

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 21 October 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Veronica Gay (Chair)

Councillors Haydn Bateman, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, David Evans, Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Colin Legg, Nancy Matthews and Paul Shotton

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Ian Dunbar (for Ann Minshull) and Mike Reece (for Joe Johnson)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Glenys Diskin and Brian Lloyd. Councillor Kevin Jones, Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection & Leisure

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment; Waste Services Manager; Highways Network Manager and Highways Strategy Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2015 were submitted.

Matters Arising

The Facilitator explained that a completed action sheet from the previous meeting had not been circulated as some responses remained outstanding. These would be addressed as part of the following actions:

Minute number 23: Review of Winter Maintenance - the Waste Services Manager agreed to follow up the request made by Councillor Carolyn Thomas for a cost comparison of salt heaps and gritting services, to enable a response to be circulated to the Committee. In response to comments made by Councillor Colin Legg, it was stated that the number of vehicles accessing the Halkyn depot site should have reduced as the site was now closed. In addition, the report outlining the arrangements for gritting footpaths at sheltered accommodation was being prepared for circulation to Members. The request for copies of Priority 2 routes would be followed up and circulated to all Members.

Minute number 24: Introduction of Zero Tolerance for Littering - in response to Councillor Joe Johnson's question on dog fouling, the Waste Services Manager reported that in 2014/15, 52 fixed penalty notices had been

issued of which 42 were paid, four withdrawn and six successfully prosecuted. Of the 12 fixed penalty notices issued so far this year, eight had been paid and two successfully prosecuted with two pending. The Facilitator agreed to circulate these statistics to the Committee by email.

Councillor Paul Shotton informed the Committee that a Task Group had been set up to look into the issue of fly tipping in the Golftyn ward along with other areas along the Deeside strip including Shotton and Queensferry.

Minute number 27: DNA Recognition Information Bank Task & Finish Group - the Chair, Councillors Colin Legg, David Roney and Arnold Woolley had all expressed an interest in sitting on the Group. Councillor Ray Hughes also confirmed his interest and asked that the remit of the group be extended to include tackling dog fouling in general. Arrangements would be made to liaise with those five Members to arrange the first meeting. The Facilitator also referred to a press report on the mandatory micro-chipping of dogs in Wales from April 2016.

RESOLVED:

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

36. VERBAL UPDATE ON NORTH WALES RESIDUAL WASTE PROJECT

The Waste Services Manager reported that Natural Resources Wales had considered the application made by Wheelabrator Technologies for an environmental permit to operate the facility. Following public consultation in September 2015, a draft permit had been given with a full permit due to be granted at the end of the month.

The partnership between the five Authorities was now in the latter stages of finalising contractual arrangements with Wheelabrator. The Welsh Government (WG) had approved the release of subsidy funding for the facility which was scheduled to be operational early in 2019. A 'Meet the Buyer' event which had just been held as part of Flintshire Business Week enabled local businesses to discuss potential opportunities for involvement, and had generated a high level of interest registered so far.

Councillor Nancy Matthews welcomed the progress made on the project and hoped that local businesses would take advantage of the opportunities. This view was also shared by Councillor Paul Shotton who referred to the involvement of two local companies on the project.

Councillor Ian Dunbar spoke positively about the interest from local businesses and engagement with local residents, but felt that concerns around transport and noise levels should be resolved before finalising the contract. The Waste Services Manager said that the standard practice of liaison groups was useful in discussing any concerns raised by individuals.

Concerns were also expressed by Councillor Ron Davies on the impact of transport on the A494/A55, particularly along the Aston Hill, which he hoped would be considered as part of the current consultation exercise by WG.

The Waste Strategy Manager agreed to feedback the Committee's comments to the Programme Manager.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

37. REVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING TRAFFIC CALMING AND OTHER HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AND SAFETY FEATURES ON THE HIGHWAY

The Highways Network Manager introduced the report outlining proposed changes to the consultation process with local Members, Town and Community Councils and members of the public. The proposals would then be subject to Cabinet approval. As part of the key consideration of the report, he detailed the procedure to evaluate and rank schemes against the Road Safety Scheme Matrix and the Traffic Calming Policy. Any new traffic calming schemes put forward would be discussed with local Members prior to consultation with local residents.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood referred to the management restructure and the lack of feedback for safer routes in communities which had been submitted as part of the Speed Limit Review. The Highways Network Manager explained that the Speed Limit Review was still ongoing, with outcomes due to be implemented before Christmas. The process allowed for each suggested scheme to be assessed, scored and ranked in line with the Road Safety Scheme Matrix, which would determine schemes to be put forward to bid for Welsh Government (WG) funding. Following comments on sharing the Matrix, the Highways Strategy Manager agreed that it could be circulated to Members. He explained that the procedure was to report back the assessment outcome to any local Members who had requested a particular scheme, however work was currently being undertaken to clear historic requests and collate all schemes on one database.

As Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Bernie Attridge pointed out that the Matrix system had been shared with the Committee at an earlier stage, prior to Cabinet approval. Having considered the practice previously in place, he and the Chief Officer had recognised the need for improvement which had resulted in the new approach to assess and rank schemes using the Matrix system which demonstrated transparency.

Whilst acknowledging that the issue had previously been considered by the Committee, Councillor Isherwood explained that her point was around the importance of Members having sight of the Matrix.

