

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 FEBRUARY 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held remotely on Tuesday, 8 February 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Rosetta Dolphin (Chair)

Councillors: Sean Bibby, David Evans, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Andy Hughes

SUBSTITUTIONS:

Councillor Martin White (for Councillor Cindy Hinds)

ALSO PRESENT:

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Chris Bithell (Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection),
Councillor Derek Butler (Cabinet Member for Economic Development),
Councillor Glyn Banks (Cabinet Member for Streetscene),
Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy),
Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation),

For minute number 64 - Programme Manager

For minute number 65 and 66 - Regulatory Services Manager

For minute number 67- Integrated Transport Unit Manager

For minute number 68 - Highway Network Manager

For minute number 69 - Access & Natural Environment Manager

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

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on the 9 November 2021 and 11 January 2022 were presented for consideration.

9 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 were approved, as moved by Councillor Paul Shotton, and seconded by Councillor Joe Johnson

11 January 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 were approved, as moved by Councillor Paul Shotton, and seconded by Councillor Joe Johnson

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the 9 November 2021 and 11 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

63. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the last Forward Work Programme for the current municipal year for consideration. The meeting scheduled for the 8th of March at 10.00 am had been changed to a Briefing Session on the Agile System. The next meetings of the committee were scheduled for the 7th of June and 5th July.

Moving to the Action Tracking report the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator provided an update on the ongoing actions and confirmed that the Town Centre Markets item for Flint and Buckley would remain on the Action Tracking report. The Highway Network Manager agreed to speak to Councillor Thomas following the meeting regarding his concerns on the review of grass cutting procedures.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson asked if an item on street markings could be included in the Forward Work Programme. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) suggested speaking to Councillor Hutchinson following the meeting to discuss the locations causing concern. Councillor George Hardcastle seconded Councillor Hutchinson's request for this to be included in the forward work programme.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme, as amended, be noted.
- (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 progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

64. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

In presenting this report the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that the authority had made the decision to become a carbon neutral council in 2019. Alex Ellis had been appointed as the Programme Manager to develop the Climate Change Strategy. This report would be presented to Cabinet next week and following that to County Council.

The Programme Manager reported that in 2019 Welsh Government (WG) had called for all public sector authorities to become carbon neutral by 2030. In December 2019 Cabinet resolved to develop a Climate Change Strategy setting out the Council proposals to become carbon neutral council by 2030. The Council had delivered decarbonisations activities for several years which included energy and renewable energy schemes. The Climate Change Strategy set out the Council's objectives to move towards the net zero goal and she provided an overview of the engagement undertaken and feedback received. Referring to the Strategy she provided information on the baseline emissions figures, highlighted the work undertaken to date and the objectives proposed to reduce direct emissions through the county. There would be financial implications both in capital and revenue and further exploration of the actions within each theme were required to understand the resource implications. The Council had utilised several funding streams and it was expected that additional funding would be provided by WG.

The Programme Manager referred to the Strategy and highlighted the following points: -

- At point 6.7 on page 53 - information on the baseline carbon emissions on the 2018/19 emissions data. She confirmed in 2021 there was a 17% reduction on that baseline.
- At point 7.1 on page 55 - the chart predicted the reductions which the actions could achieve but that there was still a 20,000 CO2 gap by 2030. She explained that measures may not currently be available and that this would be monitored and considered when the Strategy was reviewed in 2 years' time. Offsetting emissions with tree planting was outlined and the Council would need to prioritise how land assets were set aside for this.
- At point 7.10 on page 57 - this highlighted the interim targets within the direct carbon emission themes.
- At point 8.1 on page 58 - a summary was provided of the key aims within each of the themes.
- Biodiversity was integrated within the Strategy, with consideration given to climate change and de-carbonisation. Information was provided on how these were incorporated and the training that would be required.

The Programme Manager explained that by achieving these goals the Council could meet its targets tackling the Climate Emergency and Net Zero Wales by 2050. The Council would also achieve its goals within the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and Environment Wales Act. She finished by saying that this report would be presented to Cabinet next week and work was being undertaken in each theme to identify the current status and resource implications.

Responding to a question from the Chair regarding target setting the Programme Manager confirmed that the reduction predictions were based on actions already being carried out. As the Council had been proactive with the easier to fix actions having already been completed it left the more complex actions such as improvements to the fleet. This was dependant on WG legislation and resources and advances in the technology to enable this to proceed.

