

**ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**15 JUNE 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 15 June 2016

**PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)**

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Chris Dolphin, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull and Paul Shotton

**SUBSTITUTES:** Councillors: Mike Lowe (for Glenys Diskin), Mike Peers (for Colin Legg) and David Wisinger (for Ian Dunbar)

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Alison Halford

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Councillor Kevin Jones, Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection & Leisure; Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation); and Waste & Ancillary Services Manager

Chief Executive (for minute number 15)

Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) and Mr. Howard Sutcliffe, Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Officer (for minute number 16)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

**12. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman indicated that Agenda Item 6 'Update on North Wales Waste Project' would be brought forward to enable the Chief Executive to provide a verbal update. The remainder of the items would be considered in the order shown on the agenda.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**14. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2016 were submitted.

**Accuracy**

Councillor Paul Shotton asked that the minutes be amended to reflect his attendance.

### Minute number 6: Review of Waste Collection Policy

Councillor Richard Lloyd said that issues he had raised had not been included in the minutes. He had commented positively on the running of the Buckley household recycling centre. He had also proposed that the Sandycroft site allow vans with licences to which he had received a positive response from the Chief Officer and Cabinet Member.

Councillor Paul Shotton said that he had commented that the proposal by Councillor David Evans was dependent on funding from Welsh Government.

In recalling these comments, Councillor Kevin Jones gave assurance that they had been taken on board, with the addition that the proposal was subject to identifying a suitable site as well as funding.

Councillor David Evans referred to his proposal for a super site and had suggested that this accommodate vans with licences, following the point raised by Councillor Lloyd.

Councillor Mike Peers had raised various points and felt it was important that they be minuted. These involved capacity issues with the skips at the Buckley site and the evidence which had been put forward to indicate that recycling was not being fully promoted. In relation to Councillor Evans' proposal for a supersite to serve Flint and Connah's Quay, he pointed out that Oakenholt had specifically been mentioned and that the resolution should have made reference to options for additional super sites at Brookhill and Oakenholt.

### Minute number 7: Environment Enforcement Arrangements

Councillor Richard Lloyd had requested that consultation took place with all local Members in addition to Town and Community Councils. He added that he had welcomed the proposals which he felt could have been introduced at an earlier stage as this would have removed the need for the Dog DNA scheme.

### **Matters Arising**

#### Minute number 6: Review of Waste Collection Policy

As a further update, Councillor Kevin Jones circulated a statement detailing progress since discussion by the Committee on the Welsh Government (WG) commissioned review report on the Council's Household Recycling Centres. The WG recommendation for its optimum solution for site provision in Flintshire had been deemed unacceptable to the Council, resulting in alternative proposals put forward within the general ethos of WG requirements. Following lengthy negotiations, it was reported that WG was minded to support this option by providing additional funding to enable the development of Mold and Buckley sites similar to that at Sandycroft. Both sites would need to be temporarily closed to allow redevelopment, subject to Cabinet approval. Until suitable land could be identified in an appropriate location for a combined facility, operations in Flint and Connah's Quay would continue. A progress report was scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That, subject to the amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**15. UPDATE ON NORTH WALES WASTE PROJECT**

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the background to the regional partnership project involving the five Councils overseen by the Joint Committee. Following Welsh Government approval of the final business case, the five Authorities would receive a 25% subsidy of around £140m over the 25 year life of the project. Negotiations with Wheelabrator were expected to be finalised at the end of July, followed by financial closing and contract sign-off by early Autumn. Operations were due to start in 2018/19 as projected and there was no expectation for an increase in the gate fee.

In response to a question from Councillor Kevin Jones, the Chief Executive explained the need for borrowing and for potential variations in the gate fee if there were changes to the exchange rate. However, the economic forecast indicated that the partnership would still benefit should there be a temporary change in the exchange rate.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

**16. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

The Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) introduced Mr. Howard Sutcliffe, Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Officer, and invited him to present the report on the work of the AONB since the introduction of new governance arrangements.

Mr. Sutcliffe highlighted the important relationship between the councils and the workings of the AONB and welcomed continued work with Flintshire into the future. In explaining the involvement of each council on the Joint Committee and the AONB partnership, he thanked those Members for their support and referred to work underway to finalise the strategic management plan. Information was shared on a range of activities being carried out, as set out in the report, which demonstrated the importance of the AONB in the local landscape. Amongst these was the Young Ranger programme where an ex-pupil of Mold Alun School was undertaking seasonal work as a trainee Warden. It was explained that the Welsh Government gave £55K to each AONB to spend on projects. This project fund was called the Sustainable Development Fund and any organisation with a project related to the AONB could bid into the fund.

