

CABINET
18TH MAY 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held virtually via Webex on Tuesday 18th May 2021.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Dave Hughes, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Finance Manager, Enterprise and Regeneration Manager and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor: Patrick Heesom.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Derek Butler

Members expressed their congratulations to Councillor Carolyn Thomas who had been successful in the recent election as a Member of the Senedd for North Wales. Congratulations were also conveyed to Councillor Andy Dunbobbin who had been successful in the election to become the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner.

127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

128. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2021 were submitted and confirmed as a correct.

RESOLVED:

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

Councillor Roberts advised that there would be a change in the order of the agenda, with Car Parking Charges and Highways Asset Management Plan reports being considered before the other items of business.

129. CAR PARKING CHARGES

Councillor Thomas introduced the report and explained that the current suspension of car parking charges in town centres had been implemented with the intention to help town centre businesses recover after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The car park in Talacre was seen as a specific 'end destination' car park and the report sought approval to reinstate the charges in that car park.

The report also sought approval for the introduction of a charging regime on the newly developed Park and Ride car park that had been built on Deeside Industrial Park.

Councillor Banks supported the report, as did Councillor Jones who said this would help with the traffic problems in Zones 1, 2 and 3 on Deeside Industrial Park.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reintroduction of parking charges in Talacre car park be approved; and
- (b) That the introduction of a charging structure for the Park and Ride car park on Deeside Industrial Park be approved.

130. HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Councillor Thomas introduced the report and explained that the highway network was the highest valued infrastructure asset owned by the Council, with the carriageway and footway asset alone valued in excess of £1 billion. The safe and usable condition of the network was essential to maintaining economic and social connectivity, both within Flintshire and with the wider region and the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) framework provided the principles for managing the network, recognising the importance of the highway infrastructure in supporting a number of the Council's key objectives.

The report provided an update on the development of the Council's HAMP and explained how the Council utilised the principles of the HAMP to guide the strategy for managing and maintaining the highway infrastructure.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that the allocation of funds was done based on the areas in need the most, and priorities changed due to risks on the network which were identified during assessments by area co-ordinators.

The report had been submitted to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week, where a discussion had also taken place on a pilot that had been undertaken using recycled plastic to replace small areas of asphalt. The Committee were supportive of the trial and requested that a wider trial be undertaken. Work would be undertaken to identify any potential sites for such trials.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the content of the report, and the review of the Highway Asset Management Plan be noted;

- (b) That the current arrangements and actions of the portfolio to maintain the highway network be noted; and
- (c) That the revised policy for Highway and Car Park Safety Inspections, Intervention Criteria and Response Times to include a revised approach to highway structure inspections be approved.

131. **COUNCIL PLAN 2021/22**

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that the Council Plan for 2017/23 was adopted with the purpose of setting out the key priorities of the Council for the current electoral term. The plan was subject to annual review.

The Plan for 2021/22 had been reviewed and refreshed for structure and content and took into account continued recovery in addition to the longer-term strategic objectives.

The Council Plan was published as two documents. Part 1 set out the intent, and Part 2 set out the risks, performance measures, targets and milestones against which achievement would be measured and evaluated.

The framework was built around six themes:

- Economy;
- Education and Skills;
- Green Society and Environment;
- Affordable and Accessible Housing;
- Personal and Community Well-being; and
- Poverty

The Chief Executive explained that each of the six themes was accompanied by a strategic statement which lent themselves to Well-being objectives. The themes had been mapped against the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for reporting and accountability. The delivery of the Plan was the responsibility of the Cabinet. Part 1 had been shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for review and comments; no significant change to Part 1 was required as the Committees were supportive. Part 2 had been finalised for recommendation in the confidence that Members were supportive of Part 1 as the super-structure of the Plan.

The published Plan would be available on the Council's website by the end of July.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council Plan 2021/22 Part 1 in final form be approved for recommendation to Council; and
- (b) That the content of the Council Plan 2021/22 Part 2 be approved for addition to Part 1 for recommendation to Council.

132. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager introduced the report and explained that smaller town centres across the UK had been facing challenging economic circumstances for many years due to changing customer behaviours. The Covid-19 pandemic had accelerated those trends although it remained too early to understand the long term impacts of the pandemic.

The report provided an update on the strategic context for town centre regeneration, the funding currently available to support it and the programmes of work underway in Flintshire. The report proposed an increased emphasis on intervention to create more sustainable use of properties within town centres.

There was an increased Welsh Government (WG) focus on empty town centre properties with a refocusing of their loans programme, with local authorities being encouraged to use their enforcement powers more fully to bring units back into use. WG would be supporting each area to develop an action plan for that work.

In order to deliver the programme effectively increased resources would need to be made available. It was anticipated that, in the short term, a suitably experienced and qualified manager role would be required to drive forward the regeneration programme together with some modern trainee support to the team to free up time for project delivery. The estimated annual revenue cost was outlined in the report.

The report had been submitted to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee where it was fully supported.

Councillor Roberts welcomed the report and commented on the successful regeneration works that had taken place in Flint and Holywell, and he was pleased to note how vibrant Mold was. Discussions were underway on Buckley Town Centre and a masterplan was being developed for Shotton. A masterplan for Connah's Quay would also need to be developed. In addition, smaller communities needed to be considered.

The Chief Executive explained that a separate discussion needed to take place on how the Council would resource aspects included within the Council Plan. A report would be submitted to a future meeting.

Councillor Jones also welcomed the report and asked that reference to people with learning difficulties and autism be included in paragraph 1.14.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress in delivering the priorities for town centre regeneration agreed at the March 2020 Cabinet meeting be noted;

- (b) That the resource implications of delivering the programme be noted, and that they will be considered for inclusion in the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme; and
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to bid for external funding as it becomes available to support the approaches to town centre regeneration set out in the report.

133. WELSH GOVERNMENT ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS CAPITAL REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING GRANT

Councillor Roberts introduced the report and explained that the Council was in receipt of an additional schools capital repair and maintenance grant from Welsh Government (WG).

The Grant, which was on a formula basis, was £2.526,501 and was for capital repair and maintenance projects within schools during the 2021/22 financial year.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) said the report sought approval to review and agree the draft programme in order that individual projects could be progressed with expediency. The draft programme was appended to the report.

There were two projects nominated at Ysgol Castell Alun. The first was to replace the existing All Weather Pitch (AWP) as it was currently unusable. Reinstatement of the AWP was essential for delivery of curriculum PE, particularly during the winter months. The second was the refurbishment of the music area which was a legacy of the existing Capital investment project at the school. Unforeseen extensive works to the existing music area roof had to be undertaken to make it safe and ensure it was water tight. In doing so, the project budget was insufficient to complete the proposal to refurbish the music area beneath. Provision had been made in the construction contract to add the items should funding and approval be gained. In doing so there were efficiencies in tendering and preliminary costs.

The Chief Officer provided an update on the situation at Canolfan Enfys where there was a roof failure, and Queensferry Primary School which had been affected by flooding.

RESOLVED:

That the additional repair and maintenance schools programme be approved.

134. AROSFA UPDATE

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that Arosfa was a well-established service providing short term breaks / respite for children with disabilities. The unused left wing at Arosfa had been refurbished to provide two additional places at the facility, and those places brought capacity to accommodate up to four children using flexible care and shared care models.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) explained that the additional service was in addition to the current short break respite provision for up to three children at any one time. Together, the plans would enable the Council to support a maximum of four children at any one time.

The provision of an additional two places for shared care respite would form part of the Council's strategic intent to reduce reliance on expensive Out of County Placements, and would enable Flintshire to support children and young people within the county. That would increase the current capacity Flintshire had to offer and more respite care provision within the vision for strategic ambition.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made at Arosfa be recognised, and the opportunity to provide additional flexible support for up to four children and their families, with the aim of keeping families together and closer to home, be supported.

