

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 OCTOBER 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Hybrid Meeting on Tuesday, 10th October, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, David Coggins-Cogan, Chris Dolphin, Ian Hodge, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose, and Roy Wakelam

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Ron Davies for Councillor Mel Buckley and Councillor Gladys Healey for Councillor Ray Hughes

ALSO PRESENT: David Davies, Independent Member - Standards Committee (as an observer)

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy), Councillor Chris Bithell (Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection), 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), Corporate Finance Manager, Strategic Finance Manager, Highway Network Manager, Service Delivery Manager Streetscene. For minute no.32 - Robyn Lovelock, Growth Deal Programme Manager, Ambition North Wales

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

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair welcomed David Davies, Independent Member of the Standards Committee to the meeting. Mr Davies read out a statement to explain his role and purpose in joining the meeting as an observer.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

31. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023, were submitted.

Accuracy

Councillor Chris Bithell said he was present at the meeting and asked that the attendance be amended to record this.

On behalf of Councillor Andrew Parkhurst, Councillor David Coggins-Cogan asked that the following amendment be made to the minutes to reflect the comments he had made during the meeting on Public Spaces Protection Order Review: "Councillor Andrew Parkhurst asked why the public consultation didn't allow for the public to make comments as this was a consultation, not a referendum and the comments that some members of the public had emailed separately provided, in his view, a greater insight than just looking at the percentages of responses to the various questions. Officers accepted the point and said that future PSPO consultations would include a facility to add comments. The Chair asked that all County Council consultations allow for comments to be made".

Subject to the above amendments the minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved by Councillor Mike Peers and seconded by Councillor Ian Hodge.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32. PRESENTATION FROM THE GROWTH DEAL PROGRAMME MANAGER, AMBITION NORTH WALES

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) introduced the presentation to receive a progress update on the five projects being managed within the Growth Deal Agri-food & Tourism programme and the Innovation in High Value Manufacturing programme. He provided background information and asked Robyn Lovelock, Growth Deal Programme Manager, Ambition North Wales, to give the presentation which covered the following main points:

- our partners
- objectives
- background
- 5 programmes
 - Agri-Food and Tourism programme – project progress
 - Innovation in High Value Manufacturing programme– project progress

The Growth Deal Programme Manager responded to the questions and comments made by Councillor Mike Peers around delivery dates for projects, transport, and the potential impact of a moratorium on road building in Wales.

Councillor David Healey spoke in support of the Agri-Food and Tourism project.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

33. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report. She drew attention to the Integrated Transport Strategy Workshop to be held on 18 October, and said a report to provide an update on the Strategy would also be presented to the Committee at the meeting to be held on 12 December 2023.

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator referred to the Action Tracking report and advised that the one outstanding action had been completed and a report on Enforcement would be scheduled into the Forward Work Programme.

Members were invited to raise any further items to include on the Programme. The Chair asked that the item on Missed Collections and Fleet Reliability which was to be considered during this meeting be removed from the Programme for the meeting on 12 December 2023.

Councillor Richard Lloyd moved the recommendations in the report and this was seconded by Councillor David Coggins-Cogan.

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

34. BUDGET 2024/25 – STAGE 2

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the report to review and comment on the budget pressures and cost reductions under the remit of the Committee. He gave a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Setting 2024/25 which covered the following points:

- purpose and background
- additional budget requirements of the Council 2024/25
- additional budget requirement – ongoing risks
- overall position after initial solutions
- summary and conclusions
- next steps for the budget setting process 2024/25
- budget process Stage 2
- budget process Stage 3 – (Final)

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) gave a presentation on the Planning, Environment and Economy Cost Pressures which covered the following points:

- summary Planning, Environment & Economy cost pressures
- Planning, Environment & Economy cost pressures
- Planning, Environment & Economy budget reductions
- the 2024/25 budget challenge – our approach
- summary Planning, Environment & Economy budget reductions
- Planning, Environment & Economy Budget reductions – use of balances and reserves

Councillor Mike Peers queried a discrepancy in the total cost figures for cost pressures which were shown as £0.191k and £0.139k. He also raised questions on the removal of the budget for private water supplies, the budget reductions and the proposal to increase fees, and sought clarification on efficiencies. The Chief Officer and Corporate Finance Manager responded to the comments and questions raised.

The Chief Officer responded to the further questions and comments raised by Councillors Dan Rose, Richard Lloyd, and David Coggins-Gogan concerning private water supplies, cost pressures relating to HMO's, balances, reserves, and building regulations and developers.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) gave a presentation on the Streetscene and Transportation Cost Pressures which covered the following points:

- summary Streetscene & Transportation cost pressures
- Streetscene & Transportation cost pressures
- Streetscene & Transportation budget reductions
- the 2024/25 budget challenge – our approach
- summary Streetscene & Transportation - budget reductions
- Streetscene & Transportation - budget reductions

Councillor Gladys Healey referred to the review of Hazardous Transport routes and expressed concerns citing the routes in Hope and Penyffordd as examples. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) advised that the hazardous routes were last considered in 2016/17 and the proposals and actions were being put forward for consideration to the Committee prior to decision making or approval.