Councillor Owen Thomas asked if the new schools and extensions to existing schools had achieved the 100% carbon neutral target. In response the Programme Manager confirmed that following the new mandate which came into place in January, moving forward new scheduled developments would be required to meet those targets. She confirmed the focus was to make existing buildings more energy efficient. The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) confirmed that schools had been retro fitted with photovoltaics panels to ensure they were more energy efficient. The new school in Mynydd Isa would be net zero and driven by WG funding.

Referring to the Chair's point on targets the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) confirmed there was a bigger focus closer to 2030 because a lot of the targets were around procurement. Influencing the supply chain and the procurement of goods and services was difficult and would take time to establish. but the potential gains were significant.

In response to the question from Councillor Patrick Heesom on land banking the Programme Manager explained the priority for the Council was to reduce carbon emissions and that using pieces of land to counteract this would need consideration. When land became available the Council would have to determine if this could be identified for use for tree planting for carbon sequestration to counteract emissions.

In response to a question from Councillor Vicky Perfect the Programme Manager confirmed the Urban and Woodland Tree Planting Strategy would be reviewed to identify what land could carry carbon sequestration project. Consideration had to be given to the quality of the land, the landscape and was it sympathetic to the surrounding area. The Natural Environment team would ensure that it was right for that piece of land.

The Cabinet member for Planning & Public Protection firstly commented that land sales formed part of the Council's Capital Programme. He then referred to the resolutions achieved to deal with the issue of phosphates and said a plan and

commitment was already in place for tree planting, as the county had a low tree cover. The issue of Ash Dieback also had to be considered. For the Council to achieve this there had been engagement with other organisations.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene agreed saying it was a collective responsibility across the board for everyone. He said holding meetings online instead of meeting at County Hall went some way to saving carbon.

Councillor Sean Bibby spoke as Chair of the Climate Change Programme Board and thanked the Programme Manager, Chief Officer, and member colleagues for all their hard work.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Sean Bibby and seconded by Councillor Patrick Heesom

RESOLVED:

- (a) That progress made in delivering carbon reduction measures to date is acknowledged.
- (b) That the Climate Change Strategy for 2022 – 2030 and its aims therein be endorsed.

65. GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION TO PROMOTE REPAIR AND REUSE INITIATIVES

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) outlined the proposal for the joint funding bid for the re-use project with Refurbs Flintshire which had been submitted to the Landfill Disposal Tax Community Scheme via the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. As this funding was not available for the Council support had been provided to enable Refurbs Flintshire to submit a bid. This fell under the Waste Minimisation and Diversion from Landfill to encourage reuse and recycling.

The Regulatory Services Manager reported that this was first looked at in 2019 and that following discussions with residents and comments made at Housing Recycling Centres (HRC) sites it was being reviewed. There were many items being disposed of which could be re-used and recycled. Charities had been approached to attend the HRC sites, speak to members of the public to divert good quality items from being thrown away. Several charities were keen to get involved but then the pandemic struck so this was halted. Discussions were now being held with the charities to move this forward and proposals for the pilot, firstly with Refurbs, being developed. She referred members to 1.05 in the report which detailed the proposals and arrangements for the storage container. These items would be collected from each site and delivered to a central hub operated by the Council. They would then be sorted into bulk lots such as toys, textiles, bric-a-brac etc for the Charities to sell. A

library would also be created at the hub for recorded media and books which could be loaned. It was envisaged that once this was up and running donations would be delivered directly to the hub rather than the HRC sites. There were also proposals for kerbside collections of textiles in the first instance. If the funding was successful there would be a publicity campaign with the volunteers from Refurbs and other charities working at the HRC sites to engage and promote this with members of the public. She provided an overview of the items that would be focused on for this pilot.

Referring to the grant funding the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that there was significant competition for this with only one successful applicant per year. The bid had been made as bold and ambitious as possible to ensure it stood out. If this bid was unsuccessful work would continue to pursue and identify any additional funding. If successful, the project would commence in April 2022 until March 2023 dependent upon the funding. Consideration had to be given for the infrastructure, building and vehicles but that the key focus was to promote this and raise awareness. There were benefits for the charities and the public would be less likely to throw these reusable items away. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) commented that once the public were aware of this service, they would be less likely to dispose of these at the HRC sites, thus saving good quality items from landfill. Consideration also had to be given to the environment permitting and discussions were being held with Natural Resources Wales to ensure we were compliant with the legislation.

