

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 APRIL 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 23 April 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary Isherwood (Chair)

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Peter Curtis, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Joe Johnson, Brian Lloyd, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull, and Paul Shotton

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cindy Hinds and Colin Legg

ALSO PRESENT: Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Councillor Carolyn Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) and Transportation Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

54. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 March 2015 were submitted.

Matters arising

Waste Collections Policy

Councillor Chris Dolphin referred to his comments on page 5, and said he had not received a breakdown of the proposed savings around vehicle costs. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) agreed to chase up the information with the Waste Manager for Councillor Dolphin.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to the request that further consideration be given to continuing the household recycling service at Hope and commented that a decision would not be taken until after the County Council By-election at Caergwrlle had been held.

RESOLVED:

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

55. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair asked the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) to make a short statement about the current appointments process within his portfolio.

The Chief Officer provided details about the new staffing structure for the Streetscene and Transportation Team and referred to the timeframe and outcomes concerning the appointment of new managers, team leaders and supervisors. It was agreed that following completion of the process contact details of the new appointments would be circulated to all Members as soon as possible to assist with any highway issues raised. During discussion it was agreed that a visit to the depot would be arranged in due course to introduce Committee Members to key staff.

56. THE COUNCIL'S BUS SUBSIDY, REVIEW OF THE DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION UNIT

The Transportation Manager introduced a report on the forthcoming review of the County's subsidised bus service and to seek support for work to commence with local communities to deliver local community based transport arrangements. The report also advised on the proposals to remove the Council's subsidy for the bookable Demand Responsive Travel (DRT) service, known locally as the Deeside Shuttle, and to develop options for the introduction of a non-subsidised commercial bus service to replace the service. The Committee was also advised of the introduction of an Integrated transport Unit within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio.

The Transportation Manager provided background information and referred to the key considerations and next steps which were detailed in the report. She advised that a further update report on the new arrangements would be provided to the Committee in 12 months time.

Members were invited to raise questions.

Referring to the review of subsidised bus services the Chair suggested that tickets should be made inter-changeable between service providers to assist the public to travel more efficiently. She referred to an all Member workshop to be hosted by the Committee to consider identifying core routes across the County and the required frequency and standard of service each route should provide. The Chair requested that Community and Town Council representatives be invited to attend the workshop to provide input on local knowledge and the level of service needed.

Councillor Peter Curtis welcomed the proposals and the suggestion put forward by the Chair that tickets should be inter-changeable between providers. He referred to the need for commercial bus companies to work in cooperation with each other to enhance the number and quality of services available and

avoid duplication of timetables and routes. He reiterated the comments expressed by the Chair that it was important to include Town and Community Councils through workshop consultation to obtain valuable local knowledge and requirement.

The Transportation Manager acknowledged the points made and referred to work already undertaken to engage Town and Community Councils and gave an assurance that this would continue.

Councillor Paul Shotton commented on the success of the Deeside Shuttle Service and the continued increase in passenger journeys which was expected to rise again in 2014-15. He referred to the purpose of the Shuttle Service which was introduced to transport workers to Deeside Industrial Park and emphasised the need to ensure that any replacement service would still meet the needs of individuals to get to work, including shift-work, in the area. Councillor Shotton asked if employers on Deeside Industrial Park had been approached to ask if they were prepared to make a contribution towards the cost of transportation for their employees. The Cabinet Member for Environment and the Transportation Manager acknowledged the points and concerns raised and advised that work had already commenced on engaging local companies which would be taken forward.

Councillor Nancy Matthews commented on the priorities of the bus service in terms of getting people to work, school, shopping, appointments, and leisure facilities. She referred to the proposal to introduce new commercial bus services into Deeside Industrial Park and withdraw the Shuttle Service and asked what the new fare would cost. She welcomed the introduction of formalising the routes and the change to a fixed schedule with designated stops which she said would assist individuals to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The Transportation Manager responded to the comments and queries raised and explained that the purpose of the workshop was to involve all Members in deciding the priorities which would also include the corporate priorities.

Councillor Chris Dolphin expressed concerns that the Welsh Government and the County Council would become reliant on voluntary parties and charities to take over subsidised bus services.

Referring to the use of locally supported Community Transport Schemes to replace the current subsidised services when withdrawn, the Transportation Manager explained that such schemes would not be based on charity work alone but would incorporate voluntary and a range of options to meet the needs of each local community.

In response to a question from Councillor Carolyn Thomas the Transportation Manager advised that no decisions had yet been made about any of the current services.

Councillor Ian Dunbar referred to the introduction of an Integrated Transport Unit and queried the proposal to engage a suitably experienced business partner. The Cabinet Member for Environment advised that the need to appoint a specialist business post had been identified and the Authority was unable to recruit a suitable candidate in-house. The engagement was to be made on a risk and reward basis. The Transportation Manager explained that in addition to fleet and transportation provision consideration would also be given to the integration of school transport and social services provision.

The Chair read out a written question which had been submitted by Councillor Hilary McGuill. The Transportation Manager agreed to take the matters raised forward.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomes the proposed revisions to the subsidised Bus Service and supports the proposed development of community transport services;
- (b) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomes the proposals for the Deeside Shuttle Service;
- (c) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomes the realignment of all operational service delivery areas in order to establish the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) within the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio;
- (d) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the engagement of a suitably qualified business partner on a gain share basis to assist with the assessment and delivery of the financial benefit which will be derived from the new ITU;
- (e) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee requests a further update on the new arrangements in 12 months time; and
- (f) That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee will host an all Member workshop, to which Community & Town Council representatives will be invited, to identify and understand the required level of service needed on each route.

57. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme.

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

- 2014/15 Year end reporting and Data Submission
- Review of Winter Maintenance

- Highways Asset Management Planning and Local Subsidence Scheme

The Chair requested that an item on a review of speed limits be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

In response to a request from Councillor Nancy Matthews, the Cabinet Member for Environment agreed that the Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) would provide a full update on the flood alleviation schemes to the Committee.

The Chair indicated that she wished to ensure that the questions raised by the Committee were satisfactorily addressed. She explained that she had requested that a review of the meetings of the Committee within the last municipal year be undertaken to ensure that all Member questions had been answered and all requests responded to.

The Member Engagement Manager commented on the Annual Meeting of the County Council to be held on 12 May 2015 and the recommended terms of reference to be provided for the new Overview & Scrutiny Committee structure. He suggested that he and the Environment & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Officers be authorised to vary the Committee's work programme between meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be agreed as submitted with the addition of an item on a review of Speed Limits in due course;
- (b) That the Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) provides a full update on the flood alleviation schemes to the Committee;
- (c) That the Committee supported the decision of the Chair to carry out a review of meetings of the Committee within the last municipal year to ensure that all Member questions have been answered and all requests responded to; and
- (d) That the Member Engagement Manager/Environment & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Officers be authorised to vary the Committee's work programme between meetings.

58. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 11.45am)

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Chair