

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

DATE: Thursday 30th June 2016
TIME: 6.30 pm – 9.00 pm
VENUE: Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, CORLAN, Mold, Flintshire.

PART ONE

ATTENDANCE

1. Introductions & Apologies

1.1. Present

Flintshire County Council:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Chief Executive | Colin Everett (CE) |
| • Chief Officer – Organisational Change | Ian Bancroft (IB) |
| • Chief Officer – Planning & Environment | Andrew Farrow (AF) |
| • Older People's Strategy Co-ordinator | Helen Jones (HJ) |
| • Integrated Services / Lead adults | Susie Lunt (SL) |
| • Executive Officer | Joanne Pierce (JP) |
| • Policy & Performance Support Officer | Sam Perry (SP) - Minutes |

Town & Community Councils:

- Argoed Community Council
- Bagillt Community Council
- Broughton & Bretton Community Council
- Buckley Town Council
- Caerwys Town Council
- Cilcain Community Council
- Connah's Quay Town Council
- Gwernaffield Community Council
- Gwernymynydd Community Council
- Hawarden Community Council
- Hope Community Council
- Leeswood Community Council
- Mold Town Council
- Northop Community Council
- Northop Hall Community Council
- Penyffordd Community Council
- Sealand Community Council
- Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor Community Council
- Whitford Community Council

Other Representatives:

- Brian Grew - One Voice Wales (BG)
- Alan Hatton-Yeo – National Expert Lead on Age Friendly Communities (AHY)

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

1.2. Apologies

- Halkyn Community Council
- Higher Kinnerton Community Council

CE opened the meeting and thanked Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) for providing a venue. CE went on to provide some background information as to what FLVC do before giving an overview of the agenda.

PART TWO

PRESENTATION TOPICS

2. Age Friendly Communities

CE introduced Alan Hattan-Yeo and Helen Jones and thanked them both for attending the meeting.

A copy of the presentation was circulated in advance of the meeting. AHY gave a brief overview of what is meant by Age Friendly Communities and why it is important for communities to be age-friendly before discussing the next steps including how Town and Community Councils can become involved. Key points included:-

- Flintshire County Council signed the Dublin Declaration demonstrating its commitment to becoming age friendly in February 2014 and produced an Aging Well Plan in 2015.
- Successful bid to look at developing older people lead rural community support and activities.
- Development funding to develop a proposal with four years funding for initiative if successful.
- Flintshire and Pembrokeshire are the two authorities that have been chosen to be pilot areas for this work.
- Need to finalise the area within Flintshire to work with.
- Criteria for the pilot includes; rural area with population of under 5,000 people, some existing community activity but evidence of unmet need, alignment to Dementia Friendly initiative, an area that hasn't got good infrastructure in place.

AHY provided a brief overview of the timeline around this work:

- Funding and pilot sites confirmed – January 2017
- Evaluation team in place – January 2017
- Staff and resources in place and project started – March 2017
- Wales Learning Network established to support other communities to develop rural age friendly approaches – June 2017

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

- Project ongoing until December 2021 sustaining local project and producing toolkits, evidence and training to support communities across Wales.

Questions & Answers:

Is there any criteria around the number of people within the pilot area?

The chosen area can have up to a maximum of 5,000 people therefore, a cluster of areas might be chosen rather than one particular Town or Community Council area.

How do Town and Community Councils register their interest?

Town and Community Councils can contact Helen Jones to either register their interest or if they require any further information. Helen and Alan are both happy to meet with Town and Community Councils at their meetings to discuss if required.

Is there a deadline by which Town and Community Councils have to register their interest?

Any interested Town and Community Council needs to contact Helen by the beginning of September 2016 as a final decision around the selected area for the pilot will be required by the end of October 2016.

Do you have a formula or “magic recipe” to encourage people to join in?

No, it's not a case of one method fits all. Different ways to encourage people to join in have been identified and there are various tools available to help encouragement such as free eye tests, free blood tests etc. Case studies and the use of champions also help encouragement.

What funding is available?

There is some funding to support various pieces of work and to provide a paid worker. Small start-up monies are also available. Other support including funding advice and support with funding applications will be made available.

Actions:

Circulate Helen's contact information to Town and Community Councils.

[SP to action]

Email a copy of the contact details for the Town and Community Council clerks to Helen.

[SP to action]

Town and Community Councils to consider possible areas for pilot and feedback to Helen any suggestions/expressions of interest.

