

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 SEPTEMBER 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Wednesday, 19 September 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, Joe Johnson, Colin Legg, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Evans and Dave Hughes. Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor: Ted Palmer (for Cindy Hinds)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: Helen Brown, Rosetta Dolphin, Patrick Heesom, Christine Jones, Brian Lloyd, and David Wisinger (as observers)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside, Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection, Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Highway Strategy Manager. (For minute No.16) Nick Thomas, Operations Manager North-East Wales, Natural Resources Wales.

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None were received.

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 June and 12 July 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. NATURAL RESOURCES WALES (NRW)

The Chair introduced Mr Nick Thomas, Operations Manager North-East Wales, NRW, to the meeting and invited him to give a presentation on the current work being undertaken by NRW.

Mr. Thomas thanked the Committee for the opportunity to give an outline of the work of NRW. He advised that NRW was established in 2013 and was

responsible for the work of the Environment Agency Wales, CCW, the Forestry Commission and some Welsh Government (WG) duties. NRW was the largest WG sponsored body with 1750 member of staff and had an annual budget of around £170m. Its purpose was to deliver sustainable management of natural resources. Mr. Thomas went on to give a presentation which covered the following main points:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – how we will deliver
- Environment Act principles
- Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB)
- Well-being Assessment for Flintshire
- Waste regulation
- Industry regulation
- River Alyn water framework directive project
- agriculture
- Dee Estuary
- access, recreation, health
- climate change
- incident response
- flood risk management
- conservation

The Chairman thanked Nick Thomas for his presentation and invited Members to raise questions.

Councillor Owen Thomas referred to the issue of fly-tipping and asked if there was security around quarry sites. Mr Thomas explained that quarry owners held responsibility for managing security on their sites. He commented on the significant costs involved in clearing land of waste stored without a permit or exemption and the legal consequences of non-compliance. He urged Members to report any incidents or concerns regarding the management or illegal tipping/storage of waste to the NRW.

During discussion Members raised a number of concerns around the ability of the sewerage system to cope with increased demand due to new and future property development in Flintshire. Mr. Thomas referred to the work undertaken to slow and divert the flow of surface water into the sewerage system. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) explained that Welsh Water would make an assessment of its sewerage system to determine whether it could meet the additional demand of any new build in an area and, if necessary, further development would not take place until the sewerage system had been upgraded. The Chief Officer advised that some developments in Flintshire had been 'time locked' as a result of this process.

The Chief Officer referred to a sustainable urban drainage system for all developments in excess of 18 dwellings, separation of foul water and surface water

Councillor Veronica Gay raised concerns around the maintenance of the Balderton Brook, Saltney. Mr. Thomas agreed to look into the specific issues raised following the meeting.

During discussion Mr. Thomas responded to the further questions and concerns raised by Members around the Wales coastal path, Dee Estuary, dredging, and incident responses.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation from Natural Resources Wales be noted.

17. PHASE 2 SPEED LIMIT REVIEW UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced a report to provide an update on progress of the County-wide Speed Limit Review.

The Chief Officer provided background information and explained that the report sought to update the Committee on the progress made to date as well as providing details of a number of legal challenges against the proposed process which have since been overcome. The report also sought to inform the Committee of the revised timelines associated with the progress of a Single Consolidated Order covering the entire highway network, whilst also clarifying proposals to expedite those member requests that were supported by the Department for Transport (DfT) criteria.

The Chief Officer referred to the key actions which had been undertaken and explained that in order to eliminate the over reliance on Legal Services, Streetscene and Transportation officers had developed a system of approved templates which had now enabled the completion of a 'Single Order' for which all speed limits (both existing and proposed) were to be advertised. Utilisation of this revised approach had streamlined the previous over complicated procedure standardising the order writing process for any given eventuality.

The Chief Officer invited the Highway Strategy Manager to report on the key considerations as detailed in the report concerning the progress on delivering the review of speed limits on all public highways. The Highway Strategy Manager advised that following the proposal to advertise the 'Single Order' via the use of a modern map based schedule, officers had now completed a map based system covering the County's highway network for which individual Map Books had been created. Each Map Referencing Book contained a clear indexing system which enabled members of the public to easily locate individual areas of interest both within their immediate place of residence and across the County.

The Chief Officer reported that whilst progress had been made with the Consolidated Order it had not been without its challenges as detailed in the report. The Highways Strategy Manager reported on the challenges which were received regarding the advertisement of 30mph and 60mph speed limits and referred to the national legislation concerning speed limits and street lighting. He went on to explain that for the purposes of speed limits street lighting could take many forms and consisted of County Council owned lighting columns, Community Lighting, and Footway Lighting. Whilst the Authority's internal systems accurately recorded the positioning of all County Council owned and maintained Street Lighting Columns, it would not include the different

classifications of lighting described and it was necessary that the accurate positioning of every street lighting column was known (regardless of ownership) before determining whether or not a 30mph or 60mph speed limit would require the making of an order. The Highway Strategy Manager advised that a detailed survey had been internally commissioned to accurately record the extent of all street lighting on both 60mph and 30mph speed limits (regardless of ownership) which is scheduled for completion in October 2018. When completed officers will re-examine the data to determine which speed limits are regulated by 'default of Street Lighting' and those speed limits which will need to be regulated by an order.

The Chief Officer advised that due to the delays that had occurred as a result of legal challenges it was anticipated that the Single Order would be advertised early 2019. On completion of the required statutory process, both the Singular Order and the Members' requests which had been supported by the DfT Criteria, can be consolidated with Phase 1 Speed Limit Review (completed in November 2016) which would ensure the Council would hold a single consolidated and compliant order covering the County's highway network. When the single Consolidated Order was in place a 5 year review of all existing speed limits within the County (with the exception of the areas already examined within the Members requests) will be undertaken to ensure compliance with the DfT Criteria with any revisions being made via an amendment to the main Consolidation Order.

Members expressed their thanks to the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) and his team for their work on the speed limit review and the highway network.

During discussion officers responded to the questions and concerns raised by Members around speed enforcement and safety on rural roads and country lanes. The Chief Officer explained that the Authority did not have the power to enforce speed limits but could provide tracking evidence to the Police when necessary. In response to the question regarding safety on rural roads, the Highways Strategy Manager advised that accidents had to be reported to the Police in the first instance before the Authority could take action. In response to a further question concerning the objections to the Authority's proposals to advertise and implement 30mph and 60mph speed limits the Chief Officer said the Authority welcomed feedback and worked positively with objectors to achieve the mutual aim to implement the correct speed limit in an area.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made to date and the legal challenges and subsequent changes in approach which had led to a delay in the process be noted; and
- (b) That the amended legal process in order to progress the delivery of a Single Consolidated Order be supported.

18. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme for consideration.

The Facilitator advised that an update on environmental enforcement would be provided to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 27 November.

Councillor Chris Dolphin requested that for the budget workshops cost comparisons should be provided for Greenfield Valley Heritage Park and Wepre Park.

The Chief Officer Planning, Environment and Economy confirmed that each of the portfolio savings would be subject to a budget workshop. The facilitator confirmed that a date would be circulated shortly.

Councillor Paul Shotton suggested that a future meeting of the Committee be held at Wepre Park and this was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be amended; and
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the 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 was one member of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.03 pm)

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Chairman