

# COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

**DATE:** Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016  
**TIME:** 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm  
**VENUE:** Gwernymynydd Village Centre, Gwernymynydd, Flintshire, CH7 4AT

## PART ONE

### ATTENDANCE

#### 1. Introductions & Apologies

##### 1.1. Present

###### **Flintshire County Council:**

- |                                                              |                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Chief Officer – Governance                                 | Gareth Owens (GO)        |
| • Leader of Flintshire County Council                        | Aaron Shotton (AS)       |
| • Chief Officer – Organisational Change                      | Neal Cockerton (NC)      |
| • Corporate Finance Manager                                  | Gary Ferguson (GF)       |
| • Strategy Manager – Planning & Environment                  | Andy Roberts (AR)        |
| • Corporate Business and Communications<br>Executive Officer | Karen Armstrong (KA)     |
| • Policy & Performance Support Officer                       | Sam Perry (SP) - Minutes |

###### **Town & Community Councils:**

- Argoed Community Council
- Gwernymynydd Community Council
- Leeswood Community Council
- Mostyn Community Council
- Northop Community Council
- Northop Hall Community Council
- Saltney Town Council
- Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor Community Council

###### **Other Representatives:**

- Brian Grew - One Voice Wales (BG)

##### 1.2. Apologies

###### **Flintshire County Council:**

- |                                          |                     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Chief Executive                        | Colin Everett (CE)  |
| • Chief Officer – Organisational Change  | Ian Bancroft (IBan) |
| • Chief Officer – Education & Youth      | Ian Budd (IB)       |
| • Chief Officer – Planning & Environment | Andrew Farrow (AF)  |

###### **Town & Community Councils:**

- Bagillt Community Council
- Brynford Community Council

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- Caerwys Town Council
- Connah's Quay Town Council
- Halkyn Community Council
- Mold community Council
- Sealand Community Council
- Whitford Community Council
- Ysceifiog Community Council

GO thanked Gwernymynydd Community Council for hosting the meeting and providing the venue.

The Chair of Gwernymynydd Community Council opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and gave a brief overview of the agenda for the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record of events. There were no matters arising.

## PART TWO

### PRESENTATION TOPICS

#### 2. Budget Position – Financial Update

NC introduced himself and GF to the Town and Community Councils.

A presentation on the “Council Fund Budget for 2017-18” was provided by GF giving an update on the latest position on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget for 2017-18 following the receipt of the Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement received on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Key points included:

- A reminder of the projected “Budget gap” for 2017-18.
- An overview of the three ways in which Flintshire County Council are going to review the budget – 1) Service reform, 2) Corporate financial stewardship and 3) Working with Welsh Government.
- An overview of the headlines of the Provisional Settlement and the impact of the provisional settlement for Flintshire.
- A summary of the overall position for Flintshire.
- An outline of the next steps for Flintshire and key dates.

AS informed Town and Community Councils that there are Public Engagement Events arranged (Refer to AOB Item) and these will look at the budget in more detail.

#### Questions & Answers:

##### **Is the provisional settlement better than expected?**

Yes, the provisional budget is better than expected/anticipated however, there is still a way to go to balance the budget for 2017-18.

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## **Will there be any further reductions to front line services?**

No, Flintshire County Council are not planning to make any further cuts to front line services.

## **Will reserves be used to balance the budget?**

Yes, Flintshire County Council are using their reserves to help balance the budget this year and will do so for 2017-18.

## **What does the work with Welsh Government involve?**

Flintshire County Council are lobbying to get a better deal for Flintshire in terms of the distribution of revenue grant funding and more local choice on charging.

## **Inflation – If there is an escalation, what will the impact be and how will this be met?**

Some initial work has already been undertaken to look at certain target areas but this will be looked at in more detail once the amount is known.

## **Action:**

Circulate an electronic copy of the presentation slides to Town and Community Councils.

**[SP to action]**

## **3. Improvement Plan**

A presentation on the Improvement Plan was provided by KA. A copy of the slides were circulated to those present.

