

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 SEPTEMBER 2014

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, 17 September 2014

PRESENT: **Councillor Hilary Isherwood (Chair)**

Councillors Haydn Bateman, Ian Dunbar, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes,
Joe Johnson, Colin Legg, Nancy Matthews, Paul Shotton and Carolyn Thomas

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Ron Hampson (for Ann Minshull), Richard Lloyd (for Veronica Gay) and Mike Reece (for Peter Curtis)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Chris Dolphin and David Evans.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Marion Bateman

OBSERVER: Melanie Watson (Welsh Audit Office)

CONTRIBUTORS: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection & Leisure, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Chief Officer (Planning & Environment), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), and Economic Development Manager

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

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 June 2014 were submitted.

Matters arising

Councillor Haydn Bateman referred to page 2, paragraph 2 of the minutes and referred to the query he had raised around grant funding. In his response the Cabinet Member for Environment explained that Welsh Government funding had moved towards active employment rather than leisure. It was agreed that the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) would provide further information on this matter to Councillor Bateman.

- (ii) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 July 2014 were submitted.

Matters arising

Streetscene

Page 14, paragraph 4, Councillor Richard Lloyd referred to the concerns raised by Councillor Gay around the potential for flytipping as the Sandycroft HRC site did not allow for trade waste. He said he would like facilities to be made available for trade waste to be allowed at the Sandycroft site. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment advised that trade waste could be taken to either the Mold or Greenfield sites and that the Authority currently had no plans to introduce additional facilities for disposal of trade waste at any other sites. He explained that sites would be closely monitored and if a problem with flytipping was to occur the situation would be reviewed.

In response to a question concerning the collection of small items of litter from Town Centres, the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that a trial was currently being undertaken of the different types of sweeping devices available to determine the most suitable for purpose.

Planning

The Chair referred to enforcement statistics and her request for a breakdown of the number of resolved cases to be provided to the Committee. The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) advised that he would provide data on quarter 1 and quarter 2 performance

Apprenticeships and Training

The Environment and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator advised that the sub-priority on educational needs would come under the remit of the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future.

Assets and Transportation

Councillor Colin Legg referred to the withdrawal of bus services in rural areas and asked for notices to be made available in the local areas to inform residents. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) agreed to provide notices for the communities effected.

RESOLVED:

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

17. FEEDBACK FROM WORKSHOP ON CHANGING TIMES: HELPING FLINTSHIRE'S TOWN CENTRES ADAPT TO A CHANGING WORLD

The Environment and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to provide feedback on the Changing Times: Helping Flintshire's Town Centres adapt to a changing world workshop held on 14 July 2014. She asked Members to consider the outcomes from the workshop and make recommendations to Cabinet.

The Facilitator provided background information and referred to the main considerations which were detailed in the report and the feedback from the workshop which was appended to the report.

The Chairman invited Members to raise questions. During discussion Officers responded to the queries and concerns raised by Members around access for disabled people and business rate charges. Councillor Carolyn Thomas said there was a need to improve signage to town centres and local attractions and that there should be more collaborative working between local Councils. Councillor Nancy Matthews commented on the presentation of Town Centres and the need to maintain cleanliness and an attractive appearance to attract “footfall”. She asked if Community Services could be asked to provide assistance with this task. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment advised that proposals were being considered with the probationary services concerning the “upkeep” of Town Centres.

It was agreed that the Committee would put forward a report on its recommendations to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee puts forward a report on its recommendations to Cabinet.

18. PRIORITISATION OF HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES AND TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER VARIATIONS

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment introduced a report on the proposal to introduce a matrix which would be used in future to assess and prioritise highway improvement schemes to provide County wide consistency and ensure maximum benefit was derived from any available funding source. He advised that it was also proposed to introduce a matrix which would be used in future to assess and prioritise Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) related requests to ensure that the revisions and variations were carried out on a defined priority basis.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member explained the rationale for the proposals and provided background information and context. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced Anthony Stanford, Senior Engineer, and invited him to give an overview of the main considerations around the matrix for Highway Improvements and the matrix for prioritising TRO requests.

In response to a question from the Chair the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) advised that the size of the scheme was not taken into account in the scoring process.

Councillor Ian Dunbar spoke in support of the proposals and thanked Officers for acknowledging the input provided by Ward Members.

Councillor Richard Lloyd raised concerns around traffic “speeding” and commented on the need for speed calming measures to be adopted in certain areas. It was agreed that the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)

would provide a briefing paper to Councillor Lloyd following the meeting to address the specific matters he had raised.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the benefits of introducing a highway Improvement Matrix and the introduction of the matrix to evaluate future Highway Improvements to form the basis for prioritising future funding bids to Welsh Government and the Councils own capital works programme be noted; and
- (b) That the benefits of introducing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Assessment Matrix and the introduction of the proposed matrix for evaluating and prioritising TRO amendments, variations, or the provision of new TROs be recommended.

19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraphs 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

20. PROPOSED HIGH LEVEL STAFFING STRUCTURES - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) gave a presentation on proposals for the high level staffing structure for Planning and Environment portfolio.

During discussion the Chief Officer responded to the questions and comments raised by Members.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas spoke in support of the staffing structure for Planning and Environment.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

21. REVISED STAFFING STRUCTURE - STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORTATION

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced a report on the proposed staffing structure for the new streetscene and Transportation portfolio. He provided background information and referred to the key considerations which were detailed in the report. The Chief Officer presented the proposed staffing structure for Streetscene and Transportation services.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure commended Officers on the hard work and commitment which had been undertaken in producing the proposals.

Councillor Paul Shotton welcomed the proposals which he felt would provide a more efficient service and achieve financial savings for the Authority.

During discussion the Chief Officer responded to a number of concerns which were raised by Councillor Carolyn Thomas regarding the proposals and agreed to provide further information to her following the meeting.

It was proposed that the Committee noted the new staffing structure proposed within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio and recommend approval to Cabinet. When put to the vote the proposal was carried. Councillor Carolyn Thomas voted against the proposal.

RESOLVED

That the new staffing structure proposed within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio be noted and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

22. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.57 pm)

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Chair