

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 NOVEMBER 2023

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 14 November 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Bernie Attridge, Alasdair Ibbotson, and Sam Swash (as observers)

APOLOGY: Councillor Dave Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy)

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 Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Highway Network Manager, Fleet & Contract Manager, Service Delivery Manager Streetscene, Enterprise and Regeneration Manager; Climate Change Project Officer; Operations Manager Recycling, and Social Economy Development Lead Officer

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

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023, were submitted.

Accuracy

Councillor Mike Peers referred to minute 34 - Budget 2024/25 – Stage 2 and asked that the questions and suggestions raised be made available as part of the minutes. The Facilitator advised that the minutes were a summary of the proceedings, but that she would make further enquiries with regard to the recording of the questions and answers raised.

Subject to the above, the minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved by Councillor David Coggins-Cogan and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam.

RESOLVED:

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

40. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report. She gave an update on the items for the next meeting of the Committee on 12 December 2023, and reported on the proposed changes to the items scheduled for future consideration.

Members were invited to raise any further items they wished to include on the Programme. Councillor Richard Lloyd requested that an item on the new 20mph speed limit be included and how they could put forward further roads for 30mph speed limits. In response, the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) advised that the process for requesting further exceptions was due to be published in the coming days and further communication would be issued to members.

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator referred to the Action Tracking report and advised that an item on Enforcement had been scheduled onto the Forward Work Programme for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 5 March 2024.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That subject to the above amendment 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

41. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE UPDATE

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager presented the report to provide an update on social enterprise activity, achievements and future priorities. He provided background information and advised that Audit Wales had recently completed a review of support for the social enterprise sector by Welsh local authorities. The report presented a proposed response to the Audit Wales report recommendations; a self-assessment exercise undertaken by the Council using the Audit Wales template; and a revised Social Enterprise Action Plan which reflected any areas identified for improvement. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Mike Peers concerning the post of the specialist social enterprise business advisor, the areas of improvement identified through self-assessment as summarised on page 33-52 of the report, and the role of sponsorship officers to promote the work of social enterprise. The Social Enterprise Development Officer gave a brief overview of how the Stakeholder Group operated.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Dan Rose regarding investment in social enterprises and explained that the Council did not generally invest funds directly in social enterprises.

Councillor Paul Johnson referred to page 60 of the report, and gave an update on progress on item 4.1 - Review procurement strategy to enable social enterprises to compete for contracts with the Local Authority in line with new guidelines as they are developed and released.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft response to the Audit Wales report '*A missed opportunity*' – *Social Enterprises* be supported; and
- (b) That the draft Social Enterprise Action Plan be supported.

42. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager presented a report to provide an update on the development of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Programme and the selection of projects to receive a grant award from the Flintshire Shared Prosperity funding allocation. He provided background information and advised that the report provided an update on the allocation of SPF funds to projects and what the expected outcomes of the programme were for Flintshire communities. In addition, the report sets out recommendations for how the residual SPF funding and any unallocated funding arising during the delivery of the Programme should be allocated.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager reported on the key points as detailed in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Mike Peers the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager outlined the role and membership of the Economic Recovery Group. In response to the further query raised by Councillor Peers the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager clarified that the total value of the Programme was £12.7m.

Councillor David Coggins-Cogan made suggestions for improvement on the formatting of the report. He also raised questions on P69, para 1.17 and

sought clarification of the term “responsive to changes in project performance and to decisions by the UK Government about the use of funding” in the first sentence. He sought further clarification regarding section 1.18 “Deallocation – the Council and the regional administrative body will closely monitor projects and will encourage project sponsors to decommit money from their projects where they do not have a clear plan to spend all of it”. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager responded to the comments and questions raised by Councillor Coggins-Cogan.

In response to a question from Councillor Bernie Attridge the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager reported on the funding for projects received from the Welsh Government.

Councillor Roy Wakelam moved the recommendations in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Mike Peers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in developing the SPF programme both regionally and locally be noted; and
- (b) That the approach to allocating any residual SPF money, and the proposed delegated authority to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy, to operate this approach and manage changes within the projects approved, be supported.

43. COUNCIL CARBON FOOTPRINT UPDATE 2022/23

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) introduced the report to provide an update on the Council’s latest carbon footprint data following submission to the Welsh Government. He advised that the report also provided explanation as to why emissions had changed, as well as noting any improvements or difficulties relating to data and methodology. The report concludes with a brief recommendation to investigate the use of digital technologies such as Microsoft Power BI to improve data quality for greater emissions management and reduce the time spent by staff collecting the data. The report also referred to the key considerations for the Climate Change Strategy review in 2024/25, in particular baseline emissions and targets for Supply Chain and targets for Mobility and Transport.

The Climate Change Project Officer presented the report and reported on the main considerations as detailed. He advised that the Carbon Emission Update 2022/23 which was appended to the report presented the results of the 2022/23 calculation while comparing them against figures from the Council’s baseline year of 2018/19; in this case showing a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2022/23.

The Climate Change Project Officer responded to the questions and comments by Councillor Coggins-Cogan on discrepancies in the data provided in the Carbon Emission Update, Government investment, renewable energy generation, and methodology.

