

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, GUILDHALL ON
WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2017**

MEMBERS

Councillor John Pritchard, Mayor
Councillor * Andy Williams, Deputy Mayor

Councillor	Bryan Apsley	Councillor	Paul Jones
"	Andrew Atkinson	"	David Kelly
"	William Baldwin	"	M C King OBE
"	Trevor Bates	"	Geoff Lowe
"	Sonia Benbow-Jones	"	David Maddocks
"	David A Bithell	"	Tina Mannering
"	I David Bithell, MBE	"	John McCusker
"	Paul Blackwell	"	Joan Lowe
"	Brian Cameron	"	M G Morris
"	Krista Childs	"	Beverley Parry-Jones
"	Dana Davies	"	* Paul Pemberton
"	Mike Davies	"	John Phillips
"	Michael Dixon	"	Ronnie Prince
"	* T Alan Edwards	"	Mark Pritchard
"	Terry Evans	"	Paul Roberts
"	Russell Gilmartin	"	Rondo Roberts
"	D J Griffiths	"	Graham Rogers
"	Carrie Harper	"	Paul Rogers
"	Frank Hemmings	"	J R Skelland
"	Kevin Hughes	"	Debbie Wallice
"	R Alun Jenkins	"	Robert Walsh
"	Adrienne Jeorrett	"	Barrie Warburton
"	Gwenfair Jones	"	Nigel Williams
"	Hugh Jones	"	Derek Wright
"	Marc Jones	"	Phil Wynn

*Absent

30 **TO ANSWER ANY PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR RECEIVE PUBLIC STATEMENTS
OR PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDERS 10 AND 11 OF THE COUNCIL'S
STANDING ORDERS**

The Mayor reported that no public questions, statements or petitions had been received.

31 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors T Alan Edwards,

Paul H Pemberton and Andy Williams.

32 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor asked all those present to join him in observing a minutes silence as a mark of respect for the family of Carl Sargeant AM, following his recent death.

The Mayor advised that he had recently attended the Annual Remembrance Service and the Armistice Day two minutes silence held in Wrexham. He stated that both events were extremely well attended and he had been proud to represent the County Borough at these poignant events.

The Mayor thanked his fellow Councillors for supporting his recent charity dinner and advised that the evening had been a great success raising more than £3,000 for his charity fund.

Following his attendance at the Victorian Christmas market the Mayor took the opportunity to thank the town centre events team for the hard work they had put into arranging this wonderful festive event.

On behalf of the Council the Mayor thanked staff in the Environment Department who had worked tirelessly during the last few days to deal with the extreme weather conditions and keep main routes clear. He also thanked all other Council Departments for their efforts during this recent cold spell.

The Mayor wished Members and staff well over the festive period and also a happy and healthy 2018.

Finally, the Mayor advised that Agenda Item 11 was being withdrawn as the Appointments Committee were not in a position to report to this meeting.

33 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS, IF ANY

There were no declarations of interest.

34 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the County Borough Council held on 27 September 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

35 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND COMMITTEES

No issues were raised by Members in relation to the Minutes of the following for the periods indicated:

Executive Board – 12 September – 14 November 2017

Customers, Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 27 September
– 22 November 2017
Employment, Business and Investment Scrutiny Committee – 6 September
– 1 November 2017
Homes, Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee – 13 September – 8
November 2017
Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee – 21 September – 16 November 2017
Safeguarding, Communities and Well-being Scrutiny Committee – 5 September – 15
November 2017
Audit Committee – 28 September 2017
Environmental Licensing Committee – 25 September – 27 November 2017
Planning Committee – 4 September – 17 November 2017
Standards Committee – 7 September 2017

36 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

36(a) - Notice of Motion (i)

Members considered a Notice of Motion in the following terms proposed by Councillor Dana Davies and seconded by Councillor Derek Wright:

“The Council:

- (i) Call immediately on the WLGA/LGA to make urgent representations to the UK Government to fund the NJC claim and the pay spine review, reporting progress via WCBC’s Joint Consultative Committee.
- (ii) Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor supporting the NJC pay claim and seeking additional UK Government funding to fund a decent pay rise and the pay spine review ”

The Leader advised that he agreed with the sentiment behind the motion and proposed an amendment, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, in the following terms:

“The Council:

- (i) Call immediately on the WLGA/LGA to make urgent representations to UK Government to fund any agreed NJC pay settlement for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2020.
- (ii) Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor seeking additional UK Government funding to fund such pay settlement”

Following an update by the Head of Finance on the current situation with regards to pay negotiations, the original motion was withdrawn. Members proceeded to vote on the amendment, which became the substantive motion, and this was duly carried.