The Chair commented that this was an excellent idea and asked if small electrical items would be included and was the textile service a free service. In response the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed electrical items would not be accepted in the first instance but if there was a demand this could be looked at in the future. The textile collection services would be a free service in the first instance under the grant funding. There would be a better understanding following the pilot and if this was successful the service would have to be free.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene commented that this was an excellent initiative with a great partner in Refurbs. He wished the team the best of luck with the bids and thanked the staff at the HRC sites for their passion and hard work.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development commented that this had been done before working with Refurbs. He felt because of the pandemic a lot of items would have already been disposed and said that some charities were quite picky with what they would accept.

The Chair commented that there was so much scope for this especially engaging with retired people to pass on their skills to the younger age group.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) agreed with Councillor Butler's point and that this was not something new but grant funding had been awarded in previous years to similar projects. It was hoped the bid would be successful but there was competition with the whole of Wales.

The Regulatory Services Manager reported on the Repair and Reuse Centre and Cafe in the old HRBC site in Buckley. Circular Economy funding was obtained for this, and the café supported the work delivering the workshops and classes on upskilling and repurposing items. She referred to the skills of the volunteers and reported on a publicity campaign being launched to see if other retired people would consider joining the team to teach younger people how to rescue and re-use these items. This would be a hub in the community.

The Chair suggested that information be sent to all members for them to circulate within their wards. This was agreed.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) commented that it was hoped to have similar centres in all towns and larger communities. This would also count towards the Council's Target 70 recycling rate.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson commented that this was excellent and there were discussions on having a garden centre in Buckley and that one in every larger community would be great.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors George Hardcastle and Joe Johnson.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted and supported the submission of a grant funding application to promote repair and reuse initiatives.

66. BULKY WASTE COLLECTIONS

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced the report which followed a request from committee in November last year. The pandemic had impacted the collection of bulky waste items and the actions and challenges Refurbs had faced were outlined in the report.

The Regulatory Services Manager provided an overview of the bulky waste collection service which provided a way of disposing items too large for kerbside collections. An overview of items described as bulky waste was provided. Refurbs Flintshire collected items which could be re-used, restored, and refurbished, then sold at good prices in their showroom in Flint. A record was kept of these items which linked with our recycling performance and Target 70. Appendix 1 listed items collected by Refurbs, but she confirmed that home improvement waste such as kitchens, bathrooms, garden upgrades were not able to be recycled using this service. The residents were asked to dispose of this waste appropriately via an approved waste contractor. White goods such as refrigerators were collected free of charge by the Council.

The Regulatory Services Manager then referred to the timeframes for collections by Refurbs which was normally carried out with 6 working days with items placed within the boundary of their property. Support was provided by Refurbs to those who required assistance. There was a charge of £40 for up to 5 items and £5 for each additional item with 10 items taken away for £65. There were reductions for those residents on benefits to £20 and £5 for each additional item and this could be arranged twice a year. These charges were reviewed within the Fees and Charges Policy on an annual basis.

Section 1.06 in the report outlined the number of requests and tonnages collected but that during the pandemic this service was suspended and the HRC sites were closed. This unfortunately enabled services such as “man in a van” on social media to thrive but these individuals were not regulated, and residents had no idea where the waste would end up. Residents had been encouraged to ask questions on where the items were being disposed.

The team at Refurbs had a backlog of bookings following the pandemic and if the date was too long for residents to wait, they were asked to use a registered service for disposal. Refurbs also had reduced numbers of staff, due to self-isolation or with restricted ways of working and recruitment was also an issue as this was a social enterprise. Residents were informed of the date the goods would be collected and the staff kept them updated. The time for collection had been extended to 10 or 15 working days. Currently there were still slight delays but moving forward the service was back on track.

Councillor George Hardcastle asked if the information on bulky waste charges in section 1.05 could be sent to all Members for information. This was agreed.

