

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER, 2011

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Mold on Wednesday 14 December, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor H.J. McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, S.R. Baker, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, H. Brown, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, G. James, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, D. McFarlane, W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.T. Williams, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, C.S. Carver, E.G. Cooke, P.J. Curtis, A.G. Diskin, G.D. Diskin, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, A.M. Halford, G. Hardcastle, N. Humphreys, H.T. Isherwood, R. Johnson, N.M. Jones, C. Legg, E.W. Owen and L.A. Sharps

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Development and Resources, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager, Team Manager – Committee Services and Committee Officer

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced the Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager and Vice-Chairman who were sitting at the top table. She explained that members of the public would not be permitted to speak during the debate and asked that all mobile devices be turned off.

99 PRAYERS

The meeting was opened with Prayers said by Councillor N. Phillips.

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal non-prejudicial interest for Agenda item number 6 – School Modernisation:

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, F. Gillmore, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, W.

Mullin, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, N.M. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

101. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held on 26 October, 2011 had been circulated with the agenda.

Accuracy

Councillor R. Davies asked that his name be included under 'Present' on page 3 of the minutes.

Councillors C.M. Jones and D.E. Wisinger asked that their apologies be included on page 3 of the minutes.

Matters arising

Councillor R.C. Bithell asked if an update could be provided on the resolution for minute number 77. The Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported that the Ombudsman for Wales had confirmed that the Judicial Review application had been refused and that no appeal against this decision had been made.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

102. THE LATE GARY SPEED, MBE

The Chair said that it had been with great sadness to learn of the death of Gary Speed, MBE, who had been a great asset to football and to Flintshire with many Members having known him personally. She asked all Members, officers and members of the press and public to take part in a minute silence in his honour.

Following the minute silence, the Chief Executive reported that a book of condolence had been placed at the back of the meeting room for Members and the public to sign if they so wished following the meeting. He read out the following statement on behalf of the Football Association of Wales:-

"Gary Speed. A true gentleman.

Gary had been the manager of Wales Football Club for almost twelve months when the tragedy occurred, twelve months in which he had begun to see the first shoots of recovery and victories of a young team that was starting to find its way. The facts about Gary's glittering playing career are known to all the most capped Wales outfield player with at one time more Premier League appearances than any other

player:- Cup Finals, a Championship and the MBE from the Queen, and a legend at Leeds United, Everton, Newcastle United, Bolton and Sheffield United.

After his initial settling in period as Welsh manager the new season brought positive results and a move up the FIFA rankings. More importantly the Welsh public was re- discovering their football team and the names of Bale, Ramsey, Bellamy and others were on everyones lips.

This indeed should, and will be his legacy for the future. A talented squad of young players who had at last seemed to find direction under Gary and his staff and looked ready to have their name in the spotlight.

The tributes have poured in from all over. Not just from football, but from other areas of sport, Government and football fans all over the globe. A testimony to a true gentleman, not just in sport but in life in general. His charisma lit up a room whenever he entered and his infectious smile and laugh put all at ease.

Our thoughts are with his family. For everyone who knew or came across Gary they will remember him as just a down to earth, normal, top person. One of the best.”

Councillor H. Brown said that on behalf of herself, Councillor G. Hardcastle and the Aston Community she wished to send her condolences and thoughts to Gary Speed’s family and friends.

Councillor N. Phillips spoke of Gary Speed’s family who had been born and bred in Flintshire. He paid tribute to his football career, having played for Everton, Leeds, Newcastle United, Bolton and Sheffield United and recently becoming the Manager for the Wales Football team. He referred to the Everton motto – Nil Satis Nisi Optimum, which translated to nothing but the best was good enough. He said that Gary Speed, MBE had been the best and had certainly been good enough.

Councillor F. Gilmore on behalf of the Independent Group offered his condolences to Gary Speed’s family and friends.

103. SCHOOL MODERNISATION

The Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report to seek the Council's approval of the options for the Area Reviews of Secondary School provision in the Holywell, Queensferry/Connah’s Quay and Buckley/Mynydd Isa and Mold areas and for the public consultation process to be re-opened.