Following remarks from Councillor Mike Reece on village schemes such as Bagillt, the Highways Strategy Manager provided details on the consultation process which had involved other affected households in the area. He referred to the positive turnout at the consultation event, the outcome of the public ballot and correspondence from residents, which had demonstrated overall support for the scheme. It was noted that some of the representations made by local residents had been accommodated in modifications to the scheme. The Highways

Strategy Manager confirmed that road traffic accident statistics had been provided to Bagillt Community Council as requested.

Councillor Reece said that a compromise was needed between the Council and Bagillt Community Council on this traffic calming scheme. Whilst Councillor Attridge was aware of some concerns about the traffic calming measures in Bagillt, he gave a reminder of their purpose and said that the Council aimed to listen to the views of communities and that minor changes to the scheme could be considered where possible.

Councillor Colin Legg highlighted the need for road safety to be a priority for everyone with more education needed to encourage safe driving. In response to comments on reducing the speed limit as opposed to installing physical traffic calming measures, the Manager said it should be considered whether this was likely to have any effect if drivers did not adhere to the original speed limit. He acknowledged the point made but spoke about the challenges on enforcement and pointed out the Council's statutory duty of care to prevent accidents.

Councillor David Evans referred to the proposal for Town/Community Councils to gather the views of their respective communities and raised concerns that smaller Councils may not have enough resources to do this. The Managers explained that the aim was to work with Town/Community Councils to recognise their role in engaging with the public and that support could be made available to assist in the delivery of letters to residents or through officers attending a public consultation exhibition if required.

In relation to comments about the scheme in Higher Kinnerton, the Highways Strategy Manager confirmed that the consultation process had been followed by engaging with the local Member, Town/Community Councils and a public exhibition which had been well attended.

Councillor Ray Hughes requested an update on the proposed speed camera along the A541 in Pontblyddyn and said that he had not been consulted on the different speed limits along the Penyffordd to Pontblyddyn road where fatal accidents had occurred. Councillor Attridge advised that WG had recently confirmed the allocation of funding for the A541 speed camera which would be installed in this financial year. He suggested that Councillor Hughes discuss the latter point with the officers outside the meeting. The Highways Strategy Manager agreed that he could look into the matter, but commented on the advisory signs displayed along that route which met the criteria set out in WG guidance.

The Council's duty to reduce accidents was highlighted by Councillor Paul Shotton who said that the policy was working effectively in his area. He welcomed the proposal for involvement by Town/Community Councils on consulting with the public which was a more streamlined approach.

Councillor Nancy Matthews felt that an overarching scheme was needed for road safety including traffic calming and speed limits. Due to the backlog of historic schemes submitted and the change in management, she asked whether Members should re-submit their proposed schemes to ensure that they were

considered. The Highways Network Manager suggested that Members check the matrix which was to be circulated before re-submitting schemes.

Concerning the scheme in Connah's Quay, Councillor Ian Dunbar said that the consultation event had been well attended, with most residents welcoming the measures installed. In response to his request for a change to the scheme, it was suggested that he liaise directly with the officers to see if this could be accommodated.

Councillor Chris Dolphin spoke in support of Councillor Legg's comments about reducing speed limits and said that traffic calming measures could be used as a supplementary option if required. On the consultation process, the Highways Network Manager gave assurance that once the schemes had been evaluated and scored, local Members would be consulted first on their preferences before forwarding to Town/Community Councils.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Ron Davies about 'rat runs' off the A494 in Connah's Quay, Councillor Attridge suggested the possibility of a site visit to look into the matter. Following comments on 20 mph zones outside schools in the county, he explained that the majority of these were advisory and that the absence of signs to indicate the end of those zones was perhaps a technicality to be raised with WG.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Evans asked that the proposed approach to public consultation include the caveat 'if Town and Community Councils were able to do so'.

When asked by Councillor Isherwood about schemes which may have been omitted from the process, the Highways Strategy Manager gave assurance that the list of schemes was constantly changing, prioritised by the results of the assessment.

Members commended the way in which the Highways Network Manager had responded to the queries raised.

The Chair referred to the viability of schemes based on whether funding was available. The Highways Network Manager highlighted the purpose of consultation along with the Council's statutory duty, however funding would need to be identified prior to the start of consultation and would need to be returned to WG if the majority opposed the scheme.

The Committee supported the Facilitator's suggested rewording of the resolution which reflected Members' comments.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed new approach for consulting with local communities on future traffic calming schemes be welcomed by the Committee; and
- (b) That the comments of the Committee be fed back to Cabinet on the capacity of Town and Community Councils to undertake the community consultation process.

38. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator introduced the current Forward Work Programme for consideration by the Committee. As the item on the A55/A494 improvements had been deferred, due to an update awaited from Welsh Government (WG), it was agreed that a separate meeting may be required.

Councillors Attridge and Evans felt that a response from WG was unlikely until after the end of the consultation period and that the item may be of interest to all Members. The Facilitator suggested that an update be scheduled for a future meeting and that a briefing note would be sought in the meantime. This was supported by the Committee.

Councillor Attridge also suggested that a briefing note could be requested from the Chief Officer on improvements to the Queensferry roundabout, as confirmation of funding had been received from WG.

Councillor Paul Shotton asked that the item on renewable energy be brought forward to the next available meeting.

A suggestion from Councillor Mike Reece for Coastal Rangers to assist in tackling dog fouling was noted by the Waste Services Manager, who agreed to pass this on for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

39. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.30 am and ended at 12.00 pm)

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Chair