

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
24 APRIL 2018

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24 April 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Lloyd (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Andrew Holgate, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Paul Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Martin White, Andy Williams, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley.

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Sian Braun, Helen Brown, Bob Connah, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Richard Jones, Richard Lloyd, Vicky Perfect

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Strategic Programmes), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer, Democratic Services Manager, and Committee Officer.

119. PRESENTATIONS

The Chairman welcomed Laura Deas, Women's Skeleton Bronze medallist, 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, to the meeting and invited the Chief Executive to pay tribute to her.

The Chief Executive provided background information and congratulated Laura on her personal achievement in gaining a Bronze medal in the Skeleton event. He also referred to the achievements of the Olympic team in gaining a total of five medals in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics which included a Gold and Bronze medal in the Skeleton. He spoke of the Authority's pride in Laura's local 'roots', her place of birth, where she was raised and educated. He spoke of the training, skills, and discipline required for the Skeleton sport and said it was also to be celebrated that overall the Olympic team had been amongst the top 20 in the medal table in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. He invited Laura to address the Members.

Laura thanked the Chairman and the Chief Executive for acknowledging her success in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and spoke of her pride in her achievement as the first Winter Olympic medallist in Wales. She spoke of her early

experiences in sport and competitive events which had led to her discovering the Skeleton sport. Laura spoke of her pride in representing Wales and her local area of Flintshire and thanked Members for the opportunity to speak on her experiences in sport and her aspirations for the future.

Councillor Ian Roberts paid tribute to Laura on her success in gaining a bronze medal in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and in her achievement as a first Winter Olympic athlete to gain a medal in Wales. He commented on the discipline and courage required to compete in the Skeleton sport and said she was an inspiration for young people and aspiring athletes in Flintshire. Councillor Roberts said that Laura's determination and hard work was an example of what could be achieved and wished her every success in the future.

Councillor Dave Hughes, as the Local Member, congratulated Laura on behalf of Llanyfnydd Community Council and the residents of Llanfynydd and spoke of the local pride in her achievements. He wished her every success in future competitions..

Councillor Aaron Shotton also paid tribute to Laura's achievements and spoke of her dedication and enthusiasm which was an inspiration for young people in Flintshire. Councillor Shotton invited Laura to contribute through any opportunity she may have, to the services provided for leisure, youth, and education in the County to give guidance and instil enthusiasm and ambition for young people in Flintshire.

Councillors Mike Peers, Clive Carver, Derek Butler and Kevin Hughes paid further tributes to Laura and expressed their thanks and congratulations to her.

120. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 were submitted.
- (ii) The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2018 were submitted.

Accuracy

Page 30: Councillor Mike Peers referred to his comment that from April 2018 child care vouchers were to be replaced by a new UK government backed scheme of tax free child care and said it had been agreed that this information would be incorporated into the Pay Policy Statement but this had not been recorded in the resolution for the item.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above amendment both sets of minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as accurate records.

121. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer advised that a personal interest would be recorded on behalf of all Members present for item 12 – Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report for 2018.

122. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's Communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

The Chairman commented on the Buckley Town Council Musical Extravaganza held at Bistre Parish Church, Buckley, which had been organised in memory of the late Councillor Ron Hampson and his son Stephen. He said the event had been a success and a 'fitting' tribute to Councillor Hampson and Stephen and thanked Councillor Dennis Hutchinson for his hard work in organising the event.

Councillor Hutchinson responded that the proceeds of the event were being donated to the charities supported by the late Councillor Hampson and Mrs. Rita Hampson. Councillor Hutchinson expressed thanks to local residents who had supported the event wholeheartedly.

123. PETITIONS

None were received.

124. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Monitoring Officer advised that the following Question had been submitted by Councillor John Holiday, Argoed Community Council, within the deadline and was shown on the agenda.

"As you are not doubt aware, despite considerable protests, FCC/Aura decided to close the squash courts at Mold. Brymbo Squash Club are building new courts and offered to purchase, dismantle and remove the glass back units from Mold. They never heard any more. It is now apparent that instead of salvaging this valuable asset, they were smashed and skipped. Bearing in mind that they cost £6000 each, this is a scandalous waste of £12.000 when FCC are supposedly desperate for funds.

In view of interest in making further use of court glass backs, why was this valuable resource smashed and thrown in a skip?"

As the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Ian Roberts, provided the following response:

At the customer consultation meeting at Mold Leisure Centre on 23 January 2018 about the proposed capital development, a verbal request was received from a representative of the squash players about whether the glass backs could be given to a local squash club, either free of charge or for a small fee. The manager at Mold Leisure Centre agreed to look into this and as a result the contractor, WFC, were asked whether the removal and setting aside of the glass backs was feasible. WFC agreed to try to meet the request prior to the demolition.