Councillor David Evans asked whether consultation had taken place prior to the path resurfacing in Nercwys forest due to complaints from horse riders. Mr. Sutcliffe explained that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) resurfaced the forest

paths to accommodate larger excavation vehicles and that other paths were available for horses. He spoke about the need for different surfaces for different users and said that any comments raised by members of the public would be taken on board.

In respect of Loggerheads, Councillor Brian Lloyd asked if parking provision could be improved, particularly during peak times such as weekends. Whilst Mr. Sutcliffe was in agreement, he pointed out that changes to Special Areas of Conservation required approval. Although work was due to start over the Summer to convert nearby land into additional parking, this would not be enough to cope with demand at peak times. The approach was to encourage visitors during other periods and discussions had been held with the Trunk Road Agency to consider other options to address the problem. In response to a suggestion from the Chairman on potential use of land near to the Colomendy education centre, Mr. Sutcliffe explained the potential impact on the condition of the land and the need to discourage people crossing the road.

Councillor Paul Shotton welcomed the update and particularly commended the Health Walk initiatives. In response to questions, Mr. Sutcliffe shared details of the volunteer programme including work by Coleg Cambria volunteers to develop rural skills. In respect of promoting local businesses such as bed & breakfast establishments, the partnership worked with the Council's Enterprise Manager on various initiatives and had introduced the AONB Badge scheme and the Clwydian Range Tourism Group to engage with local business and promote activities in the area.

Councillor Mike Peers shared the concerns on visitors' parking and suggested that a Park & Ride facility could be introduced from County Hall for peak periods. He spoke about the need to promote areas of the AONB through local libraries and for more circular walks which could publicise the facilities of local villages. Mr. Sutcliffe referred to established links with local bus services and explained that there had been insufficient demand for a Park & Ride facility, although this could be looked at again to ascertain any renewed interest. A number of circular walks had been introduced across the AONB, based on demand, with the objective of involving Town/Community Councils in promoting local villages. Promotional leaflets were available at Hawarden and Mold libraries along with wider distribution in Chester and Wirral.

The progress in AONB work and enthusiasm of the AONB officer team was welcomed by Councillor Nancy Matthews. In response to a query, Mr. Sutcliffe spoke about the introduction of livestock at Nercwys forest whilst safeguarding the welfare of animals as well as visitors.

Councillor Butler thanked Mr. Sutcliffe for his advocacy of the AONB and spoke about the aim to encourage visitors and publicise activities including the programme on cycling in the AONB.

In summarising, the Chief Officer said that Mr. Tom Woodall of the Council's Countryside Service had provided good support to the AONB partnership. He acknowledged the concerns around car parking and said that the Council was doing everything possible to promote the AONB.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Sutcliffe for his informative presentation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the progress of and support the work of the AONB.

**17. 12 MONTH REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) presented a report on the outcome of the review of the Car Parking Strategy, a year after its approval by Cabinet. He explained the phased approach to implementing parking charges and drew attention to the summary of income levels against projections for each town, along with a number of recommended changes to the policy. He provided detailed explanation on those changes which could be accommodated in revising the policy along with the reasons why others could not, as set out in the report. The reasons for continuing with the current levels of parking charges were also indicated, and would be reviewed annually.

Councillor Ann Minshull reported that some Shotton residents had complained at being unable to park outside their homes due to others parking on the road following the introduction of yellow lines and that this was a particular problem in King George Street. She also commented on the fact that some car parks were not being used and the frustrations around the criteria for parking permits.

The Chief Officer reminded Members of the commitment to review the parking strategy on an annual basis and that any issues raised would be considered, in line with the criteria. Changes to Traffic Orders could be sought, subject to the necessary consultation. Requests for candidate sites for parking permits would be considered if brought to his attention, if sufficiently supported from residents in that area. In response to a question, he advised that seven Enforcement Officers were currently employed, however forthcoming assistance from the environmental enforcement providers would help to maximise resources.