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

- 17 August, 2011 – Council position
- Further work needed
- Passing the tests to restore confidence
- Revised options for Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay
- Revised options for Holywell
- Revised options for Mold, Buckley and Mynydd Isa
- Consulting
- Timeline

The Chief Executive reported that the Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay areas together with the Holywell Area had qualified for provisional 21st Century Funding from the Welsh Government (WG). Bids had been submitted for this funding but it had been made clear to the WG that all options were being consulted on and there were currently no pre-determined preferences.

The Chair thanked all Members who had attended and contributed to the school modernisation workshops.

Councillor A. Woolley, Leader of the Council said that he was pleased that the Council was considering the consultation process on the revised options following the resolution of the Council on 17 August, 2011 to halt the consultation process. He said that he was confident that the consultation process could resume and that all deliberations should now be in the interest of the children currently attending schools in Flintshire and who would be in the future.

Councillor N.M. Steele-Mortimer, Executive Member for Education commented on the amount of work which had been carried out since the resolution of the Council on 17 August, 2011 including the workshops which had been held and which Members had contributed to. He reported that capital funding from the WG had been announced at £64.2M, (50% of which would need to be contributed from the Council) and would be the largest ever single investment for the schools in Flintshire. He proposed that the Council support the recommendations outlined in section 4.01 and 4.02 of the report. This proposal was seconded by Councillor A. Woolley.

Councillor M. Bateman welcomed the report and commended all political parties for working together for the future of the children in Flintshire. She also commended the Chair of the Council for her work following the Council meeting held on 17 August, 2011.

Councillor C.A. Thomas said that she was pleased that there had been a halt to the process and that Members were given the opportunity to be involved in producing a list of revised options. She said that the report presented to the meeting only dealt with the issue of surplus places and asked how the Council planned to deal with the Welsh medium provision, school transport and sixth form provision in schools in Flintshire.

The Chief Executive said that he recognised that there were a number of key issues which would be dealt with by the Council over the next few years, which included Post-16 Education and Welsh medium provision for schools in Flintshire. The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider in detail how the policy framework for school modernisation would be developed and how this would be managed. Members would be given the opportunity to consider Welsh medium provision during a workshop and during meetings of the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee before final adoption. He assured Members that there would be full on-going engagement of how school modernisation would develop in the years ahead.

Councillor A.P. Shotton welcomed the approach taken by the Council following the steps taken by the Labour Group to call for the consultation process to be halted during the Council meeting held on 17 August, 2011. He said that the revised options would not protect all schools in Flintshire and the Labour Group would continue to campaign to protect John Summers High School. He sought an assurance that all Members would receive an update at the next County Council meeting on how the consultation process was progressing. He said that Councillor C.A. Thomas had asked a number of important questions and it was important that Members continued to be updated on the development plan and whether or not this would be acceptable to the WG. Councillor A. Woolley gave an assurance that Members would be updated on the consultation process. The Chief Executive said that Members would receive advance copies of the consultation documents before it re-opened in February, 2012. He also said that an update on school modernisation would be a standing item on all future County Council agendas.

Councillor R. Davies commented on option 3.02 (4), as detailed in the report, and said that his recollection of the decision made at the workshop was that a new school would be created on the existing sites and raised concern that this had not been included as part of the option. Councillor R.P. Macfarlane said that during the workshop Members had felt that keeping a school building on the existing site took into account the feelings of local residents. Councillor A.P. Shotton spoke in support of the comments made by Councillor Davies.

Councillor J.B. Attridge proposed an amendment that option 4, under the areas Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay be amended to read 'Amalgamate John Summers High School with Connah's Quay High School (one Headteacher and one Governing Body, involving the closure of two schools and creation of one new school on the existing sites). This amendment was seconded by Councillor R. Davies.

The Director of Lifelong Learning provided clarification on the amendment in response to questions from Members.

A recorded vote was requested and the requisite number of Members stood in support of this. On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

For the motion:-

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, F. Gillmore, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, G. James, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, D. McFarlane, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, C.A. Thomas, D.T. Williams, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

Abstentions

Councillor: S.R. Baker, R.J.T. Guest, N.M. Matthews, N.M. Steele-Mortimer and W.O. Thomas

Councillor J.C. Cattermoul raised concern that the viability of sixth form places was not being taken into consideration and said that only two of the 11 high schools in Flintshire had viable sixth forms in terms of the directive from the WG. She suggested that the options to retain 11-18 provision at the Elfed High School and to replace Holywell High School with an 11-18 school should be re-considered as further action to address the surplus places in sixth forms may be needed in the future. She suggested, if the options remained, that the need to address surplus places in sixth forms in the future be made clear to all interested parties during the consultation process. Councillor P.G. Heesom raised concern that the future of all sixth form provision had been ignored within this consultation process. He said that such an important issue should have been dealt with strategically as part of the report and questioned whether or not this would affect the Council's ability to access funding from the WG.

