

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
27 SEPTEMBER 2022

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday,
27 September 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Mared Eastwood (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Helen Brown, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan, Geoff Collett, Steve Copple, Bill Crease, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Chrissy Gee, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Billy Mullin, Debbie Owen, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester, Jason Shallcross, Sam Swash, Linda Thew, Linda Thomas, Ant Turton, Roy Wakelam, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Ray Hughes and Michelle Perfect

IN ATTENDANCE: Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy), Commissioning Manager, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services team

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Leader of the Council expressed his thanks and praise to the Chair for her presentation, leadership and delivery of her speech in Welsh at the Proclamation of the Assession of King Charles III. He also praised all Council employees who were involved at short notice supporting the event on the Sunday 11 September ensuring it was a success. Special thanks were also given to the Northop Band whose presence added to the ceremony. The Chair and Members of the Council thanked the Officers involved.

28. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair reported that two questions had been received and invited Mr Colin Randerson to present his question to Council. Mr Randerson thanked the Chair and Council for the opportunity to attending the meeting and read out his question.

“Given that the Council proposed changes to policies relating to affordable housing numbers on the basis of pressure from a small number of private developers, but has made no meaningful changes to the LDP as a result of the public consultation, where some sites received over 200 individual objections, do you believe this demonstrates a process which values the concerns of its residents and represents them accordingly?”

Councillor Bithell responded by saying that at the outset, it was important to stress that the changes that had been made to the Plan following the Examination hearing sessions known as Matters Arising Changes (MACs) had **not** been made by the Council but were proposed by the Inspector and had been agreed to by the Council in July of this year, in order to facilitate a public consultation on them. **No** changes had been proposed to original percentages for the delivery of affordable housing, and the only change to the affordable housing policy wording was to reflect a change requested by the Inspector to clarify that the percentages sought were a target, rather than a starting point.

The central purpose of the Examination was for the Inspector to consider the soundness of the Plan as submitted and it was not the remit of the Inspector to improve the Plan, or to change it simply based on the volume of objections to it or a particular site or policy. Part of the Inspector's assessment would be with reference to the Council's evidence base to support the Plan policies and proposals. This applied equally to representations made by objectors where the responsibility on objectors was to submit objections supported by evidence which questioned the plan or a site's soundness. It was for the Inspector to judge and the rationale for how she had considered these soundness issues would be contained in her report, which had yet to be received.

Both the Council and the Inspector were required to consider what objectors had said when representations were made, but they were not required to simply accept what was said. This was a matter of planning judgement which had been applied both by the Council and then separately and independently by the Inspectors. That was the present Development Plan process as prescribed by Welsh Government's Development Plans Manual. In part the question posed invited the Council to comment on aspects of this process that were not in its control, and it was not appropriate therefore to expect the Council to comment on how the Inspector had conducted the examination.

The questioner submitted written representations at the Deposit consultation stage which were considered by officers and where the Council agreed to recommended responses which did not alter or change the plan. As with the response to question 2 which followed, this questioner then submitted written evidence to the LDP Examination and also appeared in person and made his points to the Inspector. This evidence should also have been focussed on addressing the soundness of the site in question as that was the relevant matter for the Inspector to consider. If no change to the site's allocation came from the Examination in the form of a Matters Arising Change (MAC) relating to the site, then the clear inference from that was that the Inspector also considered that the issues raised did not challenge the plan or site's soundness. In contrast where the Inspector did have concerns about the housing element of the Warren Hall site, she had made a change.

Finally, this site was also considered to be a sustainable allocation at the UDP public Inquiry where the inspector then recommended its allocation. The site had been reconsidered through the LDP process and Examination, and no evidence had been presented to counter this view, either for this site, or the others allocated in the LDP.

Mr Randerson said his question raised concerns and asked a supplementary question as to why no changes were made, no matter how many objections were received, following the consultation. What was the point of the public consultation, which cost a lot of money, if no attention or changes were made to any of the responses from the residents? He asked were no changes made due to pressure from developers.

Councillor Bithell felt that this had been covered within the response but would respond to Mr Randerson in writing.