The presentation provided Town and Community Councils with an update in relation to; 1) performance against the Improvement Plan for 2015-16, 2) an update on the current Improvement Plan for Flintshire and 3) a brief overview of the proposals for 2017 onwards. Key points included:

- Despite increasing budget pressures the Council continues to make good progress against its priority areas - Good progress was made across the 8 priority areas identified for 2015-16 with progress being green for all areas apart from two which had an amber progress RAG.
- KA provided a few examples of where good progress had been achieved as outlined in the presentation slides.
- Flintshire County Council's progress has been endorsed by the Wales Audit Office.
- The full Annual Performance report and appendices will be published on the Council's website on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016.
- The Improvement Plan for 2016-17 has 8 priority areas and 16 sub priority areas with progress being measured quarterly against activities, risks and measures.
- The next monitoring report is due in December 2016.
- The Plan will change for 2017 onwards to incorporate a 5 year vision and strategic plan. The Plan will have more outcome based themes and will better link to partnership and regional themes. Plan due to be published in June 2017.

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GO explained that the Improvement Plan must be approved by statute by 30<sup>th</sup> June however, the elections take place next year and as a result there may be a new administration. The new administration will require time to consider the Plan therefore the timeframe will be tight and the publish date of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 may slip as a result.

Patrick Heesom expressed concern around the skills and learning and the collapse of youth services in his area.

### **Questions & Answers:**

#### **Social Enterprises – To what extent is externalisation taking place? Is this being considered as part of the budget?**

These have featured for the past 3-4 years within the Improvement Plan. Flintshire are keen as a Council to support social enterprises, the ones in the current plan are not related to externalisation however, there have been previous examples of this e.g. Connah's Quay Swimming Pool was a good example of this. Budget implications are considered as part of the process, although there was not a current financial risk for Connah's Quay swimming pool there was a risk due to the level of subsidy received for future years whereby, the Council had limited control so a decision was made to go down the externalisation route in this case and it's worked well.

#### **Actions:**

Circulate an electronic copy of the presentation slides to Town and Community Councils.

**[SP to action]**

Provide a further update in relation to 1) the new themes for 2017 and 2) detail around the content of the revised Plan at the next meeting of the County Forum in February 2017.

**[KA to action]**

#### **4. Public Services Board**

KA provided a brief overview of the Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) to Town and Community Councils. Key points discussed include:

- The PSB being a statutory body comprising of 4 statutory partners – Flintshire County Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Services and Natural Resources Wales. Other partners are invited members of the PSB e.g. North Wales Police, Coleg Cambria, Public Health Wales, Glyn Dwr University etc.
- PSB meetings take place quarterly, the last meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and the next meeting is scheduled to take place in January 2017.
- The request that came from Town and Community Councils via the County Forum meeting in June, to have representation on the Flintshire PSB, was agreed. As an interim measure, until an alternative agreed representative is determined, Brian Grew from One Voice Wales was invited to attend the PSB meeting last week.

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There was a discussion around how best to select a suitable representative in going forward and what would be required of them as the nominated representative. A number of possible ways of selecting a representative were discussed e.g. nominations put forward and names picked out of a hat, nominations put forward with nominees going through a skills matching and/or short interview process to be selected, names put forward with a vote at the next County Forum meeting to determine representative etc.

It was agreed that a job spec would be prepared and sent out to all Town and Community Councils with a copy of the PSB Terms of Reference for them to nominate suitable candidates. A further discussion to take place at the next meeting of the County Forum to determine the selection process. It was felt that this might be easier to determine when interest is known and Town and Community council's know how many candidates put themselves forward. Town and Community Councils felt that they would rather take more time to determine a representative to ensure the right person is selected rather than rushing the process and the wrong person be nominated.

### **Actions:**

Prepare a job spec for the Town and Community Council PSB representative which gives a clear indication of what will be required of them in going forward and circulate this along with a copy of the PSB Terms of Reference to Town and Community Councils.

**[KA to action]**

Notify Karen Armstrong / Sam Perry of any interest in relation to PSB representation.

**[All Town and Community Councils]**

Find out what other PSB Boards have adopted in determining Town and Community Council representation and report back.

**[BG to action]**

Update to be provided at the next County Forum meeting in February 2017.

**[KA to action]**

## **PART THREE**

### **COUNCIL TOPICS**

#### **5. Local Development Plan**

A copy of the "Flintshire Local Development Plan (LDP) Public Consultation" document on the options for future development was circulated for information and AR gave a verbal update in relation to the LDP. Key points included:

- An ambitious timetable around the LDP has been set but good progress is being made.
- The delivery timetable has been sent to Welsh Government following Cabinet resolution in June 2016.
- A number of public Stakeholder Engagement Events have recently taken place.

