

**ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**7 DECEMBER 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 7 December 2015

**PRESENT:**     **Councillor Veronica Gay (Chair)**

Councillors Haydn Bateman, Chris Dolphin, Brian Lloyd, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull and Paul Shotton

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors: Ray Hughes and Hilary Isherwood

**SUBSTITUTE:** Councillor: Mike Peers (for Colin Legg)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors: Christine Jones, Richard Jones and Billy Mullin

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Kevin Jones, Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager and Finance Manager (Environment)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

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

No declarations of interest were made.

**49.     COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/2017**

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

The Chief Executive and Corporate Finance Manager began the presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Purpose of today's meeting
- Corporate Overview

The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) continued the detailed presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Planning and Environment – Service Business Plan Proposals
- Streetscene and Transportation – Service Business Plan Proposals
- Streetscene and Transportation – Local Pressures and Inflation

The Chief Executive concluded the presentation through outlining the National Timetable and Local Timetable.

**The comments and questions which were raised by Members of the Committee on the presentation, together with the responses given, are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached).**

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted.

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

There were no members of the public and one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.25 am)

.....  
**Chair**

## APPENDIX 1

### 2016/17 Budget Consultation

### Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2015

<b>Member Comment/Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b><u>Planning &amp; Environment</u></b>	
In relation to the types of activities for which a planning fee can be charged, could an element of profit be added to the charge to assist the service and improve the overall Council budget?	There are legal constraints which do not allow the Council to make a profit. The service also needs to be conscious not to over-charge which could result in members of the public not wanting the service.
The risk statuses which are 'amber' are variable and could go up or down. Do you have any idea on the best/worst case for these proposals?	The estimates are based on the best data available to the Council over a three year period. We are committed to not over-committing the service and continued in-year budgeting monitoring.
In relation to the proposal to reduce the cost of newspaper advertising, how are these figures arrived at?	The Council is bound by legislation which requires certain planning applications to be advertised in the local newspapers. It is proposed to reduce the cost of newspaper advertising as effectively as possible and we are confident that this saving can be met. Information on current spend on newspaper advertising can be provided.
A rationale on how the figures for each of the proposals is arrived at is needed.	During consideration of the 2015/16 budget proposals, a factsheet was produced to assist Members. It is proposed that factsheet, including information on methods of costings for the 2016/17 budget proposals be provided to Members during the January, 2016 Overview & Scrutiny budget meetings.
<b><u>Streetscene and Transportation</u></b>	
Where will communities get the funding needed to run a transport service?	The intention is to achieve an improved core network/hub to enable communities to feed into those hubs and provide the transport service. There are a number of options to fund the service with good examples across the Country to draw upon. A report on the review of subsidised bus routes will be presented to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January, 2016.

Member Comment/Question	Response
Support the use of the Probation service assisting with litter collection in some areas, but need to make sure toilet facilities are available to them.	Staff are provided with a list of facilities available to them. Some companies across Flintshire allow staff to use their toilet facilities. Probation staff will be supervised.
What is meant by 'non-generic' Streetscene roles?	Previously there had been many different roles within Streetscene and this was addressed in 2012 with staff being given a generic role. This requires that staff to work across the sections of the service in return for an increased salary. The proposal is to replace any service leavers or new starters with specific service roles which will have a lower salary.
Does the proposed savings from reducing the cleansing standard in towns include an element of littering fines?	Litter collection has a large cost to the Council. The intention is to improve the work of the enforcement team, who should be more visible in towns. The proposed savings do not include income generated from littering fines.
Note that there is opposition from the Trade Unions on the use of the Probation service assisting with litter collection. Does this mean that current Streetscene staff will be deployed to other areas?	The use of the Probation Service will not impact Streetscene staff but will enable supervisors to programme work and reduce the number of agency staff needed to cover sick leave and annual leave.
The income generation for car parking charges is recorded as £200,000 yet when the revenue budget was set in February 2015 for 2015/16 this figure was recorded as £400,000 can you explain the difference in figures.	<p>The figure of £200,000 is additional to the £400,000 income generation which was a previous decision made. The combined total income generation for car parking will be £600,000.</p> <p>More detailed information on this will be provided in the factsheets in order to assist Members in tracking savings and income generations from previous decisions.</p>
<p>When the Council close a facility like the public toilets in Holywell and propose to knock down the building, this should be done as soon as possible rather than the building remaining there for a long time.</p> <p>Investment needed in the enforcement team for litter.</p>	<p>Discussions are on-going with Holywell Town Council over the possibility of the toilets being transferred into its ownership.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>

