

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
23 FEBRUARY 2023

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday,
23 February 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Mared Eastwood (Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development), Corporate Manager (Capital Programme and Assets), Revenues and Procurement Manager, Strategic Finance Managers and Democratic Services team

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During discussion on the Council Fund Revenue Budget 2023/24 (agenda item 6), Councillor Dennis Hutchinson declared a personal interest as a transport provider with a school contract.

The following Members declared a personal interest on the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 (agenda item 10) due to closely associated people employed by the Council: Councillors Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Mel Buckley, Andy Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Christine Jones, Hilary McGuill, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Kevin Rush and Dale Selvester.

82. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 December 2022 and 24 January 2023 were received.

13 December 2022

Accuracy - to correct the spelling of Councillor Collett's name.

Matters Arising - Minute number 57: Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties - a response to the questions raised by Councillor Mike Peers in the penultimate paragraph would be circulated.

24 January 2023

Accuracy - Minute number 68: Capital Programme 2023/24-2025/26 - to insert the full explanation given by the Corporate Manager (Capital Programme and Assets) in response to Councillor Peers' question on funding the repairs and maintenance of older schools.

Accuracy - Minute number 76: Notice of Motion - to record that Councillor Lloyd's proposed had been seconded by Councillor Shallcross.

Matters Arising - Minute number 75: Timing and Schedule of Council Meetings - the Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the suggested 1pm start for County Council meetings was being considered as part of work on the Diary of Meetings for 2023/24, along with the request that the mornings of those dates be kept free where possible.

On that basis, both sets of minutes were approved.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendments, the minutes of 13 December 2022 and 24 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

83. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair presented her communications covering events attended since the previous meeting.

84. PETITIONS

None.

85. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - FINAL CLOSING STAGE

A report was received with the recommendations from Cabinet for the Council to set a legal and balanced Council Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24.

Councillor Bernie Attridge moved a motion to suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillor Richard Jones to speak beyond the permitted five minutes in order to present an alternative budget, as the request to share a slide presentation on this had been refused. He was seconded by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson.

Following advice on the procedural motion by the Chief Officer (Governance), the Chair indicated that she did not allow the extension of time to speak, as she had previously advised, and that the motion would proceed to the vote.

Speaking against the motion, Councillor Ian Roberts said that there had been opportunities for Members to make representations throughout the budget process, without any time limitations on speaking.

In exercising his right of reply, Councillor Attridge called for other Members present to be allowed to speak on the matter.

Councillor Richard Jones said that representations could not have been made at an earlier stage in the process as the original budget had not been provided at that time. He therefore asked that both budgets be considered at this meeting.

Members were asked to vote on whether to accept the motion to suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillor Jones to speak on the alternative budget for more than five minutes. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

The Chief Executive, Corporate Finance Manager and Revenues & Procurement Manager gave a detailed presentation based on the report submitted to Cabinet earlier in the day, which covered the following:

- Setting a legal and balanced budget
- The journey so far...
- Changes to the additional budget requirement for 2023/24
- Additional Budget Requirement 2023/24
- Budget Solutions 2023/24
- Council Tax
- Schools and Social Care Budgets
- Open Risks
- Reserves
- Professional Opinions and Concluding Remarks
- Looking Forward
- Next Steps and Timelines

The report detailed a number of changes since the position given in January, resulting in a final additional budget requirement of £37.098m along with the outcome of work on the range of proposed budget solutions available to enable the Council to set a legal and balanced budget for 2023/24. On that basis, an overall annual increase of 3.99% was required on Council Tax for Council services and 0.96% for additional contributions to the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Regional Coroners Service and the Regional Education Consortium (GwE). This equated to an overall uplift of 4.95% which provided overall additional yield of £5.622m in 2023/24. Comparative data indicated that this proposed increase for Council Tax in Flintshire was currently marginally below the overall Welsh average.

A number of significant open risks were highlighted for 2023/24 including increasing demand for the homelessness service and Out of County Placements in addition to emerging risks such as the potential waste recycling penalty, ongoing inflationary pressures and confirmation awaited on some specific grants.

