

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
11 JULY, 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council, held at County Hall, Mold on Wednesday 11 July, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor M.G. Wright (Chairman)

Councillors: P.J. Curtis, C.J. Dolphin, V. Gay, C. Hinds, J. Johnson, C. Legg, N.M. Matthews and P. Shotton

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors G. Hardcastle for G.H. Bateman and A.I. Dunbar for A. Minshull

APOLOGY: Councillor D. Butler

CONTRIBUTORS: Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling, Director of Environment and Streetscene Business and Strategy Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillor D. Evans declared a personal interest on minute number 17.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June, 2012 had been circulated with the agenda.

Matters arising

Quarter 4 Year End Service Performance Reports

Page 2, paragraph 4, Councillor C.J. Dolphin referred to a letter which had been sent out to residents in Greenfield and emphasised that he had been referring to a previous letter during the meeting.

In response to the queries raised by Members it could not be confirmed whether the Head of Streetscene had acted on the actions identified at the previous meeting. The Director of Environment undertook to investigate and respond on the pilots for scatter rounds and flats; a visit to Connah's Quay Town Council to discuss any areas of concern; the condition of the road surface at the precinct at Connah's Quay and food collection figures.

In addition the Director also agreed to contact Torfaen County Borough Council about dog fouling enforcement; to ascertain the position in connection with the condition of the former British Steel Corporation Headquarters building at

Shotton, and pursue the figures on the efficiency of the Biomass boiler which had been requested by Councillor C.J. Dolphin.

Councillor P.J. Curtis raised the issue of car parking charges. The Director advised that a survey on usage was being carried out with a view to completion before the Summer recess. He reported that a seminar on car parking charges would be organised in early Autumn.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman; and
- (b) That the Director of Environment investigates the issues above and responds accordingly.

17. NORTH WALES RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT

The Director of Environment introduced a report to update on progress of the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project's (NWRWTP) procurement process.

The Director provided background information and advised that it was a complex procurement process where due consideration needed to be given to all matters by both the Partnership and the bidders. He advised that eight bidders had originally been invited to submit their outline solution(s). Following evaluation by a range of technical, legal, financial officers and advisors, the Joint Committee had decided to take three bidders to the next stage of the procurement process to submit detailed solutions. An additional stage had been included in the procurement process and the participants were instructed to submit a road and rail based solution for the Project. The bidders submitted full detailed proposals on 5 April 2012.

The Director gave an overview of the key considerations as detailed in the report and advised that one of the main issues for the Project was the range of waste related targets which challenged Welsh authorities. The Welsh Government (WG) had made it clear that future strategic direction and resources would be directed towards local authority policies based on high levels of recycling and composting and low levels of land-filling. However, there would remain significant levels of residual waste which must be disposed of through sustainable technologies. Penalties would be incurred if the Council failed to meet the targets levied.

Members were informed that the Joint Committee meeting to consider the bidders' detailed solutions received on 5 April 2012 was currently being set and more information on the proposed site and technology would be provided in the next update report.

Councillor J.M. Johnson asked what residual waste consisted of. The Director of Environment explained that it was defined as matter in the waste stream prior to recycling. He continued that there was no reason why the Authority could not achieve 70% recycling although there was further work to be done to inform the general public of what could be recycled.

Councillor D. Evans sought further information on tender documentation. The Director advised that the WG was technology neutral and that no guidelines or restrictions had been imposed. The Authority would be working with the WG to develop the best possible solution for North Wales.

Councillor W.P. Shotton referred to the environmental impact of air quality. The Director commented on a meeting which had recently been held to consider baseline levels of air quality in local areas and advised that a contract for the future monitoring of air quality would be set up.

In response to a query concerning industrial and toxic waste raised by Councillor P.J. Curtis the Director confirmed that it would not form part of the residual waste.

Councillor A.P. Shotton commented on the need to consider how best to represent the concerns of residents around waste treatment and air quality and particulate matter.

Councillor C. Hinds made reference to the requirement for a licence and asked for further information on its use. The Director explained that an appropriate licence was required for everything that went into the facility which would include a mixture of products.

Councillor N.M. Matthews advised that the Project Team was addressing many of the concerns raised by Members and bringing to resolution. She suggested that it would be helpful if a seminar was arranged to refresh the knowledge of returning Members and to inform new Members, which addressed the wider issues. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste and Recycling put a caveat that this might be a full Council event

Councillor D. Evans commented on the possibility of rail being used as part of the service to transport waste to the main facility and asked that consideration be given to the impact on residents whose properties were situated in close proximity to the railway lines.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That a seminar be arranged to refresh the knowledge of returning Members and to inform new members of the wider issues concerning the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project's procurement process.

18. WINTER MAINTENANCE

The Director of Environment introduced a report to advise Members on the extent of winter maintenance operations over the 2011-12 winter season and the performance of the Council's new Winter Maintenance policy during the period.

The Director reported that in comparison to previous years the 2011/12 season had been relatively mild and there were only two minor snow events, however, the number of gritting turnouts for ice prevention had been 65. Due to the relatively mild conditions there had been no difficulties in obtaining rocksalt and the strategic stocks held in the County by the Council and Welsh Government were not required and would be stored for future use. He advised that the Service had made a £245K saving on the winter budget last year which would be held in a special contingency fund for future Winter maintenance. The Director reported on the areas of Service which had been subjected to the Policy review and the actions taken during the 2011-12 winter period.

The Chair expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Committee to the Director of Environment and all his team for the hard work, progress, and achievements gained in Service delivery.

Councillor C.J. Dolphin commented on the Tan y Felin road in Greenfield and asked if this could be designated as a Priority 2 route. He also referred to the distribution of bags of salt to local residents last Winter and asked when this would be provided again. The Streetscene Business and Strategy Manager responded to the matters raised and explained that distribution of salt bags would resume at the end of September 2012.

Councillor P.J. Curtis commented on the matter of personal liability for individuals clearing snow. The Director of Environment referred to the legal advice previously given and explained that persons would not be held liable if they treated a road. He suggested that the issue be revisited and legal advice recirculated to Members of the Committee for information.

In response to a query raised by Councillor G. Hardcastle concerning salt bins the Streetscene Business and Strategy Manager advised that all salt bins were regularly inspected. It was suggested and agreed that a letter be sent to Town and Community Councils to ask for confirmation that all salt bins were still in situ. In answer to a further query raised by Councillor Hardcastle about the provision of sandbags to prevent flooding, Officers advised that there was a proactive response by the Service to deliver sandbags to areas liable to flooding.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That a full review of the Winter Maintenance service be undertaken after the 2013-14 winter season;
- (c) That the legal advice on the lack of personal liability for persons clearing snow be revisited and circulated to Members of the Committee for information;
- (d) That a letter be sent to Town and Community Councils to ask for confirmation that all salt bins are still in situ; and

- (e) That the Director of Environment and all staff involved in winter maintenance be thanked for their hard work and achievements.

19. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. He commented on the Workshop which had been held on 3 July 2012 to determine the Committee's forward work programme for the coming year and advised that the minutes of the Workshop and draft programme would be provided to the meeting of the Committee on 12 September 2012 in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

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

- Quarterly Performance Reporting
- Town Centre Action Planning

The Committee also agreed that an additional item on Hanson/Castle Cement would be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its meeting scheduled for 12 September 2012. It was further agreed that the Interim Head of Public Protection and Chief Regeneration Officer would be invited to present their areas of service delivery in the Quarterly Performance reporting.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

20. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting began at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.10 a.m.

21. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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Chairman