

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16 JUNE 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire on Friday, 16 June 2017

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

Councillors: Mike Allport, Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Cindy Hinds, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect and Paul Shotton

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Marion Bateman (for Haydn Bateman) and Richard Lloyd (for Dave Hughes)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Colin Legg

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Clive Carver and Dave Mackie

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing; Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)

Highway Strategy Manager (for minute number 8); Waste and Ancillary Services Manager (for minute numbers 9 and 10) and Transport and Logistics Manager (for minute number 11)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman suggested that agenda item 7 – Flintshire County Council’s response to the Welsh Government A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Consultation document be brought forward and considered as the first item. The Committee agreed with this suggestion.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

7. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO THE WELSH GOVERNMENT A55/A494/A548 DEESIDE CORRIDOR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced the Council’s response to the Welsh Government (WG) A55/A494/A548 Deeside corridor consultation document. The consultation process began in March 2017 on 2 possible options to improve the A55/A494/A548 corridor and a number of public consultation exhibitions had taken place in the local area, which provided residents and businesses with details on the two options which had been developed and assessed by WG. Details on the two routes (blue and red routes)

could be found on the WG website and a copy of the consultation document was attached at Appendix 3 of the report.

Details of the Council's response and preferred option were shown at Appendix 2 of the report. The Council considered that on balance, the most beneficial route to the Council and North Wales would be the red route option but considers that in order to maximise benefit from the overall project, additional elements (some of which were contained within the blue route option) should be included within the final proposals.

Councillor Marion Bateman stated that she could not support the Council's response to the consultation document and outlined her concerns around the 'divisive' choices being proposed by the WG neither of which, she felt, would address the issues on the A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor. She questioned the additional income projected for the economy from the red route given that businesses on the Deeside Industrial Park were in support of the blue route. She asked where the increased traffic would go once it had reached Northop and questioned whether the red route went against planning policy in terms of development in the green barrier.

Councillor Vicki Perfect spoke against the proposed red route and the negative impact this would have on the rural area of Flintshire. She reported that Flint Town Council had responded to the WG as part of the consultation process in support of the proposed blue route.

The Chief Officer responded that businesses on the Deeside Industrial Park had raised concerns around the disruption that would be caused during the improvement works being carried out. He had advised them to forward their concerns to the WG directly as part of the consultation process.

In response to comments made by Councillor Clive Carver, the Chief Officer advised that if WG implemented the red route option, the A548 would become a trunk road and future maintenance costs for Flintshire Bridge would become the responsibility of the WG.

Councillor Paul Shotton said that he had attended a number of consultation events where there had been consensus for supporting the red route which he felt would provide improved access to Deeside Industrial Park.

Having enquired about the green route, Councillor David Evans was advised that there were no details as this was an aspirational route intended as an alternative to the red and blue routes.

Councillor Bateman proposed the Committee consider the green route which had been proposed by Northop Community Council and Flint Town Council prior to the Council's response being submitted to WG. Councillor Chris Dolphin seconded the proposal with an addition that WG be asked to include a crawler lane from Northop Hall going towards Halkyn on the A55. He said that Cabinet should be asked to consider the proposed green route as he did not feel that the red or blue route would address the current issues. When put to the vote, the recommendation was lost.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's options appraisal for the two possible routes and the formal Council response to the Welsh Government consultation be supported.

8. UPDATE ON PROVISION OF RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEMES AND DISABLED BAYS ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

That The Highway Strategy Manager introduced an update on the provision of residents parking schemes and disabled bays on the highway network.

Flintshire County Council adopted a Resident Parking Policy in 2013, shown at Appendix 1 of the report. Since the introduction of the policy, a number of schemes had been progressed to the "local ballot" stage, however, in every case the proposal had failed to obtain the required level of local support, therefore currently no residents parking schemes had been implemented in the County. Despite the lack of successful projects, there was an ever growing demand for Residents Parking Schemes by residents and community areas across the Council and a method of prioritising requests was no required.

It was proposed, therefore that a Resident Parking Scheme Assessment Matrix, attached at Appendix 3 of the report, be implemented to prioritise the requested schemes. Also detailed within the report were the options available to residents who apply for an on-street disabled parking bay outside their property.

Councillor David Evans suggested that when initially consulting with residents on a proposed parking scheme, both the pros and cons of the scheme be included in the letter. He commented on the policy for resident parking schemes and suggested that the minimum response of 50% for a scheme to proceed be increased to 75%. He also asked if the introduction of a resident parking scheme reduced the number of available parking spaces in a street.

