

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 MARCH 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 13 March 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Joe Johnson, Colin Legg, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

APOLOGY: Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Patrick Heesom and Mike Peers attended as observers

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside; Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation); Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); and Transportation & Logistics Manager

Mr. Askar Sheibani (Chair of Deeside Business Forum) and Highway Strategy Manager for minute number 63

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were submitted.

Accuracy

Minute number 54: In the first line of the second paragraph where Councillor Peers had spoken in support of Reason 1, Councillor Gay said that the words 'rather than' should be replaced with 'and'.

Minute number 56: In the first line of the third paragraph, Councillor Dolphin clarified his view that the charges should not be standardised across all car parks in Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

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

63. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Councillor Carolyn Thomas introduced the report which gave an update on the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy for the whole of Flintshire. She thanked the team for working with Welsh Government (WG) to secure capital funding to support schemes within the Strategy which aimed to provide a long-term sustainable transport solution by integrating all modes of transport with links across the county and wider region.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) and the Transportation & Logistics Manager gave a presentation covering the following:

- Key Drivers - Why Now?
- A Fully Integrated Solution
- Cycleway and Active Travel
- Highway Improvements
- Bus Network
- Rail Improvements
- Linking Flintshire
- Progress To Date

The Strategy had evolved from the Deeside Plan to extend across the county and its alignment with the North East Wales Metro system (being promoted by WG) had helped to attract capital funding. Whilst some of the key drivers related to tackling congestion on Deeside Industrial Park (DIP) as the main employment hub in that area, the overall project aimed to establish links to key employment sites from residential areas throughout Flintshire. Members were encouraged to attend a workshop on 11 April 2018 on the review of public transport subsidies and development of community transport arrangements.

The Committee was introduced to Mr. Askar Sheibani (Chair of Deeside Business Forum) who spoke about the economic importance of the DIP within the region and the aim to increase connectivity with other areas of Flintshire. He praised the innovative approach taken by the Council and its achievements to date.

During discussion, Members commended the progress which had been made and the commitment to create links for accessing employment.

Councillor Shotton asked about timescales for the rail/road/bus hub. The Chief Officer advised that WG had confirmed funding for the new buses which were expected to be operational by October. Whilst funding and land was available, operational arrangements would need to be determined. The provision for rail was the most aspirational aspect and options would be discussed by a joint working group with WG.

In welcoming the Strategy, Councillor Dolphin felt that the report lacked detail, particularly on the benefits to residents in the west side of Flintshire. His concerns about congestion problems around the Lloc/Caerwys junction on the A55 were noted. The Chief Officer acknowledged that the report did not reflect the level of work done to date but he explained that the project was expanding to other areas. The total cost could not be estimated at this stage as the project comprised of a number of evolving schemes with some meeting criteria for Active Travel funding.

Councillor Bibby called for representations to be made to WG about the impact of reduced bus services in rural areas. In response to comments about DIP, it was explained that the results of a recent survey to ascertain working shift patterns would help inform the new bus timetables. On the improvements to bus journeys through Shotton High Street, full consultation would take place with residents and businesses along the Deeside corridor. On the proposed Park & Ride facility from Penyffordd to DIP, the development of the Quality Partnership would ensure that links extended to other areas such as Mold and Buckley. The Chief Officer agreed to pass concerns about anti-social behaviour on cycle paths to North Wales Police.

Councillor Evans suggested options for links to Zone 4 of DIP and alternative routes for Shotton High Street. The Chief Officer noted the safety concerns about traffic on Shotton High Street and the suggestion for sensors to be installed to alert heavy goods vehicles approaching the railway bridge. In relation to Deeside Parkway, it was noted that the Council was working with the designer of the Red Route on the development of the proposed new railway station.

In response to comments from Councillor Owen Thomas, Mr. Sheibani spoke about engaging with businesses on the DIP to encourage employees to use public transport links.

Councillor Dunbobbin referred to the potential to use the river and also for the Council to establish its own company to provide bus services. In response to queries, officers explained that applications for grant funding would link to legislative duties, and an update would be sought from Network Rail on the electrification of the Wrexham to Bidston railway line.

Following comments on Hawarden Airport, Councillor Butler informed Members that the prospect of commercial flights was unlikely at this stage. He went on to say that whilst some of the transport solutions would benefit the Mersey Dee Alliance, the project was primarily about inclusivity: improving access to employment sites and addressing recruitment and retention issues.

Councillor Gay felt it would be useful to view the map in detail and she raised issues about access from Saltney to Deeside. The Transportation & Logistics Manager gave assurance that officers were looking at wider issues and were aware of pinch points. On the proposed Park & Ride at Penyffordd, it was explained that land was already available and that other sites would be explored.

When asked by Councillor Bateman about the cycleway route from Mold to Broughton, the Chief Officer said that demand was recognised and that options

were being explored to enable a consultant to provide costings. A railway station near Broughton with a Park & Ride facility in Chester were being considered and a future report would be brought back to the Committee.

The Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) responded to a number of comments from Members and referred to the fit between the Strategy and the Local Development Plan.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation to all those involved in what he described as an exciting project for Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the work on Flintshire County Council's Integrated Transport solution and its links to the wider North East Wales Metro plans by Welsh Government.

Following the item, the Chairman announced a five minute adjournment.

64. QUARTER 3 COUNCIL PLAN 2017/18 MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officers (Planning & Environment) and (Streetscene & Transportation) presented the monitoring report on Quarter 3 of the Council Plan 2017/18 for the 'Green Council' priority which was relevant to the Committee. Members' attention was drawn to areas such as the identification of the Local Development Plan preferred strategy and options for improving recycling performance at household recycling sites.

In response to comments from Councillor Shotton, the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) advised that discussions were taking place on the possible use of recycled plastics mixed with bitumen that could be applied to surfaces on some roads, however this method was not yet proven. Flintshire's £1.427m allocation of Welsh Government funding for road maintenance schemes together with the Council's capital allocation would need to be carefully allocated to provide maximum benefits. All roads had been surveyed to develop a programme which would be shared with the Committee.

Following comments from Councillor Evans, it was explained that road and weather conditions determined whether it was cost-effective for pothole repairs to be sealed.

Councillor Gay reported a number of issues in her ward including fly-tipping at the household recycling centre in Saltney and the loss of bus services at Boundary Lane. The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) said that options for community transport arrangements would be shared at the forthcoming workshop and he urged Members to report road surface problems to the respective area supervisor.

Councillor Hinds asked if more could be done to publicise bus timetables where service changes had occurred. The Transportation & Logistics Manager said

that the team were working with Town and Community Councils to help raise awareness amongst residents. She went on to respond to a question from Councillor Bateman on the disposal of buses following the liquidation of GHA Coaches and advised that funding was being invested back into transport arrangements.

During discussion on staffing arrangements, the Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) reported that Derrick Charlton was now the lead officer on public footpaths and that a joint approach to the Local Access Forum was being explored with Wrexham.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 3 Council Plan 2017/18 Quarter 3 monitoring report to monitor under performance be noted.

65. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme and gave a reminder of the transport workshop on 11 April to which Councillor Hinds submitted her apologies. On the items to be scheduled, the Facilitator explained that the site visit to Parc Adfer would be rescheduled at an appropriate time.

As requested by Councillor Evans, officers agreed to schedule the report on Enforcement and Environmental Care for the April meeting which was to be held at Greenfield Valley Heritage Park. It was also agreed that Members would be invited to take a tour of the site at 9.30am before the start of the meeting at 10am.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be amended;
- (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.

66. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 12.45pm)

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Chairman