

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the County Council held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN on Tuesday, 5 November 2013 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ian Armstrong, Raymond Bartley (Chair), Brian Blakeley (Vice-Chair), Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Bill Cowie, Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Richard Davies, Stuart Davies, Hugh Evans, Peter Evans, Bobby Feeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Colin Hughes, Hugh Irving, Huw Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Margaret McCarroll, Jason McLellan, 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, Eryl Williams and Huw Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM), Corporate Director; Economic and Community Ambition (RM), Principal Solicitor (SC), HR Services Manager (CR), Democratic Services Manager (SP) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council meeting.

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill informed Members that Councillor James Davies' wife, Nina, gave birth to a healthy baby boy yesterday, 6lb 11 ½ ozs. The Chair wished to send best wishes and congratulations to both James and Nina.

Susan Cordiner, Principal Solicitor, was attending the meeting in place of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Councillor Gwyneth Kensler presented to the Chair a petition on behalf of the residents of Beacons Hill, Denbigh who were attempting to implement a one way system on Beacons Hill.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors James Davies, Peter Duffy, Carys Guy, Rhys Hughes, Alice Jones and Barry Mellor

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Stuart Davies, Huw Hilditch Roberts, Hugh Evans and Meirick Lloyd Davies declared a personal interest in item 6 – Workforce Efficiencies.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

A list of civic engagements undertaken for the Council by the Chair, for the period 4 October 2013 – 25 October 2013 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chair reported on the successful primary school visits which were proving extremely popular. Future visits for various primary schools had been booked until April 2014.

The Food Festival in Llangollen had been a great success and the Chair wished to express his thanks to all staff and everyone involved.

The Chair wished to send his congratulations to everyone involved with the Denbighshire Community Sports Awards and also the Excellence Denbighshire Awards.

***RESOLVED** that the list of civic engagements undertaken for the Council by the Chair be received and comments of the chair be noted.*

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 8 October 2013 were submitted.

Page 8, Item 7. Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts referred to the Annual Performance Review as the questions he had raised were regarding targets and aspirations, not as stated in the minutes, which had been answered by the Head of Business Planning and Performance during the meeting.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 8 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.*

6 WORKFORCE EFFICIENCIES

Councillor Barbara Smith presented the Workforce Efficiencies Report (previously circulated) to provide Full Council with an update on the workforce negotiations and, following a positive result to the Trade Unions' ballot of their members, to gain Full Council's agreement to the implementation.

As part of the agreement, the trade unions committed to further negotiate on two issues:

- Permanent savings of £72k required by the 2012/2015 Medium Term Financial Plan, and
- Cash savings of £143k in 2014/15 to cover the costs of the transitional arrangements agreed to support implementation of the changes to essential car user allowances.

Negotiations had taken place and the Local Joint Consultative Committee (LJCC) had been kept updated.

In September, 2013, Trade Unions balloted their members on the following proposals:

- From 1 October, 2013, incremental increases due for new starters and current employees with new posts would take place in either April or October, with the first incremental increase being effective after a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 18 months after commencement in role, dependent upon the commencement date. Increments thereafter would be paid annually in either April or October. The proposal would apply to all staff with the exception of teachers. It was estimated the change would generate sufficient savings to meet the outstanding £72k saving required by the 2012/15 Medium Term Financial Plan on a recurrent basis.
- In 2014/15 only, employees would have their pay reduced by 1 day and in return would be able to take an additional day's leave. This proposal would apply to all staff (including senior staff), other than school based staff. It had been calculated this change would generate sufficient savings to meet the £143k transitional costs on a non-recurrent basis.

The recuperation of the additional day's leave payment would be divided by between 12 and 15 months so the amount was not deducted from employees in one month. Discussions were still to take place with Trade Unions regarding the finalities of the agreement.

County Councillors could voluntarily give up one day of their allowance. If any Councillor wished to give up one day's allowance they should write or email to the Head of Finance and Assets. If all Councillors were to give up one day of their allowance the saving would amount to approximately £3,000.

Teachers were not included within the savings plan due to the fact that teachers terms and conditions were not negotiated at local level, but at national level. If teachers were to be requested to take a one day pay cut it would not be classed as a saving due to the fact that the Welsh Government would request the monies be kept within the Education Budget.

A vote was taken which resulted in a unanimous support of the recommendation.