The update on reserves included the latest position with the Emergency Fund and the list of earmarked reserves set aside for known commitments and risks, noting that Flintshire had one of the lowest reserve levels in Wales. On un-earmarked reserves, the conclusion of the Local Development Plan process had resulted in an additional amount being added to the Contingency Reserves which brought that total to £6.591m. Whilst the Corporate Finance Manager recommended that base level of reserves be maintained for 2023/24, he advised that this should be reviewed for the 2024/25 budget to safeguard against open risks and in view of the lower indicative settlements for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The seven recommendations in the report from Cabinet to Council were moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Roberts, who provided background to the proposals. He thanked the UK Government and Welsh Government (WG) for the positive impact of consequential funding included as part of the Provisional Settlement and said that the report reflected the conclusion of a comprehensive budget process involving Overview & Scrutiny committees.

As Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Paul Johnson seconded the proposal and said that the report represented a significant level of work and many difficult decisions. In making reference to ongoing risks on rising inflation and energy costs, he reiterated the importance of maintaining sufficient levels of reserves.

Councillor Richard Jones moved an amendment as an alternative to the final closing stage of the revenue budget which had been put forward. He was seconded by Councillor Attridge.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair agreed to an adjournment to allow Members to consider the amended budget which had been circulated.

Councillor Richard Jones presented the amendment as follows:

Reduction options not supported in the alternative budget:	£
Reduction in the NEWydd funding contract for Primary school meals	19k
Increase in car parking charges	187k
Introduction of parking charges on all other Council car parks	35k
Introduction of part-night street lighting in residential areas	18k
Apprenticeship trainee scheme - withdrawal of funding	35k
Removal of pressure for additional Licensing Scheme for HMO ¹	140k
Modern Apprentices - reduction in cohort	72k
Reduced hours in the Mold and Buckley Connects Centres	60k
	566k
<u>Additional option supported in the alternative budget:</u>	
Homecare	150k
£566k - £150k = £416k additional funding required	

The additional funding required through the portfolio efficiencies deletions and the additional item was as follows:

¹ Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO)

- Triennial Actuarial Review of the Pension Fund - £2.90m contribution for 2023/24, leaving any remainder for the next two years (£2.65m in the original budget)
- Schools budget - 3.3% reduction in delegated school budgets (3% reduction in the original budget)
- Council Tax - 4.8% annual increase (4.95% in the original budget)

In acknowledging the challenges in creating a legally balanced budget, Councillor Jones said that this alternative budget lowered the risk to portfolios and provided a fairer solution that would minimise Council Tax increases and protect Connects Centres, high streets and apprenticeships as well as residents' safety. On the additional budget requirement in the Cabinet report, he highlighted the Council's levy contribution to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee which he said could have been used elsewhere for the benefit of Flintshire residents.

In support of the amendment, Councillor Dennis Hutchinson spoke against increasing car parking charges and reduced hours of Connects Centres.

Whilst Councillor Bill Crease acknowledged the need for reductions across all portfolios, he said that the benefits accrued from the alternative budget would help to protect apprenticeships and high street traders.

Councillor Helen Brown highlighted the impact of increased parking charges on residents. She expressed her disappointment that the largest opposition group had not been given the opportunity to present its alternative budget in full.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst felt that the original budget was officer-led and did not take into account the impact on residents.

Councillor Carol Ellis referred to the unfairness of Flintshire's allocation of funding per capita in the context of all Welsh authorities. She went on to raise concerns about the impact of increased parking charges on town centres and reduced hours of Connects Centres on residents.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Mike Peers that a record of comments raised during consultation with Overview & Scrutiny committees on cost reductions had not been made available. He queried the £0.445m underspend in the Planning portfolio which had previously been reported as a pressure and went on to say that the alternative budget protected services of most value to residents and that he had suggested alternating the opening hours of Connects Centres in Mold and Buckley.

In support of the alternative budget, Councillors Debbie Owen, Glyn Banks and Dale Selvester highlighted the importance of retaining Modern Apprenticeships whilst Councillor Roz Mansell spoke against the removal of the pressure for the HMO Licensing scheme.

Councillor Attridge said that significant work had been undertaken on the alternative budget which he felt should have been allocated the same time to present as the original budget. He described the Connects Centres as a 'flagship' service

which should not be eroded. He sought a recorded vote to which the requisite number of Members stood in support.