WFC have provided a report on how they dealt with the request including a diagram showing the fixing of the squash courts (see annexe 1). The salient points are as follows:

- the base of the glass was fixed into a 'U' shaped channel which was embedded within the structural concrete floor;
- it was secured by a heavy mastic product to hold it securely in place;
- the sides of the glass were also secured in mastic;
- the joints between glass sections were also filled with mastic;
- the details were commensurate with constructing the glass backs so that they were fit for purpose, secure, vertical and resilient to take the rebound and other substantial impact experienced in a squash court;
- WFC used their best endeavours by cutting out as much mastic as possible using appropriate glass handling tools for example suckers, to loosen and lift the glass panels; and
- however given the nature of the original fixing method this was simply not possible without damage to the glass. The result was that there was no option but to break the various sections to get them out.

The Mold Leisure Centre manager had phoned the squash club representative on 1 February 2018 to inform him that it had not been possible to successfully remove the glass backs.

In conclusion all steps were taken to try and meet this request as it was in the interest of all concerned including the Council, Aura Leisure and Libraries and the squash players and local club. Unfortunately this was not possible and this was communicated in a timely manner.

Considerable consultation has taken place about these developments, including specifically with squash players. The relatively low level of squash use from Mold can be accommodated at other sites in reasonable proximity including Deeside Leisure Centre.

The work at Mold Leisure Centre which is now well underway is part of a £1.4 million project, with no cost to the Council, which will double the size of the current fitness facility and create a bespoke group exercise studio. Aura Leisure and Libraries are an employee owned charitable company established by the Council and the employees. Aura are able to pay back the capital costs through an increase in revenue income.

Councillor Bernie Attridge asked for clarification on the procedure for raising public questions at meetings of the County Council. The Monitoring Officer explained that there was a maximum period of 30 minutes allowed during the Council meeting for public questions to be raised and answered.

125. QUESTIONS

None were received.

126. NOTICES OF MOTION

None were received.

127. FLINTSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD – WELL-BEING PLAN

The Chief Executive introduced the report to seek approval of the final Well-being Plan for Flintshire, prior to publication. He advised that the report provided an overview of the work of the Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) and the development of the Well-being Plan (the Plan).

The Chief Executive provided background information and reported on the main considerations. He commented that Flintshire was renowned for its record of partnership working and advised that the Plan had been developed alongside the Council Plan and provided a strong alignment and 'fit' with the priorities. The Plan was to be adopted by the County Council as a statutory requirement.

The Chief Executive gave a joint presentation with the Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer which covered the following key points. He invited the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Social Services), and Chief Officer (Strategic Programmes) to report on the five priorities for the Well-being Plan.

- statutory and non-statutory (invited) members
- the Well-being Plan
- how the Plan has been developed
- the five priorities:
 - Community Safety
 - Economy and Skills
 - Environment
 - Healthy and Independent Living
 - Resilient Communities
- next steps – development and publication of the Delivery Plan

The Chief Executive advised that the Well-being Plan was subject to variation and was recommended for formal adoption by the Council as a statutory plan by 4 May 2018.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Aaron Shotton thanked the Chief Executive and officers for the work that had been undertaken with colleagues in partner organisations. He said that the objectives of the Well-being Plan were complimentary to the Council's five year Plan and that it was not possible for the Authority to achieve all the improvements it wanted without working in collaboration with partners in the public sector. He expressed praise for the level of partnership work being undertaken to achieve common objectives and positive outcomes for the benefit of Flintshire's residents. He specifically thanked Councillor Billy Mullin and the Chief Executive for their work on the Flintshire Public Services Board and for providing leadership to the Board and partners. He asked Members to support the Plan and said he looked forward to delivering the outcomes.

Councillor Mike Peers asked for details of the County Council membership on the Board. He referred to the priority on Economy and Skills and the need to develop skills for employment opportunities. He said it was important for community businesses to have the opportunity to link into the Board to identify the employment skills they needed in their businesses. He referred to the information on Community Safety on page 58 of the report and acknowledged the work that was taking place. He suggested that information also be included on community policing and engagement with the public, and commented on the reassurance that the police presence provided in terms of public safety and well-being. Councillor Peers also suggested that the priority on Environment should be linked directly into the local development plan to reflect the ambitions and objectives of the Well-being Plan and the Council Plan.

Councillor Carol Ellis referred to the Council's proposal to extend residential care on the Marleyfield site in Buckley, which she said would alleviate the pressure on accident and emergency services in local hospitals and was an example of how the Council worked in partnership with the Health Board.

Councillor Heesom said he had some concerns around the linkage between the Council Plan and the Well-being Plan. He referred to the reference in paragraph 1.10 in the report, to feedback from the Welsh Government and the Future Generations Commissioner on the draft Flintshire Assessment and asked if a copy of the feedback could be provided to Members. The Chief Executive advised that an all-Member workshop would be held on the Council Plan on 29 May, and that it would be submitted for adoption by the Council in final form at its meeting in June. He commented that officers were confident that the linkage was strong but said that a shared partnership plan should not be over dominated by the Council Plan. The Chief Executive agreed to provide a copy of the feedback to Councillor Heesom and other Members on request.