[ALL T&CC's to action]

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

PART THREE

COUNCIL TOPICS

3. Future of Local Government

CE provided Town and Community Councils with a brief overview of the current position on Local Government Reorganisation and Boundary Reviews. Key points included:

- The next local government term will be a 5 year term and not a 4 year term.
- The new boundary review period.
- Welsh Government are expected to support a longer-term review programme for principal council areas.
- The outcomes of our local community review are awaiting approval but are expected to be supported.

4. Financial Future

A copy of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in Wales presentation slides were circulated prior to the meeting. CE provided a brief overview of their content and shared with Town and Community Councils, the Council's case for an improved turnout position for Flintshire. Key points included:

- The Commission on Local Government Finance has not recommended an immediate review of the funding formula; there is little appetite amongst Welsh local government for a radical formula review.
- Any review will be complex and take time to complete, agree and implement.
- Time is not on our side given the local financial forecast and pressures.
- Temporary solutions or remedies are needed pending longer term reform.
- If the local government settlement is held at the 2016/17 level, the combined gap for 2017/18 and 2018/19 is probably beyond our means.
- Service portfolio business plans are 'maxed out' and there are few remaining cost-cutting options.
- The 2016/17 budget is already proving hard to deliver and cost pressures will only increase.
- The funding formula is complex and dated.
- Flintshire is 19th in the per capita underlying table at only £1,196 per capita and £114 below average.
- The range of grant per capita runs from £996 (Monmouthshire) to £1,576 (Blaenau Gwent) with the Welsh average being £1,310.
- If Flintshire were to receive the average per capita, the annual budget will be £17.6 million greater than now.
- The formula makes no allowance for workforce size and workforce cost pressures.
- The difference in funding per capita between Denbighshire and Flintshire is worth £40 million.
- The difference between Newport and Flintshire per capita (similar population) is worth £29.65 million.

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

- Flintshire County Council are in the process of building a good business case, using a strong evidenced position to try to and gain an improved position for Flintshire.

Questions & Answers:

Why is Flintshire County Council different?

Flintshire County Council is not different, a number of Councils are in the same position.

Can we utilise the deprivation indices to explore the accuracy of data used?

The data is fairly up to date. The make-up and weighting of factors within the funding formula is the cause.

Is Flintshire County Council Capital rich?

No. Flintshire County Council is not a capital nor reserve rich Council.

How far forward does Flintshire plan for things, John Summers School is closing yet there is a new housing development planned?

Yes, unfortunately John Summers School will close but it has been proven that the School would not be full even with the projected populations' growth from new build housing.

Actions:

Further update to be provided to Town and Community Councils at the next County forum meeting in October.

[CE to action]

5. Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

A copy of the Community Asset Transfer presentation slides was circulated to everyone present.

IB gave an overview of the overall Community Asset Transfer programme and discussed with Town and Community Councils, the proposals for play area provision. Key points included:

- The revised Community Asset Transfer scheme was launched 18 months ago.
- To date, there has been a large number of expressions of interest received with 12 stage 2 applications being approved and 8 transfers complete.
- There is value in doing these transfers other than the financial savings it has created for the Council e.g. co-operative working approach, growth of local skills and capacity.
- All play areas are listed as community assets and there are 182 in total.

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

- Based on next year's budget, the Council estimates it can sustain 4 play areas per community plus skate parks and wheeled facilities which equates to 124 of the 182 play areas.
- The Council needs to work with Town and Community Councils to determine which play areas are retained by the Council and which ones communities may want to take on etc.
- The Council can offer buy back of inspections and maintenance.
- A grant (Maximum of £5,000) for each play area transferred with a maximum of £10,000 per community area is available.
- Play area grant applications – forms out in July 2016.

IB offered to meet individually with communities where required to help to; 1) identify the play areas within their communities, 2) determine which of these are classed as priority play areas and 3) progress any play area CAT's.

Questions & Answers:

Is Flintshire County Council open to any alternative suggestions around play area provision e.g. a service level agreement so that Town and Community Councils don't need to enter into a 27 year lease via CAT?

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.

Is Flintshire County Council looking at splitting the inspection and maintenance of play areas up as the inspection element can be problematic?

The "Buy back expertise" option is available to Town and Community Councils who decide to go down the CAT route. Flintshire County Council have a gold standard with inspections but there would be no need to undertake inspections at the same level if passed over. The "Buy Back" option can be discussed in detail with any Town and Community Council upon request.

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:

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

[SP to action]

Forward any alternative solutions around play provision to Ian Bancroft.

