

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 MARCH 2021

Minutes of the remote meeting of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 9 March 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Rosetta Dolphin (Chair)
Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, David Evans, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Ian Roberts (Leader of the Council) and Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside; Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy); Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Alexander Fortune, Project Sponsor from Transport for Wales (for agenda item 5) Niall Waller (Enterprise and Regeneration Manager) (for agenda item 7)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officers

44. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

None were received

45. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were submitted.

Councillor George Hardcastle referred to the last paragraph on page 6 and said his question was in relation to a one off delivery of sand and sandbags to be used by the response team at Hawarden Community Council. In response the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) provided an explanation on why the sandbag policy was brought in effect, the costs involved and also outlined the potential storage problems communities could face by storing the bags and large amounts of sand. He reassured Councillors that in the event of flooding, assistance would be provided.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to page 8 of the minutes and asked for a correction to the proposer as it was moved by Councillor Chris Dolphin not Councillor Chris Bithell.

The minutes were moved and seconded by Councillors Sean Bibby and Paul Shotton.

RESOLVED:

That with the addition of the two corrections the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

46. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Facilitator presented the report and referred members to the Forward Work Programme on page 17 which provided an update of items being brought to the 12th May meeting and explained that the Highway Asset Management Plan would include information on the outcome of the Aggregate Trial and Potholes. The Facilitator then referred to the 8th June meeting confirming that in addition to the Year End Council Plan report, Litter and Fly Tipping, an update on Floods and Assisted Help would also be brought to that meeting. With regard to the 6th July meeting the Facilitator confirmed that the Public Rights of Way report, as put forward by Councillor Chris Dolphin, and Hydrogen Fuel Aspirations would be presented at this meeting.

The Facilitator then referred to the Action tracking table and confirmed most were now completed and that following the May meeting the feedback to committee on the Pothole Trial and the Ash Dieback items could then be closed.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside asked Councillor Hardcastle if he was happy with the response provided by the Chief Officer on the Sandbag Policy. Councillor Hardcastle confirmed he was happy with the response provided by the Chief Officer.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Chris Dolphin and Joe Johnson

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved.
- (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.
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

47. **BORDERLANDS LINE TRAIN SERVICES – ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND POTENTIAL IMPACT ON STOPS (PRESENTATION)**

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) clarified that this presentation was produced following a request from this committee and that it provided information on the development and aspirations for the line following the implementation of the new franchise in 2018. He confirmed that the Council was not responsible for the line but worked closely with neighbouring authorities, and the operator Transport for Wales (TFW) to develop the line and with shared aspirations the work would link into the Council's Metro plans. He confirmed that the track and signals were owned by Network Rail with the franchise managed by (TFW) who were undertaking a desk top study of the line to establish what constraints could impede the aims and aspirations for the line.

The Chief Officer introduced Alex Fortune, The Rail Project Sponsor in Wales for Transport for Wales who worked closely with Network Rail and colleagues to help deliver these plans. Mr Fortune commenced the detailed presentation to committee which included slides on the following:-

- North Wales Metro –
 - A transformation of bus and rail services

- Making it easier and faster to travel between the North Wales Coast, Wrexham, Deeside, and Merseyside in North East Wales.
 - Improved interchange at Shotton for the North Wales Coast Line.
 - New station at Deeside Parkway
- Infrastructure
 - Stations & Usage
 - New trains

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) commented on the local issues of bridge strikes and to the bids placed last year to assist with dealing with these which were regularly happening on the route and the implications this caused commuters when this happened. He confirmed the Council's aspiration was that this line became a major commuter line which needed to be reliable. He referred to the successful bid to put interactive signage along all of the low bridges along the route which included Cefn-y-Bedd, Shotton and Padeswood and explained how this would work to alert drivers of high vehicles. He then provided information on the bid placed to raise the bridge or lower the road and to the study carried out on the three sites to lower the road. It was not possible to lower the road at Shotton and Cefn-y-Bedd and that because of local issues this was possible at Padeswood.

The Chief Officer then referred to the two station improvements and said that Shotton was not as advanced as the Parkway station, which was part of the Metro Transport Strategy. He said it was key to the development of integrated strategies to develop a commuter line linked to Penyffordd with a park and ride to encourage commuters not to use their cars.

Councillor Sean Bibby thanked Mr Fortune and the Chief Officer for the presentation which was very positive. He raised the following questions:-

- An update on the redevelopment of Shotton Station.
- Referring to Deeside Parkway he asked what would be the future for Hawarden Bridge.
- With regard to Disabled Access he reported on a number of issues raised by residents concerning Shotton Station and asked what measures were being put in place to ensure these stations were disabled accessible especially as the crossing points had been blocked.