## **COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE**

- No key decisions have been made as yet and no growth or spatial options have been decided.
- There is an ongoing commitment to discuss the LDP with Town and Community Councils. Open offer from AR to attend individual Town and Community Council meetings to further discuss if required.
- The Council's website will be kept up to date around the LDP - As and when new information is available, it will be on the website.
- The public consultation document provided will be available on the Council's website from tomorrow.

Patrick Heesom informed AR that he had attended the public engagement events and was very pleased. He felt that there had been a real change in terms of the delivery plan and felt that Flintshire County Council are now on the right track in relation to the LDP and wished AR well.

### **Questions & Answers:**

#### **What is the timescale for delivery?**

The LDP is a 5 year Plan that started in 2015. AR explained that the LDP is different from the UDP in the fact that while the plan is being developed it doesn't carry any weight.

#### **Is there any protection for land banking?**

No, Flintshire County Council are looking at shorter term planning permission being granted to help address land banking issues.

#### **Planning application questions**

In response to a couple of enquiries around planning applications, AR explained that Flintshire has an obligation to adhere to the TAN1 Planning Guidance when considering applications and as a result have to give significant weight to any applications that support the housing shortage. AR went on to say that the Council are lobbying Welsh Government to change the TAN guidance/policy as they don't feel that it's right but they do currently have a responsibility to carry it out.

### **Actions:**

Send a link to the Consultation document on the Planning page of the Council's website to Town and Community Councils.

**[SP to action]**

Update the County Forum webpage to include a link to the Planning/LDP webpage.

**[SP / LM to action]**

Interested Town and Community Council's to contact AR if they wish him to attend a meeting or further discuss the LDP or Community Plans.

**[All Town and Community Councils]**

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### 6. Local Elections Planning

GO provided a brief overview of the key dates in relation to the Local Election timetable. Key points included:

- Publish election notice – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- Nominations close – 4pm on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
- Last opportunity to withdraw nominations – 4pm on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
- Town and Community Councils need to be prepared that the nomination closing date is exactly the same as the withdrawal of nominations.
- Elections – May 2017.
- County Council Ward votes will be counted overnight – Thursday to Friday.
- Town and Community Council's – Start counting from 12 noon on the Friday.
- Candidate briefings will be offered.
- Count will take place in the Sports Hall at Coleg Cambria as per previous arrangements.
- Access to the count is going to be a lot stricter than it has been in previous years.
- A full timetable is available on the Council's website and a link will be made available on the County Forum webpage.

### Questions & Answers:

**Is there any way that the timetable can be amended to give sometime between the deadline for nominations to be received and the deadline for nominations to be withdrawn? Apparently Chirk Council have amended this to give an hour between the two deadlines.**

GO confirmed that Councils do not have any power to change the timetable but agreed to look at this and report back. GO has looked into this as agreed and Chirk Council has not allowed any extra time to withdraw nominations after the period for submitting them has closed.

### Actions:

Update the County Forum webpage to include a link to the Elections page/timetable.

**[SP / LM to action]**

### 7. Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

In the absence of IBan, NC provided an update in relation to CAT's and the proposals for play area provision. Key points included:

- The revised Community Asset Transfer scheme was launched 18 months ago.
- There will be no closure of play areas in 2016-17 or 2017-18. This will give Town and Community Council's time to review current provision.
- The Council estimates it can sustain 4 play areas per community plus skate parks and wheeled facilities.

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- IBan would welcome the opportunity to meet with Town and Community Councils to; 1) identify the play areas within their communities, 2) determine which of these are classed as priority play areas, 3) progress any play area CAT's and 4) discuss and explore options to move forward.

There was a general discussion around the funding available via CAT's. Argoed expressed a view that the play area grants should be used based on need rather than supporting CAT's.

### **Questions & Answers:**

#### **What is the position with regards to Halls and CAT?**

The position remains unchanged. Very good progress is being made. Complex assets are being worked through/addressed.

#### **Given that good progress is being made, does that mean the pressure is off for the small Community Centres and Halls?**

Assets on the list that have not yet transferred via a CAT will remain on the list and given the financial pressures that the Council face, they will be at risk in going forward.

