

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Monday 9th September, 2019.

PRESENT: **Councillor Dave Mackie (Chair)**

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Geoff Collett, Paul Johnson, Tudor Jones, Brian Lloyd, Martin White and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Sean Bibby, Andy Dunbobbin, Ralph Small and Andy Williams.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Sean Bibby, Andy Dunbobbin, Ralph Small, Andy Williams, Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets) Councillor Carolyn Thomas (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside), Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing) Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) and Benefits Manager (Housing & Assets)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Support Officer

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Tudor Jones referred to previous meetings where he had declared an interest in lieu of his links with Holywell Leisure Centre and asked should he do so again. The Chair commented a note in the minutes would suffice.

21. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 1 July and 9 July, 2019.

RESOLVED:

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

The Chair sought the Committee's approval to move item 7 on the agenda forward to become item 6 to enable the agenda to flow better. This was agreed and seconded by the Committee members present.

22. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Environment and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the report which outlined the Committee's current draft Forward Work Programme. She then provided an update on the outstanding items on the Action Tracking appendix and information on the progress of other items.

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) referred to the Council's Closed Circuit Television Service (CCTV) and confirmed discussions with the Police & Crime Commissioner concerning higher financial contributions would take place once the CCTV had been successfully relocated to Wrexham.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be submitted as approved;
- (b) 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; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

23. ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS PHASE 2

The Chief Officer introduced the report which was presented to seek the Committee's support. Cabinet had approved the priority list and there were also links with the Council Plan. He then provided an update on each of the different Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs):-

- CCTV Monitoring and Control Service
- Theatr Clwyd.
- Micro Care (Community based domiciliary care services)
- Streetscene and Transportation Trading Services
- Housing Revenue Account Trading Services
- Food Poverty Enterprise
- Green Energy Company

Councillor David Wisinger asked the following questions on the proposed MOT testing at Alltami and proposal to provide domestic gas and electrical servicing:-

- Was there sufficient parking for clients at the Depot?
- Would other work be considered such as servicing of vehicles?
- With regard to gas and electrical servicing would this be carried out by one officer?

In response to the first point the Chief Officer clarified that this was still at the concept stage but the proposal was that once the Council vehicles had left the depot in the morning there would be available space for parking at the back by the workshop for this. With regard to the car servicing question he said there could be opportunities to include other work but it was an unknown at present as the project was at concept stage and to be developed further. With regard to the Gas and Electrical Servicing proposal (Housing Services) he said this was again at a very early stage and would seek to utilise and grow the service within the Housing Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). Councillor Wisinger said this was a very positive move as there was the demand for this type of service especially by private landlords.

Councillor Geoff Collett referred to Theatr Clwyd and asked if the proposed model was the most tax efficient for the Theatre. He referred to Chester Zoo where patrons were asked to sign a document to enable the Zoo to claim an extra 26% back from the Government. The Zoo was not an Independent Trust Model but asked if the Theatre would be able to claim some tax back similar to the Zoo.

In response the Chief Officer confirmed the model would enable the Theatre to receive benefits from Corporation Tax and Value Added Tax. There were opportunities for Business Rate Relief, access to charitable funding and alignment of employment models with other theatres which would also be beneficial. This would give the Theatre more freedom to plan how they operated. There was a lot of work being undertaken but a detailed report on this would be presented to the Committee in the autumn.

Councillor Tudor Jones sought clarification on the following points regarding the Housing Revenue Account Trading Services ADM

- Would this be established similar to the Aura ADM or managed by the Council?
- Would this impact on other existing charitable organisations such as Care and Repair and could consideration be given to partnering with those operators as he felt it was important not to disadvantage them?
- With regard to employment of staff which could be a huge financial burden he referred to how Care and Repair operated using self-employed local trades people when required. Would this be something that would be used in this model especially if it was a charitable organisation and would save money?

In response to the first point the Chief Officer did not foresee this as being as big as Aura but would be able to offer those services and create some income for the HRA Account. He agreed it was important not to disadvantage other organisations but said that this was a large market and these organisations did not access all aspects of it. There was a considerable amount of work yet to be carried out to ensure the Council understood the market, had scope to develop and were competitive. With regard to the third point the Chief Officer said this ADM would enable the current DLO staff to be fully utilised with the prospect of being able to grow and expand into new and exciting markets.

Councillor Paul Johnson referred to the Green Energy Company and had reservations that Flintshire was large enough to take this forward. He provided information on the schemes in Bristol and Nottingham which were large cities with larger reserves and asked if schemes in other authorities had been considered. In response the Chief Officer confirmed other projects had been researched and that the design had been considered carefully with Flintshire taking a different route. He provided information on Robin Hood Energy project saying there was a lot of risk around that model and that it could be that Flintshire sold energy back to the grid which was a safer route with a guaranteed fixed rate. He added that work was ongoing to explore and identify which model to use, but that this project was just at the concept stage at present. A further report would be presented to Committee when stage two had been reached.