Councillor Mike Peers expressed concerns regarding the cost pressures listed on page 25, section 1.10, of the report. He also referred to the budget reductions outlined in section 1.11, page 26, and asked a number of questions and made suggestions for improvement. The Chief Officer gave a detailed response to the points and comments raised by Councillor Peers.

Councillor David Coggins-Cogan raised further questions and concerns around the cost pressures listed in section 1.10. He also referred to the budget

reductions outlined in section 1.11 and made suggestions for improvements. The Chief Officer and Highways Network Manager responded to the points raised.

Councillor Dan Rose commented on the potential to generate an income from business recycling. He also raised questions regarding the replacement of Mayrise and asked if this would be considered by a Task and Finish Group. He commented on the budget reductions in section 1.11 and made suggestions for improvements.

Councillor Chris Dolphin suggested that a review of the 'black bin' collection service be included on the proposals for budget reductions in Table 4, section 1.11 of the report. The Chief Officer explained that the 'black bin' service had not been included on Table 4 as it was not an efficiency.

The Chair raised questions around the Mayrise replacement and asked if collaboration was taking place with other local authorities. He also commented on the proposals for budget reductions in Table 4 of the report.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor David Coggins-Cogan and seconded by Councillor Ray Wakelam.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio's cost pressures be noted;
- (b) That the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio's options to reduce budgets be noted;
- (c) That the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio's cost pressures be noted;
- (d) That the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio's options to reduce budgets be noted;
- (e) That the Committee's comments on the proposed efficiencies be explored further.

Item 6 - Budget Presentation Slides

35. MISSED COLLECTIONS AND FLEET RELIABILITY

The Chief Officer introduced the report to provide an update to the Committee following a request for further information on Missed Collections & Waste and Recycling Collection Vehicle Reliability. She provided background information and advised that the report provided an overview of the issues that can cause collections to be regularly missed, with particular focus on fleet reliability within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio. The report outlined the policies in place for missed collections and summarised the performance and reliability of the Council's fleet vehicles and identified key issues.

The Service Delivery Manager and Highways Network Manager presented the report and referred to the main considerations as detailed.

Councillor Gladys Healey raised concerns regarding a missed collection of a medical waste bag and also the assisted collection service. The Service Delivery Manager advised that the Council was currently working with an external organisation to develop new software which would significantly assist the current collection services by providing a solution to the problem of “human error” which resulted in a missed collection. The new software could also potentially provide notification to residents when the collection vehicle was in their immediate area.

Officers responded to the questions and comments raised by Councillor Mike Peers concerning multiple missed collections (for example a street collection), the ‘no return’ policy for missed recycling collection, and electric recycling recovery vehicles.

Officers responded to the further questions and comments raised by Members regarding, the potential to review and extend operating hours to include weekend working, missed collections, side waste and enforcement, and comparable data with other local authorities on collection rates. The Chief Officer and Service Delivery Manager also responded to the questions raised concerning staff vacancies, recruitment, and use of agency staff.

The Chief Officer and Highway Network Manager responded to the further questions raised by Councillors David Coggins-Cogan and Dan Rose on fleet age and the plan for fleet replacement.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Dan Rose and seconded by Councillor Mike Peers.

RESOLVED:

That the report on service performance for Missed Waste Collections and Fleet Reliability be noted.

36. HIGHWAY STRUCTURES (AUDIT REPORT)

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced the report to provide a progress update on the Highway Structures audit report. She provided background information and advised that the report provided an overview of the Highway Network Service, with particular focus on the management of highways structures, along with assurances regarding the recommended action taken and controls put in place following the audit.

The Highways Network Manager presented the main considerations as detailed in the report.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to paragraph 1.13 of the report and asked for an update on the Flintshire Bridge. He also asked for explanation of the data in paragraph 1.14 which showed one structure listed in the category ‘poor’. The Chief Officer and Highway Network Manager responded to the points raised by

Councillor Peers and explained that at the current time the maintenance of the Flintshire Bridge remained the responsibility of Flintshire County Council.

Referring to paragraph 1.14 the Chair asked if Members were informed of the condition and category of structures in their Ward. The Chief Officer agreed that where practical to do so going forward Members would be notified of the condition of structures in their area.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor David Coggins-Cogan and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work of the Streetscene and Transportation Highway Network Team and the required support from the wider technical team to deliver the action plan be supported; and
- (b) That the action taken and controls put in place in response to the internal audit recommendations be supported

37. 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 2.20 p.m)

.....
Chairman