Speaking in support of the original budget, Councillor Simon Jones said that the proposed increase in Council Tax in the alternative budget would provide only a minimal annual saving from that in the original budget. He also spoke against the extra reduction in delegated school budgets given existing pressures on schools.

Councillor Teresa Carberry said that sharing an alternative budget at this final stage did not allow time for proper consideration and raised particular concerns that the proposed further reduction in delegated school budgets would add to the significant pressures in schools as a result of the pandemic. As Chair of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee, she said that the portfolio efficiencies had been accepted with no representations made at that time.

Councillors Tina Claydon and Paul Cunningham shared concerns about the late submission of the alternative budget, as did Councillor Hilary McGuill who called for alternative proposals to be put forward at the same time as the original budget in future to enable both to be considered fully.

Councillor Marion Bateman said that the Independent group should have been given the same amount of time as the original budget to present their proposals.

Speaking in support of the original budget, Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the length of time taken to prepare and reach this final stage of the process including consultation and reporting at the various stages.

Councillor Arnold Woolley suggested that Members' comments around apprenticeships be taken on board for the future. On proposed increased parking charges, he referred to the environmental impact.

The professionalism of officers throughout the budget process was praised by Councillor Carolyn Preece who spoke against the alternative budget which she said would further increase demands on the education sector. She also pointed out that the reduction in apprenticeships in the original budget reflected a small percentage.

Councillor Ian Roberts said that any concerns about apprenticeships raised during the consultation period would have been considered and he gave a commitment for Cabinet to look at apprenticeships as a matter of urgency and to report back to the relevant committee.

As requested, the Revenues and Procurement Manager clarified that the differential between an increase in Council Tax of 4.8% as opposed to 4.95% for a Band D property would be £2.17 per year or 4p per week.

As Section 151 Officer, the Corporate Finance Manager advised Members on the considerations required to reach a decision on the budget. He confirmed that his advice on the alternative budget had been sought in advance of the meeting and that it represented a legal and balanced position if approved by Council. Whilst officers provided advice on risks, it was the responsibility of Members to consider and assess

those impacts. Speaking on the impact and risks from the alternative budget, he said that a further reduction of £0.250m from the actuarial review of the Pension Fund would result in less available to contribute to efficiencies next year, which would increase challenges due to the lower indicative settlement for 2024/25. Although this did not represent a significant amount in the context of the overall budget, the amount would need to be replaced from elsewhere. On delegated school budgets, he advised that the proposed additional reduction would add further risk to that sector. On the additional efficiency on homecare costs, he said that cost reduction options presented in December 2022 had all been reviewed in detail so that only low and medium risk options were included as the most deliverable. On the Council's estimated share of additional educational consequential funding from WG, it was noted that funding allocated to schools would reduce from £0.448m above the estimate (original budget) to £0.072m (alternative budget) above the estimate. He asked the relevant Chief Officers for their respective advice on the impact of the alternative proposals on education and social care.

As the Statutory Director for Education, the Chief Officer (Education and Youth) said it was recognised that as the largest element of the Council's budget, schools would need to play their part in achieving a legal and balanced budget. During extensive engagement with school representatives, concerns had been expressed about the effect of budget reductions upon staff and learners, particularly given the long-term impact from the pandemic. On that basis, she strongly advised against any further reduction in school budgets beyond 3% as this would exacerbate the challenges on that sector. She also advised of the potential implications of failing to passport the full impact of consequential funding and any delays in issuing school budgets. Members were reminded that high levels of school balances reported last year, as a result of additional WG grant funding, were reducing in accordance with regulatory requirements. Schools would need to prudently manage their reserves to achieve balanced budgets and would remain under considerable pressure. It was clarified that schools had been advised that their budgets would be subject to a reduction of between 3-5% in advance of the agenda being published with the proposed 3% reduction.

As the Statutory Director for Social Services, the Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that he was unable to support the proposed reduction in homecare within the alternative budget due to the unacceptable risks. He referred to the significantly challenging period during the Autumn and Winter period where pressures on social care services were shared across hospitals and homecare provision. Whilst the Council had maintained in-house services during this time, any reduction in homecare provision would create new risks, particularly as a number of independent care home providers had ceased business during the period.