Councillor Johnson then asked if discussions had taken place with neighbouring authorities maybe via the North Wales Economic Growth Bid which he felt would be a better route to take with a greater customer base. He also asked if discussions had been held with Welsh Government (WG) as Flintshire could be the first authority to do this in Wales. In response the Chief Officer agreed with Councillor Johnson's comment regarding collaboration with neighbouring authorities saying there was potential and opportunities for North Wales to develop and explore this within the growth deal. The Chief Officer advised that he was not extensively involved in the Growth Deal but felt discussions would have taken place with WG and that there may be opportunities for grant assistance for innovation projects which could drive this forward.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside added that the North Wales Authorities procured their energy together as a regional consortium to obtain a better rate and from October this would be from renewable sources. Flintshire had changed to LED streetlights which had produced a saving which was reinvested into the service. Councillor Johnson felt this was a positive story that should be promoted more maybe on the website. The Cabinet Member agreed saying Denbighshire promoted it on their twitter and Facebook pages.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside then reported on the Regional Transport Group which fed into the North Wales Ambition Board where the issue of electrical charging points was discussed to ensure costs were shared regionally. An officer from the National Grid had attended the meeting to voice their concerns on where these charging points would be located as this would impact the demand on the grid. There was funding available for this and the group were also looking at capturing the energy from Parc Adfer. Hydrogen power was also being investigated with the hydrogen captured into tankers and then used as fuel.

The Chair complimented Members on their involvement and said the Green Energy Company seemed to be moving so fast with endless opportunities. This committee looked at ideas with an open mind and it was vital opportunities that could be explored to ensure new technologies were not missed.

The recommendation was proposed Councillor David Wisinger and seconded Councillor Janet Axworthy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the second phase of the Alternative Delivery Model programme; and
- (b) That the Committee receive further reports, alongside Cabinet, which evaluate each of the proposed service models for more detailed consideration prior to any formal decision on their future, noting that several of the models are well advanced and that one (the CCTV Monitoring Service) has been given a separate and prior approval.

24. YEAR-END COUNCIL PLAN MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

The Chief Officer introduced the report which analysed the performance against the Improvement Plan Performance Indicators. There were no performance indicators which showed a red RAG status for current performance against targets.

The recommendation was proposed Councillor Martin White and seconded by Councillor Geoff Collett.

RESOLVED:

That the committee approve the Year-end Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report.

25. FLINTSHIRE FOOD ENTERPRISE AND THE FOOD POVERTY RESPONSE

The Chief Officer presented the report which provided information on the development of the food enterprise and response to food poverty. The project had developed from the holiday hunger campaign into a partnership with Clwyd Alyn, Can Cook and Flintshire County Council to form a social enterprise. He referred Members to section 1.09 of the report which set out the aims of the social enterprise and that the meals on wheels model would also provide a social aspect delivering to communities especially rural areas whose residents would probably would, on a day to day basis have little social contact and interaction. He then provided information on the domiciliary care food provisions services saying the aim was to move from food aid to food purchase for vulnerable groups which in turn would support people in communities thus tackling loneliness. He referred Members to page 27 point 1.11 in the report which outlined the initial investment with Flintshire aiming to build and develop a production kitchen to deliver food to communities and housing associations.

Councillor Jones sought clarification on a couple of phrases within the report:-

- On page 26 at point 1.01 “people do not have access to good fresh food by choice” and asked what that referred to. In response the Chief Officer clarified there were people who used food banks and that whilst providing an excellent service they did not provide good fresh food. The by choice was that they had nowhere else to go. The Benefits Manager added there was an issue with people not being able to access good fresh food especially in rural areas. She added everyone whatever their background had a right to access good fresh food. Councillor Jones suggested it should be changed to “may by circumstance”.
- He then referred to the next paragraph “it is known that for every £1 spent on food 37p was added for diet related disease that required treatment later” and asked for clarification. In response the Benefits Manager explained that this was taken from a piece of research carried out by health professionals looking at the wider impact on the health service because of diet related illnesses. The comment was made as a consequence of poor diets or people not having enough to eat then 37p from every £1 would be required to treat those people. Councillor Jones

commented that the 37p was what society had to pay to compensate for those choices made in earlier years.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside said these measures were important especially when applying for funding and outlined the work being undertaken by local authorities and the Health Service with regard to prevention. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets added that this was a great initiative especially for those living in rural areas who would not only received a good nutritious meal and but would also have contact with another person. We also need to reduce the number of cancers caused by bad diets.

Councillor Paul Johnson raised the following points:-

- At point 1.12 in the report and the first bullet point “inclusion of the social value narrative he suggested it should just read “social value”.
- In the monitoring report reference was made to the Social Value Officer and his question was were these going to be linked. He asked if this would be coming to committee at a later date for members to have a better understanding of what could be delivered as regards social value.
- With regard to the Ethical Employment Model he asked how this would work with the three different partners involved and asked if hairdressers had been consulted as sometimes for people living in isolation their only regular contact would be with their hairdresser. He referred to KIM Inspire and wondered if this would be a way to engage with people?

