

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16 DECEMBER 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council, held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 16 December 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor Matt Wright (Chairman)

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Peter Curtis, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Joe Johnson, Nancy Matthews, Paul Shotton and Carolyn Thomas

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Glyn Banks for Ann Minshull

APOLOGIES: Councillor David Evans

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, Director of Environment, and Assistant Business Development Officer. (For minute No. 48) Mr. Edward Hunt, Superfast Cymru Programme Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

47. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 November 2013 were submitted.

Accuracy

Page 5: Councillor Paul Shotton asked that the word 'not' be removed from the first line of the fourth paragraph.

RESOLVED:

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

48. PRESENTATION BY SUPERFAST CYMRU

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Mr. Edward Hunt, Superfast Cymru Programme Director, and invited him to give a presentation on Superfast Cymru. Mr. Hunt provided background information and context and

explained that the project was created in partnership with BT and the Welsh Government. The main points of the presentation were:

- Aims of Superfast Cymru
- The 'Open' Network
- Rollout progress
- Plans for Flintshire
- Why fibre broadband

The Chairman thanked Mr. Hunt for a detailed and informative presentation and invited Members to raise questions. The Chairman indicated that he would be exercising his discretion to allow a member of the public attending the meeting to speak and ask a question. He formally welcomed Mr Paul Hill to the meeting.

Councillor Ian Dunbar commented on the cost, which he felt could be prohibitive, for some residential customers and small businesses switching to fibre broadband. Mr. Hunt advised that due to market competition the cost of transferring to fibre broadband was relatively low and with some providers there may be no charge at all for existing customers. He outlined the benefits of fibre broadband and advised that the inability for old internet connections to continue to meet needs was the biggest driver.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas highlighted the significant problems concerning broadband connection which was experienced by residents, farmers, and businesses in rural areas. Mr. Paul Hill explained the difficulties he had experienced in establishing a consistent internet connection in his rural area. Mr. Hunt agreed to discuss externally the issues and concerns raised and outlined the work being undertaken on rural and urban deployment and commented on the size of the engineering project. He gave reassurance that there would be no single large area in Flintshire or Wales which would not have access to a broadband service: the intention was to achieve 96% penetration, which would be amongst the highest achieved globally. The 4% would not be related to a discrete geographical area, but would instead be individual properties which proved 'hard to reach' across the country.

Councillor Chris Dolphin commented on the impact that advances in information technology had on local communities and cited the closure of high street shops and banks as an example.

Councillor Veronica Gay suggested that all community centres should be connected to fibre broadband.

During discussion Mr. Hunt advised of the work being undertaken in conjunction with the Authority's Economic Development Team to inform residents in Flintshire of Superfast Cymru and the availability of fibre broadband. It was agreed that Mr. Hunt would liaise with the Director of Environment following the meeting concerning some issues which had been encountered with marketing. It was also suggested that information on

Superfast Cymru be included in the Authority's newsletter Your Community Your Council, and that a press release be submitted following the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be received.

49. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting:

- Town Centres and High Streets
- Review of Council's Waste Policy

The Chairman informed Members that prior to the next meeting a budget consultation meeting would be held and Members would be notified of the date when confirmed.

The Member Engagement Manager suggested that the item on the North Wales Residual Waste Partnership which was scheduled for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 February 2014 may be withdrawn in view of the current timings of the procurement process and the outcome of the Joint Committee meeting to be held in January 2014.

The Member Engagement Manager also asked that Members consider agreement to the Environment and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator updating the Forward Work Programme, as required, in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Councillor Nancy Matthews asked if the report on the Review of the Council's Waste Policy could be sent to Members as early as possible for consideration. The Director of Environment said he would circulate the draft report in the New Year.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That subject to the above the Forward Work Programme be agreed; and
- (b) That the item on the North Wales Residual Waste Partnership which was scheduled for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 February 2014 may be withdrawn, subject to the current timings of the procurement process and the outcome of the Joint Committee meeting to be held in January 2014.

50. 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 item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

51. UPDATE ON NORTH WALES RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT AND THE SUB-REGIONAL FOOD WASTE PROJECT

The Director of Environment introduced a report to update Members on progress of the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project's (NWRWTP) procurement process and on progress of the Sub-Regional Food Waste Project

With reference to the NWRWTP, the Director reported on the main considerations which were detailed in the report.

Concerning the Sub-Regional Food Waste Project the Director advised that interim services continued to run smoothly with no operational issues being reported. Construction of the new treatment facility was progressing following delay and it was anticipated that the facility would be fully operational mid 2014. In conclusion the Director commented on the 'spend to save' proposals in relation to an anticipated capital receipt to be gained in the future.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

52. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was one member of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and ended at 11.50 am).

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Chairman