

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 MAY 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Wednesday, 22 May 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Matt Wright (Chairman)

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Peter Curtis, Chris Dolphin, David Evans,
Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Joe Johnson, Colin Legg, Ann Minshull,
Paul Shotton and Carolyn Thomas

SUBSTITUTES:

Councillors Ian Dunbar for Derek Butler, Neville Phillips for Nancy Matthews and Mike Reece for Cindy Hinds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Patrick Heesom

APOLOGIES:

Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Environment, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling, Director of Environment, Head of Streetscene Services, Economic Development Manager, Chief Regeneration Officer, (for minute No.4) Mr. Alex Rodda, Managing Director Trackyou Limited and Ms Emma Goodall, National Account Manager Trackyou Limited, (for minute No.5) Mr. David Sheil, Countryside Officer, (for minute No.6) Mr. Dewi Davies, Regional Strategy Director, Tourism Partnership North Wales

IN ATTENDANCE:

Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor C. A. Thomas declared an interest in Agenda Item 6.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chairman sought nominations for a Vice-Chairman for the Committee.

Councillor C.J. Dolphin proposed that Councillor N.M. Matthews be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee. Councillor N. Phillips seconded the proposal.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar proposed that Councillor W.P. Shotton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee. Councillor P.J. Curtis seconded the proposal.

Members were asked to vote on the proposals and when put to the vote Councillor W.P. Shotton was appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor W.P. Shotton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2013 at 10.00 am, had been circulated with the agenda.

Accuracy

Councillor P.J. Curtis referred to page 3, item 76, and said that he had spoken in support of the Communities First Programme in Flintshire and asked that the minutes be amended to record his comments.

RESOLVED:

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

- (ii) The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2013 at 2.00pm had been circulated with the agenda.

Matters arising

The Director of Environment referred to the query raised by Councillor H.J. McGuill about funding for the Deeside Newsletter. He advised that this was currently funded from the Neighbourhood Renewal grant, however, in future funding would be provided from the Town Centre Action fund.

RESOLVED:

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

4. MISSED COLLECTIONS TECHNOLOGY

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Mr. Alex Rodda, Managing Director Trackyou Limited, and Ms Emma Goodall, National Account Manager Trackyou Limited, to the meeting and invited them to give a presentation on the Asset Tracking and Fleet Management System Trackyou.co.uk.

The Head of Streetscene Services provided background information and referred to the development of the Trackyou.co.uk system, the potential for the Authority and the anticipated financial savings from the new proposals. He also commented on the increased use of the system to ensure that the Authority achieved full value from its vehicle equipment.

Mr. Rodda provided background information concerning the company and advised that as a service provider Trackyou specialised in systems integration

based around core products of Vehicle and Asset Tracking. He explained that the system was used by many Local Authorities on collaborative projects to achieve financial savings and that he had worked with the Council for sometime on various projects to identify areas of concern and had developed technology to guide and instruct drivers. Mr. Rodda gave an overview of the benefits of the technology and explained it had many applications and technical possibilities to improve performance for the future.

Ms. Goodall gave a detailed demonstration on the Trackyou system for waste and recycling collection.

The Head of Streetscene Services commented on the matter of assisted collections and referred to the improvements in this area as a result of the Trackyou system and the potential future benefits. He said that the system enabled the Service to be proactive in its response to service users and reduced the potential for complaints to be made

The Chairman thanked Mr. Rodda and Ms. Goodall for an interesting and informative presentation and invited Members to raise questions.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar expressed a number of concerns about assisted waste, kerbside collections, monitoring of properties, and collection from locations which were not accessible to Council vehicles. In his response the Head of Streetscene Services explained that operatives were not expected to open gates and enter properties to collect bins, however, if the operative was able to reach the bin from the rear of the footway then that should be done. He confirmed that monitoring would continue for isolated cases.

Councillor C.A.Thomas raised a number of questions concerning the Trackyou system. In response the Head of Streetscene explained that the tracking system was fully operational and was a cost met within the existing vehicle maintenance budget. He also advised that contact centre staff had access to live real time information and that information on low participation for recycling was conveyed to the relevant officers.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling gave an assurance that side waste would continue to be collected. He advised that recycling participation was improving and therefore reducing side waste. Recycling officers were visiting certain locations where participation was low to encourage residents to engage. The Head of Streetscene Services commented that participation was not about individual monitoring but about perception.

Councillor D. Evans asked what arrangements were in place in the event of system failure and queried if the system could be a source of distraction to the driver of a vehicle. Mr. Rodda confirmed that information would continue to be collected and stored on the devices and could be transferred once systems had been restored. The Head of Streetscene Services advised that consultation had been undertaken with drivers and that the device was similar to using a sat nav system.

Councillor R. Hughes raised concerns regarding kerbside collections and collection points in his ward. The Head of Streetscene Services agreed to meet

with Councillor Hughes following the meeting to resolve the specific issues raised.

Councillor A. Minshull commented that assisted collections had improved significantly in her ward. She referred to a number of concerns which included the fee to replace a bin if stolen, whether operators who suffered from dyslexia were able to use the system, and if there were any plans to take action against people who refused to recycle. The Head of Streetscene Services advised that the fee for replacement bins was an historic charge. He confirmed that operators who were dyslexic were encouraged to use the system and no problems had been experienced as operators worked in teams of 3.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling said that it was anticipated that a new Waste Management Policy would be ready in the Autumn.

