

## **COUNTY COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the County Council held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN on Tuesday, 13 May 2014 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Ian Armstrong, Raymond Bartley (Chair), Brian Blakeley (Vice-Chair), Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Bill Cowie, Ann Davies, James Davies, Meirick Davies, Richard Davies, Stuart Davies, Hugh Evans, Peter Evans, Bobby Feeley, Carys Guy, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Colin Hughes, Rhys Hughes, Hugh Irving, Alice Jones, Huw Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Margaret McCarroll, Jason McLellan, Barry Mellor, Win Mullen-James, Bob Murray, Peter Owen, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry, Paul Penlington, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands, David Simmons, Barbara Smith, David Smith, Bill Tasker, Julian Thompson-Hill, Joe Welch, Cefyn Williams, Cheryl Williams and Eryl Williams

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Corporate Director: Economic and Community Ambition (RM), Head of Legal & Democratic Services (GW), Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation (AS), Democratic Services Manager (SP) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

#### **Also in attendance:**

Superintendent Alex Goss, North Wales Police  
Paul Shea, North Wales Police Call Centre Manager

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Geraint Lloyd-Williams and Huw Williams

Apologies for absence were also received from the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director: Customers

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest.

### **3 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS: DUBLIN DECLARATION**

The Chair informed full Council of the Dublin Declaration which had been approved and accepted at Cabinet on 29 April 2014. The Declaration would be signed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Hugh Evans, Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services, Councillor Bobby Feeley and the Chair of the Council, Councillor Raymond Bartley.

By signing the document, Denbighshire County Council were pledging to take forward work based on the World Health Organisation and the United Nations' principles to make their communities more age friendly.

The pledge, known as the Dublin Declaration due to Ireland's presidency of the EU, highlighted the need to create age friendly places, with a key focus on promoting awareness of older people, their rights, needs and potentials, as well as highlighting the positive social, economic and cultural contribution made by them.

Councillor Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Care, Adult and Children's Services and also the Older People's Champion clarified to the Council Members that people were living longer within the community and there was a need to respond positively. It was about allowing people to live independently in their own homes and also to celebrate the ageing population and listen to their views regarding the kind of opportunities to be explored to keep them fit, active and to be able to participate in local community life.

As the number of people living longer increased it would be important that the council considered ways to adapt surroundings and buildings to reflect the needs of an ageing population.

At this point Councillors Hugh Evans, Bobby Feeley and Raymond Bartley signed the Declaration.

#### **4 CHAIR OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The retiring Chair, Councillor Raymond Bartley, delivered a speech during which he reflected upon his time as Chair and highlighted a number of events he had attended over the last twelve months.

The retiring Chair and his consort, his wife Dorothy, had a very busy year attending over 200 events. The most memorable event had been the huge success of the National Eisteddfod in Denbigh. The retiring Chair and his wife, had attended the Eisteddfod every day and been approached by hundreds of people, offering their congratulations for the success of the Eisteddfod, or complimenting the County for their support and commitment to the event. The retiring Chair expressed thanks to each and every member of staff involved in any of the arrangements, from senior management to all those who played their own special and invaluable part in the success. It had been a great team effort and one which Councillor Bartley would always hold with special pride and one which had put Denbighshire on the map in a favourable way.

It had also been a great honour to be able to offer a £2,000 sponsorship to the North Wales Music Festival in St. Asaph. This had been used to provide a musical workshop for pupils within the county's special schools. Part of the sponsorship would also be used for school transportation to enable pupils from a number of schools to attend a variety of workshops arranged for them.

Other highlights included:

- St. Davids Day flag and poetry competition for all Denbighshire Primary school students. This event had been so successful that it would now become an annual event.

- School visits to the Council Chamber
- Denbighshire Schools concerts
- Attending the 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays of citizens of Denbighshire.

Thanks were extended to everyone who attended or supported the events held to raise money for the retiring Chair's two charities.

The retiring Chair also thanked staff from Democratic Services who had held some fund raising events for Ty Gobaith and the sum of £1,724.00 had been raised and forwarded on to Ty Gobaith. The retiring Chair thanked everyone for their generosity and thoughtfulness to others and expressed his pride in the efforts of staff.

The retiring Chair presented cheques from money raised during his time as Chair (in total £4,000) to his chosen charities:

- (i) Eluned Yaxley, Fundraising Manager, accepted the cheque for £ 2000 on behalf of Ty Gobaith/ Hope House Hospice
- (ii) Ian Bellingham, Chief Executive accepted the cheque for £2000 on behalf of St. Kentigerns Hospice, St. Asaph

The retiring Chair then proceeded to present gifts to his Chaplain, Reverend Wayne Roberts, his Consort, the Member Support and Development Manager, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Democratic Services Manager, Member Support Officer, Business Co-ordinator: Leaders Office, Committee Administrators and the Scrutiny Co-ordinator in recognition for their support during the past twelve months.

