

COUNTY FORUM MEETING NOTE

DATE: Thursday 10th May 2018
TIME: 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm
HOST: Connah's Quay Town Council
VENUE: Town Council Offices, Quay Building, Fron Road, Connah's Quay,
Flintshire, CH5 4PJ

PART ONE

ATTENDANCE

1. Introductions & Apologies

1.1. Present

Flintshire County Council:

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| • Chief Executive | Colin Everett |
| • Chief Officer – Governance | Gareth Owens |
| • Chief Officer – Housing and Assets | Neal Cockerton |
| • Chief Officer – Streetscene and Transportation | Stephen O Jones |
| • Corporate Business and Communications Support Officer | Sam Perry - Minutes |

Town & Community Councils:

- Argoed Community Council
- Broughton and Bretton Community Council
- Caerwys Community Council
- Cilcain Community Council
- Connah's Quay Town Council
- Gwernaffield and Pantymwyn Community Council
- Gwernymynydd Community Council
- Hawarden Community Council
- Holywell Town Council
- Hope Community Council
- Leeswood Community Council
- Mold Town Council
- Mostyn Community Council
- Nannerch Community Council
- Northop Community Council
- Northop Hall Community Council
- Penyffordd Community Council
- Saltney Town Council
- Sealand Community Council
- Shotton Town Council
- Ysceifiog Community Council

Other Representatives:

- Claire Germain, Welsh Government

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1.2. Apologies

Flintshire County Council:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Leader of Flintshire County Council | Aaron Shotton |
| • Chief Officer – Strategic Programmes | Ian Bancroft |
| • Chief Officer – Planning, Environment and Economy | Andrew Farrow |
| • Chief Officer – Social Services | Neil Ayling |
| • Interim Chief Officer – Education and Youth | Claire Homard |
| • Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer | Karen Armstrong |
| • Executive Officer | Joanne Pierce |

Town & Community Councils:

- Buckley Town Council
- Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor Community Council

Colin Everett thanked Connah's Quay Town Council for chairing the meeting and providing the venue. CE congratulated Cllr. Pam Attridge on her new appointment as Chair of Connah's Quay Town Council.

Cllr. Pam Attridge opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and went through the general housekeeping and fire evacuation procedures for the building. Cllr. Pam Attridge chaired the meeting and introduced each agenda item.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12th October 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record of events. There were no matters arising.

PART TWO

NATIONAL REVIEW

2. Review of Community and Town Council Sector in Wales

A copy of the Information sheet for the Review of Community and Town Council Sector in Wales was circulated to all Town and Community Councils in advance of the meeting along with a link to the relevant page on the Welsh Government website.

Claire Germain from Welsh Government gave an overview of the purpose of the review along with progress to date. Key points included:

- An Independent Review Panel, made up of six people, has been set up to consider the future role of Community and Town Councils.
- The Review is expected to take around a year to complete and has a very broad remit.
- The review will; 1) explore the potential role of local government below Local Authority councils, drawing on best practice, 2) define the most

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appropriate model(s)/structure(s) to deliver this role and 3) consider how these models and structures should be applied across Wales. This will include consideration of any situations in which they would not be necessary or appropriate.

- Four questions have been posed as part of the Review. These being;
 - What should Community and Town Councils be responsible for?
 - How should they operate?
 - What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?
 - How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?
- The Review Panel held its first meeting in September 2017 and since have held monthly evidence sessions hearing from a variety of stakeholders.
- The Panel has visited a variety of Community and Town Councils across Wales, learning how different councils work for their community.
- Regional engagement events took place in March to give every council, clerk and community member the opportunity to share their views and help shape the future of the sector. Each event was well attended.
- In addition, the Panel has held four workshops with representatives from local authorities across Wales.
- The Panel is now beginning to focus on starting to draw out their core findings and identify any emerging themes.
- Town and Community Councils were encouraged to respond to the review questions if they have not already done so.

There was a lengthy discussion around this item. A summary of points raised around the four questions posed include:

- The Review seems a little too broad, should be more focused and provide a clearer steer and further detail around the specifics of the review.
- The core role of Community and Town Councils should be around;
 - providing a conduit to move things forward whilst ensuring the interests of the local community are met, recognising that each community is different and the interests of that community will differ across the county,
 - building good/closer working relationships with both County Councillors and the local Authority,
 - exploring alternative ways and resources to deliver via enhanced partnership working, and
 - ensuring that the unique identities/voice of local communities are not lost – One size does not fit all.
- Party politics was discussed and the role this should and should not play
- A number of Town and Community Councils expressed concerns around the lack of funding and available resources to deliver/expand the role of Community and Town Councils especially given the fact that Welsh Government have stopped a number of various funding streams that were available to them.