Councillor I.B. Roberts commented on the need for the Council to address surplus places in Primary Schools which also formed part of the directive from the WG.

The Director of Lifelong Learning commented on the importance of open and clear information being made available to parents. The Chief Executive explained that the Council would be given the opportunity to demonstrate to the WG that the options complied with their guidance in order to access the provisional capital funding.

Councillor H.G. Roberts thanked Members and officers for the changes made to the original proposals for Ysgol Gwenffrwd and commented on the importance of retaining Welsh medium education in Flintshire.

Councillor R. Dolphin raised concern on the transport costs which would increase if a sixth form provision was removed from Holywell and supported the need to retain this provision in order to assist with the regeneration of the Town. Councillor C.J. Dolphin said that the Head teacher

of Holywell High School and the Governing Body supported the creation of an 11-18 school.

Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd thanked the Members representing Buckley for their support for the concerns of parents with children attending Argoed High School when considering the options for Mold, Buckley and Mynydd Isa during the workshops. Councillor M.J. Peers thanked Councillor Dodd for his comments and said that it was evident that Argoed High School was an excellent school and that there was a need to address the surplus places at Elfed High School. He welcomed that 21st Century School funding would be made available for the Holywell and Deeside areas but said that it would be useful for Members to understand why the Buckley area had not been successful. He also asked that the revised consultation document be clear so that all parties would be able to understand the process.

The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that it was important that the consultation document was easy to understand and that Members would be given the opportunity to comment on the consultation document prior to the process re-opening in February, 2012. He also explained that 21st Century School funding was applied to areas most in need looking at not just education but social needs within the communities. Funding for the Buckley area would be considered as part of the Council's future Capital Programme.

Councillor R.B. Jones proposed an amendment that option 3 under the list of options for Mold, Buckley and Mynydd Isa be deleted as it was included within option 2. When put to the vote this amendment was carried.

Councillor J.B. Attridge asked for clarification on the options sent to the WG in order to qualify for 21st Century School funding. The Director of Lifelong Learning explained that the options (in line with long standing practice) had been put forward following an officer team meeting, and in consultation with the Executive Member for Education.

In response to a concern raised by Councillor Heesom that these options had been sent to the WG without Member consent, the Chief Executive explained that the options had been submitted to the WG to ensure that Flintshire did not miss out on the opportunity for 21st Century School funding. It had been made clear to the WG that all options were being consulted on and there were currently no pre-determinations.

In summing up, Councillor Steele-Mortimer recognised that there were other issues, including sixth form provision and surplus places within primary schools which would be addressed in due course. He commented on the Welsh medium education draft strategy which would be open for consultation with Members to enable an input in the process.

Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd read out the following statement on behalf of 'Save Argoed':-

'Save Argoed would like to commend and thank all Councillors for their time and commitment since 17 August, 2011 exploring all viable options and keeping their promise to look at all options again'.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the County Council approve the revised set of options for public consultation, as detailed in the report, subject to the following amendments;
- (b) That option 4 under the areas Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay be amended to read 'Amalgamate John Summers High School with Connah's Quay High School (one Headteacher and one Governing Body, involving the closure of two schools and the creation of one new school on the existing sites);
- (c) That option 3 under the list of options for Mold, Buckley and Mynydd Isa, as detailed in the report be deleted before re-opening the consultation process; and
- (b) That the County Council commits to reopening public consultation in February, 2012 with preparatory work to be completed in January, 2012.

When put to the vote, Councillor P.G. Heesom voted against the recommendations.

104. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and ended at 8.25 p.m.

105. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were seventeen members of the public and four members of the press present.

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Chair

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

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	14 DECEMBER, 2011
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillors: J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, F. Gillmore, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, P.G. Heesom, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, N.M. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright	School Modernisation	103