

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the County Council held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN on Tuesday, 23 February 2016 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Raymond Bartley, Brian Blakeley, Joan Butterfield, Bill Cowie, Ann Davies (Vice-Chair), Stuart Davies, Hugh Evans, Peter Evans, Bobby Feeley, Carys Guy, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Rhys Hughes, Alice Jones, Huw Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler (Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Barry Mellor, Win Mullen-James, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry, Paul Penlington, Pete Prendergast, Arwel Roberts, Anton Sampson, Barbara Smith, David Smith, Julian Thompson-Hill, Joe Welch, Cefyn Williams, Cheryl Williams, Eryl Williams and Huw Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM), Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW), Interim Head of Finance & Assets (JG), Chief Finance Officer (RW), Programme Manager – Procurement (TB) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Armstrong, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Meirick Davies, Richard Davies, Colin Hughes, Hugh Irving, Jason McLellan, Bob Murray, Peter Owen, Gareth Sandilands and Bill Tasker

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Huw Williams declared a personal interest in Item 9 – Treasury Management Strategy.

Councillors Bobby Feeley, Merfyn Parry and Huw Hilditch-Roberts declared a personal interest in Item 10 – Capital Plan.

At this juncture the Chair extended Members best wishes to Councillor Richard Davies who, unfortunately, was in hospital.

Sympathies were also sent to Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies on the passing away of his sister.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services confirmed there were two urgent items:

- (i) Councillor Joan Butterfield requested the absence of a member be discussed at the end of the meeting. This was agreed.
- (ii) The Lead Member for Social Care, Adult and Children's Services, Councillor Bobby Feeley stated that in 2015 the Council had signed the Dublin Declaration which showed commitment to all the needs and rights of our older people. The signed Declaration, which had been produced in both Welsh and English, was presented to the Chair of the Council, Councillor Gwyneth Kensler for display in County Hall reception.

4 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

A list of civic engagements undertaken by the Chair for the period 29 January 2016 to 11 February 2016 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

***RESOLVED** that the list of civic engagements undertaken by the Chair be received.*

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 January 2016, were submitted.

Matters Arising

Page 8, Item 5 – Councillor Alice Jones confirmed that she had received a response from Simon Dean of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) regarding the evidence she had provided of poor care provided to some patients.

Councillor Alice Jones also asked for an update on the future of Tawelfan together with mental health care provision in the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Rhyl.

The Chief Executive confirmed that an update regarding the Royal Alexandra Hospital, had been provided to Members following a recent meeting with BCUHB which concluded they were not ready to commence the project as no project business plan was yet in place. BCUHB officers confirmed commitment to the Royal Alexandra Hospital and a budget had been allocated.

The Corporate Director: Communities confirmed that Officers from BCUHB were due to attend Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 25 February, 2016 to discuss the development of the Community Hospital in Rhyl and Members would have the opportunity to put forward questions at that meeting.

Page 9 – Councillor Eryl Williams stated that within the first bullet point it had stated that various suggestions had been raised at previous budget sessions. Councillor Williams expressed the opinion that the suggestions should have been noted within the minutes to enable Members to be aware of what they were.

Page 11 – Councillor Eryl Williams queried the amount of cuts anticipated to grants. Councillor Williams requested that members be provided with a list of all grants which were to be received including those which would be cut.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that a detailed summary of the finance report was due to be presented at the next Cabinet meeting. There would be a reduction to the single enforcement grant and also to the education improvement grant. Some grants had not yet been announced.

The Chief Executive clarified that the Council had not yet received information regarding all grants. There was a possibility that some would not be announced until the new financial year. Once all the information had been collated, the information would be passed on to all Members.

The Chair reiterated that it had been proposed by Councillor Eryl Williams that all Councillors receive a list of the grants at the end of the financial year together with any cuts proposed. Seconded by Councillor Martyn Holland. There was a unanimous show of hands in support of this proposal.

The Chief Finance Officer stated that grant funding had been discussed at the November 2015 Budget Workshop which had included a current list of all the grants. The grants list would be updated and forwarded to all Councillors.

Page 12, Item 8 – Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts stated that there had been a meaningful discussion which had not been captured correctly within the minutes. He proposed an alteration to reflect what had been said within the Council Chamber on that subject.

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services explained to Councillor Hilditch-Roberts that the presentation by himself had not been completed as Members had requested the item be deferred for a more in-depth discussion.

Councillor Stuart Davies explained that in 2010 Council had discussed the style of minutes which would be attributed to all meetings. As there were comments being received from members regarding the style of minutes he recommended this be analysed for an update which would be favourable to Members.