There was also a discussion around democracy and party politics and the role this should/should not play.

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Questions & Answers:

Is the Review financially driven?

No, that is not the intention of this Review.

Will available funding and resources be considered as part of this review?

Yes. Claire confirmed that Welsh Government are considering this as part of their Review. A more general resourcing discussion is taking place at the moment. To help inform discussions around funding and available resources Claire asked Town and Community Councils to inform the Review Panel of any lost funding streams/resources.

Actions:

Inform the Review Panel of any lost funding streams/resources.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

Respond to the four review questions directly. Alternatively, forward any comments/responses to Sam Perry.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

Collate any feedback/comments and/or survey question responses into one document and submit one response to Claire Germain.

[Sam Perry to action]

PART THREE

COUNCIL TOPICS

3. Charter Review: A Shared Community – A Joint Charter between Flintshire County Council and Town and Community Councils in Flintshire

A copy of the revised draft Charter (Version 6 – April 2018) was circulated to all Town and Community Councils for information and review in advance of the meeting.

Colin Everett provided an overview of the Charter and key changes made as part of the review. Key points included:

- The charter is a joint Charter between Flintshire County Council and the Town and Community Councils within Flintshire.
- It was created as a result of the guidance document 'A Shared Community' produced by the Welsh Local Government Association, Welsh Government and One Voice Wales.
- The purpose of the Charter was to build on existing good practice and embrace the shared principles of openness.
- Following agreement at the County Forum meeting in October 2017, a small Working Group has met to undertake a joint review of the Charter.

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- In summary, the main revisions to the Charter include:
 - Addition of a contents page to help with reference and navigation of the Charter.
 - A revised structure split into five sections to aid flow and continuity of the Charter.
 - A general update to reflect changes in digital communications.
 - Inclusion of a specific section for the County Forum (Section 1). There was very little reference to the County Forum in the previous version.
 - Information around supporting Council campaigns and communications as a conduit has been added as part of the Consultation and Engagement section (Section 2).
 - Information has been added around devolved services and reference has been made to Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models (Section 3: Services).
 - Removal of the section around the Community Strategy as this is no longer relevant.
 - Addition of a new section around the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and the Well-being Plan for Flintshire to include hyperlinks to further information and links to the Council Plan (Section 5).
 - Additional information has been added around Diversity and Equality and the Welsh Language Standard (Section 5).
- The Working Group will meet again on Monday 14th May 2018 to start to develop a supporting Action Plan.
- The Working Group will meet on a six monthly basis to review the Action Plan and on an annual basis to review and update the Charter.

Town and Community Councils approved the revised Charter subject to supporting Action Plan and there were no objections raised around this item.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions raised for this Agenda item.

Actions:

Circulate an electronic copy of the 'Charter Briefing Paper' to all Town and Community Councils following the meeting.

[Sam Perry to action]

Circulate a copy of the draft Action Plan, once prepared, to all Town and Community Councils for their review/feedback.

[Sam Perry to action]

Forward any comments/feedback around either the revised Charter and/or Action Plan to Sam Perry as soon as possible.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

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Brief update around the development of the supporting Action Plan to be provided at the County Forum meeting in June 2018.

[Karen Armstrong / Joanne Pierce to action]

4. Public Service Board Updates

Colin Everett provided a brief update around Town and Community Council representation on the Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB), and a progress update around the development of the new Well-being Strategy for Flintshire. Key points included:

- Three Councillors have expressed an interest in representing Town and Community Councils on the Flintshire Public Services Board. Instead of undertaking a selection process to determine PSB representation, a decision has been made to invite all three nominees to attend on a rotational basis.
- The PSB collectively endorsed the draft Well-being Plan for Flintshire - March 2018.
- The Council took the Plan to Cabinet and Special County Council for formal endorsement/adoption - April 2018.
- All PSB partners have been asked to formally endorse/adopt the Plan via their own organisations prior to publication.
- The designed version of the Plan will be published on the Council's website before the end of May 2018. A copy will be circulated to Town and Community Councils once published.

Questions & Answers:

Does Active Travel play a part of the Well-being Plan?

Yes. A lot of work is being undertaken around this area.

Actions:

Contact the three Public Services Board nominees to formally invite them to attend the PSB meeting in July 2018 (AGM).

[Colin Everett to action]

Provide Argoed Community Council with an update around the Local Access Forum.

