

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JULY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 9 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect and Paul Shotton

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor: Bob Connah (for Dennis Hutchinson)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection; Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation); and Highways Network Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officers

10. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that it had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the New Independent Group. Members were advised that the Group had appointed Councillor Patrick Heesom to this role.

From this point, Councillor Heesom chaired the remainder of the meeting. He took the opportunity to pay tribute to Councillor Ray Hughes as the outgoing Chair.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 were submitted.

Matters Arising

Minute 7: Briefing paper on 20mph mandatory speed limits within Flintshire - the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) said that although officers were working on potential schemes, the Welsh Government had yet to reach a decision on a change in legislation.

RESOLVED:

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

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

The Democratic Services Manager presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. The Chief Officers give a brief presentation on services within their respective portfolios to assist the Committee in identifying future agenda items.

The following topics were suggested:

- Building Control - including the impact of changes to the building inspection market and exploring further opportunities to carry out services for other councils
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Countryside Service
- Minerals and Waste Planning - including provision of external services across the region
- Digital connectivity
- 'Green Council' theme of the Council Plan including Energy Services, solar panels, street lighting and plastics
- Council's response to the Climate Change agenda
- Enterprise/Town Centre regeneration - including the Business Improvement District (BID) process to be scheduled for early 2020
- Battery parks - helping to educate communities on the impacts
- Fleet electrification
- Cemetery provision and strategy
- Winter maintenance review
- Commercial services
- Waste permitting and data flow
- Contact Centre
- Car parking - charges, enforcement and maximising income by prompt repair of faulty machines
- Charging/indexation policy
- Service standards
- Enforcement
- Grass-cutting policy and performance (including re-circulating the agreed standards) - including managing wildflowers
- Effect of roadworks by utility companies
- Dropped kerb policy and practices
- Garden waste bins - size, charges and potential for providing a second bin free of charge

The Chairman asked that the Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) provide Members with the updated version of the draft 'Who's Who' document once finalised. Councillor Evans suggested that the final document include more useful contact numbers if it was to be made available to the public.

The Chief Officer explained that this was an interim document until those services were incorporated into the Contact Centre. He noted Councillor Hughes' point about sharing work mobile phone numbers of officers.

Councillor Bibby said that a similar document with contact details of other portfolios would be useful.

Councillors Dolphin and Hardcastle commented on the availability of officers and response times. The Chief Officers explained the benefits of the Contact Centre central number (701234) in logging calls and follow-up actions. Options were being considered to reduce the call waiting time, and the collation of different teams into a single corporate Contact Centre based in Ewloe would provide greater resilience. Local Members were reminded to report specific issues to their Area Co-ordinators whose contact details had previously been shared.

The Chairman thanked both Chief Officers for their detailed presentations and asked that the Streetscene team be thanked for their work in helping communities during the recent severe weather. This was endorsed by Councillor Carolyn Thomas.

During discussion on the suggested topics, the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) explained the need for grass-cutting services to be undertaken by various teams due to the variety of equipment required. On garden waste bins, he clarified that the purpose of the report to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee was to set the indexation policy. Councillor Evans said that the report should have been considered first by this Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager suggested that the list of topics be considered by officers, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to produce a range of combined topics to populate the Forward Work Programme. This was moved by Councillor Bibby and seconded by Councillor Shotton.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the officers be thanked for their portfolio presentations;
- (b) That the Forward Work Programme, as submitted, be approved;
- (c) That the list of topics identified during the meeting be analysed by the officers to produce a range of combined topics, for consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- (d) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (e) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

14. REVIEW OF STREETSCENE STANDARDS

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) introduced a report to seek a recommendation for Cabinet to adopt the Streetscene service standards which had been updated following review. Performance against the standards - under the Safe and Clean Council theme in the 2019 Council Plan - would be reported as part of the new performance monitoring process.

In response to comments from Councillor Bibby, the Highways Network Manager agreed to provide further clarification on the permitted chemicals used for graffiti removal.

Councillor Connah questioned the removal of some of the standards. He was informed that responses to pest control would continue to be monitored and that new waste bins/recycling boxes were now collected from Household Recycling Centres.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Dolphin about repeat missed bin collections; sometimes involving an entire road. In response to questions, the Chief Officer explained that Streetscene Supervisors were able to visit Town and Community Councils upon request. He shared the frustrations about delays to street-lighting works involving Scottish Power which were outside the control of the Council.

In response to questions from Councillor Evans, the Chief Officer provided clarification on the removal of sharp objects from Council owned land and the targets for street cleansing as agreed with Town and Community Councils. He also reported on the maximum time needed to process applications for assisted bin collections and the agreed 3-step procedure for dealing with incidents of side waste.

As requested by Councillor Hardcastle, the Chief Officer detailed the process for dealing with fly tipping and reported no increase in the number of incidents.

Councillor Chris Bithell encouraged Members to raise awareness of the Council's Pest Control team who provided an effective service to residents. When asked by Councillor Gay about exemption criteria from these charges, the Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) agreed to circulate details.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Evans and seconded by Councillor Dolphin.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends to the Cabinet adoption of the Streetscene service standards detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, including the proposed additions and deletions to the revised list as a result of the portfolio changes.

15. 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 12.05pm)

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Chairman