Mr David Rowlinson read out the following question: -

“The Local Development Plan (LDP) is now seven years late. A public consultation took place which involved the planning department considering and rejecting a huge number of public objections over 200 at some sites). No meaningful changes were made to the plan. There has been a detailed inspection resulting in impassioned hearings but resulting in only minor technical changes to the plan, partially driven by Inspectors being powerless to suggest improvements to the plan. Since the posting of the LDP several years ago, there has been no opportunity for elected council members to influence the outcome of the plan despite the repeated concerns raised by their constituents. How much has the LDP cost since the plan was initially shared as part of the public consultation; and does the council feel this represents an optimised and good use of public funds, given the reluctance of the planning department to make changes or improvements to the LDP?”

Councillor Bithell responded saying that it was important, at the outset, to remind the Council on some of the key reasons for preparing the Local Development Plan in the first place:

- The Local Development plan was a statutory plan. **The Council had to produce one;**
- The LDP would provide an up to date policy framework in order to make informed decision on planning applications;
- The LDP would support economic ambition and growth and deliver jobs in line with Flintshire’s National Growth Area status;
- The LDP would provide housing in sustainable locations to meet the needs of this growth, including a significant amount of affordable housing;
- Adoption of the LDP would prevent the continued stream of planning applications for speculative housing development where any Member’s ward was vulnerable due to not having an up-to-date adopted development plan in place.

The LDP was in its final stages approaching adoption. It was common practice for LDPs to be adopted into their plan period and the plan could only become operational once adopted.

The LDP had been through all of its statutory stages including those that were the responsibility of the Council prior to its submission for Examination, and then those that were under the sole control of Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW) and the appointed Inspectors. It was the Council, as a whole, who made

decisions on the progress of the development plan up to submission, informed and advised by the recommendation of officers.

The Council had considered and agreed to progress the Plan on two separate occasions – firstly when it agreed to publish the Deposit LDP for consultation on the 23 July 2019 - no Members voted against; and then when it agreed to the recommended responses to the public representations received, and to submit the plan for public Examination, at its meeting held on 22nd September 2020 – no Members voted against.

Welsh Government (WG) advised that a Council should not submit its plan for Examination unless it considered the plan to be sound and capable of being adopted as once submitted, control passed from the Council to the appointed Inspectors.

The role of the appointed Inspectors was to consider whether the plan **as submitted** was sound and capable of adoption – their role **was not to seek to improve the plan**. This was made clear at the Pre-Hearing Meeting and was reflected in the Inspector’s note of the meeting. That meeting was attended by 120 participants including the questioner.

Simply because a number of people made objections to a site did not mean that the Council had to either automatically accept those objections or make a change to the Plan. The key requirement in objecting was to show, with evidence, how the plan or any specific site was not sustainable or sound. Representations submitted following the Deposit LDP consultation were considered by officers and the recommended responses agreed by the Council – in the Council’s view these did not raise issues that challenged the soundness of the plan.

Further representations were submitted as written and verbal evidence to the LDP Examination in relation to this site (and others). These should also have been focussed on addressing the soundness of the site in question as that was the relevant matter for the Inspector to consider. Indeed, the hearing sessions held were not solely to hear objectors as the Inspector heard from all interested parties including those promoting sites allocated in the Plan. If no change to the site’s allocation came from the Examination in the form of a Matters Arising Change (MAC), then the clear inference from that was that the Inspector also considered that the issues raised did not challenge the plan or site soundness.

Whilst the full cost of the production of the LDP would be calculated once the Plan was adopted, the main cost elements to date were as follows:

- Policy Team annual staffing costs (from 2022/23 budget) £318,698.00
- Evidence base preparation (whole process to date) £374,000.00
- Examination Inspectors Fees to date £53,122.87
- Examination Programme Officer costs to date £29,812.50

The main point for Members to acknowledge was that the Council had no option but to produce a development plan as it was a statutory requirement, meaning that it **had** to expend public funding to resource the process. The Council had budgeted for that but had actually saved a considerable amount from holding the

Examination in an entirely virtual way, which had also had the benefit of allowing greater public involvement and participation. The savings had been to the extent that the financial reserves to support the LDP adoption would be returned to the corporate centre, thereby assisting the Council's overall budgetary position.