Councillor Sean Bibby thanked the officers for providing detailed explanations regarding items for collection. He referred to his ward and asked if there was flexibility regarding terraced properties or flats with no outside space or communal areas and he was concerned that these could be seen as flying tipping. He also referred to the cost of £40 for up to 5 items was good value for money but for one item that was expensive. In response the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed if residents made it clear when making the booking that there was no outside space, the Refurbs staff would call and provide those residents with a date for collection rather than leave the item outside. The Bulky Waste Collection team and Enforcement team work closely with each other and would be aware of items left for collection. Regarding the fee the £40 this was to cover the cost of providing the vehicle and two individuals to collect the item. This could be looked at when the Fees and Charges were reviewed.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development commented publicity should be used as a selling point was that these items were going to be re-used. The man in a van, although undercutting the Council, there was no information on where the item would end up or whether it would be recycled.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) agreed saying that there was a problem with the “man in a van” type of trader. The publicity campaign should remind residents that they had to ensure that these alternative providers were licenced to carry and dispose of that waste correctly. The Regulatory Services Manager reported that the newly recruited officer in the Enforcement Team as an Environmental Improvement Coordinator who would be speaking to residents, community groups and members of town and community councils to get this message across.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene referred to the “man in a van” individuals and would like to see the legislation tightened so they had to show they were licenced on their advert. Regarding the cost of £40 he suggested that maybe residents could speak to their neighbours and club together to cover the cost but that a lot of people only pay £20. He also felt that the mattress manufacturers should be made to take responsibility for the disposal of old mattresses.

The Chair referred to a licensing committee meeting that she had attended where a scrap metal dealer had to confirm to the Council that he was paying tax to get a licence. She wondered if this could apply here.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson felt the fly tipping situation was decreasing rather than increasing which was positive.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) reported the Waste Carriers Licence was easy to obtain and cost £200. The legislation needed to be changed to include where they were intending to dispose of the waste and Natural Resources Wales were currently looking into this.

In response to the fly tipping point the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) referred to a report presented to committee in June last year. It stated that there had been an increase in fly tipping because of the “man in a van” collections as the Council’s enforcement team had not been able to go out and the HRC sites had been closed. The situation had recovered and there were less hotspots now which was positive especially with the increased capacity within the enforcement team and the employment of a new Environmental Improvement Coordinator to engage with the local community.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors George Hardcastle and Owen Thomas.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report and supported the work undertaken to maintain the bulky waste collection during the pandemic.

67. IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON PUBLIC BUS SERVICES (COMMERCIAL AND SUBSIDISED) AND THE INCREASE IN TRANSPORT OPERATING COSTS

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that the Recovery Committee at its November meeting recommended that a report should be brought to Committee. Public Transport Services had been heavily impacted by the Pandemic. This report provided an overview of what had happened, and mitigations put in place to support the operators in partnership with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

The Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) Manager explained the pandemic had severely affected school transport and public transport services across Wales. The loss of passenger numbers together with social distancing and Covid costs had added to the pressures on the services. Operators were told to suspend services with changes to guidelines and support provided to mitigate the suspended services. Welsh Government (WG) had introduced the hardship fund and an overview on this, and the concessionary fare passes was provided. The Bus Emergency Scheme was introduced in July 2020 (BES 1) and continued to maintain their income at historic levels. Flintshire was the host authority for North Wales allocating and processing that funding with the support of regional officers. WG expected operators to contribute and improve regional networks which was part of the agreement for Flintshire and across North Wales. The ITU Manager explained that BES 1.5 was introduced to assist operators to return to full service, especially considering social distancing measures when two buses would be required at school times. Ramp up funding was provided to ensure they were operational. A long-term BES 2 funding agreement with WG and TFW would be running until July 2022 unless market conditions recovered sufficiently with assessment of the funding requirement taking place over the next few months. The Bus Operators were finding it increasingly difficult to sustain services with passenger numbers declining over the last 18 months. In July 2020 the service 5 from Mold to Ellesmere Port, because of the lack of revenue, was handed back by the operator handed. As this service formed part of the Council's core network the route was sent out for procurement and came back with a threefold cost increase. The BES funding had supported that increase in cost but there was a budget pressure of £100k plus because of this. When routes were put out for procurement the operators had two options, tender on net costs or gross costs and the ITU Manager explained the difference. Most contractors used the gross contract process which put the risk back on the Council for fare revenue. The operators had also reported significant increases in their operating costs for fuel/insurance/wages, shortage of vehicle parts, loss of drivers (HGV and other roles) and training of drivers, which was also impacted. The only income the operators were getting was from the Council and WG as school trips and excursions were cancelled and not supported by BES. The public transport network was recovering but the prediction was that procurement costs in the future would be significantly higher and would be reported as an ongoing budget pressure.