Mr Fortune responded to the first point to say Shotton Station would be proceeding to Grade 4 from next month as there was funding available from Welsh Government (WG) to support this. With regard to the point on disabled access he agreed this was an issue which needed addressing and said he was not aware of any crossings being blocked at the stations but commented that Network Rail viewed foot crossings as a risk and were looking at mitigation to resolve this which would mean using a bridge and lifts.

Mr Fortune then referred to the Hawarden Bridge station which had a very low usage level but he was not aware of any plans to close that station. He said the developments at Airfields and the industrial park could potentially increase passenger numbers for this station.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation reported on the application for Resilience Funding to lower the road at Padeswood and the work

being undertaken shortly at Cefn y Bedd which included traffic lights and warning signage. She commented that this line was also used by freight at Padeswood and that this would impact on timetabling. She was pleased that Shotton and Parkway were moving forward and with Penyffordd as a hub station with parking it would make it easier for commuters to use the train and buses rather than drive. She felt four trains per hour was an aspiration but would be very pleased with two trains per hour.

Councillor Joe Johnson asked if the station at Greenfield would be considered in this report. In response the Chief Officer confirmed this station was on the coast line so not included in this report but confirmed that a similar study had been undertaken on that line which he hoped to receive by the end of the month.

Councillor Hardcastle thanked Mr Fortune for the presentation and asked if there were any proposals for Hawarden station and was it possible to include toilet facilities at this station as well as Shotton.

In response Mr Fortune recognised that the lack of toilet facilities was an issue. He confirmed there were plans for a changing spaces toilet facility to be placed at Shotton but commented it was very difficult as some stations were unmanned and there was a risk to vandalism and anti-social behaviour. WG wanted to increase the number of facilities at stations and these did form part of our aspirations to include these at stations wherever possible. Councillor Hardcastle then asked if it was possible for Hawarden to become a manned station and also if he could receive information on the plans for improvements to Hawarden station. In response Mr Fortune confirmed he would have to come back to Councillor Hardcastle as he did not have the information on Hawarden to hand.

Councillor Owen Thomas asked the following questions.

- Were there any proposals to electrify the line given the plans to phase out diesel?
- Would there be ample parking provided at these stations?
- With regard to Padeswood Station Councillor Thomas had concerns with lowering the road as this area was subject to flooding at various times during the year with only high vehicles able to pass through.

In response to the third point the Chief Officer confirmed they were aware of the flooding problems and that this was an opportunity to address it. He confirmed that this was still at the early stages and that funding would be required to develop the project and also tackle the flooding issues at the same time. The Chief Officer then referred to the second point saying that parking was key to the success of the projects together with ensuring all sites linked into the Active Travel Network. The promotion of Penyffordd as a park and ride site would enable people who were unable to walk, cycle or use the bus to access the station to park their cars and use the train to commute to work. The sites that provided car parking would be promoted.

In response to the first point Mr Fortune agreed that electrification was the way forward with regard to decarbonisation and greener transport. He said presently the trains were diesel powered with the new 230s trains being bi-mode

diesel and battery powered. Hydrogen powered trains were been considered in the UK as these were already in active service in Germany and Austria and that these would link into Merseyside's hydrogen hub plans. Mr Fortune then referred to the Mersey Rail 777 trains powered by battery which were being used after Easter but felt electric trains were required to enable access into the centre of Liverpool. He confirmed WG and TFW had plans in place to decarbonise the fleet. In essence presently there were only two types of train diesel and electric but the other variations were getting better and there would be alternatives in the future.

Councillor Paul Shotton thanked Mr Fortune for the presentation and was looking forward to seeing the new Deeside Parkway Station which he felt would lead to more investment in the Deeside Industrial Park. He asked if discussions had been held with the Deeside Business Forum and Mersey Dee Alliance and if he had completed his recruitment of drivers and ancillary workers going forward. In response Mr Fortune confirmed there were sufficient drivers in training to meet the needs for the increase services for this year and 2022. He confirmed he had met with the Deeside Business Forum and Mersey Dee Alliance and other cross border organisations as the whole region was an important economic centre.