The plan was at such an advanced stage now that all that was awaited was the Inspector's report, whose recommendations in respect of plan soundness and adoption were legally binding on the Council. There was no option to debate any specific aspect of the plan at this stage – **adoption was of the plan as a whole.**

Mr. Rowlinson appreciated the lengthy response and agreed with many of the points made on the purpose of the LDP and the thorough way in which it had been carried out, especially allowing people to join virtually to contribute. He asked a supplementary question on clarification he was seeking on a breakdown of the numbers between the preparation of the plan, prior to the public consultation, and the cost excluding the actual examination costs since that point. It seemed that there would be significant costs with going through the motions on the plan when there hadn't been any actual changes to the plan which would indicate that it was poor value. He felt that the response focused on the soundness rather than the ability to improve the plan or make it an optimized plan for the public. The fact that no meaningful changes were made to the plan following the public consultation would suggest that it did not represent good value on appropriate process. What was the point of carrying out that public consultation if the views expressed would not form part of shaping the plan? For clarification he asked what costs were incurred since the publication for the public inspection minus the actual examination costs which he accepted were part of the process.

Councillor Chris Bithell agreed to respond to the supplementary question in writing.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received

30. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 May 2022 and 26 July 2022 were received.

Minutes of 24 May 2022 - Accuracy

On page 18 and 19 Councillor Antony Wren asked that the misspelling of his Christian name be amended. This was agreed.

Minutes of 26 July 2022 - Accuracy

Councillor Richard Jones referred to page 28 and the debate around the national definition of fuel poverty and the re-defining of the wording to be used locally

and asked if there was any information on this. In response the Deputy Monitoring Officer said a response would be provided following the meeting.

The minutes of the meetings held on the 24 May 2022 and 26 July 2022 were moved and seconded as correct records.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of 24 May 2022 and 26 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

31. PETITIONS

Councillor Hilary McGuill presented a Petition, containing 300 signatures, on behalf of residents of the Heol Fammau and Moel Gron areas of Mynydd Isa. The residents had requested that urgent repairs be carried out because of the poor condition of the roads. This had been requested for quite some time and Councillor McGuill said that during a 60-year period the roads had only been patched and were now desperately in need of a proper resurfacing.

Councillor David Coggins Cogan presented a Petition, containing the signatures of 315 residents in his ward for the Council to urgently review the safety of the roads in his ward. An overview was given on the dangerous conditions encountered on these roads which had resulted in several deaths. There was also a lack of pavements and warning signs. In addition, the speed limit on that road was 60-mph. The Council was aware of the problems, and he pleaded for urgent action be taken

32. CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer referred to the Annual Meeting of the Council, when it was agreed to establish a Climate Change Committee and said the Terms of Reference for this Committee were located at Appendix 1 of the report. Clarification on a slight amendment to the Terms of Reference was provided together with confirmation that it was a non-statutory committee, but that Council had agreed that it would be politically balanced. The first meeting was scheduled for the 22 November and Council was required to appoint a Chair for the committee, to agree if the Chair should receive a remuneration for the role and to agree the Terms of Reference.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) provided an overview of the commitment made by Cabinet in 2019 that the County Council would be carbon neutral by 2030 following Welsh Government (WG) advice. He provided information on the appointment of the Climate Change Co-ordinator, Alex Ellis, and outlined the work undertaken by the Climate Change Programme Board. He said the Committee would be an advisory committee to inform Cabinet on the actions required to reach that target of carbon neutrality by 2030. The Action Plan and Strategy were agreed in February 2022, and he explained how this committee would work collaboratively across the council and with other business partners to achieve that aim of carbon neutrality by 2030.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure moved the Terms of Reference recommendation, as amended. He also moved that the Chair of the Climate Change Committee was remunerated. He nominated Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson as Chair the Climate Change Committee. He felt confident that with Councillor Ibbotson as Chair, together with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy, that they would be able to drive forward the important work that was required to be done. The was seconded by the Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services (including Health and Safety and Human Resources).

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst asked for an amendment to the terms of reference recommendation. He read out a statement from the Liberal Democrat Group. His proposed amendment to recommendation 1 was “to approve the Terms of Reference of the Climate Change Committee subject to a review during the next municipal year”. This amendment was proposed in the spirit of supporting the aims of Flintshire County Council to seriously address climate change.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure accepted the amendment. The Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services (including Health and Safety and Human Resources) as seconder also accepted the amendment.