<b>Member Comment/Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Welcome the proposal to develop energy production at landfill. Is this due to the reduction in subsidy?</p>	<p>The National Government are reducing the subsidy. The proposal is to introduce photo volcanic panels to both the landfill sites at Brookhill to increase the levels of energy produced. The proposals will be submitted to the Environment Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in January, 2016.</p> <p>Also the potential to extend the energy source to Alltami depot opens the opportunity for utilising the energy to power the fleet.</p>
<p>Understand that Flintshire has a high number of Household Recycling Centres in comparison to other areas of Wales but concerned over the possible increase in fly-tipping.</p>	<p>Since the reduction in operating hours of some of the Centres across Flintshire, fly-tipping has been monitored and there is no evidence of an increase in fly-tipping across Flintshire. Welsh Government continue to question the number of Centres across Flintshire.</p>
<p>Would European Funding be available to assist rural communities in providing a subsidised transport service?</p>	<p>The Rural Development Communities Fund could be drawn on but it was important to ensure that a future service in which ever form was sustainable.</p>
<p>Are there any proposals to charge for assisted waste collections and the introduction of three weekly black bin collections?</p>	<p>Officers have been challenged to provide details of all savings options to meet the 30% budget reductions within their service areas. Options for 2017/18 include these proposals but this does not mean these proposals will be taken forward.</p>
<p>The proposed closure of the public toilets at new street car park in Mold will result in a reduction in revenue. The toilets are well used and should remain in use.</p>	<p>Discussions are on-going with Mold Town Council over the possibility of the toilets being transferred into its ownership.</p>
<p>The proposals to introduce an integrated transport unit and the final phase of the public convenience review will have a negative impact on rural communities and therefore the risk status should be amended from 'amber' to 'red'.</p>	<p>The proposal to introduce an integrated transport unit will improve how the Council procures services and will not impact front line services. The review of the subsidised bus routes covers not only rural communities but also urban routes and there are good examples across the Country where this has been implemented successfully that can be drawn on.</p> <p>The majority of public conveniences are in towns across Flintshire. Council facilities will be more accessible for the public to use.</p>

<b>Member Comment/Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
In relation to the proposal to rationalise Household Recycling Centres, how will you decide which centres remain open. Will this be based on usage or geography?	A good deal of work needs to be undertaken before a decision is made on the centres. Geography and usage will be considered along with other factors but this decision is yet to be made.
If the Council can't raise enough money from the cemeteries to continue to provide the service, how does it expect Town and Community Councils to find the funding required for the maintenance liability and cleanliness of cemeteries?	The proposal is to pass all liability for the long term maintenance of cemeteries to Town and Community Council who would be able to carry out the maintenance service at a cheaper cost than the Council. There were opportunities to share income with the Community.
Given the increased income generation from car parking charges, is there any proposals to increase the charges?	There are no proposals to increase car parking charges. The total income generation of £600,000 is based on current level of charges.
Concern that decisions made as part of the 2016/17 budget would commit Members to decisions within the proposed 2017/18 budget which Members may not be supportive of.	Any changes to Council Policy would need to be presented to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to Cabinet. None of the proposals outlined for 2016/17 commit Members to decisions for 2017/18.
Is the increase in landfill tax a national Government tax?	Yes. The Council is proactive in diverting all waste possible from landfill.
In relation to the presentation slide explaining local pressures and inflation, explanation is needed on the terms 'premises/supplies and Contractors' increase'.	Further clarity can be provided during the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee 'mop up' session.