Councillor David Evans asked the following questions:-

- Would the trains still be changing at Bidston rather than going direct from Wrexham to Liverpool?
- He commented the timetables did not currently enable people from Shotton who work for example in the Wrexham Maelor Hospital, to travel to the station and then get to work for 8.00 am.
- The last train back from Liverpool to Wrexham was at 10.15 pm but if you were going to Chester the last train was 11.45 pm. Chester had a better service compared with the borderlands line. Could something be done regarding this?

Mr Fortune responded to the first point saying this was a long term aspiration to get into Liverpool and said that part of the study was to extend the services for Birkenhead North which would provide 8 trains per hour into the centre as opposed to the 4 at Bidston. The study was looking at how this could be achieved to fit in with Mersey Rail's timetable. In response to the timetabling problems he confirmed consultation was undertaken with major employers and businesses and that he would feedback Councillor Evans' comments to the Timetabling and Stakeholder Team to see if this could be improved for the future.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson referred to the presentation and asked the following questions:-

- With regard to the Shotton higher and lower line how would these marry together and would these proposals would move the station further north. He said that he had used this station and that the walk to get onto the high line and walk to the town centre was very poor and dangerous.
- With regard to the timetables for Bidston and Wrexham and Chester and the North Wales coast there were gaps where passengers would have a long wait a long time to catch a train to the North Wales coast. He said the station was not the best place to wait a long time for a train.

In response Mr Fortune agreed with the comments made regarding Shotton and provided an outline on how the extended platform would look together with the footbridge and lift facilities from one platform to the other which would improve the whole environment. He confirmed the aim of the metro project was to look at integrating the timetables at hub locations to ensure they worked properly and made it easier and more accessible.

Councillor Cindy Hinds referred to the comments made on the proposals to remove the level crossings and asked what would be put in place to enable people to get to the other side especially the disabled, parents with pushchairs and farmers who had to use the level crossing to get into their fields. In response Mr Fortune said accessibility was an important consideration and crossings would not be closed until there was a suitable alternative in place, which in most cases would be a lift and footbridge which were considered safer option. With regard to farmers and other workers again this would be considered carefully and crossings would not be closed until another option was in place.

The Leader of the Council informed committee that he represented the Council on Growth Track 360 and Mersey Dee Alliance and was the Transport spokesperson for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. He commented on the need for delivery as soon as possible on the Deeside Parkway and Shotton Stations and that if this was to become a commuter line it had to be resilient. He referred to Birkenhead North Station saying reinstating the additional platform would be a better option than Bidston. The Leader asked if the additional service would be an all station service or would it miss some stations along the line and welcomed more debate on rail transport in the future.

The Cabinet Member reported on the additional funding provided by WG for active travel, cycling and electric buses but commented that good signage, especially artist impressions at the Parkway Station providing information on what was happening, as this was key to the success of the North East Wales Metro project. She referred to discussions with TFW regarding information boards selling the vision as well as providing information on timetabling, bus services and other services with a unique identifying logo. She then referred to the results on the consultation at Greenfield Station which she hoped could be brought to committee as soon as it was ready.

Mr Fortune commented that communication and getting the information out into the public domain was key and that unfortunately this was something that wasn't publicised enough. Information on the services provided and how to use them was crucial to the success of the project and artist impressions were a good way of selling the vision. He hoped it would not be too long before these would be ready. He then referred to Greenfield Station and confirmed that he was aware that this scheme was funded for the next stage of consideration and on their Work Programme for the next financial year to look at feasibility, building on what had been done so far and to take it through the investment programme procedures. He hoped that this would move things forward.

RESOLVED:

That the committee thanked the representatives from Transport for Wales for their presentation and noted the contents thereof.

48. **RECYCLABLE MATERIALS AND THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON VOLUMES AND RESALE VALUES**

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) who explained this information was requested by Committee to understand the extensive impact the pandemic had caused on quantities of materials collected and values obtained for the material. The Chief Officer then provided detailed information on the positive impact which was recycling which had increased by 25%, food waste collections which had increased by 10%. The negative impact was that residual waste had increased by 7%, and that with the closure of HRC sites and suspension of garden waste collections this had impacted on overall recycling performance. The Chief Officer confirmed the recycling performance was likely to remain the same at around 66% and provided information on the WG target of 70% for the 2024/25 financial year and confirmed that this would be brought back to committee in June with the new Campaign called "Target 70" to encourage more recycling. He also referred to the new TV and media campaign by WG called "Mighty Recycler" which would be starting in a couple of weeks to engage with the public. He then provided information on the financial impact on the prices for plastics and the resulting pressure on the service. WG had been very supportive with Flintshire being one of the first councils in Wales to put forward a bid for the hardship fund because of the additional tonnage and loss of income and that the service overspend had decreased over the years because of WG support.

