

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Hybrid Meeting on Tuesday, 5th March, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ray Hughes, and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)

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 Dave Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change an Economy), Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Highway Network Manager, Transport Manager , Regulatory Services Manager, Operations Manager, Waste Strategy Manager, and Integrated Transport Unit Manager

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

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

75. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024, were submitted.

Accuracy

Councillor Chris Bithell explained that he had joined the meeting later and asked that his attendance be noted.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved by Councillor Richard Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Mike Peers.

RESOLVED:

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

76. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

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

Councillor Mike Peers proposed that an item to consider the operation of the Connects Centres be added to the Forward Work Programme. The Chair advised that the request may come under the remit of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee and said enquiries would be made.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Mike Peers and seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That subject to the above request 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

77. AUDIT WALES ASSURANCE & RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT – CARBON REDUCTION PLAN

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) provided background information and advised that the purpose of the report was to give an overview of the Assurance & Risk Assessment review and the action taken to date to address the recommendation. The Chief Officer presented the report and referred to the main points as detailed.

The Chief Officer responded to the questions raised by Councillor Mike Peers concerning a £22m funding gap (Authority's cost estimate in excess of £22m), resources being a barrier to meeting the targets, and the Authority's estimated costs to be compliant with the target (page 39 - £66m).

The Chief Officer responded to the further questions and comments raised by Members regarding the undertaking by Audit Wales of each Council's carbon commitment and action against the findings of their public sector wide report.

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

RESOLVED

That the outcome of the Audit Wales report and support action being taken to address its recommendation be noted.

78. OUTCOME OF ADOPTION OF LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY

The Highway Network Manager presented a report to provide an update following the conclusion of the public consultation and present the final draft of the Strategy for adoption. He introduced the Operational Area Manager to the Committee who had overall responsibility for provision in the County.

The Highway Network Manager provided background information and referred to the main considerations as detailed in the report. He advised that the new Strategy aimed to reflect the ambition of the Council's Leadership to provide improved facilities for Flintshire's residents and visitors. The Flintshire County Council Local Toilet Strategy 2023-27 and Summary of Public Consultation Engagement were appended to the report.

Councillor Mike Peers commented on toilet provision in tourist areas and asked if local councils made a contribution towards the cost of the service. He also asked if the Authority had to provide funding for participating premises. The Highway Network Manager responded to the questions and referred to the current annual budget for Public Conveniences, and capital investment which was subject to bids to the Capital Board. He explained that subject to approval of the Strategy a 3 year bid programme would be submitted to the Board.

The Highway Network Manager drew attention to section 1.07 in the report in response to the comments raised by Councillor Richard Lloyd regarding the need for adequate toilet facilities.

The Chair raised a question on the needs assessment data detailed on page 63 of the report and commented on the special needs score for the Shotton area.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Richard Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Mike Peers

RESOLVED

- (a) That the work done to date on the results from the Local Toilet Strategy questionnaire and 12-week consultation be noted; and.
- (b) That the new revised Flintshire County Council Local Toilet Strategy 2024 and renewed action plan included within be supported.

79. RESOURCE AND WASTE STRATEGY

The Regulatory Services Manager presented the report to review the Council's waste strategy with the objective of achieving Welsh Government's statutory recycling target of 70%. She provided background information and advised that the report provided feedback on the consultation exercise which took place on the draft Resource and Waste Strategy and presented the final document for consideration.

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that if the Strategy was adopted it was proposed that a further report be submitted to Cabinet in June outlining the Council's transition to a restricted capacity residual waste collection model as committed to in priority 2 of the Strategy. She advised that this action was fundamental in achieving the statutory recycling target of 70% and would be the first action to implement if the Strategy was adopted. The Strategy would be presented to the Minister for Climate Change for consideration with a detailed action plan for implementation to continue progress towards 70% recycling.

Councillor Mike Peers raised questions regarding the proposed actions and aspirations referred to in the report and the draft Resource and Waste Strategy. He referred to the problem of residents placing recyclable items in residual waste bins that could have been collected via the recycling collection service or at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). He also asked what actions were being undertaken to encourage participation rates, and referred to priority 1 (page 82) to reduce overall waste arising within Flintshire and increase the amount reused to avoid disposal and said there were no timescales against the project plan (page 128).

Councillor Peers cross-referenced between the information contained in the report and the draft Resource and Waste Strategy which was appended. He raised further questions and concerns and referred to the following: the proposed actions listed in section 1.14 (page 83), the proposal for the Council's transition to a restricted capacity residual waste collection model as committed to in priority 2 of the Strategy (page 85, section 1.17), priority 2 (page 82) increase recycling, (page 83, section 1.14) and the aspiration to encourage greater recycling by either reducing the frequency of collections or reducing the capacity (size) of the black bin, and the final bullet point in the list of actions on page 130 of the report to restrict the amount of residual waste that residents can dispose of in the black bin to encourage greater recycling by all residents either by reducing the frequency of collections or the capacity of the bin.

Councillor Peers proposed that the third recommendation in the report be amended to read: "That Scrutiny agrees to a further report to be presented in June outlining the Council's proposals to increase recycling waste in line with Priority 2 and the draft Resource and Waste Strategy". He also proposed that the final bullet point on page 12 of the draft Resources and Waste Strategy be amended to read: "That the Council may consider restricting the amount of residual waste that residents can dispose of in the black bin to encourage greater recycling by all residents either by reducing the frequency of collections or the capacity of the bin". Councillor Richard Lloyd seconded the proposals.

Councillor Richard Lloyd and Councillor Dan Rose expressed concerns regarding recycling waste collection points and the locations. Councillor Richard Lloyd suggested there was a need for more detailed consultation with the local Member for the Ward around the need and siting of recycling waste collection points in local communities.

The Regulatory Services Manager responded to the comments and points raised.

The following recommendations were moved by Councillor Roy Wakelam and seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made on achieving a robust and effective Resources and Waste Strategy to meet net zero targets, achieve statutory recycling targets, and mitigate against the risk of infraction fines, be noted;
- (b) That the Resource and Waste Strategy to meet net zero targets, achieve statutory recycling targets, and mitigate against the risk of infraction fines be supported; and
- (c) That Scrutiny agrees to a further report to be presented in June outlining the Council's proposals to increase recycling waste in line with Priority 2 and the draft Resource and Waste Strategy.
- (d) That the final bullet point on page 12 of the draft Resources and Waste Strategy be amended to read: "That the Council may consider restricting the amount of residual waste that residents can dispose of in the black bin to encourage greater recycling by all residents either by reducing the frequency of collections or the capacity of the bin".

80. UPDATE ON BUS EMERGENCY SCHEME

The Transport Manager introduced a report to provide an update following the announcement of the termination of the Bus Emergency Scheme Funding and the introduction of the Bus Transition Funding (BTF). He provided background information and advised that the report referred to the funding of commercial services post BTF, and the scope of the Welsh Government Bus Network Fund (BNG) which will be introduced in April 2024. The Transport Manager reported on the key points as detailed in the report.

The Chair asked if data was available on the subsidies other local authorities currently subscribed to bus transportation.

Councillor Mike Peers asked if a report could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on overall public transport provision in Flintshire.

The Transport Manager and Integrated Transport Unit Manager responded to the further comments and questions raised by Members around the sustainability of unviable transport routes, criteria for services in rural areas, and the collection of data to assess public need for services.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Mike Peers and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam

RESOLVED:

How public bus services have been funded during the pandemic, the impact on service levels, passenger numbers, and bus companies themselves, and future proposals, be noted

81. **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 11.45 a.m.)

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Chairman