RESOLVED that Full Council agreed to the proposed permanent change to increments for new starters and appointments to promoted posts, and the day's additional unpaid leave for 2014/15 only as the means of meeting the remaining Workforce Efficiencies savings from the current Medium Term Financial Plan.

7 DRAFT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY AMBITION STRATEGY

Councillor Hugh Evans presented the Draft Economic & Community Ambition Strategy report (previously circulated) for Full Council to approve the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Since February 2013, a Task and Finish Group had been working to develop Denbighshire's first Economic & Community Ambition Strategy in line with the Corporate Plan priority of developing the local economy.

The vision statement for Denbighshire's Economic & Community Ambition had been confirmed as:

- Developing opportunities and creating confidence.
- Working together to make Denbighshire a place where:
 - Businesses, new and established, grow and flourish
 - Towns and communities were vibrant and prosper
 - Residents could enjoy a good quality of life and participate in the local economy.

The following had been identified as priority areas for action and form the core structure of the Strategy:

- The right infrastructure for growth
- Businesses that were supported and connected
- Maximised economic strengths / opportunities
- A high quality skilled workforce
- Vibrant towns & communities
- A well promoted Denbighshire.

Economic activity in Denbighshire generally was slightly above the North Wales level but below that of the UK as a whole. This masked pockets of significant economic activity and deprivation, with areas of Rhyl and upper Denbigh among the 10% most deprived in Wales.

Along with the other five North Wales Councils, Denbighshire was a member of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. The Board was committed to working together to transform and grow the economy in North Wales.

An indepth discussion ensued:

- Eyesore sites were to be addressed across the county as these sites had an impact upon tourism. It was agreed a balanced approach across the Local Authority would be required.
- Issues had been identified in relation to Digital Denbighshire. A strategic vision for digital needs and opportunities was lacking. The roll out of Superfast Cymru Fibre Broadband would improve performance overall, but it was possible that some of the most rural communities would remain poorly served.
- The Rhyl Going Forward programme which included the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project and the recently completed harbour bridge, was underway.

- If Denbighshire were successful in their work to deliver the right infrastructure for growth in the county then the indicators would show whether the Strategy was having a positive impact.
- Brown road signs on the A55 with directions through to St. Asaph would be reflected in the Town & Area Plans. Unfortunately, the signs were an extremely costly way of promoting the area.
- Promotion of businesses within the county would be progressed.
- Denbighshire close working with Denbighshire Enterprise Agency would continue.

A vote was taken which resulted in a unanimous support of the recommendation.

RESOLVED that Council notes the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group to prepare the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy and Delivery Plan and approves them for implementation.

At this juncture the Chief Executive confirmed to Full Council that the Williams Report would be published before the end of the year which would recommend Local Government re-organisation. The report would confirm the change in the number of Local Authorities recommended for Wales.

Members called for a full and frank discussion to take place regarding the issue of what would be best for Denbighshire. If Members agreed to the suggestion of three Local Authorities for North Wales, the Chief Executive confirmed he would put this forward to the Welsh Government.

It was agreed that the item would be added to the Full Council Agenda on 3 December.

A vote took place by show of hands and the proposal was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED that Local Government reorganisation be added to the Agenda for the Full Council meeting taking place on 3 December 2013.

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

Meeting reconvened at 12.10 p.m.

8 SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

Councillor David Smith presented the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the provisions of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 and request that they approve the suggested delegated powers for Licensing Committee to hear oral representations.

Metal theft had a major impact on the economy. To address the issue, the regulation of scrap metal dealers, introduced in the 1960s had been revised. The Government had introduced the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 received Royal Assent on 28 February 2013 and came into force on 1 October 2013.

The Act would maintain Local Authorities as the principal regulator of these industries. The Act created two different types of Scrap Metal Licence, either a "Site Licence" or a "Mobile Collectors Licence". A Mobile Collector would have to have a licence in every Local Authority are in which they operated.

Under the 2013 Act, councils would be able to refuse to grant a licence where the applicant was judged not to be a suitable person to operate as a scrap metal dealer.

The report had been presented and approved at Cabinet on 24 September 2013.

Councillor David Smith agreed to a request from Councillor David Simmons to examine the legislation pertaining to the displaying of identity and authorisation badges by Scrap Metal Dealers.

Councillor Smith also agreed to a request from Councillor Win Mullen James to examine the use of Traffolyte as an alternative to metal being used.

A vote was taken which resulted in a unanimous support of the recommendation.

