

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 MAY 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Hybrid Meeting on Tuesday, 16th May, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Mel Buckley, Chris Dolphin, Ian Hodge, Ray Hughes, Richard Lloyd, Hilary McGuill, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose, and Roy Wakelam

APOLOGY: Councillor David Healey

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Dennis Hutchinson for Councillor Mike Peers Hughes

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Chris Bithell (Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Protection), Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy), Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities, including Social Value and Procurement, Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Enterprise and Regeneration Manager, Democratic Services Manager, Integrated Transport Unit Manager, and Manager C4W/C4W+

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officers

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the Labour Group. The Committee was advised that Councillor David Evans had been appointed to this role for the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor David Evans as Chair of the Committee be noted.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Chris Dolphin nominated Councillor Mike Allport as Vice-Chair of the Committee and this was seconded by Councillor Ian Hodge. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mike Allport be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson declared a personal interest in agenda item 9: Review of Flintshire County Council's Integrated Transport Strategy.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023, were submitted.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved by Councillor Richard Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam.

RESOLVED:

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

5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) provided an update on Public Services Protection Orders (PSPOs) which was scheduled for consideration at the meeting to be held on 12 September 2023. In response to questions raised by Councillor Richard Lloyd, the Chief Officer advised that the areas which were being proposed would be shared with Members in advance of the review and consultation exercise.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) responded to the concerns raised by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson on the issue of dog-fouling and enforcement of PSPO's. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) responded to the further questions raised by Councillor Hilary McGuill on dog fouling, signage, and provision of bins for dog waste.

Members were invited to raise any further items to include on the Programme.

The Facilitator referred to the Action Tracking report which was appended to the report and provided an update on progress to date.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Ian Hodge and seconded by Councillor Hilary McGuill.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be 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 Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions

6. COMMUNITIES 4 WORK

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager presented the report to provide an update on the closure of the Communities for Work programme across Wales following end of the European Structural Fund programmes. He provided background information and advised that In December 2022 it was announced that Flintshire would receive sufficient Welsh Government funding to continue to provide the Communities for Work support and enable the Council to retain the staff team to do so. The report provided an update on the programme and the changes which had taken place and future priorities.

The Manager C4W/C4W+ gave an overview of the key points, as detailed in the report, and referred to the Communities for Work Plus (C4W+) programme, pathway programmes, jobs fairs, social care pathways, and partnership work with local employers.

Councillor Bernie Attridge asked how individuals were referred to the work programmes. He also asked for an update on work with Waites. The Manager C4W/C4W+ advised that work with Waites was continuing and commented on the successful outcomes. She also explained that any person in Flintshire aged 16+ and unemployed could access the C4W+ Programme.

Councillor Paul Johnson commented on the need to raise awareness amongst Members and the general public of the opportunities available with the Programme.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised questions around the financial implications for people in receipt of social support payments. She also asked if refugees/asylum seekers living in Flintshire were eligible to access the Programme. The Manager C4W/C4W+ explained that the Service worked with any individual who lived in Flintshire and each individual had a robust mentor review to assess needs, background, and financial position. She confirmed that refugees coming into the County were supported.

The recommendation, as set out in the report, was moved by Councillor Roy Wakelam and seconded by Councillor Dan Rose.

RESOLVED:

That the closure of the Communities for Work programme and the new arrangements to support long term unemployed people be supported.

7. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION LOANS

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager provided background information and advised that the report gave details of the town centre regeneration repayable loan funding awarded to Flintshire County Council and the proposed criteria to be used to manage and administer the funds to support delivery of its regeneration work programme across town centres in Flintshire. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager reported on the key points as detailed in the report.

In response to the questions raised by Councillor Richard Lloyd, the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager advised that the repayable loans were interest free but an administrative charge was applied to cover the cost of administering the loan to the Council. Referring to the 7 towns identified in the report for development in the Place Making Plans programme the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager explained that should another town expressed interest and had a suitable scheme it could be discussed with the Welsh Government.

In response to a question from Councillor Hilary McGuill concerning commercial property, the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager advised that applications for a loan could be made either by the tenant or the landlord, however, the loan was secured by a legal charge on the property so would require the landlord's consent.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the repayable loan funding awarded for town centre regeneration in Flintshire be noted; and
- (b) That the proposed criteria and approach to administering and managing the town centre repayable loan funding across Flintshire be supported.

8. REVIEW OF FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), presented the report to undertake a review of Flintshire's Integrated Transport Strategy. She provided background information and advised that to ensure that Flintshire was best placed to feed into and shape development of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP), it was proposed that a review of the Council's own Integrated Transport Strategy be undertaken to help determine the County's transport priorities for the next five years. The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the review and an update on the current "state of play" regarding national and regional transport developments. The Chief Officer reported on the key considerations as detailed in the report.

Councillor Bernie Attridge raised concerns around Corporate Joint Committees and commented on the proposal to hold a workshop in October. He suggested that more urgent action was needed and that an all-Member meeting be held to feed in views on the review of Flintshire's Integrated Transport Strategy.

Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy) spoke in support of a proposed all Member workshop being held in October 2023 and emphasised that more detailed information would be available to share at that time. He gave an assurance that the issue of traffic congestion in Flintshire was recognised and ongoing concerns were being raised with the Welsh Government.

Councillor Hilary McGuill commented on the impact of road repair works on tourism and the disruption to visitors travelling into Wales and asked if a

moratorium could be placed on all railway/road works during Bank Holiday weekends.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson raised questions around support for submitting a further bid for levelling up funding. He also expressed concerns around the Wrexham to Bidston rail service and the alternative service which was provided.

Councillor Chris Dolphin expressed concerns around the diversions as a result of road repairs to the A55 and the damage caused to local road networks and disruption to local residents and communities in Flintshire.

Councillor Roy Wakelam commented on the lack of public transport provision in some areas which prevented people from being able to work. Councillor Hilary McGuill suggested alternative solutions which might enable people to connect to public transport at key locations.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) thanked members for their comments and confirmed that the issues raised would be welcomed at the workshop planned for later this year.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Roy Wakelam and seconded by Councillor Dan Rose.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the national and regional developments taking place be noted and the proposal to undertake a review of the Council's own Integrated Transport Strategy to help inform the RTP development be supported; and
- (b) That the proposal to hold a members' workshop to review the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy later this year be agreed.

9. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m and ended at 11.30 a.m)

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Chairman