[All T&CC's to action]

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

If required, contact Ian Bancroft to request an individual community meeting to further discuss play area provision within your community area and determine the priority play areas.

[Town & Community Councils to action]

Forward a copy of the timetable around this work to Town and Community Councils.

[IB to action]

Meet with any interested Town and Community Council to explore the possibility of having a service level agreement with an annual fee rather than passing over play areas via CAT and what that could look like for Town and Community Councils.

[IB to action]

Town and Community Councils to forward their interest to explore the option of having a service level agreement around play provision to Ian Bancroft.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

6. Local Development Plan (LDP)

A copy of the LDP timeline was circulated for information and AF provided a brief overview of 1) the key milestones and stages identified within the timeline and 2) the acronyms used before giving a more general update in relation to the LDP. Key points included:

- 2016 is a critical year in terms of making progress on the LDP.
- Delivery timetable has been reviewed and will be sent to Welsh Government following Cabinet resolution in June 2016.
- Next formal step will be to agree the "Preferred Strategy" by the end of 2016 in order to be able to consult on this with key stakeholders and the general public.
- Key components are currently being developed and will adopt an incremental approach.
- 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 & Community Councils.
- The FCC website will be kept up to date around the LDP - As and when new information is available, it will be on the website.

There was a discussion around the current membership of the stakeholder group and the fact that Town and Community Councils felt that they were not represented and a request was made to have a nominated contact join the group in going forward. AF agreed to raise this suggestion with the stakeholder group and report back.

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

Actions:

Circulate an electronic copy of the timeline for the LDP to Town and Community Councils for information.

[SP to action]

Send information in relation to any inaccuracies of data/information held on the Council's webpage to Sam Perry.

[Town & Community Councils to action]

Consider the request from Town and Community Councils around representation on the stakeholder group and report back at the next County Forum meeting in October.

[AF to action]

PART FOUR

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL TOPICS

7. Implications of EU Funding following the vote to leave the EU – Hope Community Council

CE acknowledged the recent article in the press and confirmed that Flintshire County Council does not receive a lot of EU funding and that the process of negotiating an exit from the Union is expected to be a long process therefore, there was no immediate risk to the Council.

8. Highways matters in the County of Flintshire – Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor Community Council

Cllr. David Ellis raised a number of issues on behalf of Trelawnyd Community Council. Issues raised include:

- Conditions of the pedestrian walkways around the Trelawnyd area, this includes grass and weed growth but also lack of pedestrian walkways going out of the village.
- Grass cutting and the lack of clean up after cutting.
- Blocked gullies and grids.
- Signage – Damaged signs plus an issue around still having the old "Newmarket" signs up which should have been removed.
- Current status of pelican crossing.

As the items raised were pertinent to Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor and no other Town and Community Council, It was agreed that SP would contact the relevant Officer at Flintshire and request a direct response to the Community Council.

[SP to action]

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

PART FIVE

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. New Code of Conduct for Members – Message from Gareth Owens

CE informed Town and Community Councils that they have all adopted the new code of conduct for members therefore, all Town and Community Councils will be included in the advert that goes out. CE confirmed that the advert should be placed either later this week or next week and that a scanned copy of the advert will be send to all clerks for information.

Reminder for clerks - Clerks need to notify the PSOW via email (if not already done so) and confirm that their council has adopted the new code of conduct. Clerks will also need to include a copy of the code of conduct with their email. The email address is: annie.ginwalla@ombudsman-wales.org.uk.

Actions:

Circulate a copy of the advert to all Town and Community Councils.

[Gareth Owen to action]

Email PSOW to confirm that your Town or Community Council has adopted the new code of conduct.

[T&CC Clerks to action]

10. Public Services Board Representation

There was a discussion around the membership of the Flintshire Public Services Board and Town and Community Councils requested that they have representation on the Board in going forward.

Actions:

CE to raise the request at the next PSB meeting in July and report back.

[CE to action]

11. Future Meetings

It was agreed that future County Forum meetings (dates/venues) would be arranged 12 months in advance to enable Town & Community Councils to better plan for these.

Gwernymynydd Community Council offered to host the meeting in October 2016.

Actions:

Arrange meetings to include a venue for each meeting for 2017 before the next County Forum meeting and circulate to all Town & Community Councils.

[SP to action]

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

NEXT MEETING

Date: Thursday 27th October 2016
Time: 6.30pm – 9.00pm
Venue: Gwernymyndd Village Hall, Gwernymynydd, Flintshire,

Initial Agenda Items:

- None suggested/proposed.