The Chief Officer then referred to 1.08 in the report to re-assure Members regarding concerns with Brexit and access to European markets for recycling products. He confirmed that access was still available but that presently all our recyclable materials were being distributed to merchants in the UK with end destinations monitored and reported by Natural Resources Wales.

Councillor Hardcastle referred to a meeting of Hawarden Community Council the previous evening where the parking issues at Yowley Road and Crossways at Ewloe were discussed. Wagons were finding it difficult to navigate through the cars and resulted in collections being missed and asked what procedures were in place in this situation to collect the recycling.

In response the Chief Officer confirmed that this was a common problem in every ward with more parked cars as people were working for home and that this was becoming a big issue for the service. The recycling had to be collected and it was not the residents' fault that they were working from home and reported on letter drops which had been carried out to encourage residents to move their cars on collection days. Smaller vehicles were being used but there was a cost to this and that it was more cost effective to collect with our larger vehicles. He agreed to feedback this back to the team and email the councillor at Hawarden Community Council.

The Cabinet Member commented on the recycling figures saying the amount of recycling collected from households had increased by 26%, food waste by 10% and residual by 7% and that the work undertaken by the workforce to manage this was unbelievable. The amount collected was monitored by weight rather than volume when calculating the figures which meant even though recycling had increased it was negated by the residual waste. There was a need

to promote and encourage more residents to recycle especially the food waste recycling service as this was taken to a site in Rhualt to turn into electricity. She raised concerns on the amount of fly tipping and litter but was so impressed with the community litter picking groups stepping in to deal with this problem. The Cabinet Member then reported on the funding for the repair café in Buckley and that going forward we should be promoting re-use and repair rather than dispose. She then referred to the sweeping of gullies and ditches with the waste having to be cleaned. This was expensive and had to be sent to company in Manchester and that this had been raised across North Wales to look at a local facility to clean this waste. The Chief Officer added that the disposal of gully and sweeping waste was one of the service's highest spend areas because the material, whilst not classed as hazardous waste, the cost of disposal was considerably higher than normal waste material.

The Chief Officer then referred to a question in the chat around Saturday collections and understood contact numbers were provided but would come back to committee with this. He had also reported that all the Co-ordinators would be emailing the members within their region on a Friday afternoon with their availability for the following week and outlining the procedure for them to follow if they were unavailable.

Councillor Chris Bithell sought clarification on the increase in the residual waste figures asking if it was recyclable or HRC waste and was the Council penalised with additional gate fees at Parc Adfer and by WG for this increase. In response the Chief Officer confirmed this was an additional quantity of residual waste which as a weight had increased by 7% and did not include recyclable materials. He referred to Parc Adfer and confirmed there was a guaranteed minimum fixed gate fee with any tonnage over this amount producing a reduced rate for the authority, so there was no net impact in using Parc Adfer for waste disposal.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to a litter group which had commenced in Connah's Quay and had quickly increased to 400 members who went out in small groups to collect litter regularly. He asked if the Council's litter pickers were fully operational now. In response the Chief Officer confirmed there were a small number who were shielding but the majority were still working throughout the pandemic. He fully appreciated and supported the litter picker community groups which provided extra support in dealing with the increased amount of litter. A bid had been placed with WG for the provision of equipment, bags etc. to provide to these groups and a waste collection service was provided to pick up the bags of litter. The Cabinet Member said she had been approached by so many litter picking groups requesting equipment and she confirmed some supplies were available such as coloured plastic bags to identify the litter collected which was in turn collected by the Council from designated areas. The groups had also been asked to separate the collected items between waste and recyclable materials if possible.

Councillor Chris Dolphin commented that in rural areas the hedgerows were full of rubbish which had always been the case but because people were walking more now this had been highlighted. He then referred to the various collection vehicles and praised the supervisor in the west of Flintshire who always answered the phone. He commented there were some excellent people in this team which always had to deal with complaints especially when the weather was windy.

The Chair referred to the Chief Officer's comment regarding the email sent by the co-ordinators on a Friday and said it would be useful if information on who to contact could be included in the email.

Councillor Owen Thomas referred to the A541 from Mold to Nannerch commenting that this road was an actual disgrace with litter which was attributed to the fast food outlets in Mold which diminished the further along the road you travelled. Something had to be done with regard to the fast food waste. In response the Cabinet Member referred to a Consultation with WG currently taking place on litter and fly tipping which finishes in April and it was suggested that Councillor Thomas added his concerns as part of that consultation. The scheme in Kent where CCTV on vehicles was used to discover who was responsible for the litter and then imposing fines on the owners was also discussed.