RESOLVED that Council Members approve the suggested delegated powers for Licensing Committee to hear oral representations:

- To grant or refuse a Scrap Metal Licence or a collector's licence
- To grant or refuse a variation to a licence
- To revoke a licence.

9 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Colin Hughes put forward the following Notice of Motion for the consideration of Full Council.

"That this council prohibits access to payday loan companies websites from council run libraries, buildings and wifi spots to do its utmost to ensure that vulnerable people do not use council facilities to access unaffordable and sometimes irresponsible sources of money lending. Instead the council will direct people to credit unions and the CAB in the hope that good advice will better guide them through their financial problems."

Discussion took place and the notice of motion was proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED that the Notice of Motion put forward by Councillor Colin Hughes to prohibit access to payday loan company websites from council run libraries, buildings and wifi spots be carried.

10 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill presented a Notice of Motion on behalf of the Denbighshire Conservative Group for the consideration of Full Council.

The Notice of Motion was as follows:

“In light of the recent critical national average coverage of Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and our long standing concerns about the running of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, we call upon the recently appointed Chair of the Board to attend the next meeting of Full Council. We would like him to explain his plans for turning around the reputation of the Board and Health Service in general across North Wales and here in Denbighshire. We want him also to tell us how he will rebuild the confidence of staff, patients and the general public in our local health services.”

Discussion took place and the Notice of Motion was proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED that the Notice of Motion put forward by the Denbighshire Conservative Group to call upon the recently appointed Chair of the Board to attend the next Full Council be carried.

11 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Gwyneth Kensler presented a Notice of Motion on behalf of the Denbighshire Plaid Cymru Group for the consideration of Full Council.

The Notice of Motion was as follows:

“Council notes that:

- Local government will see substantial real term cuts in the years ahead as a result of the Spending Review of the Westminster Government and its knock-on effect on the budget of the Welsh Government.
- Extending the current Financial Transaction Tax on shares to other asset classes such as bonds and derivatives could raise £20bn of additional revenue in the UK a year; and
- At least 11 European states including France, Germany, Italy and Spain are moving ahead with FTTs on shares, bonds and derivatives estimated to raise £30bn a year.

Council believes that:

- Revenues from the FTT could help repair the damage caused by cuts in public services;
- As key deliverers of local services and providers of employment, local government deserves to receive a significant proportion of FTT revenues.

Council resolves that:

- The UK government should extend the current FTT on shares to other asset classes, such as bonds and derivatives, and ensure that revenue is equitably distributed to devolved administrations.

Council further resolves to:

- Write to the UK Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, stating this council’s support for extending FTTs.”

Discussions took place and Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill expressed his misgivings of the scheme following investigations he had made.

The Notice of Motion was proposed and seconded.

Councillor Arwel Roberts requested a Recorded Vote which was agreed by a number of Members.

A recorded vote was taken and accordingly, the following Members voted in favour of the Motion:

Raymond Bartley, Brian Blakeley, Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Bill Cowie, Peter Evans, Bobby Feeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Huw Jones, Peter Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Margaret McCarrol, Jason McLellan, Win Mullen-James, Robert Murray, Paul Penlington, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands, David Simmons, Bill Tasker, Cefn Williams, and Cheryl Williams

The following Members voted against the Motion:

Ian Armstrong, Meirick Lloyd Davies, Ann Davies, Hugh Evans, Martyn Holland, Colin Hughes, Hugh Irving, Peter Owen, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry, Barbara Smith, David Smith, Julian Thompson-Hill, Joe Welch, and Huw Williams

RESOLVED that the Notice of Motion put forward by the Denbighshire Plaid Cymru Group to extend the current Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) on shares to other asset classes such as bonds and derivatives and also to write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer stating that the Council's support for extending FTTs be carried.

At this juncture, the Chair offered his thanks to all Members for their constructive debates during the morning.

The Chair reminded Members of the Special Budget Seminar taking place on 9 December 2013.

The Chair also reminded Members of the Carol Service taking place in St. Asaph Cathedral at 7.00 p.m. on 10 December.

12 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the Council's Forward Work Programme, previously circulated, and Members agreed that the following new items be included in the Forward Work Programme:

- 3 December 2013 – Local Government Re-organisation
- 3 December 2013 – Following passing of Notice of Motion, Dr Higson, Chair of the Board to attend to explain his plans for turning around the reputation of the Board and Health Service in general across North Wales. Also to explain how he will rebuild the confidence of staff, patients and the general public in the local health service.

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

The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.