The Highway Strategy Manager explained that the pros and cons of a resident parking scheme were provided to residents during the drop-in events and public consultation. He agreed to look into increasing the minimum response required to 75% and advised that a resident parking scheme did reduce the number of parking spaces available.

In response to a question from Councillor Sean Bibby, the Highway Strategy Manager advised that if a resident parking scheme was not successful, residents would be informed on why the scheme failed through local consultation events.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Marion Bateman around a proposed scheme in Mold and the lack of clarity for residents, the Highway Strategy Manager said that he would look into this matter following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to the existing Residents Parking Policy be recommended to Cabinet, with an amendment, that the minimum response required from residents be increased from 50% to 75%;
- (b) That the Residents Parking Scheme Assessment Matrix, which will be used to prioritise future requests for Resident Parking Schemes, be recommended to Cabinet; and
- (c) That the criteria and process for the provision of marked disabled parking bays on the public highway be noted.

9. WASTE COLLECTION ROUNDS AND NEW OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS AT HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE (HRC) SITES

The Waste and Ancillary Services Manager introduced the proposed changes to the waste collection rounds and the new operating arrangements at Household Recycling Centres (HRC). He provided an update on the following areas as detailed within the report:-

- Resident only permits
- Resident Van Permits Scheme
- HRC Management
- Opening times
- Waste and recycling round changes

Councillor Paul Shotton thanked officers for a positive report and welcomed the proposal to retain the Resident Van Permit Scheme. He commented on the positive work carried out by the Task Force at Deeside and asked if this would be rolled out to other wards across the County. He also asked whether consideration had been given to working with Social Enterprise at HRC and whether the new facility in Oakenholt was on track to be opened in September 2017.

The Waste and Ancillary Services Manager responded that following the success of the Task Force at Deeside, it was proposed to carry out similar events across the County to assist with the reduction of side waste. He advised that the Council currently work with Social Enterprise at HRC across the County and were looking to expand recycling with them. The Chief Officer advised that the new facility in Oakenholt was due to be opened in September 2017 but he would bring a further report to the Committee if there were any changes to this date. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing gave an assurance that the HRC sites in Flint and Connah's Quay would remain open until the new facility in Oakenholt was opened.

Councillor Richard Lloyd also welcomed retention of the Resident Van Permit Scheme and asked how the Resident Only Permit Scheme would be enforced to ensure that they were not passed to residents without a permit. The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside explained that further work would be carried out prior to a decision being made on the introduction of a Resident Only Permit Scheme. Councillor David Evans asked if factual information on how many people who did not reside in Flintshire visited the HRC

across the County could be presented to the Committee prior to a decision on the Resident Only Permit Scheme.

In response to further questions, the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside advised that residents would soon be receiving a 9 month calendar which would include information on what items can be recycled. She also advised that she would be reviewing the cost of bulky waste collections.

Councillor Sean Bibby asked if the Council had the resources to target side waste. The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside advised that consideration was being given to re-directing enforcement officers currently deadline with littering to work with people to encourage them to recycle and reduce side waste.

Councillor Chris Dolphin asked that local Members be informed of any residents within their ward who would have a change of collection day or change of collection week. The Waste and Ancillary Service Manager agreed to provide this information to local Members.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Dolphin around regular changes to waste collection times for residents, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing agreed to look into this matter following the meeting.

In response to Councillor Andy Dunbobbin, the Chief Officer explained that the Council had previously introduced a policy to charge supermarkets for collecting and returning trolleys.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed changes to the Council's Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy be recommended to Cabinet; and
- (b) That the proposed changes to the waste and recycling rounds, due to be implemented in September, 2017, be recommended to Cabinet.

10. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Waste and Ancillary Services Manager introduced an update on the Council's Car Parking Strategy following its implementation in 2015.

Since the approval of the Car Parking Strategy in April 2015, parking charges had been implemented in six town centres across Flintshire and as part of that strategy it was proposed to introduce charges within Flint Town Centre in September 2015. Due to the ongoing regeneration works and the local car parks being utilised as temporary works compounds, the strategy was not progressed at the that time. As these works were drawing to a close and car parks were being released, the Council was now in a position to progress the strategy in Flint in a phased manner, as shown in Appendix 1.

