

CABINET
14TH MAY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 14th May 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Education and Youth) and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES:

None.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Helen Brown, Bob Connah, David Healey and Patrick Heesom.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bithell declared a personal interest in agenda item number 6 – School Organisation – Lixwm Community Primary School Consultation on the Proposed Change of Designation from a Community to a Voluntary Aided School. Councillors Banks and Jones declared personal interests in agenda item number 7 – Removal of School Transport Anomalies.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April were submitted and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Councillor Butler introduced the Town Centre Regeneration report which had been produced in response to the following key three drivers:

1. Continuing challenging economic conditions being faced by town centres in the UK;
2. A commitment in the 2018/19 Council Plan to develop a response; and
3. Concerns expressed by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members over the viability of Flintshire town centres and the need for the Council to establish a proactive response.

The report summarised the economic challenges facing town centres which were impacting on their sustainability. A series of proposed responses were outlined to increase the diversity of uses in towns, to strengthen the role of local stakeholder groups and to support businesses to adapt and compete more efficiently.

The Council had invested significant resources in strengthening local community leadership, and the following examples were cited:

- Working with Holywell stakeholders on the development of new governance for the leisure centre and on the trial reopening of the High Street to traffic;
- Supporting Buckley Town Council in developing a long term action plan for the town;
- Bringing together Flint stakeholders to steer the transformational regeneration of the town and to develop their aspirations for the foreshore area;
- Working with Deeside stakeholders to develop a long term aspirational strategy for the area and securing major Welsh Government (WG) investment towards its delivery; and
- Supporting stakeholders in Mold to develop a long term town plan and establishing a governance model for managing community green space.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the report and the significant proposals to help the challenges faced by town centres. He commented on the number of units within towns that were not owned by local businesses and the difficulties faced by trying to make contact with absentee landlords, and asked what could be done to encourage engagement with the Council. He also commented on the upper rooms of units not being used which could be utilised to address the housing shortage. Councillor Butler said contact had tried to be made on numerous occasions over recent years to little or no avail but the Council would continue to try.

Councillor Thomas commented on the development of Business Improvement Districts (BID) which were companies established by the local business community to make investments in their area that improved business trading conditions, attracted customers and reduced operating costs. There were over 300 BIDs in the UK and the feasibility of developing a BID in Mold town centre was being investigated.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed approach to supporting the regeneration of town centres in Flintshire be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to bid for external funding as it becomes available to support the approaches to town centre regeneration.

4. LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

Councillor Thomas introduced the Local Toilets Strategy report which provided an update on the completed statutory public consultation process. To assist the Council in developing its strategy, a number of individuals, stakeholder networks and organisations had been engaged to gather information which helped to develop a needs assessment and informed the draft strategy.

It was emphasised that whilst there was a duty to prepare a Local Toilets Strategy, it did not require the Council to provide and maintain public toilets directly nor was the Council required to provide additional dedicated facilities.

The statutory consultation opened on 4th February 2019 and was accessible until 26th February 2019 – 201 responses had been received. Those responses had been analysed and where necessary and appropriate had been included in the final Local Toilets Strategy.

The proposed strategy included a 12 point Action Plan for the two year period covered by the strategy and was appended to the report.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that in April 2019 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to focus on five specific areas that formed the basis of the strategy and the five questions asked, and responses, were detailed in the report. The Committee had supported the draft Local Toilets Strategy and the approach officers had taken in its development.

A number of comments were made on another Welsh Government (WG) initiative for local authorities which did not have any funds to support it. A discussion took place on the possibility of local businesses being awarded National Non Domestic Rate Relief if they were to offer toilet facilities to the public where approved as part of the local strategy. It was agreed this would be pursued with WG.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the details contained within the report and the outcome of the public statutory consultation on the Local Toilets Strategy be noted;
- (b) That the Local Toilet Strategy for Flintshire County Council be approved; and
- (c) That Welsh Government be requested to grant NNDR reductions to businesses for making toilets available to the public where approved as part of the Local Toilet Strategy.

5. SCHOOL ORGANISATION – LIXWM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF DESIGNATION FROM A COMMUNITY TO A VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL

Councillor Roberts introduced the report which provided details on the proposed change of designation for Lixwm Community Primary (CP) School from a Community to a Voluntary Aided School.

Lixwm CP School had been investigating sustainable solutions to maintain their school in its local community with other schools, the Diocesan Authority and the Council. This was following determination by Cabinet not to amalgamate Lixwm CP School with Brynford CP School.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) explained that this work had culminated in an agreement between the Governors of Lixwm CP School and the Governors of Ysgol Y Esgob Voluntary Aided (VA) School to seek to form a federation between the two schools. However, the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 did not allow schools with a faith or trust base to federate with community schools. It was therefore necessary for the Council to consult on a proposed change to the designation of Lixwm CP School from a CP to a VA School under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018.

The Chief Officer thanked the Diocesan Authority for their active involvement in discussions with the Council and Schools and for their support of the proposed strategy.

The anticipated timeline for the proposed consultation process was appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet are satisfied that the Governing Body of Lixwm Community Primary School has explored suitable and sustainable models for provision of education in the Lixwm area; and
- (b) That Cabinet approve for consultation to be undertaken under The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 on a proposal to change the designation of Lixwm Community Primary to a Voluntary Aided school in order to facilitate a future federation.

6. REMOVAL OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT ANOMALIES

Councillor Thomas introduced the Removal of School Transport Anomalies report which, given the significant financial challenges facing the Council, provided an option for withdrawing the historical transport anomalies in July 2019, instead of July 2020 as previously agreed, to achieve a budget saving.

