

CABINET
15TH JUNE 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held virtually via Webex on Tuesday 15th June 2021.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor: Patrick Heesom.

APOLOGY:

Councillor Derek Butler

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2021 were submitted and confirmed as a correct.

RESOLVED:

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

3. MERSEY DEE ALLIANCE (MDA) ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

The Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that, in response to the unprecedented impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) had developed a package of investment priorities for the sub region which would hopefully trigger the recovery of the economy. The package represented a bid to UK and Welsh Governments for funding to deliver on five investment priorities, which were:

- Keeping our businesses competitive;
- Decarbonising industry;
- Skilling for the future;
- Connecting our region; and
- Digital connectivity.

Those priorities were developed in agreement with all of the MDA partners. The level of investment being sought equated to £402m, a combination of capital and revenue funding. The package was developed from November 2020 to March 2021 and was the subject to a “soft launch”. The next steps were to undertake a fuller launch of the package which would be handled by the MDA and engagement would take place with Welsh Government (WG) and UK Government officials on the details of the stimulus package and how it could be successfully progressed.

Members welcomed the stimulus package and thanks were expressed to Councillor Butler for the work he had undertaken on it.

RESOLVED:

That the stimulus package be supported by the Council as a partner to the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA).

4. WELSH GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION – REBALANCING CARE AND SUPPORT

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that Welsh Government (WG) were seeking Local Authority views on proposals to introduce new legislation that addressed the complexity of current local commissioning processes and refocused priorities for the commissioning of care and support.

From the case for change, three critical areas emerged where WG believed focussed action was needed to deliver system-wide improvement to secure the vision for social care:

- Refocusing the fundamentals of the care market – away from the price towards quality and value;
- Reorientation of commissioning practices – towards managing the market and focusing on outcomes; and
- Evolution of integration mechanisms – focusing on joint planning and delivery.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) said that through actions in those areas, the White Paper sought to rebalance the care and support market based on a clear national framework where services were organised regionally and delivered locally. In doing so, they aimed to rebalance social care so that there was neither an over reliance on private sector, or a monopoly in the other direction.

RESOLVED:

That the consultation response to the White Paper be submitted.

5. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that the information presented the annual out-turn of performance against those measures identified for 2020/21.

The out-turn report for the 2020/21 Reporting Measures showed that 67% of the performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets. Where performance could be measured against last year there had been a 52% downturn in trend, with 43% of measures improving on last year's performance and 5% maintaining stable performance. The report was an exception-based report and concentrated on under-performance against target.

The Chief Executive explained that the Reporting Measures were monitored by the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees according to the priority area of interest, with the full report being submitted to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week. Each Committee had been fully satisfied with the performance, noting that any areas of underperformance were explained by the interruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Report would be submitted to County Council in July as formal adoption was required before the end of October.

Members praised the performance of employees during what had been, and continued to be, a very difficult period. It demonstrated the adaptability of the organisation and its employees.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall performance of indicators against the agreed Reporting Measures at the end of year point be noted; and
- (b) That Members be assured by explanations given for underperformance, which in the main were explained by the interruption of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that the Council had a statutory duty to publish an annual report setting out how the Welsh Language Standards (WLS) had been met. The Standards which are required to be met were set out in a Compliance Notice. They were unique to each organisation and specified what each organisation was expected to implement in Welsh, and the time period for compliance.

The report provided an overview of the Council's progress in complying with the WLS and identified areas for further progress and improvement.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Annual Monitoring Report be approved prior to publication, noting areas for further progress and improvement;
- (b) That the Welsh Language Report be included on the forward work programme of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (c) That Cabinet receive a mid-year report on the progress made in-year.

7. DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME PROVISION

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that the Council was committed to ensuring children and young people received high quality care so they were, and felt, safe, loved and supported to develop the skills and resilience to lead fulfilled lives.