The retiring Chair offered special thanks to the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director: Customers, the Corporate Director: Economic & Community Ambition and the Head of Finance & Assets for their support and assistance during the past year.

Thanks were also extended to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Hugh Evans for sharing his knowledgeable experience and advice.

Finally, the retiring Chair wished to thank his wife, Dorothy, for her unfaltering support and for her dedicated service to Denbighshire County Council over the years.

At this point, the retiring Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Chair of the County Council for 2014/15. Councillor Joan Butterfield proposed Councillor Brian Blakeley to be elected Chair outlining the personal qualities and experience he would bring to the position.

Councillor Cefyn Williams seconded the proposition adding Councillor Blakeley would make an excellent Ambassador for Denbighshire County Council.

There being no further nominations and following a vote by a show of hands, Councillor Brian Blakeley was unanimously elected Chair of the Council for the 2014/15 municipal year.

The retiring Chair wished the incoming Chair all the best for the future and invested him with the Chair's Chain of Office, following which, he completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The retiring Chair's Consort invested the new Chair's Consort with the Chain of Office.

The incoming Chair paid tribute to the work undertaken by the retiring Chair and presented him with the Past Chair's Badge, plaque and a gift on behalf of the Council.

The incoming Chair named his daughter, Michelle Blakeley, as his consort, Reverend Andy Grimwood as his Chaplain for the year and advised of his chosen charities – Ty Gobaith/ Hope House Hospice and Rhyl Lifeboat.

## **5 VICE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chair sought nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chair.

Councillor Eryl Williams proposed that Councillor Gwyneth Kensler be elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2014/15 municipal year. He referred to Councillor Kensler's vast experience and dedication to the county.

Councillor Hugh Evans seconded the nomination referring to Councillor Kensler's tireless work for the community.

There being no further nominations and following a vote by a show of hands, Councillor Gwyneth Kensler was unanimously elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2014/15 municipal year.

The Chair invested Councillor Kensler with the Vice-Chair's Chain of Office following which she completed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The incoming Vice-Chair's consort was named as Gaynor Morgan Rees, who, unfortunately, had been unable to attend full Council due to prior commitments.

Group Leaders paid tribute to the work of the retiring Chairman over the last twelve months and congratulated Councillors Brian Blakeley and Gwyneth Kensler upon being elected Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

## **6 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

No urgent matters.

## **7 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 April, 2014 were submitted.

Councillor Joe Welch stated his attendance at the meeting of the 8 April 2014 had not been noted on the minutes.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts stated with regards to item 9 Capital Plan, he had raised the issue of procurement which had not been noted within the minutes.

Councillor Arwel Roberts stated with regards to item 11 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, he had asked for an amendment and had not raised an objection.

Matters Arising – Councillor Rhys Hughes enquired regarding item 9, Capital Plan, whether an Environmental Policy now in place. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed he clarify and report back to members.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 April, 2014, be confirmed as a correct record.

## **8 NORTH WALES POLICE - FORCE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (FCC)**

Superintendent Alex Goss, on behalf of North Wales Police, congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chair on their appointment and wished them well for the next 12 months.

Superintendent Alex Goss, Head of the Joint Communication Centre, St. Asaph, North Wales Police, together with Paul Shea, Manager of the Force Communications Centre (FCC) gave a presentation to increase Members' knowledge of the Force Communications Centre (FCC) function and accessibility and also to highlight calls received, including inappropriate 999 calls.

Paul Shea, ran through the presentation. The presentation covered:

- Number of calls received
- Call handling
- Contact numbers and other means of contact
- What happened with a call
- Critical incident management
- Inappropriate 999 calls

Discussion took place and questions were raised by members. The following issues were covered:

- The training of staff prior to commencement of their employment together with ongoing training
- Penalty for inappropriate use of 999 and wasting police time. North Wales Police had a duty of care for everyone in North Wales and the 999 lines were required for essential emergency calls
- Any assistance which councillors and communities could give to eliminate the inappropriate 999 calls would be welcomed
- Follow up information arising from a crime being reported. Options were currently being explored, one being "track my crime", which would be available on the internet, as a possible solution
- Closure of roads due to accidents. Road closures depended on the seriousness of the incident. The police avoided closing roads unless

absolutely necessary. If the decision to close a road was made, North Wales Police would then contact the local authority highways department to take on the road closure

- Local knowledge by staff had been included in the recruitment process. The telephony systems were due to be upgraded to a skill based telephone system. It had also been mooted that in the future, teams would be divided to improve local knowledge
- There had been an increase in mental health calls which had caused issues. On many occasions the calls resulted in an officer being deployed. Superintendent Goss confirmed that mental health problems were not an issue for the police and a police custody suite was not the appropriate place for a person with mental health issues. Professional people should be dealing with these cases, and not the North Wales Police

Superintendent Goss stated that if Members wished to visit the Force Communications Centre, to contact him and he would facilitate the visit.