The Chair then referred to the third recommendation to appoint the Chair of the Committee saying that one nomination of Councillor Alistair Ibbotson had been received. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy fully supported the nomination of Councillor Ibbotson.

Councillor Helen Brown nominated Councillor Allan Marshall for the Chair of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Richard Jones

Upon voting for each nomination, Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson was appointed as Chair.

The Chair asked if there were any speakers for recommendations 1 and 2.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Mike Peers, the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed the wording at point 9.15.4.2 of the terms of reference was correct.

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson firstly expressed his gratitude to Members for supporting his nomination. He said the terms of reference were very broad and followed the Cabinet net zero decision in 2019 and the Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy was required to be incorporated into every aspect of the Council’s business and he outlined the pathways within the Strategy to ensure the terms of reference were met to enable the Council to achieve net zero by 2030.

In response to question on providing impartial advice to residents, the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) felt that this was covered at point 9.16.5.13 of the terms of reference which could include advice on energy provision.

Having been moved and seconded, the recommendations were put to the vote which was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Terms of Reference of the Climate Change Committee be approved;
- (b) That the Chair of the Climate Change Committee be remunerated; and
- (c) That Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson be appointed as Chair of the Climate Change Committee.

33. NORTH WALES MARKET STABILITY REPORT

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing presented the North Wales Market Stability Report.

Welsh Government (WG) had asked that local authorities and local health boards work in collaboration to produce a Market Stability Report alongside the Population Needs Assessment. The Market Stability Report would provide an assessment of the sufficiency of care and support required when meeting the needs and demand for social care as set out in the Population Needs Assessment and the stability of the market for regulated services providing that care and support.

A single Market Stability Report must be produced for the North Wales region and approved by Full Council for each of the Local Authority areas and the local Health Board as a requirement of the Social Services and Well Being Wales Act 2014. The final Market Stability Report must be published on all Local Authority websites, the Health Board websites and the Regional Partnerships Board's website in both English and Welsh with a copy of the report submitted to Welsh Ministers. Both the Population Needs Assessment and the Market Stability Report documents would be used to inform local and regional delivery plans and service development going forward. Therefore, she asked that Council approve the North Wales Market Stability Report for 2022.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) thanked the Contract and Commissioning Manager and her team for their work in completing the report. The report had been presented to the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet and he was proud of the work undertaken in the development of services, such as the Children's Homes in Mold and the expansion of the facility at Marleyfield in Buckley. The latest Market Stability Report outlined the partnership working with partners in North Wales within the Regional Partnership Board and included the regional footprint and he highlighted the Flintshire themes.

An overview of the elderly population in the county was provided with the over 65 predictions during the next 20 years higher in Flintshire than the regional average. The Authority had to plan to ensure all services were resilient to provide the best quality services with the report providing excellent information not just for Health and Social Care but other services too.

In response to a question on the closure of care homes from Councillor Peers, the Chief Officer (Social Services) outlined the close working relationship with the care home partners but said that because of the pressures they had experienced some had stopped operating but this did not happen often. The sensitivities of working with care homes, families and residents was understood to ensure that all were supported and settled in other homes. Referring to the overall capacity he confirmed that this had reduced and highlighted that the Authority needed to provide its own good quality care provision, which was why Marleyfield had been completed and plans were ongoing to extend Croes Atti in Flint and for options to be considered for Llys Gwenffrwd in Holywell.

In response to a question from Councillor Bateman on day care at Croes Atti, the Chief Officer (Social Services) explained that Croes Atti was used for day care support for younger people with dementia prior to the pandemic. Day care remained part of the Council's provision and when it was safe to continue it would be provided in the existing Croes Atti facility and at the new Croes Atti facility when it was developed in two years' time.

Councillor Thew commented on the importance of day care for people who remained in their own homes. The Chief Officer (Social Services) agreed saying day support was very important and he would feed back to the appropriate team. He said there were issues in recruiting staff to cover all services which was why residential care was prioritised.

In response to a question by Councillor Ellis on the demand and need for the resumption of day care services, the Chief Officer (Social Services) outlined the alternative community settings used, such as memory or dementia cafes which had reduced some of the demand. He agreed that for some people day care was a highly valued service and that it was intended to provide these wherever there was the demand and workforce to facilitate it. Workforce recruitment was an issue and he asked for Members support in encouraging constituents to consider health and social care roles which included day care, extra care services and residential care services. These staffing pressures were limiting the authority's ability to deliver all services. He fully understood the comments made around day care saying that it was an important part of this document.