135. INTER AUTHORITY COLLABORATION TO MANAGE THE SUPPLY OF AGGREGATE MINERALS IN THE NORTH EAST WALES SUB-REGION

Councillor Bithell introduced the report and explained that the Regional Technical Statement Second Review (RTS2) stated that where local authorities were unable to meet their individual indicative apportionment figures for the provision of aggregates, there was a need for all of the local authorities within that sub-region to collaborate in order to ensure that the overall sub-regional apportionments were still met to ensure that a steady supply of those minerals was secured.

The inter-authority collaboration should be agreed in the form of a Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration (SSRC) agreed by all local authorities within the sub-regional area, which would then be used as evidence base for Local Development Plan policy making and a material planning consideration in development management decisions with respect to the sub-regional need for aggregate minerals in the North East Wales Sub-Region.

Approval of the document by all three local authorities in the North East Wales sub-region would demonstrate that the authorities were committed to inter-authority collaboration pertaining the supply of aggregate minerals in line with the sub-regional apportionment figures for sand and gravel, and crushed rock as set out in the RTS2.

It had been considered at Planning Strategy Group on 8th April 2021 where the amended draft SSRC was endorsed. Consultation had been taking place with the partner authorities of Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council in order to approve the draft SSRC.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amended Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration (Version 3, April 2021 – Appendix 2) be approved, and for it to be forwarded to the Welsh

Government and the Planning Inspectorate for consideration as part of the Examination in Public into Flintshire's Local Development Plan; and

- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) concerning editorial i.e. non-material amendments, to the draft Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration should the need arise as a result of recommendations made by Denbighshire County Council or Wrexham County Borough Council following approval of the report.

136. 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, Former Llanfynydd C.P School Playing Field, Llanfynydd**
The transfer of former Llanfynydd C.P. Schools Playing Field, Llanfynydd.
- **Bagillt Bowling Green, Highfield Road, Bagillt**
To formally declare surplus to requirements the premises known as Bagillt Bowling Green, Highfield Road, Bagillt.
- **Former Pavillion, Fron Park Road, Holywell (next to the tennis courts)**
To formally declare surplus to requirements the premises known Former Pavillion, Fron Park Road, Holywell.
- **New Brighton Community Centre, Moel Fammau Road, New Brighton**
To formally declare surplus to requirements the premises known as New Brighton Community Centre, Moel Fammau Road, New Brighton in order to transfer the asset as a Community Asset Transfer (CAT).
- **Housing Benefit Overpayment**
Request to write off Housing Benefit Overpayment of £10,901.96.
- **Council Rent – Application to Write Off Tenancy Arrears**
Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) stipulates that individual bad and irrecoverable debts in excess of £5,000 are considered for write off in conjunction with the releval Cabinet Member.

The decision to write off is in respect of one tenant who is subject to a Debt Relief Order (DRO). Rent arrears of £6,210.08 are included in the DRO which are now irrecoverable as a result of the award of the DRO.

- **Business Rates Write Offs**
Financial Procedure Rules (section 9.6 – Income and Expenditure) stipulate that any individual debt between the values of £5,000 and £25,000 shall be reported to the Corporate Finance Manager / Section 151 Officer for

consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets.

The schedule attached to the report, which was summarised by the category of write off, involve two Business Rate accounts totalling £33,931.02 where the overall debt for the company is greater than £5,000. The write off of these debts is recommended as the companies are either no longer trading or subject to liquidation.

Education and Youth

- **Local Authority Appointed School Governors**
Appointment of Local Authority Governor(s) representatives on school governing bodies in accordance with the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

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).

137. APPROVAL OF COSTS FOR NEW HOUSING SCHEME AT PARK LANE, HOLYWELL

Councillor Hughes introduced the report which sought approval to develop four new Social Rent homes at Park Lane, Holywell.

The report and appendices provided detailed information on the proposed scheme, including location, proposed property types, design and layout and projected build costs.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the development of four new Social Rent homes at Park Lane, Holywell be approved; and
- (b) That prudential borrowing be approved to the value stated in the report (subject to final cost and verification) to fund the proposed development at the location.

138. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

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

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Chair