The ITU Manager then provided information on the work being undertaken with the Council, TFW and WG to review the public transport for Wales and outlined their aspirations for this. She confirmed that stage 1 of the programme had been

completed and it was hoped to provide a presentation on the work being undertaken to committee in due course. She then provided information on the work of the WG Bus Reform Working Group which had a 5-year plan for bus services in Wales.

Moving on to the School Transport costs the ITU Manager explained that these had also significantly increased. In 2017 the Council introduced the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which ran for 6 years and was due to expire in 2023. An overview of how the system worked and the flexibility it provided to operators was provided. The routes were due to expire in July 2021, but because of the pandemic, they were extended to July 2022, and she outlined the three stages for procurement and budget pressures for these routes.

In response to the question from Councillor Owen Thomas on building more flexibility in the routes the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) confirmed that the Bus Reform aimed to take more control back from operators to Transport for Wales (TfW) and the Welsh Government (WG). The Council was providing comments and feedback into the Bus Network Review which was led by WG and TFW with the focus on making the bus an alternative to the car. She outlined everything that was being covered within this review with Flintshire already using the model being considered by WG in terms of a core bus network. She outlined what the Council provided regarding core services and feeder services.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene applauded the work that WG and TfW had undertaken regarding BES2 and hoped that it would be extended past July 2022 for maybe an extra year which would be appreciated.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development said that the deregulation of bus services had resulted in the situation being faced with today. He felt that national resources were required to ensure that there was an integrated transport system to take people where they wanted to go.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Joe Johnson and Patrick Heesom

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report and supported the work undertaken by the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio to maintain key services during the pandemic.
- (b) That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted how public bus services have been funded during the pandemic, the impact on service levels / passenger numbers / bus companies themselves and future proposals.
- (c) That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted how school transport services have been impacted by the pandemic, the limited

number of operators tendering for contracts and the substantial percentage increase in costs.

68. ACCESSIBLE DROPPED KERB CROSSING FOR PEDESTRIANS

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) confirmed the report was presented following a request from committee. It provided information on the requests for uncontrolled crossings and provision of tactile pavements.

The Highway Network Manager firstly referred to recent changes in the Highway Code which was provided at 1.02 of the report. He outlined the reasons and benefits for installing dropped crossings to the assist safe crossing of the highway by all road users and the standards which had to be followed. Active Travel addressed considerations from local authorities, but the delivery of the fully integrated network could take years to achieve. Dropped crossing were considered when highway improvements and maintenance schemes were carried out, and the request process was outlined in the report. There was no revenue funding for this provision and opportunities via external grant funding were explored. The Highway Network Manager then referred to the prioritisation process which was transparent, and the scoring matrix was outlined in the report.

In response to the question from Councillor George Hardcastle on the allocation of funding the Highway Network Manager explained that most requests for dropped crossings were funded through Active Travel grant funding from WG. The Active Travel core funding provided flexibility for the Council to address routes which had been identified on the Active Travel Integrated Map and the network. Also, if grant funding schemes for improvements or maintenance were made then the Council would identify any requests for dropped crossings in those areas and these would be carried out at the same time.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection referred to 1.07 on page 135 which stated it was an offence to obstruct or park on pedestrian dropped kerbs. He reported on instances of cars parking across dropped crossings in his ward and asked who was responsible for enforcement. In response the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained if they had parked on the line markings then the enforcement team would be able to act. If they were no line markings, then the Police would need to be involved as it would be classed as an obstruction. The Regulatory Services Manager reported that this was a grey area in residential areas and that the Council had no powers unless it was within a special enforcement zone when the enforcement team could issue fixed penalty notices. WG legislation would be required to enable enforcement across all areas of obstruction on dropped crossings. She confirmed that some fixed penalty notices had been issued but it was difficult as officers had to be present at the time. She asked Members to identify areas to her and she would take it back to the enforcement team to enable them to patrol those areas. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection added

that there needed to be a robust conversation with WG and the Police as these were not being enforced and were not fit for purpose if blocked by inconsiderate parking.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) confirmed there was an ongoing national review of all on street parking and footways, which included the 20 mph schemes, and obstructions of dropped crossing points. The proposals from WG were expected in 12 months' time.