Councillor Paul Shotton commented on the priority Community Safety and the need for partners to be involved in intelligence gathering around organised criminal gangs in Flintshire. He also referred to the Economy and Skills priority and commented on the recent jobs fair at Deeside Leisure Centre and said over 500 jobs had been on offer which demonstrated the diverse range of employment and training opportunities available in Flintshire. Councillor Shotton also took the opportunity pay tribute to the work of the Communities First team.

Councillor Aaron Shotton referred to the comments made by Councillor Peers on the importance of ensuring that the Authority and its partners in the public sector were in tune with identifying the skills required by local businesses. He gave assurance to Councillor Peers that his comments would be addressed and that this work should be accomplished through the work of the North Wales Growth Deal.

RESOLVED:

That the Well-being Plan be endorsed.

128. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: DELIVERING FOR PEOPLE

The Chief Executive introduced the report on a response to the Welsh Government green paper Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People. He provided background information and context and gave a presentation which covered the following main points:

- Local Government reform – pre-history
- Local Government reform – on or off ?
- latest Green Paper 1
- latest Green Paper 2
- why an obsession in Wales?
- the real big issues
- our consistent position 1 and 2
- risks of a structural reform 1 and 2
- making a constructive response

The Chief Executive advised that the deadline for consultation on the green was 12 June 2018 and that it set out structured consultation questions for a response to be made. He explained that guidance was sought from Members on a response that the Council could make on their behalf.

Councillor Aaron Shotton referred to the progress which had been achieved on the North Wales Growth Deal and the positive relationships that were being developed with the Government and the Welsh Government around a Growth Deal. He also referred to the ‘Back the Bid’ campaign and coverage in the local and national press to engender interest and confidence in businesses in North Wales and in what was being achieved in the region. Councillor Shotton also commented on the current united North Wales position and said there was the potential for further regional collaboration to take place and that the aims of Mark Drakeford AM, former Cabinet Secretary for Local Government, announced in 2017 in favour of enhanced regional working, should be given full opportunity

Councillor Aaron Shotton commented on the need for a robust analysis of the cost and the benefits of local government reform to be carried out as a starting point to determine if the proposals should be undertaken. He proposed that the need to provide a response on consultation to the green paper be delegated to group leaders to form an agreed response. He welcomed the opportunity to strengthen powers but said there was a lack of detail in the report regarding how this could be applied. He referred to the need to support the response of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) particularly in response to option 3, and said there was “no appetite in Wales for option 3”. He emphasised the importance of maintaining the good relationship the Authority had developed with other local authorities and referred to the importance of economic growth and the ambition of the Growth Board.

Councillor Peers supported the views expressed by Councillor Aaron Shotton and commented on the need to consider the impact of the proposal for structural reform of local government on local communities. He commented on the work in progress on

the North Wales Growth Deal which he said could be undermined by any reorganisation.

Councillors Tony Sharps, Hilary McGuill, Arnold Woolley and Carol Ellis spoke against the proposals and queried the benefits to be gained from voluntary mergers or a single directive merger programme. The financial costs of the proposed reforms, the benefits to be gained by the Authority, the impact on the residents of Flintshire and on future service performance and continuity, were raised.

Councillor Patrick Heesom spoke in support of the North Wales Growth Deal which he said was inspiring and was beginning to make an impact in Flintshire.

Councillor Derek Butler supported the views expressed by Councillor Aaron Shotton. He said that the consensus of opinion expressed by Members was that the proposals were too early. He emphasised the partnership work that was being undertaken by the Authority in the public sector and on the Growth Deal and the Mersey Dee Alliance.

Councillor Neville Phillips commented on previous proposals for local government reorganisation and said in his opinion reform would take place. The Chief Executive explained that the circumstances this time were different to previous reorganisation proposals and that the proposals were contestable.

RESOLVED:

That a response to the consultation be sent, based on the report, presentation and discussion, and copied to Group Leaders for information.

129. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report to enable Council to receive the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report for 2018/19. This determines payments to elected and co-opted members for the next year. He reported that the IRPW draft proposals for 2018/19 had been considered by Council on 24 October. The final report was published on 27 February 2018 and sets the levels of payment for Members for 2018/19. The Democratic Services Manager advised that from 1 April 2018, all elected Members would receive the basic salary of £13,600 which was an increase of 1.49% on the 2017/18 basic salary.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that most payment levels were determined by the IRPW but Flintshire, as with other Welsh local authorities, must decide which payment level it wished to apply for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council. He referred to the three possible levels of salary set in the IRPW and explained that since the discretion was introduced Flintshire had always paid Level 2 to both the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Democratic Services Manager advised that responsibility Level 2 would be paid at £21,800 for the Chair and £16,300 for the Vice-Chair (inclusive of the basic salary).

Councillor Attridge proposed status quo which was that the Chair of the Council continued to be paid at Level 2 and the Vice-Chair continued to be paid at Level 2. When put to the vote this was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the decisions which the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has made on Member salaries for 2018/19 be noted;
- (b) That the Chair of the Council should be paid at Level 2 (£21,800 which is inclusive of the basic salary); and
- (c) That the Vice-Chair of the Council should be paid at Level 2 (£16,300 which is inclusive of the basic salary).

130. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and 16 members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 4.16pm)

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Chairman