[Colin Everett to action]

Forward a copy of the final designed version of the Well-being Plan to Town and Community Councils once published.

[Sam Perry to action]

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5. National and Local Budget Positions

Colin Everett provided a very brief update on the latest position around the national and local budget position:

- Flintshire County Council managed to balance its budget for this year.
- Work is currently underway to look at the outline budget for next year.
- The landscape is changing nationally.
- Chancellors Statement in autumn – Degree of positivity.
- There needs to be a shift at a national level otherwise a number of Councils will struggle to balance their budget.
- For a number of years, Flintshire County Council, as a low-funded council per head under the funding formula, has set out why councils in this position are particularly exposed to the ongoing impacts of austerity and will continue to do so.
- Flintshire County Council is genuinely trying to protect services and continues to find innovative ways of saving money.

Cllr. Billy Mullin, Broughton and Bretton Community Council, praised Flintshire County Council for the work that had been done to balance the budget and in securing services for the county.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions raised for this Agenda item.

Actions:

There were no actions identified for this Agenda item.

6. County Forum Webpage

Gareth Owen informed Town and Community Councils that information has been added to the County Forum homepage on the Council's website which will be useful for raising awareness of the code with their councillors. The first item is a set of slides that cover the background to the code and those behaviours that will put it into effect or breach its requirements. The second item is a link to a video prepared by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on his role in relation to the code of conduct. Both were prepared for the new intake of councillors following the elections in May 2017 and have been used within the recent training session in Northop. A further session will be arranged for September 2018. Again, this will be open to all but will take place somewhere more north within the county.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions raised for this Agenda item.

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Actions:

Circulate a link to the relevant webpage to Town and Community Councils.

[Sam Perry to action]

7. Value of Co-designed Area Priorities

Neal Cockerton provided an update on the early discussions around the value of co-designed area priorities and profiles in the absence of Ian Bancroft. Key points included:

- As part of the Public Services Board work for 'Resilient Communities', there is a major piece of work developing around public services working in a co-ordinated way to work with communities to 1) develop community profiles and area priorities and 2) identify the key characteristics that enable a community to be resilient in bouncing back or dealing with a major problem e.g. flooding, crime.
- The community profiles work is about mapping both the physical assets of an area and the key people assets for example volunteers, community champions and enabling this information to be shared when appropriate.
- Based on knowledge of the assets in an area, the intention is to work with communities to identify the key priorities for that area that will support an increase in the resilience of that community.
- This work will link to and incorporate the work that has so far been developed on community planning from a physical planning perspective e.g. Gwernymynydd.
- The intention is to start this work with three communities where work has already started on key local initiatives. These being:
 - Holywell (Holway) - there is investment in the housing environment taking place and joined up work on crime prevention,
 - Flint - there is work taking place of physical regeneration of the town and the Foreshore, and
 - Shotton - where with the location of Care and Repair there is a major social enterprise with a major asset located on the site of the old Tata Steel social club.
- Next steps will include developmental work in the three areas, engagement with the Town and Community Councils including the development of the community profiles and community priorities.
- Results of this work will be brought back to the County Forum at appropriate intervals to keep Town and Community Councils updated and share learning.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions raised for this Agenda item.

Actions:

Circulate a copy of Ian Bancroft's briefing paper to Town and Community Councils following the meeting.

[Sam Perry to action]

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8. Community Planning

A document outlining the process for the development of the 'Gwernymynydd Development Plan' was handed out for information and Cllr. Chris Bradshaw provided a brief overview of the process. Key points included:

- Gwernymynydd community wanted to become less reactive and more proactive and as a result, a small Working Group was established.
- Work commenced in 2007 to start to look at the process around developing a local Plan.
- At this time there were no Community Development Plans in Wales but there were 1,500 in England.
- The Plan needed to be a credible, evidence based document and have support from Flintshire County Council for it to be meaningful and serve its purpose.
- Various forms of consultation and engagement took place as part of the development of the Plan to include an open question survey that went to all households within the community.
- The biggest issue that was highlighted as a result of this engagement work was the lack of social activity within the community.
- The Plan took four years from the original concept to produce and was first published in May 2011. A copy of the Community Development Plan is available on Gwernymynydd Community Council's website via the rainbow link on the homepage.
- A major review of the Plan is currently being undertaken.

Cllr. Kevin Hughes from Gwernymynydd Community Council explained that the Plan is regularly discussed, updated and improved upon and the community has seen increased community benefits as a result of the Plan being in place. Cllr. Hughes urged Town and Community Councils, if they have not already done so, to consider developing a local Plan within their own communities.