RESOLVED: That Council

- (i) Call immediately on the WLGA/LGA to make urgent representations to UK Government to fund any agreed NJC pay settlement for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2020.**
- (ii) Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor seeking additional UK Government funding to fund such pay settlement.**

36(b) - Notice of Motion (ii)

Members considered a second Notice of Motion in the following terms proposed by Councillor Carrie Harper and seconded by Councillor Marc Jones:

“The Council call on the UK Government to pause the roll out of Universal Credit in order to address the substantial concerns expressed by charities, the third sector and others about its implementation”

The Leader advised that he agreed with the sentiment behind the motion and proposed an amendment, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, in the following terms:

“That Council note the UK Government’s intention to roll out Universal Credit despite the substantial concerns expressed by charities, the third sector and others about its implementation. But given that the Wrexham Job Centre went live as a “full service” site from 4 October 2017, the Council should continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions locally to mitigate the impact upon customers and provide the necessary support as and when required”.

The amendment was voted upon and subsequently carried.

RESOLVED – That Council note the UK Government’s intention to roll out Universal Credit despite the substantial concerns expressed by charities, the third sector and others about its implementation. But given that the Wrexham Job Centre went live as a “full service” site from 4 October 2017, the Council should continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions locally to mitigate the impact upon customers and provide the necessary support as and when required.

37 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/19

The Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health and Safety and Governance submitted a report (HF/134/17) allowing Council to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to commence in April 2018, for the 2018/19 Financial Year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed**

Requirements (Wales) Regulations ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the Welsh Assembly on 27 November 2013 be noted.

- (ii) The outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on its local discretions in its Council Tax Reduction Scheme (section 5) be noted.**
- (iii) The Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, as the Council's Scheme for the Financial Year 2018/19, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report, be adopted;**
- (iv) To delegate to the Head of Finance (in consultation with the Leader) authority to consider, approve and/or deal with as necessary any amendments which may be made to the "Amendment regulations" following consideration by the National Assembly for Wales when these regulations are laid & approved by Welsh Government.**

REASONS FOR DECISION

- (i) The Council is obliged to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19 under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations by 31 January 2018.**
- (ii) Due to the timing of the spending Review, it is likely that the uprating regulations for Benefits, will not be laid until late December at the earliest, and therefore will not be debated by the National Assembly for Wales until January 2018, as a result it will mean that the amendment regulations will not be approved by the Assembly until late January 2018.**

38 REVIEW OF 2017/18 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

The Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health and Safety and Governance submitted a report (HF/124/17) seeking approval for a revision to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2017/18.

During the discussion officers confirmed that the proposals in the report had been shared with Wales Audit Office and external advisors. The Wales Audit Office would be carrying out an audit in summer 2018 and no official response would be received before then. The Head of Finance confirmed that he did not anticipate any issues or concerns from WAO.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the revisions to the MRP Policy for 2017/18 be approved:**

- a) **Option 3 (Asset Life Method- straight line) to be used for calculating MRP on outstanding supported borrowing as at 31 March 2017. The calculation will be ‘the straight line’ method over 40 years. This represents a change from Option 2 (CFR method) as approved by Council on 22 February 2017.**
- b) **Option 3 (Asset Life Method – straight line) to be used for calculating MRP on supported borrowing incurred on or after 1 April 2017. The calculation will be the ‘straight line’ method over an appropriate number of years, dependent on the period of time that the capital expenditure is likely to generate benefits. This also represents a change from Option 2.**

REASONS FOR DECISION

To enable the Council to make a prudent provision for the repayment of debt.

39 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

The Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health and Safety and Governance submitted a report (HF/130/17) informing Members of the Council’s current budgetary position following six months of the 2017/18 financial year.

During the debate, the following points were noted, in particular:

- There had been an unprecedented increase in Looked After Children between January and September of last year. This national trend, and particularly the requirement for a number of specialist placements had led to a projected overspend within the Children’s Social Care department.
- Members had been informed of the projected overspend once related costs for the placements had been subject to the usual calculation and challenge by officers.
- Concern that the pressure on the Children’s Social Care department was likely to continue as the number of Looked After Children and the need for specialists placements increased. A Member suggested that the sudden and national decline in preventative services was a contributing factor.

RESOLVED – That 2017/18 revenue budget position be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure robust budget monitoring arrangements for the financial year and that action is taken to address areas of overspend

40 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This item was withdrawn (minute 32 above refers).

Councillor John Pritchard
Mayor