The resolution was moved and seconded by Councillor Chris Dolphin and Sean Bibby

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the current volatility relating to both waste and recycling collection levels and rebate values for the recycling material collected in the County.

49. **ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) and Enterprise and Regeneration Manager. The Chief Officer confirmed this was part of a series of papers being brought to committee regarding Economic Recovery and that this report outlined the proposals at the regional level and within the Council Plan.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager confirmed the report clarified where the Council was at present with regard to the economy in Flintshire, highlighted potential risks, the governance structures in place and the current work programme to respond to those risks. He provided information on the following:-

- The uncertain position with regard to Brexit
- The work undertaken by Grant Thornton on behalf of the WLGA looking specifically at trade and highlighted a number of risks specific to Flintshire as our economy was based on trade.
- Most company headquarters were not based in Flintshire which placed Flintshire at risk with decisions being made elsewhere
- Flintshire had a high level of low skill workers which were vulnerable to job losses
- The Covid 19 situation we still uncertain with the Furlough scheme still in place which could mask potential future job losses especially for young people.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager referred members to the diagram on page 36 prepared by Grant Thornton which highlighted the risks on how manufacturing and wholesale were reliant on Brexit and Covid outcomes.

He reported on the number of groups established with WG and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the work undertaken to plan the recovery process both for immediate needs and to reshape the future. The priorities were included within the Council Plan.

Councillor Patrick Heesom felt that this was a very important report and was concerned with the lack of member involvement in the procedures. He referred to the structure on page 37 which had very little space for contributions from elected members especially with the implications of Brexit. He then referred to the contributions of the Hatch Report and Grant Thornton Report and felt that members needed a precis of those reports to enable a better understanding. In response the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager hoped the information provided a summary of those report and confirmed when they were available they would be circulated to Members. He would reflect on the comments regarding member involvement and hoped the meeting would provide some member involvement to enable discussion and hold officers to account. He hoped that would provide some level of reassurance but was happy to receive any comments.

Councillor Shotton referred to the issues at Holyhead port because of the amount of paperwork companies had to complete which had resulted in deliveries being diverted to European ports and coming in the UK via Eire and then to Northern Ireland. He asked how this was impacting on firms and haulers in Flintshire. He also asked with the European Funding coming to an end and priority funding taking place where were the decisions being made at WG or the North East Wales Growth Board. In response the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager referred to the changing position with regard to freight and haulage and that it was important to separate the short term disruptions with the longer term shifts in our economy. The situation was uncertain at the present time with Holyhead in a vulnerable position with the alternative route being a long expensive sea route. As regards the EU funding this would be tapering off in the next two or three years but Flintshire was a small recipient of EU funds which had made a huge difference and that work was required to understand the impacts of the loss of that funding. He referred to the UK budget which announced some funding for regions but the replacement was not fully operational yet and provided information on the shorter term funding made available with the bids for funding processed at Westminster not Cardiff. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager provided information on the strong successful collaborative working in place across North Wales.

Councillor Owen Thomas stated that Flintshire had a highly skilled workforce and very skilled companies with the whole world available to do business with but felt that apprenticeships should be encouraged across all trades. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager agreed with Councillor Thomas' comments on skills saying there was a proportion of firms with a very high skilled workforce which was the reason there were so many manufacturing and high tech industries in the county.

Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the recent Town Centre Consultation in Mold and praised the support provided by the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager and his team to the county and town councillors and members of the public.

The Cabinet Member reported on previous funding from Cadwyn Clwyd and the Rural Development Plan (RDP) and asked how much longer that funding would be made available for Town Centre Regeneration. She also asked what the situation was concerning the Aggregates Levy Fund for Wales and confirmed she was speaking to WG for an update on what was replacing this funding as now that quarries and building was commencing again she would like to see communities receive some of this funding.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager confirmed the Rural Development Plan for Wales funding was 50% European and 50% WG money and these programmes would phase out over the next 2 or 3 years together with the other European programmes. The situation was very unclear about the future for these rural programmes and also no detail was available at present on what the replacement for the Common Agriculture Policy or the work covered by Cadwyn Clwyd.