Councillor Bernie Attridge said that previous discussion on the Strategy had made clear the potential for displacement issues along with an undertaking to review Traffic Orders where appropriate. He added that Enforcement Officers worked on a rota basis to monitor and target specific areas where parking issues were reported as well as reacting to hotspot areas.

Councillor Mike Peers thanked the Chief Officer for listening to the views of Town and Community Councils, and the Cabinet Member for ensuring that the Strategy was reviewed. He pointed out that details of parking fines had not been mentioned in the report and that he was awaiting responses to his questions on the implementation of charges at County Hall. He suggested various reasons why parking charge income levels had exceeded expectations in Buckley and asked if consideration could be given to introducing a double-ticket arrangement along with parking charges from 10am-3pm on a six month trial basis. He also asked whether there were plans to look into why parking charge income levels were lower than expected in some other areas.

The Chief Officer agreed to provide a list of parking fines for the minutes, explaining that this income was put back into the service with a proportional fee paid to Denbighshire. With regard to the proposed trial in Buckley, he agreed to include this in the report for Cabinet to consider, with no officer recommendation as the loss of income from reducing the hours of application was not sustainable, as indicated in the report. In respect of the final comment, he felt it would be unfair to review areas where income was lower than expected as there may be other circumstances over which there was no control.

In respect of County Hall, Councillor Attridge said that an announcement would shortly be made, stating that parking charges would not be introduced for employees and Council Members at this stage. A parking permit could instead be issued for an annual fee of around £12. Although parking charges at County Hall had been considered as part of the Strategy for Mold, the Cabinet Member pointed out that other Council offices such as Alltami were not included and also that many employees had been impacted by Single Status. Visitors using the County Hall car park would be subject to parking charges.

Councillor David Evans stressed the need for monitoring the County Hall car park to ensure there was sufficient capacity and prevent unauthorised parking. Councillor Attridge agreed but said that this was a corporate issue. Councillor Evans also pointed out the impact on local businesses from the removal of a loading bay at the car park in Charmleys Lane, Shotton. It was explained that the matter had been discussed with the Clerk of Shotton Town Council and that action could be taken to review the Traffic Order.

Councillor Mike Lowe asked about the approach to enforcement of dual-use parking spaces and raised concerns about the process for renewing blue badges where there was no requirement to return outdated badges. The Chief Officer said that the suggestion for dual-use spaces had been received at a late stage and would need consideration of how this could be managed, however a suggestion for separate 'parent and child' spaces seemed a more practical option. He gave assurances that fixed penalty notices were issued for vehicles failing to display blue badges and would pass on the concerns raised to the relevant section. He also agreed to pursue an update for the Committee on the management and enforcement of blue badges.

Councillor Paul Shotton felt that the need for parking charges should be acknowledged in recognition of the current period of austerity. He commented on the vibrancy of Flint, Shotton and Mold town centres and commended the use of double-tickets to benefit local businesses. He welcomed the update from the Cabinet Member on County Hall parking and sought information on parking provision at Talacre. The Chief Officer explained that significant work had been involved in reaching the current stage to extend parking spaces. This would allow the introduction of a Traffic Order during the Summer to restrict on-street parking at specific times along the main route, along with improved car park signage. The objective was to maximise the limited number of parking spaces available and to reduce the potential for congestion along the main route.

In response to a further question, the Chief Officer advised that 'Kingdom' the environmental enforcement provider would commence work with the Council at the beginning of July following a period of induction/training.

In acknowledging the aims of the Strategy, the Chairman thanked the Chief Officer for the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee recommend Cabinet approval of the outcome of the 12 month review of the Council's car parking strategy and proposed changes to the strategy resulting from the review.

**18. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

In presenting the current Forward Work Programme for consideration, the Facilitator advised that the report on Household Recycling Centres would be brought to the next meeting in July. Due to the number of other items scheduled for that meeting, it was agreed that officers would liaise with the Chairman to defer some items.

Councillor David Evans requested a future report on Civil Parking Enforcement including information on rules, location hotspots and fines issued. Councillor Mike Peers asked that the report also include details of resident parking schemes. Councillor Bernie Attridge suggested that the report be brought to the September meeting to allow time for the environment enforcement company to have commenced work with the Council.

As stated earlier in the meeting, officers agreed to circulate information to Members on parking fines and would include details of fixed penalty notices together with a guidance note on civil parking.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be amended as necessary; and
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

**19. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There were two members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am)

.....  
**Chairman**