In response to a question from Councillor Hughes on the severity of Covid and moving forward, the Chief Officer (Social Services) agreed but said that Covid had also impacted on staffing levels.

The Chief Officer (Social Services), in responding to a question from Councillor Brown, confirmed that there were staffing pressures, similar to every department in the country. Day care had not been prioritised because of public health advice but also the demand had decreased. There was a commitment for continuing to provide day care, but staffing was a key factor. The service had responded to local demands within its services at Marleyfield and at Croes Atti in the future.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing explained that there were 8 memory cafes across Flintshire supporting

not only people with dementia but any elderly person who would like to visit. They had been hugely successful with residents spending the morning or afternoon at the café and had reduced the need for day care. She suggested that an item on day care be included on the forward work programme for the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Referring to Croes Atti she explained the attendance had decreased because people were using these other settings. During Covid staff had worked in extremely difficult circumstances and it was distressing for residents, but Covid was still present, and the service had to be managed carefully.

Councillor McGuill referred to the warm hubs saying the premises were ready and heated but that there was a shortage of staff to run them and asked if the third sector could assist. She referred to her local community centre which provided a place for a variety of groups to hold meetings which could replace the need for day care centres.

In response to questions from Councillor Richard Jones, the Chief Officer (Social Services) said he would welcome a discussion on day care at Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it was an important part of the service provision moving forward. The service was not just for older people but for people with disabilities and other needs too with a lot of valuable support provided.

The Commissioning Manager provided an overview of the commissioning provision and how it had changed since the Pandemic. Information was given on the Commissioning Carers Scheme, Bridging the Gap Scheme, Direct Payments and Micro Care Project which enabled people to access different opportunities moving away from the traditional day care service.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the North Wales Market Stability Report 2022.

34. CO-OPTED MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and explained that Council must appoint people who were not Councillors to the Standards Committee so that it was seen to be more independent and apart from the internal politics of the Council.

The term of office for one of the co-opted members would come to an end in December. That member was eligible to be reappointed for a further term.

The co-optee was the current Chair of the Committee and she had worked hard in the role and had made a beneficial contribution to the governance of the Council. She was willing to serve a further term if re-appointed.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Julia Hughes be reappointed to the Standards Committee for five years.

35. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and explained that the Local Government and Election (Wales) Bill became an Act in January 2021. This was a large wide-ranging Act, and a Working Group was established to ensure all aspects which related to the Council were implemented.

He referred Members to the Appendix which highlighted how the Council had responded to the key parts of the Act. Outlining some of the key changes he confirmed that the largest change was holding meetings remotely, which had been in response to the Pandemic but was now law. On the Appendix, he clarified that the areas shown in green had been fully implemented with the areas shown in grey not currently enacted and the 5 areas shown in amber being work in progress.

The recommendations were moved and seconded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the briefing report be received, and Council be assured;
- (b) That the constitutional and other implications of the Act be noted;
- (c) That the Officer Working Group be stood down until and unless any powers not yet exercised required implementation; and
- (d) That the Constitutional and Democratic Services Committee, supported by the Chief Officer (Governance) see the final aspects of the implementation of the Act to conclusion.

36. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group.

“This Council recognises the extreme hardship residents are suffering under the Cost-of-Living Crises. Growing numbers of residents, especially those using domestic heating oil (not protected by the domestic energy price cap) are entering a period of fuel poverty and will not be able to afford to heat their homes this winter. Even now, before winter, many residents are already in fuel poverty.

“Warm Hubs” are warm and friendly environments in which to enjoy refreshments, social activity, information and advice and respite from social isolation. Warm hubs can be based in civic and public buildings, which are already heated and open to the public such as libraries, in community asset buildings, church and village hall and other businesses such as cafes that may be happy to sign up to be scheme.