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services confirmed the house style of minutes had been agreed in 2010 and, therefore, confirmed a report would be put forward to the Democratic Services Committee in May 2016. If any changes were recommended, they would be looked into.

At this juncture the Chair took the opportunity to thank all the minute clerks for their hard work.

Page 13 – Councillor Cefyn Williams asked for an update following the Notice of Motion put forward regarding Right to Buy.

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services confirmed that he would request an update from the Interim Head of Finance and Assets regarding the business case.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Martyn Holland put forward the following Notice of Motion for the consideration of Full Council.

“The Welsh Conservative Group believes that to help improve the public’s perception of the County Council, the county should, in future, provide webcasting for all Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings”.

At this juncture, Councillor Martyn Holland stated that a slight amendment be made to the Notice of Motion which would be “ provide webcasting for all Cabinet, Scrutiny and Corporate Governance Committee meetings held in County Hall, Ruthin”.

Discussion took place and Members stated that meetings should not be webcast in just one location but across the whole of the county.

The Lead Member for Modernisation and Housing, Councillor Barbara Smith, clarified that webcasting had been discussed prior to submission of the Notice of Motion. The grant funding by the Welsh Government for webcasting would come to an end in June 2016 and thereafter the cost would be borne by the Council.

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services confirmed that work had been taking place to assess all options available. Initially Conference Room 1A and reconfiguration of the Council Chamber. The cost of webcasting all sites would be significant. The item would be presented to the Modernisation Board and a report containing costs of all options would then be submitted to Full Council for Members consideration.

Councillor Eryl Williams proposed that following presentation to the Modernisation Board, a report containing all options available and costings be presented back at Full Council. Seconded by Councillor David Smith.

RESOLVED that the Webcasting of future meetings be put forward to the Modernisation Board, thereafter, a report containing all options available together with full costings be presented back at Full Council.

7 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Dewi Owens put forward the following Notice of Motion for the consideration of Full Council.

“Denbighshire County Council

- Values the work of the North Wales Community Health Council
- Expresses concern over the diversion of resources from the North Wales Community Health Council to the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales

- Calls upon the Welsh Government to take action to protect the independence of individual Welsh Community Health Councils”.

Following discussion an amendment was proposed by Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts that the first bullet point be agreed but to defer the second and third bullet points until a presentation by the CHC at Council Briefing which was due to take place on 7 March, 2016. Seconded by Councillor Raymond Bartley.

RESOLVED that Members:

- Value the work of the North Wales Community Health Council
- Agreed to defer:
 - o Expresses concern over the diversion of resources from the North Wales Community Health Council to the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales, and
 - o Calls upon the Welsh Government to take action to protect the independence of individual Welsh Community Health Councils until a presentation by CHC at Council Briefing took place on 7 March, 2016.

8 COUNCIL TAX

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Council Tax 2016/17 and Associated Matters Report (previously circulated).

Councillor Thompson-Hill particularly referred to:

- The main features of the budget as approved on 26 January 2016
- Observations of the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of budget estimates
- A breakdown of the precepts from City, Town and Community Councils and the Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales, and
- Recommendations for the levels of Council Tax for 2016/17.

Following a discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Council unanimously:

- note that it was necessary for the County Council, as the Billing Authority, to consider the precepts received from the Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales and the City, Town & Community Councils and declare the Council Tax levels for the 2016/17 financial year*
- approve the recommendation that the amounts calculated by the Council for the 2016/17 financial year, in accordance with Sections 32 to 34 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act) and Alteration of Requisite Calculations (Wales) Regulations 2008 be as Appendix A section 3*
- approve the recommendation that the amounts calculated by the Council for the 2016/17 financial year, in accordance with Sections 34 (2) to 36 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act) be as Appendix A section 4*
- approve the amounts of Council Tax for the 2016/17 financial year for each of the categories of dwellings be as shown in Appendix C*

- (v) *approve the level of discount for Class A, B, and C as prescribed under the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 2014 be set at zero for the financial year 2016/17 being the term of this Council with the caveat that this is dependent on no changes to legislation or local conditions.*

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Lead Member for Finance & Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Treasury Management Strategy Report (previously circulated) seeking approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2016/17 together with the Prudential Indicators 2016/17 to 2018/19.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management required the Council to approve the TMSS and Prudential Indicators annually.

The TMSS showed how the Council would manage its investments and borrowing for the coming year and sets the policies within which the Treasury Management function operates. The report also outlined the likely impact of the Corporate Plan on this Strategy and on the Prudential Indicators.