Councillor P.J. Curtis expressed his congratulations to the Director of Environment and Officers on the significant improvement in waste and recycling collection.

The Chairman reiterated his thanks to Mr. Rodda and Ms. Goodall for their presentations and commented on the positive outcomes of the partnership work undertaken between the Authority and Trackyou Limited which was a local company which employed local people.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

5. THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Head of Planning introduced a report on the recent extension of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its implications for the Authority. He provided background information and introduced Mr David Sheil, Countryside Officer from Denbighshire County Council, and invited him to give a presentation on the extent of the AONB, the management arrangements, and the implications for the Authority. The main points of the presentation were:

- CROW Act 2000
- Governance
- Sustainable Development Fund
- Supporting Farming
- Supporting Business
- Loggerheads
- Sense of Place – Tourism and landscape / Community and landscape
- Landscape producing quality
- Health and Wellbeing
- Young Rangers

The Chairman thanked Mr. Sheil for an interesting and informative presentation and invited Members to raise questions.

The Chairman asked if any thought had been given to extending to the North East area and cited Halkyn mountain. Mr. Sheil advised that Halkyn Mountain had not been part of the study which had resulted in the designation of the extended area. Mr Sheil also referred to the grants available for woodlands, etc. in response to a question raised by Councillor J.M. Johnson.

Councillor CA. Thomas expressed her thanks to Mr. Sheil for his detailed presentation. The Chairman commented that the Authority was aware of its responsibilities and the importance of the area.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. TOURISM IN FLINTSHIRE

The Economic Development Manager introduced the report to update Members on the approach taken to promote Flintshire to visitors and to manage the County as a destination. He provided background information and referred to the key considerations in the report. He introduced Mr Dewi Davies, Regional Strategy Director, Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW), and invited him to give a presentation on the work of the TPNW. The main points of the presentation were:

- Tourism Strategy North Wales 2010-2015
- Challenges for the future
- Key Priorities
- Destination North Wales
- Destination Flintshire
- New Tourism Forum for Flintshire
- Flintshire Tourism Association
- Buy in by Local Authority Heads of Service and Businesses
- Aligned Assets
- Plans for the future

The Chairman thanked Mr. Davies for an interesting and informative presentation and invited Members to raise questions.

Councillor A. Minshull commented on the need to rejuvenate local town centres and for an inter-link between tourism and town centres. She also commented on the negative impact created when promoting tourism for Flintshire and the poor impression created for visitors who travelled on the old coast road. The Head of Regeneration referred to a range of programmes for 8 of Flintshire's town centres and to new investment in the area as a result of the Deeside Enterprise Zone. He also commented on new investment in housing.

The Chairman referred to the need to review designated Town Centres with the aim of creating a more sustainable Town Centre core area and commented on the need for planning, marketing and investment.

Councillor P.J. Curtis emphasised the need for adequate signposting to guide tourists to key attractions and historical sites in Flintshire and cited St Winefride's Well which is one of the seven wonders of Wales as an example. The Director of Environment advised that the trunk roads were in the control of the Welsh Government and he had written to them previously to seek permission to erect signs.

Councillor C. Legg raised a number of concerns around hospitality, provision of toilets and car parking. He said there needed to be a supererogation approach to customer care if Flintshire was to extend its tourism.

Mr. Davies acknowledged the comments made and referred to the induction and training programme to enhance skills and improve the image of the tourism sector as a career choice.

Councillor J. Johnson asked if links could be provided from the coastal path to other major pathways, for example Pilgrims Way. Mr. Davies advised that a circular path project was currently looking at circular walking routes and possible links.

Councillor C.A. Thomas emphasised the need to raise the profile of Flintshire as a tourist destination and to strengthen the publicity material available to promote the range of castles, hillforts, walks, and other key attractions. She suggested that a DVD or video be produced for Flintshire similar to the one produced by Cheshire which was currently being shown at Broughton Park Shopping Centre. She also referred to the North East Wales brand and the need for the Authority to identify and link in "the Flintshire offer" using images of key sites.

Mr. Davies agreed that it was up to each Authority to put a programme in place to highlight their area whilst also seeking to unify the value of North East Wales.

Councillor N. Phillips highlighted the significance of the Gladstone Library in Hawarden.

The Chair asked what progress had been made regarding car parking facilities at Talacre.

Councillor C. Legg expressed his thanks to the Head of Regeneration for his hard work and achievements.

The Chair summarised the main points arising out of the discussions as follows:-

- Town Centres – links with tourism package and specific projects going forward – discussion to take place with Chair /Vice Chair/Facilitator
- A55 Signage – Greenfield Valley, St Winefride's Well and general signposting to areas of interest
- Linking paths – links from coastal paths to other major paths in particular the Heritage Trail leading through to Wepre Park
- DVD – to promote what Flintshire had to offer for tourism

- Gladstone Library – a major attribute of great interest
- Coastal road – How can we work together to improve image
- Talacre Car Park - progress

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be noted; and
- (b) That the main points arising from discussion as summarised above be progressed.

7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Environment and Health Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 June 2013:

- Performance reporting
- Draft Flood Management Strategy and Flooding issues
- Speed Limit Review
- Mersey Dee Alliance

The Facilitator reminded Members that a Forward Work Programme planning session was to be held in July.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

8. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting began at 10.00 am and ended at 12.55 pm.

9. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press present.

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Chairman