This Council acknowledges the Warm Hubs are unlikely to generate revenue and will not expect visitors to buy teas, coffees or otherwise spend money to stay in the warmth. Warm Hubs are community resource, recognising that if someone is in fuel poverty, they should be helped to conserve their financial resources and not feel pressured into spending money in order to stay in a warm, public environment

Therefore this Council resolves:

1. To liaise with partner organisation and provide Warm Hubs throughout the County of Flintshire
2. To work with Members and Town & Community Councils to identify suitable premises in each ward; and
3. To provide advertising materials for Members and Town & Community Councils to raise awareness of Warm Hubs within their communities.”

In speaking to the Notice of Motion, Councillor Coggins Cogan said that it was horrifying that, as one of the wealthiest countries in the world, the Council was having to consider “Warm Hubs”.

He felt the assistance from the UK Government would not make a difference as further increases in energy bills were predicted. He expressed disbelief at the tax breaks given to high earners but the vulnerable were being left to fend for themselves. Because of this his group was proposing the establishment of Warm Hubs utilising premises which were available in the county with the support of third sector organisations.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure accepted the Notice of Motion on behalf of Cabinet. At a meeting held the previous day, Cabinet actioned most of what was contained in the Notice of Motion, and he echoed the sentiments of Councillor Coggins Cogan that the sixth largest economy in the world had to provide Warm Hubs for its citizens. He also wished to be associated with the comments made regarding the tax breaks for high earners.

Councillor Richard Jones felt confident that all Members would support the principle and intent of the Notice of Motion. He queried the words “Warm Hubs” and asked if an alternative name could be used.

Councillor Ibbotson expressed his concern on what was facing residents this winter. He confirmed that during the previous months a huge amount of work had been undertaken by the Liberal Democrat group, Cabinet, Officers and his colleague Councillor Simon Jones. He commented on the impacts of high inflation, increase in energy bills, increased food prices and the cost of fuel would have on residents. It was recognised that the hubs could not be provided everywhere and that there were economic pressures on Council budgets but called on everyone to ensure that each person in the county had access to the support they needed this winter

Councillor Ellis said that she had written to Group Leaders and Senior Officers in September asking what support was being provided to the most vulnerable residents of Flintshire. She agreed with the comments made on a possible

alternative name, and the use of libraries or community centres as they were available in most towns and open to all residents. She asked if written information could be provided to assist with responding to residents questions.

The Vice Chair of the Council fully supported the Notice of Motion and thanked Councillor Ibbotson for his comments and concurred with the suggestion of renaming the hubs.

Councillor Peers supported the Notice of Motion in principle but also had reservations around the name and how it would be delivered and advertised, .

Councillor Owen also supported the Notice of Motion but asked how the hubs would be staffed and would the costs for refreshments be provided by the Council.

Councillor Chris Dolphin agreed with the comments made and did not have an issue with the name. Homelessness was always a problem which was unfortunately likely to get worse. He wondered who would administer the hubs and felt it was not feasible to have one in every community with churches and village halls requiring to turn their heating on which was a major problem. He asked if the Chief Officer (Social Services) would be able to provide a response.

Councillor Simon Jones confirmed that he had been working with various groups across the country and said the name "Warm Hubs" was a UK standard name for this type of service. The focus should not be on the name but providing this service as quickly as possible with winter fast approaching.

Councillor Bibby paid tribute to the work undertaken, thanking the Senior Manager (Benefits) for the work she had done and agreed with the comments made today

The Chief Executive explained that this was being co-ordinated through the Senior Manager (Benefits) and her team. The third sector community groups had a major role to play with the Council to ensure its success. He thanked Members for their support on the Notice of Motion and provided reassurance that the work already being undertaken by the Senior Manager (Benefits) and the team which would continue.

Councillor Wakelam provided information on the way volunteer groups ran in Penyffordd and said it was important to engage with all groups in the community.

Councillor Crease also supported the Notice of Motion which was something meaningful for the whole county of Flintshire.

Councillor Coggins Cogan expressed his gratitude Members for their supportive comments. He understood why the name caused concern and said in his ward it would be called the "Gwernaffield Community Café". He reiterated the importance of working with the third sector to provide the support that was required.

The recommendation was proposed Councillor Ian Roberts and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be received and supported.

37. QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that three questions had been received and responded to. These had been circulated to Members.

RESOLVED:

That the questions and written responses be received and noted.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

None were received

39. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 4.22 pm)

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Chair