

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 DECEMBER 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 12 December 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Patrick Heesom, Christine Jones and David Wisinger attended as observers

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection; Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside; Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); and Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation)

For minute number 47

Community & Business Protection Manager and Licensing Team Leader

For minute number 48

Service Manager Strategy and Project Engineer, FCERN (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

44. INFORMATION SESSION

Prior to the start of the meeting, Members of the Committee were given a presentation on the Food Hygiene Ratings (Wales) Act 2013 by Sian Jones and Helen O'Loughlin. It was agreed that the slides would be circulated by email.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

46. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

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

47. PEST CONTROL

Councillor Chris Bithell introduced the report on the work of the Council's Pest Control service. He highlighted the importance in continuing this non-statutory service to help meet the public health agenda.

The Community & Business Protection Manager said there was an increased focus on promoting the service on which Members could assist by raising awareness amongst residents.

The Licensing Team Leader spoke about the vast experience of the small team in providing a professional, high quality service which had been recognised in positive feedback from residents. There were a number of initiatives to publicise the services available which were competitively priced and included follow-up visits.

The Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) added that preventative services were also being offered to clients and that the long-term aim was to develop a self-funded model for the service.

Councillor Evans asked about dealing with pest problems emanating from another person's property. The Team Leader advised that in respect of privately owned land, the team would approach those residents and provide advice to encourage them to tackle the problem. If the problem occurred on a Council owned property, this could be progressed through Housing colleagues.

The Chairman praised the service given by the Council. He felt that a person reporting an infestation on a neighbour's property should not have to bear the cost of resolving it and that councils should be given more powers to tackle this.

Councillor Shotton commended the professionalism of the team and Councillor Legg highlighted the dangers of ignoring pest control.

When asked about charges, the Manager advised that these were reviewed annually and accompanied the publicity leaflets circulated to commercial clients. She pointed out that unlike private sector companies providing pest control services, the Council was able to offer concessionary rates for households meeting the criteria.

In response to further questions, officers explained the arrangements with the North Clwyd Animal Rescue to take in stray dogs.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the contents of the report and promote the Pest Control service within their local communities, where possible.

48. MOLD FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME - REVIEW OF OPTIONS FEASIBILITY

Councillor Bithell introduced a report on recent work led by the Council's Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) team on a review of feasible options for designing and delivering a Mold Flood Alleviation Scheme. Councils had been invited to submit details of large scale schemes for consideration by Welsh Government (WG) who were developing a five year national programme of FCERN schemes with allocated funding. On behalf of the Council, a review of the previous unaffordable scheme in Mold had been undertaken by Waterco Consultants to explore alternative viable options.

The Service Manager Strategy explained that the consultants had been commissioned to identify ways of practically implementing the scheme and that the proposed approach was to agree a phased delivery programme of smaller component schemes. The initial feasibility study had indicated a provisional total cost of £5.5m and the intention was to progress this to the next stage of a project appraisal report to provide more detail and testing. Changes to the provision of grant funding meant that applications for eligible schemes could receive a contribution of between 75-85% from WG with the remainder to be funded from the Council's capital programme.

The Project Engineer provided an overview of the various components of the scheme shown on the Opportunity Map, explaining that some areas were overlapping but that any could be delivered in isolation. The project appraisal report would provide more technical data and refinement of costings for the WG to compare against another schemes in the region.

In response to questions from Councillors Bateman and Shotton, the Project Engineer provided information on attenuation storage tanks. In respect of costs, the Manager explained that the £12m previous scheme had involved a significant amount of civil engineering work and the 4-staged approach for the new scheme could be more advantageous in attracting WG funding.

Following concerns by Councillor Owen Thomas on surrounding areas, the Project Engineer provided details of flood mitigation work by Natural Resources Wales and explained the aim of Option 7 in respect of areas south of Mold. Planning requirements on future housing developments could provide an opportunity to achieve the desired infrastructure and would involve restrictions on run-off rates to ensure that these did not add to flooding problems. Whilst the new scheme impacted less on landowners, some informal discussions had taken place and formal approaches would form part of the next stage.

The Chairman requested that officers look into his concerns about areas downstream such as Llong and Pontblyddyn and the impact of flow from other rivers as well as the Alyn. The Manager said that ongoing work on the flood risk management plan would be brought back for consideration by the Committee. The Project Engineer agreed to make enquiries with Natural Resources Wales on improvement works carried out in Pontblyddyn.

Councillor Bithell spoke about the various causes of historic flooding in Mold and commended the way forward set out in the report which would help to address other aspects.

RESOLVED:

That the individual opportunities identified in the Waterco Feasibility Study for 'smart flood management' in Mold are progressed to 'Project Appraisal Report' stage so that initial options identified are progressed and tested further in terms of their economic viability and therefore future deliverability through Welsh Government's pipeline programme.

49. COUNCIL PLAN 2017-18 - MID YEAR MONITORING

Members received the mid-year progress report on the Council Plan for 2017-23 for the 'Green Council' priority which was relevant to the Committee.

The Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) referred to the major (red) risk on the availability of funding to deliver flood alleviation schemes which related to earlier discussion. On other areas of the report, progress on developing a local strategy to improve air quality would be scheduled for a future meeting and a reminder was given of the approaching deadline for consultation responses on the Preferred Strategy for the Flintshire Local Development Plan.

Explanation was given by the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) on the amber progress rating for school transport, due to around 30 college contracts which were currently going through the tender process.

Following positive comments from Members, the Chairman asked that the winter maintenance team be thanked for their hard work during the recent bad weather. In response, Councillor Carolyn Thomas spoke about the efforts of all involved to ensure that roads were gritted and the call centre was operational.

On comments from Councillor Owen Thomas, the Chief Officer said that it was not feasible to provide grit to all contractors used by the Council and he referred to the cost and volume of salt distributed on roads so far this winter.

The Chairman stressed the importance of bus companies continuing to provide services, particularly in rural areas, where roads were passable. The Chief Officer advised that each company undertook its own risk assessment procedures and he agreed to raise the matter of better co-ordination of bus routes at a forthcoming meeting with Arriva.

RESOLVED:

That the Council Plan 2017/18 mid-year monitoring report to monitor under performance be noted.

50. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. The following actions were agreed:

- The meeting on 16 January 2018 at Greenfield Valley would include additional items on the Tree and Woodland Plan and Car Parking Charges.
- Members would be given confirmation of the site visit to Parc Adfer which was provisionally booked for 19 February 2017.
- A report on regional air quality would be added to the meeting on 13 March 2018. Attention was drawn to the information session on fly tipping to be held prior to the start of the meeting.
- The report on school transport would be considered before the end of the school year, possibly in April 2018.
- The item on decriminalised parking since 2013 would be scheduled into the Forward Work Programme.

As requested in the report, Members considered their preferred meeting pattern for the Committee and agreed to continue with the current meeting slot (generally on Tuesdays at 10am).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be amended;
- (b) That the Committee's preference to continue to meet at 10am on Tuesdays be reported back to the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee; and
- (c) 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.

51. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 11.30am)

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Chairman