Cllr. Marjorie Thomson went on to give some examples of the community benefits seen as a result of the Plan. These include:

- The Community Asset Transfer of the Village Centre,
- Weekly Co-op of fruit and vegetables,
- Weekly luncheon club,
- Yoga classes, and
- The annual pantomime.

Gwernymynydd Community Council offered to attend any Town or Community Council meeting to discuss the development and benefits of the Plan in more detail if required.

Colin Everett asked Town and Community Councils to contact Flintshire County Council if they are interested in developing a Community Development Plan to determine what support the Council can offer.

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Questions & Answers:

Was everyone within the Community consulted as part of the development process or were the consultation and engagement exercises focused around those people that attend Council meetings?

Various consultation and engagement events took place within the community. An open question survey also went to every household within the community to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to have their voice heard.

What return did you get for the survey that went out?

Over 200 people attended the showcase day and 21 households responded to the survey. In addition, feedback was received via other means e.g. post its on boards etc.

Actions:

Scan and circulate a copy of the 'Gwernymynydd Development Plan Process' document to all Town and Community Councils.

[Sam Perry to action]

Download a copy Gwernymynydd's Plan from their website and circulate a copy to all Town and Community Councils for information.

[Sam Perry to action]

Contact Gwernymynydd Community Council if you would like any further information and/or them to attend a Council meeting.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

Interested Town and Community Councils to contact Flintshire County Council to determine what support the Council can offer.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

9. Bus Service Review

Stephen O'Jones provided a very brief update on the Bus Service Review:

- A comprehensive review of the transport network and how best to prioritise increasingly limited public funding is underway.
- An open and transparent process is being followed.
- There is an on-line public consultation around the review which commenced in April 2018 and will close on 3rd June 2018.
- Town and Community Councils were urged to respond to the consultation if they have not already done so. The council needs as much feedback as possible to ensure informed decisions are made.

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- Public engagement drop in events have taken place at five locations to give the opportunity for people to discuss the review with the Council.
- Feedback will be reviewed and proposals made on the preferred transport option in each area in June 2018.
- Proposals will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in July 2018.
- Any proposed changes will be implemented from October 2018.

Stephen O'Jones offered to attend the County Forum meeting in June to provide a more detailed presentation around the review and the four options put forward as part of the review.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions raised for this Agenda item.

Actions:

Include Bus Service Review as an item on the agenda for the County Forum meeting in June 2018.

[Sam Perry to action]

PART FOUR

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL TOPICS

10. Pothole Repairs – Cilcain Community Council

Stephen O'Jones provided a brief overview of the current process around pot hole repairs and informed Town and Community Councils that they should all have a nominated representative who are contracted to attend any Council meetings that they are invited to attend. Town and Community Councils were asked to inform Stephen O'Jones of any issues where the nominated representatives are not making themselves available when requested to do so and Town and Community Councils were asked to inform both Stephen O'Jones and their nominated representative if they have any examples of where the correct procedures have not been followed when repairing the potholes.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

11. Highway Maintenance Funding - Cilcain Community Council

Stephen O'Jones confirmed that Flintshire County Council has done everything in its power to seek additional funding to help fund road maintenance and will continue to seek additional funding when appropriate.

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Actions:

There were no actions relating to this Agenda item.

12. Community Speed Watch – Argoed Community Council

Councillor John Holiday provided a brief overview of the Community Speed Watch Campaign that is in operation in his community with the support of volunteers from within the community and urged Town and Community Councils to consider implementing a similar scheme within their own communities.

Interested Town and Community Councils to contact either Councillor Arnold Wooley or Argoed Community Council for more information.

[Town and Community Councils to action]

PART FIVE

FUTURE MEETINGS

Future County Forum meetings have been arranged as follows:

Date: Tuesday 19th June 2018
Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Host/Chair: Leeswood & Ponblyddyn Community Council
Venue: Leeswood Community Centre, King Street, Leeswood, CH7 4SB

Date: Thursday 4th October 2018
Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Host/Chair: Saltney Town Council
Venue: Douglas Place Community Centre, Woodall Avenue, Saltney, CH4 8NB

Proposed agenda items for June 2018:

- Presentation – Bus Service Review to give overview of the four options that have been put forward as part of the review (**Stephen O’Jones**)
- Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for Flintshire (**Fiona Mocko**)
- DEWIS demonstration to show its value as a resource for improving health and well-being (**Kate Howard**)
- ANOB Dark Skies Project (suggestion from previous meeting)

Actions:

Forward any agenda items to Sam Perry in advance of each meeting.

[Town and Community Councils to action]