The main aim was to support families to care for their own children, and to prevent them, if safe to do so, from becoming looked after. Where children needed to be looked after, the Council would want to ensure that suitable and timely placements could be made. However, there were significant challenges with placement sufficiently. The authority was reliant on the independent sector for Children's Residential Care provision. That provision was very expensive and often in placements that were out of area, which had led to children being placed away from their communities at an increasing, and unsuitable, financial cost to the local authority.

To secure change a commitment had been set to develop a Residential Care Home provision for children and young people, with details of the priorities for the next three financial years through the delivery of the following projects:

1. Arosfa – to support a growing number of disabled children and their parents/carers
2. Ty Nyth – to provide specialist therapeutic assessment and support
3. Emergency Provision – to enable an effective response to crisis situations
4. Small Group Homes – to enable children to live within their local community

The Chief Officer (Social Services) emphasised the importance that the development of an in house residential Children's Care Home was seen as part of a whole system approach to supporting children and young people. It involved a number of complimentary projects to:

Reduce the number of children looked after by:

- Strengthening edge of care provision to support children safely and appropriately at home and prevent them needing to enter the formal looked after care system
- Working to revoke court orders to ensure that children who no longer needed to be in care could safely exit the care system
- Developing a support package for Special Guardianship arrangements in line with the financial and support arrangements for foster carers

Support more children through local authority fostering by:

- Attracting more general foster carers through a Methu Wales/Foster Wales campaign
- Expanding the Mockingbird Hub model

Members welcomed the report and supported the development of an in house Residential Care Home for children which would help with reducing the cost of Out of County placements.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members support the move to become a direct provider of Residential Care for Children; and
- (b) The following four projects be agreed as the priority projects for in-house development: Arosfa, Ty Nyth, Emergency Provision and Small Group Homes.

8. UPDATE ON THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Councillor Banks introduced the report which provided details on how the Council was making progress in delivering its biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Council's Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan 2020-2023, titled 'Supporting Nature in Flintshire' was explained and the progress of action to deliver objectives was reviewed, highlighting key areas of biodiversity work within the county.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) said this was a good example of what could be achieved, commenting on the successful grant applications that had been awarded. It has been submitted to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week where it had been fully supported.

In response to a question from Councillor Bithell, the Chief Officer said that the Council could provide advice to residents on the removal of Japanese Knotweed, but it could not enforce people to remove it.

RESOLVED:

That Members recognise and support the progress with the biodiversity strategy.

9. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council – Crosstree Lane, Ash Lane, Glynne Way and Gladstone Way, Hawarden and Cotton Lane, Mancot – Proposed Prohibition of Waiting, Prohibition of Waiting at any Time and Limited Waiting**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition of Waiting, Prohibition of Waiting at any Time and

Limited Waiting on Crosstree Lane, Ash Lane, Glynne Way and Gladstone Way, Hawarden and Cottage Lane, Mancot.

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).

10. NEWYDD CATERING AND CLEANING – ANNUAL REVIEW

Councillor Mullin introduced the report which provided an overview of NEWydd Catering and Cleaning performance in 2020/21 and highlighted the difficulties and opportunities that had been presented during that time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes made to the NEWydd Business Plan and the revised strategic objectives for the business be approved; and
- (b) That the achievements of NEWydd during this challenging year be noted, and the proposals for the recovery phase and the company's plans for growth for future years be supported.

11. PROCUREMENT OF WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD (WHQS) ENVELOPE WORKS TO COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTIES

Councillor Hughes introduced the report and explained that the Council embarked on an ambitious project to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) to all of its homes by 2020.

The final stage of that programme was in the delivery of 'envelope works'. The programme would reach its conclusion in December 2021 due to the restrictions faced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report proposed to appoint a contractor for the remaining works.

RESOLVED:

That Members support the Direct Award to the contractor named in the report, to carry out the Whole House Envelope Programme, through the Procure Plus framework.

12. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.10 a.m.)

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Chair