

EXECUTIVE
5 SEPTEMBER 2011

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 5 September 2011

PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley (Chairman)

Councillors: H. Brown, C.A. Ellis, H. D. Hutchinson, N. M. Matthews, N. Phillips, L. A. Sharps and N. Steele-Mortimer

APOLOGY: Councillor M.G. Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, Q.R.H. Dodd, F. Gillmore, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, C. Legg, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, H.J. McGuill, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, H.G. Roberts, A.P. Shotton and C.A. Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Director of Environment, Head of Finance, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Development and Resources

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and officers introduced themselves to the members of the public.

The Leader of the Council reported that it was the Council's procedure to respond to letters/e-mails within 10 working days and apologised that this had not been possible given the volume of letters received from members of the public in response to the consultation on school modernisation. All correspondence received had been noted and archived.

The Executive Member for Leisure and Public Protection reported that the Director of Lifelong Learning would be responding to all letters received. He also reported that, together with Councillor M.J. Peers, he had visited his constituents with an interest in the future of Argoed High School.

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 3 – School Modernisation: Secondary Review:-

Councillors: H. Brown, C.A. Ellis, H.D. Hutchinson, N.M. Matthews, N. Phillips, N.M. Steele-Mortimer and A. Woolley.

81. SCHOOL MODERNISATION: SECONDARY REVIEW

The Director of Lifelong Learning gave a presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Introduction

- Council meeting of 17th August – Time for reflection
- Passing the test
- Workstreams
- Indicative timetable considerations

The Executive Member for Education commented that the standard of education in Flintshire had been recognised as one of the highest in Wales with schools continuing to improve. Despite the improvements made, there was a need to review secondary school provision in Flintshire to address the level of surplus places. In view of the proposed halt to the consultation process, it was proposed that the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider the next steps and make recommendations to the Executive prior to a full County Council before reconvening the public consultation process. Proposals to address surplus places at the schools in Holywell would be considered by the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee and fast tracked to meet all Members, partner organisations and stakeholders' satisfaction to ensure that grant funding was received from the Welsh Government (WG). On section 3.17 of the report, he asked that Faith Schools be included in the list of key stakeholders and partner organisations.

The Chief Executive reported that school modernisation was a high priority and a challenge to the Authority. The Estyn report on the strategic management of education in Flintshire had identified tackling school modernisation as a critical recommendation. Reassurance had been given to Members and the public over a process in which all could be confident; the halt to the process had provided the opportunity to reconsider how best to consult. On the proposed workstreams there was a need for ownership of the consultation process. A revised timetable, as set out at Appendix A, would enable consultee-led options to be considered equally, and could vary between individual reviews according to the needs of separate areas. There was also the opportunity for Group Leaders, Executive and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny to take stock of progress and make recommendations at each distinct step in the process.

The Leader of the Council concurred with the comments made by the Executive Member for Education and welcomed the comments/observations from members of the public as part of the consultation process.

The Deputy Leader of the Council said that there was a need for public confidence to be restored prior to the reconvening of the consultation process. The Council's policy had always been for children to be educated at the school of their parent's choice and as a result surplus places in areas of Flintshire had risen gradually over a number of years. When the consultation process did re-start, he asked that planning information in the form of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), to identify projected population growth, and financial information be readily available to assist Members in their deliberations.

The Executive Member for Social Services agreed with the Deputy Leader's comments and asked that section 3.01 of the report be amended to

include consideration of additional options as well as existing options. The Chief Executive reported that if additional options were brought forward these would be considered equally alongside existing options.

The Executive Member for Leisure and Public Protection suggested that the Local Assembly Members be asked to give their views on school modernisation given that the Council was being asked to address this by the WG.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outlined methodology in consulting with communities, as detailed in the report be supported and adopted;
- (b) That the support for the full involvement of the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in considering the process of consultation, developing options appraisals in each area and formal reports at each stage of the area review process be re-confirmed;
- (c) That the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the methodology set out in the report, verify the comprehensive data available and provide confidence in our Communities and make recommendations prior to a further Executive and Council meeting; and
- (d) That a further report to Executive and full Council be commissioned following the current period of reflection, on the next steps and the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

82. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 10.50 a.m.

83. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were four members of the press and twenty five member of the public in attendance.

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Chairman

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT

EXECUTIVE	DATE: 5 SEPTEMBER 2011
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillors: H. Brown, C.A. Ellis, H.D. Hutchinson, N.M. Matthews, N. Phillips, N.M. Steele-Mortimer and A. Woolley	School Modernisation: Secondary Review	81