

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JUNE 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Hybrid Meeting on Tuesday, 13th June, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Chris Dolphin, Ian Hodge, Ray Hughes, Hilary McGill, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose, and Roy Wakelam

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Teresa Carberry for Councillor Richard Lloyd, Councillor Tina Claydon for Councillor Mel Buckley, and Councillor Dennis Hutchinson for Councillor Mike Peers

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 David Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy), Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities, including Social Value and Procurement, Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation). For minute no.13 Henry Aron, Ambition North Wales, Low Carbon Energy Programme Manager.

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

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2023, were submitted.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved by Councillor Ian Hodge and seconded by Councillor Dan Rose.

RESOLVED:

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

12. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report. She advised that an additional item, the Food Service Plan would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 July 2023.

The Facilitator referred to the Action Tracking report which was appended to the report and advised that both outstanding actions had been completed. She drew attention to the workshops which would be held on 18 October 2023 on the Review of the Flintshire County Council Integrated Transport Strategy.

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

Councillor Chris Dolphin suggested that an item to provide data on the number of breakdowns of refuse collection vehicles be added to the Programme. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained there had been some operational issues and said the Service Manager would contact Councillor Dolphin to arrange a meeting to discuss the problems raised. It was agreed that a report on missed collections and fleet reliability would be brought to the October meeting.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson and seconded by Councillor Hilary McGuill.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That subject to the above amendment 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

13. PRESENTATION FROM THE ENERGY PROGRAMME MANAGER AMBITION NORTH WALES

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) introduced the item to receive an update on the current position on the Low Carbon Energy programme projects. He provided background information and introduced Henry Aron, Low Carbon Energy Programme Manager, Ambition North Wales.

Mr Aron gave a presentation on the Low Carbon energy Programme which covered the following points:

- our Partners
- objectives
- investment
- North Wales Growth Deal - Low Carbon Energy Programme
- Smart Local Energy Fund
- hydrogen sponsor challenge
- Trawsfynydd project
- Cydnerth (Morlais) project
- Egni project

The Low Carbon Energy Programme Manager responded to the comments by Councillor David Healey on the proposals for the Port of Mostyn

and advised of the opportunity through recent funding from the Welsh Government to support key schemes. The Programme Manager also advised that there were plans for major off shore wind projects in the Irish sea and Ambition North Wales was keen to secure a significant role for North Wales ports in the construction, maintenance, and operation of the projects, particularly in the Holyhead and Mostyn ports.

Councillor Bernie Attridge asked for information concerning how the projects would benefit residents in Flintshire. The Programme Manager advised that there were a number of projects within Flintshire and cited the Warren Hall project as an example. He referred to the Energy Programme and explained that the Smart Local Energy Fund could support projects in Flintshire and also commented on the 'People that I can Help project' and provided examples of other schemes which would bring direct and indirect opportunities and benefits for the Flintshire area.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) advised that whilst a project may not be located within Flintshire under the Regional Programme there was a supply chain to assist with the delivery. He also commented on the direct link with local schools, colleges, and universities to support the work of Ambition North Wales by providing the knowledge and skills required by a future workforce to work on the programmes.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked if there were any plans to recycle vehicle batteries. The Programme Manager acknowledged the point made by Councillor McGuill and advised that the Smart Local Energy Fund would promote introductions and raise awareness of any potential opportunities as soon as made available.

The Programme Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Chris Bithell on tidal energy projects. He also responded to the comments and questions raised by Councillor Dan Rose around Smart Local Energy funding, and the hydrogen hub.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked if any funding was available to enable homeowners to produce their own domestic electricity through solar panels installed on their property. The Programme Manager advised that the Smart Local Energy Fund would not take applications from individual households due to lack of resources but would consider applications from community projects.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

14. WELSH GOVERNMENT DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), presented the report to provide an update to members on the Welsh Government's proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). She provided background information and reported that the proposed Deposit Return Scheme had received strong support as outlined in the government response. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural

Affairs (DEFRA) had subsequently confirmed that it would work with industry, the Welsh Government, and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland, to set up the scheme. The expected start date was October 2025. The report provided an overview of the proposals and an update on the next steps for delivery of the scheme in Wales.

Councillor Vicky Perfect spoke in support of the scheme.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) responded to the questions and concerns raised by Councillor Dan Rose regarding recycling rates and explained that the intention was that the scheme would increase recycling in the future. She also referred to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging reforms which was being consulted on alongside the DRS and said feedback would be provided to the Committee in the future when more information was made available.

Councillor Hilary McGuill queried whether the DRS was a 'recycle' or a 're-use' scheme and raised questions on how it would be operated and if payment would be credited direct to the consumer when the item was returned. The Chief Officer commented that it was unclear at the present time if the DRS was a 'recycle' or a 're-use' scheme until more information was provided.

The Chair expressed concerns around the current 'unknowns' regarding operation of the scheme, resources required, and willingness of consumers to participate. He suggested that the recommendation in the report be amended to read as follows: that the Committee notes the contents of the report and the proposals to deliver a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for Wales. The amendment was duly seconded and was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the contents of the report and the proposals to deliver a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for Wales.

15. 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 11.15 a.m)

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Chairman