In response to a question from Councillor George Hardcastle on the guidance for dropped crossings the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) confirmed that WG set the criteria for this not the Council.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Vicky Perfect.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted and supported the process for accepting and implementing requests for accessible drop kerb crossings for pedestrians.

69. FLINTSHIRE COAST PARK

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) explained that Cabinet was seeking the views of the Committee with regard the development of the coastal park.

The Access & Natural Environment Manager confirmed the Coastal Access Improvement Programme, which had commenced in 2006, had resulted in the opening of the Wales Coastal Path. Work was undertaken to establish the strategic direction for access to the foreshore with the ideas of a Coast Park and TEP Consultancy produced a prospectus in 2014. He provided an overview of the framework and the six hubs, but the detail remained on how this would be implemented, resourced and where it sat within the portfolios. Since 2014, there had been successful grant aided projects and he said the appetite was still there for development especially following the pandemic, and it was felt that the Coastal Park should be explored again, potentially taking it to a formal designated regional park. He outlined the benefits for the coastal park and what had been achieved during the last 10 years. The Prospectus would need to be revisited to understand what had changed and the company who produced this had been approached to carry out this scoping work. The Access & Natural Environment Manager reported on meetings held with officers involved in the recent work in the South Wales Valleys and he provided information on the range of topics discussed. The benefit analysis, criteria for inclusion, identification of grant funded opportunities and how this would feed into supporting the levelling up fund application, was all being considered.

Councillor Patrick Heesom wanted to ensure that this was fair and would benefit the whole county. In response the Access & Natural Environment Manager agreed saying that from Flint to Talacre to Saltney there was a fantastic resource and asset for the county. The identification of the six hubs in the 2014 prospectus and would be relooked at as part of this new scoping study. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) clarified that the Strategy document attached to the report was the same as the 2014 prospectus. This was being reviewed to ensure it was fairer and covered the whole of the coastline.

Councillor Heesom asked if this could be led by the Committee. In response the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) confirmed that the proposal would be led by the County Council collaborating with all community councils and local members along the coastline. Cabinet together with this committee would be able to scrutinise any developments which came forward which was why this had been presented for consideration.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to the Levelling Up Fund and asked if there would be a cost to businesses. He praised the excellent work carried out by the coastal rangers and referred to the work at Connah's Quay docks cutting back the undergrowth and his visit planting fruit trees with the High School pupils which was excellent.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development felt the county had undersold itself previously but with the Levelling Up funding it provided an opportunity to look at this again. There were opportunities for the coastal park and a raft of other opportunities to support the rich environment especially the industrial heritage. At 1.06 and 1.07 it outlined the proposals with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Town and Community Councils who were all involved to maximise funding streams to bring this to fruition.

Councillor Sean Bibby echoed the comments made and reported on the excellent work in his ward clearing the undergrowth. This was a fantastic report and with the Levelling Up bids it was an opportunity to protect the industrial legacy and mitigate the deprivation in a lot of these areas.

Councillor Owen Thomas referred to the AONB and felt that improvements to the paths and parking should also be factored in.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene referred to the map on page 160 and said the Point of Ayr and Talacre were the wrong way round. Referring to Talacre he commented that the train station was already in place, and it would be great if people from Liverpool and Manchester could visit Talacre and Gronant on the train. He said if the train stations were linked from Greenfield to Flint and Mostyn it would bring people to these areas using the train rather than cars. He then referred to page 169

which stated that the masterplan for Talacre and Gronant was completed in 2010 and commented that it happened a lot later.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection said there was 25 miles of coastline which was one of Flintshire's best kept secrets. There was so much to offer especially the historical sites if it was made available.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) referred to the point raised by Councillor Paul Shotton and said the link between Connah's Quay and Flint was a complex issue with work ongoing to try and find a resolution to it. The Levelling Up Fund point was being led by Niall Waller with a timeline of Spring this year. He confirmed the work to develop a Coastal Park could carry on irrespective of the Levelling Up Fund. Regarding the Coastal Park there were no current requirements for business investment, but it may come later.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Paul Shotton.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members noted the strategic direction set out in the Coast Park Prospectus and support work to develop the creation of a Regional Flintshire Coast Park.
- (b) That Cabinet welcomed the views of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and delegates authority to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development) to make minor changes to the proposals to reflect those views.

70. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.24 pm)

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Chair