Pedestrian only zones were in operation on Holywell High Street and Buckley High Street and had been established since 1992 and 2000 respectively.

It was proposed to review the pedestrian zones in both town centres and explore the possibility of placing free limited waiting parking places on both of the High Streets in order to support local businesses. Before the formal consultation process could commence and in line with Council policy, it was proposed that the Town Councils be asked to confirm their position on the proposed changes and to undertake an informal consultation process to gauge local support (or otherwise) for the proposed changes.

Parking charges were introduced to Holywell Town Centre in September 2015 in line with the Car Parking Strategy agreed by Cabinet. A private car park owned by the Catholic Church on Well Street was previously leased to Flintshire County Council, however, when charges were removed from Holywell in 2013 the lease agreement was terminated. A preliminary conversation had been held with the Church and they were now in support of re-establishing the previous agreement which would allow the management of the site to pass to Flintshire County Council.

Councillor Joe Johnson welcomed the proposed inclusion of Well Street car park into the Holywell car parking strategy and asked whether consideration had been given to introducing electric car charging points at car parks across Flintshire. The Chief Officer explained that the Welsh Government would be making funding available to install electric car charging points, therefore, a report on this would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Vicki Perfect spoke in support of the programme to roll out the Flint Car Parking Strategy which she said was reasonable and in line with other Car Parking Strategies across Flintshire.

Councillor Chris Dolphin spoke in support of removing the pedestrianised zone at Holywell Town Centre and asked that businesses owners in Holywell be consulted and suggested a trial period. Councillor Richard Lloyd sought an assurance that the consultation on the pedestrianised zone was carried out in a way to ensure fair representation of everyone's opinion. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing explained that the consultation exercise would be carried out by both Buckley and Holywell Town Council's and they would decide how best to carry out the consultation process.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the phased roll out for implementing the Flint Car Parking Strategy be recommended to Cabinet;
- (b) That the review of off-street parking provision, the Church Street Cycleway and Resident Parking Scheme within Flint Town Centre be supported;
- (c) That the Committee recommend to Cabinet that Buckley and Holywell Town Councils be required to undertake informal consultation on a potential review of pedestrian zones in the respective town centres; and
- (d) That the inclusion of Well Street car park into the Holywell car parking strategy be recommended to Cabinet.

11. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT/PROCUREMENT PROJECT

The Transport and Logistics Manager introduced an update on the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) Procurement Project and details of the main changes in transport provision as a result of the new process which would be introduced from September 2017.

Following Cabinet approval in May 2015, it was agreed that an ITU should be established within the Authority to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery and operational management. Under the changes, service delivery, budget management and day-to-day operational management for Social Services transport transferred to the ITU. Budget management and eligibility assessment for mainstream home to school transport also transferred to the ITU within the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio; however, policy setting for school transport remained within the Education & Youth portfolio.

A diagnostic review of all transport operations across the Authority had been carried out in order to identify any savings opportunities and efficiencies within the current operating model. In particular, the diagnostic review was intended to make clear recommendations on the future of all transport services and on the best delivery model. One of the early outcomes of the diagnostic review identified a number of areas of potential savings, particularly in the area of procurement. A thorough optimisation exercise has been completed by the ITU prior to the commencement of the tender process. The optimisation exercise was intended to deliver maximum benefit by ensuring the most efficient use of vehicles and deliver the most cost-effective routes for the required number of eligible passengers. As outlined in the current transport policy, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport.

All school transport escort staff and passenger assistants have attended briefing sessions to keep them informed of the proposed changes to the procurement arrangements. Children with complex needs will still travel with the same school transport escort staff to ensure that there is no disruption for them.

In response to a question from Councillor Cindy Hinds, the Transport and Logistics Manager explained that eligibility for school transport would not change. Councillor Chris Bithell asked that notification to parents on arrangements for school transport be sent out well in advance of the beginning of the school term. He also hoped that the review of transport operations would address the inconsistencies of some children being collected outside of their home, with others having to walk to a designated spot.

Councillor Paul Shotton thanked officers for the report and the work undertaken to review all transport operations and deliver the savings planned for the service as detailed in the Business Planning proposals for 2017-18.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the likely impact from the School Transport procurement process detailed in the report be noted, and

- (b) That a further report be submitted to the Committee following completion of the diagnostic work which would detail the options to change the existing School Transport Policy.

12. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were seven members of the public and three members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.15 pm)

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Chairman