flintshire County Council building known as Holywell Public Convenience. Tower Gardens, Holywell. The transfer of the building will be as a Community Asset Transfer to Holywell Town Council on a 27 year lease.
- **The Flintshire County Council (Ffordd Glyndwr, Ffordd Owen and Ffordd Edwin, Northop) (One Way Traffic) Order 20-**
To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed One Way Order, on the roads listed above.

Education and Youth

- **Bryn Tirion, Charmley's Lane, Shotton**
To request that the Bryn Tirion site be declared surplus to the requirements of Education and Youth Service.

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

90. NORTH WALES SUPPORTED LIVING FRAMEWORK – FLINTSHIRE SUPPORTED LIVING COMMISSIONING

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that, in accordance with the local authorities Contract Procedure Rules, due to the projected value of two contracts, Cabinet approval was required to progress with the tender exercise and contract award.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That approval be given to adopt the North Wales Supported Living Framework for the two prospective Supported Living commissioning exercises for seven placements; and
- (b) That the proposal to commission the Supported Living Services, as per the Contract Procedure Rules that require Cabinet approval for the award of contracts with a value of over £2 million, be approved.

91. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.20 a.m.)

.....
Chair