#### **Is Flintshire County Council open to alternative suggestions around play area provision?**

Yes. The Council is open to any creative, alternative solutions in going forward. The Council is more than happy to meet representatives from interested Town and Community Councils to explore alternative solutions. Any suggestions to be sent to Ian Bancroft.

#### **What happens after next year's budget, could the position change again?**

No. Flintshire County Council are looking to maintain these arrangements in going forward.

### **Actions:**

Forward any alternative solutions around play provision to Ian Bancroft.

**[All Town and Community Councils to action]**

Contact Ian Bancroft to request individual community meetings to further discuss play area provision within your community area and discuss and explore possible options to move forward

**[Town and Community Councils to action]**



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## PART FOUR

### TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL TOPICS

#### **8. Community Council's Development Plan – Gwernymynydd Community Council**

Chris Bradshaw provided a brief overview of Gwernymynydd's Community Council's Development Plan:

- Gwernymynydd's Community Plan was published in May 2011 and has a 20 year cycle. It is an evidence based Plan and was the first Plan of its kind in Flintshire.
- A copy of the Plan can be found on Gwernymynydd Community Council's website: [www.community-council.org.uk/gwernymynydd/](http://www.community-council.org.uk/gwernymynydd/)

There was a discussion around how Community Plans will fit with the LDP and AR offered to support any Town and Community Council that wants to develop a Plan for their community and/or discuss how these Plans fit with the LDP and offered to meet with any interested Councils.

#### **Action:**

Interested Town and Community Councils to contact AR to arrange to meet/progress.  
**[Town and Community Councils]**

#### **9. Gulley Cleaning Schedule – Whitford Community Council**

Whitford Community Council were unable to attend the meeting and asked that their item be withdrawn.

#### **10. Grass Cutting Schedule – Whitford Community Council**

Whitford Community Council were unable to attend the meeting and asked that their item be withdrawn.

#### **11. Play Areas – Trelawnydd & Gwaenysgor Community Council**

Trelawnydd & Gwaenysgor Community Council informed NC that they had written a letter to Ian Bancroft asking a number of questions and they felt that the response that they had received did not satisfactorily answer the questions raised. NC promised that a full detailed response be provided.

**[NC / IBan to action]**

#### **12. County Forum - Trelawnydd & Gwaenysgor Community Council**

Trelawnydd & Gwaenysgor Community Council expressed concerns over the last minute organisation of the County Forum meetings.

It was agreed that future meetings dates would be circulated in advance (dates for 2017 have already been arranged), minutes of meetings will be circulated to Town and Community Council's within two weeks of each meeting, Town and Community Councils will be asked for agenda items at least one month prior to any meeting and

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a final agenda will be circulated to Town and Community Councils two weeks prior to each meeting.

[LM to action]

There was a request from Town and Community Councils to consider the room layout at future meetings. It was felt that the way in which the room is set up splits Flintshire County Council staff and Town and Community Councils, there needs to be more of a balance.

LM to action]

### PART FIVE

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### 13. Our Flintshire, Our Future Public Engagement Events

GO informed Town and Community Councils that seven Public Engagement Events have been arranged to take place during November 2016 and urged people to register to attend one of these sessions. A list detailing the dates, times and venue information for each of the Events was provided to everyone present.

**Action:**

Send an electronic copy of the list to all Town and Community Councils following the meeting.

[SP to action]

#### 14. County Forum Meetings for 2017

Meetings for 2017 have been arranged as follows:

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8.30pm  
**Host:** Mold Town Council  
**Venue:** Mold Town Council, Council Offices, Town Hall, Earl Road, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 1AB

**Date:** Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8.30pm  
**Host:** Argoed Community Council  
**Venue:** Mynydd Isa Community Centre, Mercia Drive, Mynydd Isa, Flintshire

**Date:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8.30pm  
**Host:** Buckley Town Council  
**Venue:** Buckley Town Council, Council Offices, Buckley, Flintshire, CH7 2JB

An email has gone out to all Town and Community Councils to notify them of the proposed dates for 2017 and Councils have been asked to confirm their availability by the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

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### NEXT MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8.30pm  
**Venue:** Mold Town Council, Council Offices, Town Hall, Earl Road, Mold,  
Flintshire, CH7 1AB

#### **Initial Agenda Items:**

- Improvement Plan 2017 onwards – Update in relation to themes and plan content (Karen Armstrong).
- None suggested/proposed by Town and Community Councils.