***RESOLVED*** that members note and take on board the presentation and to contact Superintendent Alex Goss if they wish to visit the Force Communications Centre.

**At this juncture (11.50 a.m.) there was a 20 minute break.**

**Meeting reconvened at 12.10 p.m.**

## **9 ANNUAL DELIVERY DOCUMENT FOR THE CORPORATE PLAN**

The Lead Member for Modernising & Performance, Councillor Barbara Smith and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Hugh Evans, presented a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the Year 3 Delivery Document (2014/15) for the Corporate Plan 2012/17 and the Cabinet Members' Corporate Plan Priorities to be delivered by 2017.

A decision had been required to approve the final draft version of the Corporate Plan Year 3 Delivery Document. A Delivery Document had been created for every year of the Corporate Plan. The purpose of the Delivery Document had been to outline some of the key projects that would be started and/or delivered during the financial year for each of the priorities, with the intention of illustrating how the Corporate Plan affected the work that was being carried out.

With regard to the Cabinet Members' priorities for 2017, Council had been asked to note the Measures of Success that Cabinet Members had identified within their portfolios to deliver against each of the Corporate Plan priorities.

Discussion took place and questions were raised by members. The following issues were raised:

- A large number of abbreviations were contained within the document. The document would be reproduced in a more user friendly format and officers would ensure information had been clearly set out.

- Cutting back 20% of amount of staff travel time. Mobile working including skype and remote access, would reduce the amount of travelling time for staff.
- Parent's preferential school choice. There had been an eligibility criteria for every applicant which each parent would be requested to sign. If the parental choice had been not to send their child to the nearest school to their home, then they would be requested to pay for the provision of school transport.
- Residents Survey. It had been clarified that, in the past, the residents survey had been distributed to random residents by a professional company on behalf of Denbighshire County Council. In 2014, the residents survey had been undertaken in house.
- Councillor Cefyn Williams raised the issue of the standard of the roads within Denbighshire. Councillor Williams stated that the standard of road maintenance had been deteriorating and, therefore, could be the cause, in the future, of a serious accident. The standard of the work carried out on the highways was very poor as, within 18 months of the repairs being carried out, holes would again begin to appear. It had been confirmed that there were insufficient finances to carry out work to all the roads which required improvement within the county. A budget had been set aside each year for highway improvements. The road improvement plans were presented at the Member Area Group meetings for approval or amendment. Councillor David Smith informed members that if they knew of any roads in such a bad state of disrepair, they should contact him and he would pass the information on to the highways section. Councillor Hugh Evans recommended the issue of the state of disrepair of the county's highways be addressed at Scrutiny Committee for a more in-depth discussion.
- Improved living conditions in private sector housing. 320 privately owned dwellings to be adapted to enable disabled people to live independently in their own homes. A breakdown of the information as to who would receive the funding within the private sector had been requested by Councillor Joan Butterfield.

**RESOLVED that:**

- Subject to any agreed changes, Members approve the final draft of the Delivery document to enable it to be translated and published*
- Council notes the content of Appendix 2 relating to each Cabinet Members portfolio*

## **10 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts presented the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report (previously circulated) for Members consideration.

To comply with Article 6.3.7 of the Council's Constitution, Scrutiny Committees must report annually to full Council on their work, make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Following lengthy discussion, the following points were raised:

- Scrutiny member's attendance at Service Challenge Groups and other outside bodies was extremely important and Scrutiny members were urged to attend. If, for any reason, a Scrutiny member was unable to attend they were requested to send a substitute member if possible
- Cabinet Lead Members now attend Scrutiny Committee which assists Scrutiny Members greatly
- A standing item on Cabinet Agenda covered items referred from Scrutiny Committees.
- If a request had been received to add an item to a Scrutiny Committee meeting agenda, it would be presented to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group who then made the decision as to which would be the appropriate Scrutiny Committee to deal with the issue. Alternatively, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group occasionally made the decision that the issue was not for Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise.

Councillor Joan Butterfield expressed her gratitude to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and the support officers for such a clear and precise report.

***RESOLVED*** that Council accept the Annual Report of Council's Scrutiny Committees 2013/14

## **11 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services introduced the Council's Forward Work Programme (previously circulated).

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets highlighted the dates for the forthcoming Budget workshops scheduled to take place in July, 2014.

The dates were as follows:

- 9 July 2014 (all day)
- 14 July 2014 (all day)
- 30 July 2014 (half day – afternoon session)

***RESOLVED*** that subject to the above, the Council Forward Work Programme be approved and noted.

**The meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.**