The Cabinet Member for Social Services referred to the large amount of work being carried out on loneliness and isolation which crossed over into the Housing & Assets portfolio. She also referred to the work being undertaken within the social services portfolio with regard to food poverty and period poverty.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside reported when she worked in a post office / hairdressers which was the hub of the community and recalled a time when an elderly resident had had a stroke and no one knew, it was about having those links in the communities. She then referred to procurement of services and the need to ensure that there was that social element in place. She added that she would raise this and had made a lot of notes.

The Chief Officer referred to the point on Ethical Employment which was important in this model commenting all three partners were working together on this.

The Chair reported on the over 50s' group which he was involved with saying once people came along, they stayed and then had that support network. He then referred to the young person who went blind because of his poor diet and asked what came first was it education or having that good food available. You need to have the food there and then educate. He then referred to Councillor Jones' point that every £1 spent on food 37p was added for released diseases, and asked what food that referred to. It was confirmed the reference was for highly processed food, microwave and highly salted food.

Councillor Jones commented on a programme which was provided to hairdressers for them to identify signals of difficulties and providing them with the ability to signpost that person to the services they needed. The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside commented previously she had received messages from her local hairdresser asking for help with that the person's permission.

The recommendation was proposed Councillor Martin White and seconded by Councillor David Wisinger

RESOLVED:

That the committee endorsed and supported the proposal for a new Social Enterprise model which will make a significant contribution to reducing food poverty in the County.

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 paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

26. FLINTSHIRE FOOD ENTERPRISE AND THE FOOD POVERTY RESPONSE (CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX TO AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 6)

Questions on Business Plan

Councillor Geoff Collett complimented the team on a really good presentation. He referred to the time a family took to prepare a meal had reduced from 2 ½ hours to 6 minutes which highlighted there was a need to educate people. He felt this was a generational thing with children not engaged with cooking.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside referred to a visit to a green food bags project in Mold where they had to put instruction cards on how to cook vegetables in the bags. She agreed there was a need to teach Children how to prepare food and peel vegetables etc.

The Benefits Manager explained the social enterprise model was designed to cover all areas of food insecurity from food equipment, knowledge and skill, affordability and time to cook. She provided information on the Liverpool model and said this was not food aid but a long term change. She added that people in crisis who were hungry could not deal with the other issues going on in their lives.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets agreed with everything that was being said and recalled his childhood where domestic science was a big part of school and that at home the grandparents taught their grandchildren how to cook and bake. In contrast there was now a reliance on convenience foods, home deliveries of readymade meals etc.

Councillor Johnson agreed and was in favour of the social value aspect and added there was the issue of fuel poverty. He referred to the convenience store at the top of the Holway where people had to struggle to carry large items whilst dealing with a pushchair or walker. He asked was there any way to incorporate the delivery of the larger items within this service and ensuring access to public transport.

The Benefits Manager responded to say this was not something that would be considered at this stage but this could come out of the community resilience work and referred to what Councillor Mullin said about families or neighbours looking out for each other. Maybe the outcome of the community resilience work would be asking the convenience store if they would deliver.

The Chair referred to the foods that have no nutritional value at all and reported on an experiment in the 1960s where rats who ate the fast food boxes did better than the rats who ate the fast food. Maybe it needed to be highlighted how little nutritional value there was in these fast foods.

Councillor Jones wondered what the difference between nutritional and dietary value. He referred to the food selection on page 75 of the report and asked if the committee would have an input into the ingredients. He also asked if food had fewer preservatives would it have a shorter shelf life. With obesity concerns over sugar rich diets, high carbs, pastries and cakes it may be it should be stated that this was what we provided if you want these then we don't provide them. The Benefit Manager said the pre-prepared meals had the oxygen removed when they were sealed and that stays fresh in the fridge for 8 to 10 days so preservatives would not be used. The model was about engaging with communities

The Chair commented this had been a good debate but we were not here to scrutinise in the normal sense but to look at ideas and bring ideas forward.

Councillor Jones sought the Chair's discretion to discuss his concerns with committee regarding leisure centres. Welsh Government had recently decided to cut the free swimming grant which was provided to Flintshire who then distributed to the leisure centres and this impacted all Leisure Centres. Holywell Leisure Centre would receive £10,000 less next year but because it was not part of Flintshire it also meant Holywell would also be losing £5,000 in November. Cambrian Aquatics and Aura would be also affected. This year's business plan would prove very difficult. The Minister may have cut the grant to Flintshire but they were also cutting the funding for Charitable Organisations too.

Councillor Jones would be writing to the Minister to raise their concerns but wanted to inform the Committee of the situation.

27. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am)

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Chairman