The Climate Change Project Officer responded to the further questions and suggestions for improvement made by Councillor Mike Peers. Councillor Peers asked if the results of the Travel Survey could be shared with the Committee and a breakdown of renewable energy by percentage – wind and landfill grant, and resource implications.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) responded to the further questions and comments raised by Councillor Bernie Attridge concerning the Travel Survey and gave an assurance that Council employees would be encouraged to undertake the survey to achieve a good overall response. He said the results of the survey would be provided to the Committee and also to Cabinet and the Climate Change Committee

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the progress made in the past year to improve data collection for the Council's carbon footprint be supported.

44. LOCAL ENERGY PLAN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) presented the report. He provided background information and advised that following the endorsement of the North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan, and commencement of the Local Area Energy Planning in early 2023, the report provided an update on the development of Flintshire's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). The Chief Officer referred to the main points as detailed in the report and advised that a further update would be provided to the Committee and Cabinet early next year.

Following discussion the Chief Officer agreed to the request from Councillor Coggins-Cogan to provide context around the statistics provided in the report to assist Members' understanding of the figures provided in future reports.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Roy Wakelam and seconded by Councillor Ian Hodge.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the progress made in the development of the Local Area Energy Plan for Flintshire be supported.

45. WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION ON UNADOPTED AND PRIVATE ROADS

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced the report to present proposals for a new policy for waste and recycling collections for properties located on private or unadopted roads. She provided background information and advised that the report gave an overview of the recently commissioned review of waste and recycling rounds and associated risk

assessments, specifically focused on properties located on private and unadopted roads. The report proposed changes for some properties to protect employees from injury and prevent risk of spending unnecessary money on vehicle repairs, maintenance, and damage caused where roads had fallen into disrepair. The report detailed the conditions that will need to be met for the private or unadopted road to be a suitable standard for waste and recycling collections to continue to take place from the property boundary.

The Service Delivery Manager reported on the key considerations as detailed in the report and gave a presentation which covered the following main points:

- risk review of waste and recycling collections on unadopted roads
- 586 sites assessed and rated as red, amber, green
- 1057 properties assessed as amber or red that could be impacted by the new policy
- next steps
- conclusion

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson, speaking as an observer on behalf of the residents in his Ward, raised a number of objections to the proposals in the report and urged the Committee to vote against the recommendations. The Chief Officer responded to the comments raised and emphasised the need to ensure a safe working environment for waste collection crews.

In response to comments from the Chair the Chief Officer agreed that the risk assessments of roads in individual areas could be shared with the relevant Ward Member if required.

Councillor Bernie Attridge spoke in support of the proposals.

Councillors Dan Rose, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Chris Dolphin, and David Coggins-Cogan, expressed a number of concerns and commented that further work and consultation was required. Officers responded to the questions and points raised and explained that safety and collaboration was crucial to the proposals and the individual circumstances relevant in each area.

Councillor Mike Peers proposed that an all-Member workshop be arranged to assist Members to consider the proposals in further detail and review the draft policy. This was agreed by the Chief Officer and she also reiterated that a list of the unadopted and private roads could be provided to Members whose wards were affected by the proposals.

Councillor Peers also proposed that the recommendations in the report be amended as follows:

1. That the Committee notes the risks posed and that safety was paramount for all Streetscene employees; and
2. That the Committee supports, in principle, a proposed new policy for collections on unadopted and private roads and supports the establishment of criteria for assessing all roads and their conditions;

3. That the Committee notes that a reasonable and suitable indemnity agreement may be considered for acceptable roads;
4. That the Committee recommends that a workshop be arranged for all Members to review the draft policy;
5. That a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

The above proposals were seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd and when put to the vote were carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the risks posed and that safety was paramount for all Streetscene employees;
- (b). That the Committee supports, in principle, a proposed new policy for collections on unadopted and private roads and supports the establishment of criteria for assessing all roads and their conditions;
- (c) That the Committee notes that a reasonable and suitable indemnity agreement may be considered for acceptable roads;
- (d) That the Committee recommends that a workshop be arranged for all Members to review the draft policy; and
- (e) That a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

46. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL OPERATOR LICENCE

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) introduced the report. She provided background information and advised that the report provided an update on progress of the action plan following an internal audit of the Council's Operator's (O') Licence conducted in April 2021. A follow-up audit in May 2023 highlighted that reasonable progress in implementing the agreed actions was being made and key controls were in place, but some refinement of the addition of controls was required which would enhance the control environment. The follow-up audit report gave a reasonable (amber/green) assurance level and identified that key objectives could be better achieved with some relatively minor adjustments, and key controls were generally operating effectively.

The Highway Network Manager reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report. He responded to the questions raised by Councillor David Coggins-Cogan regarding the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), the national average pass rate for HGV and MOTs, and controls around the O' Licence. The Highway Network Manager also responded to the further questions raised by Councillor Richard Lloyd regarding the O' Licence, operating centres, and the CPC.

The Highway Network Manager introduced the recently appointed Fleet & Contract Manager, who introduced himself to the Committee with some details relating to his background and his impression of the role in his first few months of employment with the Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the ongoing working arrangements within Fleet Services and the actions undertaken to control the operational risk to the Council and ensure compliance with the undertakings required for the Operator's Licence be supported.

47. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 2.25 p.m.)

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Chair