A school transport route optimisation and re-procurement exercise had been completed in September 2017, with the exercise delivering maximum service benefit by ensuring the most efficient use of vehicles and the most cost effective routes and vehicle capacity for the required number of eligible passengers. As a consequence of the review, a number of historical non-statutory transport arrangements were identified that were over and above the current Home to School Transport Policy and presented opportunities for alternative service delivery and potential efficiency savings.

Reports were submitted to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July and November 2018 where the option to support the continuation of anomalies

until July 2020 was agreed and then supported by Cabinet on 20th November 2018. However, given the significant financial challenges facing the authority, consideration of withdrawing the historical transport anomalies from July 2019 was presented as an option.

Option 1 was to withdraw the anomalies in July 2020 which would have an impact on the school transport budget but would allow the Integrated Transport Unit to undertake a more extensive consultation period with pupils for them to consider alternative transport arrangements.

Option 2 was to withdraw the anomalies in July 2019 which would provide a financial saving to the authority but would have significant impact on those pupils utilising the services as they were currently no alternative public transport options along those routes.

Councillor Thomas recommended that option 1 be supported in line with the previous Cabinet decision which was supported.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) provided clarification that the cohort of children who had previously attended John Summers High School would continue to receive free school transport to Connah's Quay High School until their time at the school had ceased. This was welcomed by Councillor Jones.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive explained that if the removal of school transport anomalies had been brought forward a year it would have had a positive impact on the budget of £229,000. It was understood and accepted that a further saving was not being taken as a values-based decision on the grounds of risk to learners and families.

Councillor Thomas said that the Council operated a parental choice policy and emphasised the need for parents to choose carefully. The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) explained that the school admissions form made the school transport policy clear and there was a requirement for a box to be ticked to say that had been understood. Colleges from Streetscene also attended secondary school open evenings to reiterate the details of the policy so that parents and carers were aware. If a school that was not the nearest school to the child was chosen, transport costs would be borne by parents and carers.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet notes the financial impact of providing the historical transport anomalies and continue to support the anomalies until July 2020.

7. PARC ADFER UPDATE

Councillor Thomas introduced the Parc Adfer Update report and explained that the North Wales Residual Waste Joint Committee had recently met to discuss changes to the requirements of environmental permits for Energy and Waste facilities in relation to Particulate Matter (PM) and made a recommendation on the reporting of PM2.5, in addition to the permit requirements.

As a result of concerns raised during the procurement process in relation to emissions to air from Parc Adfer, specifically of PM2.5 particulates, a contractual option was included in the contract with Wheelabrator Technologies Inc (WTI) to carry out monitoring and reporting of PM2.5 particulates over and above the normal monitoring regime that WTI would have to do under their permit as issued by Natural Resources Wales which was welcomed by Councillor Jones. In response to a question from Councillor Banks, the Chief Executive said that reporting technology would allow instant updates to be given on emission levels.

The Chief Executive explained that the site employed around 400 people which was in line with expectations as the completion of the build and the start of the commissioning became closer. Construction of the Parc Adfer facility began in January 2017, and commissioning of the facility and acceptance of the Partnership's residual waste was scheduled to begin in June 2019, reaching full operational capacity by late 2019. It was estimated that the plant would generate enough renewable energy to power more than 30,000 homes. In addition, a total of 34 new jobs were set to be created ranging from plant management to operational, technical and administrative roles.

Work had also been undertaken with all parties involved to ensure that lorries did not disturb residents by travelling on minor roads – assurances had been given that routing for lorries would be set via principle A roads.

The construction of Parc Adfer had been well managed – the British Safety Council had recently inspected the site and awarded the project a 5 star rating. Members would be invited to the site to meet the operational team. There would also be an educational facility on the site which school children would be invited to attend as part of organised school visits.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That Members be assured of progress and readiness for the commencement of Commissioning of Parc Adfer.

8. RENEWAL OF NORTH WALES CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK

Councillor Roberts introduced the Renewal of North Wales Construction Framework report which provided an update and confirmed the new arrangements for the Framework.

The North Wales Construction Framework was established in 2014 and ran until 2018. It was set up primarily to deliver the construction of new school buildings, or the remodelling and refurbishment of existing school buildings under the 21st Century Schools programme. However, the Framework evolved and could also be used by other public sector organisations in the region to deliver their non-school construction projects.

The Framework provided a streamlined, cost-effective and collaborative mechanism to secure contractors for construction projects in schools and other public buildings across North Wales. Twenty regional projects had delivered a number of community benefits which were outlined in the report – that number would likely increase as the final Band A projects were completed.

Details of the new Framework and the process undertaken were outlined in the report. The Framework would have a positive effect in the North Wales region creating new facilities for public use including new schools, creating jobs in the construction sector, improving educational attainment, providing opportunities for community involvement and engagement and help to promote a vibrant culture and Welsh language. The Framework would be the procurement vehicle for the Council's 21st Century Schools Band B investment programme.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council – Linderick Avenue, Southfields Close, Muirfield Road and Selsdon Close, Buckley. (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 12) Order 201.**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places Amendment No. 12 Order on Linderick Avenue, Southfields Close, Muirfield Road and Selsdon Close, Buckley.

- **The Flintshire County Council – Carlines Avenue, Grant Drive and Lincoln Road, Ewloe (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 25) Order 201.**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places Amendment No. 12 Order on Carlines Avenue, Grant Drive and Lincoln Road, Ewloe.

- **Disposal of Two Old Caterpillar Gensets via Part Exchange for the Hire of a Smaller Unit at Standard Landfill Site.**

Two old decommissioned 1MW CAT Gas Engine Gensets (which are now surplus to requirements) at Brookhill and Standards Landfill sites, to be disposed of for spares/scrap value.

10. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 10.40 a.m.).

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Chair