In summing up, Councillor Richard Jones responded to some of the comments raised. He clarified that the increased reduction in the schools' budget was £309k and that the social care options were risk-rated as amber/green (medium/low) when shared in December 2022. On timing, he said that some of the figures were not made available until recently and that the alternative budget, which was deemed valid by the S151 Officer, sought to lower risks in portfolios and mitigate against other increases, offering hope for residents. On that basis, he commended the alternative budget to Council.

On being put to the recorded vote, the amendment was lost as follows:

For the amendment:

Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Steve Copple, Bill Crease, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Carol Ellis, Chrissy Gee, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Richard Jones, Dave Mackie, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst, Mike Peers, David Richardson, Dale Selvester, Jason Shallcross, Linda Thew, Ant Turton, Roy Wakelam and Antony Wren

Against the amendment:

Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, David Evans, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Simon Jones, Richard Lloyd, Gina Maddison, Billy Mullin, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Ted Palmer, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Sam Swash and Linda Thomas and Arnold Woolley

Abstentions:

None

Having already been moved and seconded, the substantive motion as follows was put to the vote and carried:

1. That Cabinet notes and approves the revised additional budget requirement for 2023/24;
2. That Cabinet approves the final proposals for the cost reductions that will contribute to the budget;
3. That Cabinet recommends to Council a legal and balanced budget based on the calculations as set out within the report;
4. That Cabinet notes the open risks which remain to be managed in the 2023/24 financial year;
5. That Cabinet recommends an overall annual increase in Council Tax for 2023/24 of 3.99% for Council Services and 0.96% for contributions to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Regional Coroners Service and the Regional Education Consortium (GwE) - an overall uplift of 4.95%;
6. That Cabinet invites Council to pass the formal Council Tax resolution now that we have had notification of the precepts of the Police and Crime Commissioner and all Town and Community Councils within Flintshire; and

7. That Cabinet notes the medium-term forecast as a basis for the next revision of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the recommendations of Cabinet, as detailed above, for balancing the budget for 2023/24 be approved; and
- (b) That the level of Council Tax for 2023/24 as recommended by Cabinet be approved.

At this point in the meeting, there was a brief adjournment.

86. COUNCIL TAX SETTING FOR 2023/24

The Revenues and Procurement Manager introduced the report to formally set the Council Tax charges and associated statutory resolutions for 2023/24 as part of the wider budget strategy on the basis of the decision taken on the previous item. Members were asked to endorse the continuation of the Council Tax Premium scheme and the practice for designated officers to lead on legal proceedings on behalf of the Council.

The overall level of Council Tax comprised three separate precepts which made up the total sum charged against each property. The 3.99% increase in the Council's element met expectations of affordability and would, along with central government funding and Revenue Support Grant, help to protect front-line services and maintain the scale and complexity of demand for services. The overall amount raised by Council Tax consisted of the County Council's total precept of £101,126,334; the North Wales Police & Crime Commissioner's total precept of £21,922,318; and the collective precept of £3,421,107 across all Town and Community Councils.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Ian Roberts and Paul Johnson.

Councillor Richard Jones commented on the ongoing decline in annual increases in the Council's Aggregated External Finance (AEF) from Welsh Government which impacted on residents in terms of Council Tax levels.

His comments were acknowledged by Councillor Chris Bithell who referred to the impact of reduced central funding on Police services.

Having been moved and seconded, each recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2023/24 Council Tax be set as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;

- (b) That the continuation of the policy of not providing a discount in the level of 2023/24 Council Tax charges for second homes and long-term empty homes be endorsed. Also, where exceptions do not apply, to charge the Council Tax Premium rate of 75% above the standard rate of Council Tax for designated long-term empty dwellings and 100% for second homes from 1st April 2023; and
- (c) That approval be given for designated officers to issue legal proceedings and appear on behalf of the Council in the Magistrates' Court for unpaid taxes.

87. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT, PRACTICES & SCHEDULES 2023-26

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 in conjunction with the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and Schedules 2023-26 as appended.

No significant changes had been made to the Strategy since the previous year and no specific issues had been raised following consideration by the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Linda Thomas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 be approved;
- (b) That the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2023 to 2026 be approved; and
- (c) That the Treasury Management Practices and Schedules 2023 to 2026 be approved.

88. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION - 2023/24 POLICY

The Corporate Finance Manager presented the report to approve the annual policy for the Minimum Revenue Provision for the prudent repayment of debt. He confirmed that there were no changes required to the policy for 2023/24.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Linda Thomas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following be approved for Council Fund (CF):-
 - Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in financial year 2023/24 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure

funded from supported borrowing fixed as at 31st March 2017. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over 49 years.

- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2023/24 for all capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing from 1st April 2016 onwards. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2023/24 for all capital expenditure funded from unsupported (prudential) borrowing or credit arrangements. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.

(b) That the following be approved for Housing Revenue Account (HRA):-

- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2023/24 for the balance of outstanding capital expenditure funded from debt fixed as at 31st March 2021. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over 50 years.
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2023/24 for all capital expenditure funded from debt from 1st April 2021 onwards. The calculation will be the 'annuity' method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits.

(c) That MRP on loans from the Council to NEW Homes to build affordable homes through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) (which qualify as capital expenditure in accounting terms) be approved as follows:-

- No MRP is made during the construction period (of short duration) as the asset has not been brought into use and no benefit is being derived from its use.
- Once the assets are brought into use, capital (loan) repayments will be made by NEW Homes. The Council's MRP will be equal to the repayments made by NEW Homes. The repayments made by NEW Homes will be classed, in accounting terms, as capital receipts, which can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt. The capital repayment / capital receipt will be set aside to repay debt and is the Council's MRP policy for repaying the loan.

89. PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2023/24

Members were asked to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 to enable publication within the statutory deadline. This was the eleventh annual statement published by the Council and reflected current arrangements regarding

pay, incorporating updates as well as a new section confirming the Council's position on payment for leavers.

Prior to its publication, the typographical error on section 6(iv) of the Policy Statement relating to the basic salary of Chief Officer Point 3 would be amended.

On that basis, the recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Bernie Attridge and Billy Mullin.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That subject to the amendment, the appended draft Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development) to update the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 during the course of the year to reflect any changes required by legislation, Government policy or national negotiations so that it remains accurate and current.

90. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

91. QUESTIONS

An urgent question from Councillor Helen Brown, received after the deadline, was permitted by the Chair:

“Following the February 14th announcements by Lee Waters and the Welsh Government, it’s abundantly clear that those decision makers in South Wales have no regards for our residents in Flintshire or indeed North Wales. Nothing, we gained nothing. I would like to ask the cabinet member has he has sight of the report from Dr Lynn Sloman? Who was consulted upon the report’s findings?”

The Red and Blue routes had been extensively consulted upon and ended in a costly public Inquiry. The Independent Inspector made his ruling. Why have Welsh Government chosen to ignore this? Why are we now back to looking at Aston Hill again? No consultation has taken place and this is not in line with Welsh Government’s Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015. Our community is outraged at being pushed aside yet again.

I have noted that Ken Skates MS is calling for devolution to North Wales, will the Leader and his Cabinet support him and help enable us locally to become the decision makers for our local area.”

The question had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, along with the following response from the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy:

“I would like to thank Cllr Brown for the urgent question.

Matters relating to the outcome of the ‘Roads Review’ are, as you will appreciate, complex and require consideration of a number of factors both local and regional, these matters will take time to work through with, Members, officers, and our regional partners. We acknowledge that much work and time has gone into the development of the proposed schemes both nationally and locally and it is disappointing that many of these have now been removed from the national roads programme. This will have a number of negative impacts for our local communities and wider economy.

We will bring together a detailed update on the review and implications for Flintshire which will be circulated to Members for their comments; however, it is important to understand that it may be necessary to discuss at a national and regional level how best to proceed and make progress on this important matter.”

In exercising her right to ask a supplementary question, Councillor Brown requested a specific response to the final paragraph of her question which she said had not been addressed.

In responding, Councillor Ian Roberts advised that regional discussions were ongoing at the present time on which he was unable to elaborate further due to issues of confidentiality.

92. NOTICE OF MOTION

None were received.

93. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

None were received.

94. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 5.55pm)

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Chair