Council considered the report and following discussion, it was –

RESOLVED that Council approves:

- (i) *The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2016/17 detailed in Appendix 1 to the report*
- (ii) *The setting of Prudential Indicators for 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19 detailed in Appendix 1 Annex A to the report*
- (iii) *The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as detailed in Appendix 1 Section 6 to the report.*

At this juncture (11.22 a.m.) there was a 20 minute break.

The meeting reconvened at 11.42 a.m.

10 CAPITAL PLAN

The Lead Member for Finance & Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Capital Plan 2015/16 report (previously circulated), to provide Members with an updated Capital Plan including an update on major projects and the Corporate Plan.

Councillor Thompson-Hill guided Members through the report and drew attention to the following sections –

- Summary capital plan funding
- Summary capital plan by Head of Service

- Details of scheme estimates
- Major capital project updates
- Details of recommendations by Strategic Investment Group
- Capital Bids recommended for approval
- Summary of Business Cases for investment in the Ruthin Primary Area.

The full Capital Plan had last been reported to Council in February 2015. Monthly updates had been provided to Cabinet. The estimated Capital Plan was now £46.9million. The plan had been updated very slightly since being reported to Cabinet on 16 February 2016.

Councillor Thompson-Hill responded to questions raised regarding various aspects of the Capital Plan and specific allocations including progress with various schemes. Main areas of discussion focused on the following –

- Flood Prevention – would St. Asaph be included under “Denbigh and others”. It was confirmed that this information would be obtained and relayed to Councillors.
- Rhyl Harbour Development – retention of monies was for snagging following completion of the project.
- West Rhyl Housing Improvement – further information would be obtained and relayed to Councillors.
- Bridges – throughout the county there were a number of bridges which required improvement works. Councillor Martyn Holland confirmed he would submit a proposal form for this item to be raised at Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Eryl Williams requested it be noted his thanks to officers for their work involved with the school projects.
- Councillor Joan Butterfield also congratulated officers for their work on the Capital Plan. Councillor Butterfield then stated that Member Area Groups (MAGs) should benefit from some of the savings. She requested that this be discussed at a budget workshop. Seconded by Councillor Cefyn Williams.

The Leader, Councillor Hugh Evans, stated this had been an extremely positive report. Difficult decisions had been made and the Council had made savings/cuts of £28million. There had been robust financial processes in place and good project management to enable continued investment in the community.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) *Members note the latest position on the 2015/16 element of the Capital Plan and the update on major projects*
- (ii) *Members support the recommendation of Cabinet as detailed in Appendix 5 and summarised in Appendix 6*
- (iii) *To approve the 2016/17 Capital Plan.*

11 CONSIDERATION OF FINAL DRAFT PROCUREMENT STRATEGY & CPR'S

The Lead Member for Finance & Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Final Draft Procurement Strategy & CPRs report (previously circulated) for approval and adoption.

The new Procurement Strategy had been developed following extensive consultation. It broadly followed the format of other Council strategy documents and was designed to be short, high-level, but deliverable. The Strategy was underpinned by seven key principles that were intended to guide all the procurement activity, which included duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and a requirement to ensure that due regard was made in all purchasing decisions to local economic prosperity.

Development of the new Procurement Strategy and revised CPR's had been led by the internal Procurement Transformation Board whose membership included the Chair of Performance Scrutiny and the Chair of Corporate Governance Committee. There has also been ongoing involvement in the development from the Federation of Small Businesses, North Wales Business Council and Business Wales.

Reports had been presented to the Corporate Governance Committee, Economic & Community Ambition Board, Senior Leadership Team, and Cabinet Briefing. There had been meetings with all political Groups and Group Leaders, regular 1-2-1 meetings with key internal stakeholders and a formal consultation process with internal and external stakeholders had taken place which closed on 31 December 2015.

RESOLVED that Members:

(i) Approve and adopt the Procurement Strategy

(ii) Approve and adopt the revised CPR's.

Both documents to "go live" from 1 April 2016.

12 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED that the Council Forward Work Programme be approved and noted.

URGENT MATTER

Councillor Joan Butterfield requested approval from Council for the absence of Councillor Ian Armstrong until the end of May 2016 due to his recent illness.

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services clarified that this was because if a Member does not attend a meeting within six months of their last attendance, they cease to be a Member. Councillor Ian Armstrong's absence would come to a six month period on 7 April 2016. Councillor Joan Butterfield requested approval of the absence so that the six month rule did not apply.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Stuart Davies and seconded by Councillor Cefyn Williams.

RESOLVED that Members unanimously agreed to the approval of absence of Councillor Ian Armstrong until the end of May 2016.

At this juncture, best wishes were sent to both Councillor Ian Armstrong and Councillor Peter Owen from all Members of Council.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 p.m.