The Chief Officer referred to the Aggregates Levy Fund and explained that this was introduced as a tax on primary aggregate extraction about 15 years ago with a proportion used to enable local communities to apply for funding for local projects such as community buildings or play areas. He confirmed it ceased in England about 7 or 8 years ago but continued in Wales until 2 years ago when WG removed their support for this. He commented that the bigger infrastructure projects such as Parc Adfer provided community development funds and felt as a council Flintshire was good at accessing opportunities whether via Parc Adfer or other streams with Tom Woodall and his team directing communities to funding streams. The Cabinet Member asked if the committee could write to WG to lobby support for the reintroduction of the Aggregates Levy Fund as a recommendation from the committee.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development agreed with previous comments made saying the economy was in a state of flux. He was pleased that Airbus were not making compulsory redundancies and that information was still awaited regarding Vauxhall. He referred to job losses which had been lower than envisaged so far but the furlough scheme was potentially masking the full impact. He referred to the vulnerability of the food manufacturing industry, in particular. The Cabinet Member then referred to the benefits which could be achieved from the North Wales Growth Deal and the Mersey Dee Alliance cross-border initiative and that the hospitality and tourism sectors could be boosted by the staycation economy. As regards Cadwyn Clwyd, there were concerns amongst the WLGA about rural packages which had been generous from the EU in the past and it was unclear what funding would be coming forward from Westminster to replace these.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom seconded Joe Johnson

RESOLVED:

- (a) Members noted the potential economic outlook projections and review the recovery structures established to steer future actions.
- (b) Members noted the current and proposed work programmes established to support economic recovery in Flintshire.
- (c) That a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to Welsh Government to ask for the reinstatement of the Aggregates Levy Fund

50. **RECOVERY STRATEGY (STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO)**

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) and provided a regular update on the portfolio's recovery strategy and recovery priorities following the pandemic. He highlighted three of the nine priorities and provided information on the Working hours of the Workforce, Waste Treatment facilities and Highway Network.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Chris Dolphin and Joe Johnson.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee considered and supported the progress made to support Recovery Strategy by the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio.

51. **RECOVERY STRATEGY AND RISK REGISTER (PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY PORTFOLIO)**

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) and provided a regular update on the portfolio's recovery strategy and recovery priorities following the pandemic. The main objectives within the report were highlighted which included car parks at destination sites such as Wepre Park and Talacre and the implications with regard to non-essential businesses and licensed premises and hospitality reopening. The Chief Officer referred to the Ash Dieback survey and reported on the tree removal on the A541 Mold - Denbigh Road with the road being closed for a day using equipment which removes trees in one go and minimises disruption to the local communities and that a report would be returning to committee on this. The Chief Officer then highlighted and provided information on the risks to committee.

Councillor Heesom referred to item 1.01 in the report and asked what handover arrangements meant. Councillor Heesom then referred to the Planning Strategy Group which he felt was a very important toolkit, elected member based and suggested in the current climate it would be helpful to revise that structure. He then referred to the Local Development Plan and asked for an update on where we were with this and could it now go ahead. Councillor Heesom reported on the long standing difficulties contacting planning staff with news on improvements very welcome.

In response, the Chief Officer referred to page 69 and that the Local Development Plan hearing which was due to commence in February but had had two delays but was now scheduled to start on 13th April. The delays were solely due to the Inspectorate's non availability. The Chief Officer then referred to the terms of reference of the Planning Strategy Group which were revised following the last local government elections. The two functions of this group were firstly, to lead the production of the Local Development Plan and secondly to deal with any issues in relation of the statutory planning process. The Terms of Reference had not changed over the last four years. What had changed was that the focus was primarily on dealing with the Local Development Plan and he felt it had spent its time appropriately since the terms of reference were revised. With regard to

communications with the Planning portfolio, he reported on an email which was being sent to all Members this week which he hoped would alleviate members concerns. The Chief Officer then referred to the handover arrangements for recovery and stated that 12 months ago when the Covid lockdown happened the Council was in a response phase with critical areas prioritised with those officers essential to service delivery. He reported on officers within Community and Business protection who were moved to supporting the Covid response, but clarified that none of the other work ceased rather it was a case of changing the way the work was undertaken in response to Covid 19. The Chief Officer then referred to the point regarding difficulties in recruiting staff which was in relation to Environment Health Officers and that there had been no difficulties in recruiting any other members of staff.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Joe Johnson and Owen Thomas with Councillor Heesom abstaining.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee gave oversight to the progress made with respect to recovery planning for the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio.
- (b) That the Committee noted the content of the updated portfolio risk register and mitigation action.

52. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.31 pm)

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Chair