

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**18 APRIL 2023**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 18 April 2023.

**PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)**

Councillors: Mike Allport, Mel Buckley, Chris Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose, and Roy Wakelam

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillor Bernie Attridge for Councillor Ian Hodge and Councillor Teresa Carberry for Councillor Ray Hughes

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Councillor Chris Bithell (Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection), Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy), Councillor David Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Enterprise and Regeneration Manager, Climate Change Programme Manager, and Regulatory Services Manager

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officers

**69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**70. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023, were submitted.

Accuracy

Page 9: Councillor Mike Peers said that the proposed development he had referred to was in the Buckley Mountain Ward and asked that the minutes be amended to correct this

Subject to the above amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate record as moved and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam and Councillor Mared Eastwood.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**71. CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

The Chair advised that item 6: Council Plan 2023-28 Development, would be brought forward

## **72. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report. He advised that an additional item on the Integrated Transport Strategy had been scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 May, and an item on the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transition Plan was scheduled for the meeting to be held on 11 July 2023. Members were invited to raise any further items they wished to include on the Programme.

The Democratic Services Manager referred to the Action Tracking report which was appended to the report and advised that work was ongoing to complete the two outstanding actions.

In response to the request by Councillor Mike Peers for an update on the issue of parking outside schools which had been considered jointly with the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) advised that work on drafting the terms of reference was in progress and a report would be submitted shortly to both the Environment & Economy, and the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committees for approval.

The recommendations in the report were moved and seconded by Councillors Dan Rose and Mike Peers.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That 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

## **73. COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28 DEVELOPMENT**

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) presented the report on the Council Plan 2023-28, Part 1 and Part 2, draft content for review and feedback prior to sign off at Cabinet.

The Chief Officer provided background information and advised that the Council Plan for 2023-28 had been reviewed and refreshed to reflect the key priorities of the Council for the five-year term of the new administration. The 'super-structure' of the Plan comprised seven priorities and relevant sub-priorities. The seven priorities take a long-term view of recovery, projects, and ambitions over the next five years. The Council Plan 2023-28 will be published in a similar format to previous years, identifying actions aimed at achieving the Well-being objectives, priorities, and sub-priorities. National and regional issues/risks which could impact on the achievement of these priorities will be identified and monitored. Part 2 of the Council Plan will be considered by the respective

Overview and Scrutiny committees to ensure full coverage of Part 1 of the Council Plan 2023-28 and its respective measures and their targets.

In co-presenting the report the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) commented on the long term strategies, ambitions, and Welsh Government priorities, and emphasised that the Plan took a long-term view of recovery over the next 5 years.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy spoke in support of the Council Plan which he said was a visionary document that supported the work of the Council up to 2028 and congratulated Officers on their work to develop the Plan. He drew attention to the importance of the new sub priority within the Council Plan to Commission a data review for rural Flintshire and hold community consultation to better understand rural community needs by March 2024..

Councillor Mike Peers referred to Appendix 1 - An overview of the Wellbeing Objectives, Priorities, Sub priorities and their definitions, and commented on the following priorities: phosphate mitigation, net zero council carbon , levelling up, rural regeneration, and town centre regeneration. Councillor Peers also referred to Appendix 2, the sub priority reducing worklessness, and the definition - work with our partners to support individuals to gain employment. Commenting on the achievement actions he asked if the definition applied to all individuals or just disadvantaged groups.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) responded to the questions and points raised by Councillor Peers. He explained that a report to update Members on progress concerning phosphate mitigation would be submitted to a future meeting of the Planning Strategy Group. He referred to the role of the Climate Change Committee and said that an action plan had been developed to address the need to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and could be provided to Members if wished. Referring to the question raised by Councillor Peers on the withdrawal of Levelling Up the Chief Officer explained that the future for Levelling Up was currently unknown but projects could be aligned if funding was made available. The Chief Officer also responded to the questions raised by Councillor Peers around rural and semi-rural regeneration, town centre regeneration, redundant buildings, and car parking, and commented on the work being undertaken on 'placemaking' plans.

Regarding the further question by Councillor Peers on the priority Economy in Appendix 2; sub-priority to reduce worklessness, the Chief Officer advised that the overall action applied to everyone but the priority was for disadvantaged groups and said the point made by Councillor Peers would be acknowledged in the revision of the draft Council Plan.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) referred to public transport in rural areas and reiterated that a report on the Integrated Transport Strategy would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 May, and was included as a sub-priority in Appendix 1.

The recommendation as set out in the report was moved by Councillor Mike Peers and seconded by Councillor Roy Wakelam.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and Part 2 documents that outline the actions, measures and risks that underpin the Priorities, Sub-Priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28 be supported.

**74. HOUSING REGENERATION GRANTS AND LOANS POLICY**

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager presented a report to review the Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy and recommend approval to Cabinet. He provided background information and advised that the report provided an update on the work of the team, sets out a series of recommended priorities for the team in the future, and proposed that the outdated Private Sector Grants and Loans Policy be replaced with a simple schedule of grants and loans available to householders in Flintshire.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager referred to the key considerations as detailed in the report and drew attention to the priorities as set out in section 1.13. The current schedule of grants and loans issued by the service was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Referring to the schedule of grants and loans available, Councillor Mike Peers asked for further information on the total amount of funding provided by the Welsh Government, the number of individual grants which had been provided to applicants, and details on the application process. He suggested that further information was needed to advise anyone interested in applying for a loan or grant on how to make an application. Councillor Peers also raised concerns that there were properties which remained unoccupied due to a delay in obtaining 'work guarantees' from developers whilst tenants were being housed in temporary accommodation.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager responded to the points raised by Councillor Peers and explained that funding from the Welsh Government for home improvement loans up to £35k in certain circumstances was available to householders and was repayable by 2030. He advised that information on the scheme was available on the Council's website and was also being promoted directly. In response to the concerns raised by Councillor Peers on the issue of 'work guarantees' the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager gave reassurance that this matter was being addressed by Officers.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved by Councillor Mared Eastwood and seconded by Councillor Dan Rose.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the update on the work of the Housing Regeneration team is noted and that the future priorities for the service be supported; and
- (b) That the grants and loans schedule be noted and the process for amendment be supported with delegated authority given to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Countryside and the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) to vary the schedule as funding

availability or requirements change.

**75. NORTH WALES ENERGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLANNING IN FLINTSHIRE**

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) introduced the report to consider and endorse adoption of the Regional Energy Strategy and Action Plan and seek support for development of the Local Area Energy Plans.

The Climate Change Programme Manager presented the report. She provided background information and referred to the North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan, and Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP), as detailed in the report. She advised that work on the LAEP commenced in January 2023, and whilst the timeline was to be confirmed it was likely that the Flintshire LAEP should be completed in December 2023. It was proposed that annual updates on progress be provided to the Climate Change Committee and Cabinet to secure effective democratic oversight of progress and to influence and decide on actions going forward. The North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan and collation of actions where Local Authorities had been identified as the Lead within the North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan were appended to the report.

Councillor Mike Peers commented on the lack of detail concerning the Flintshire LAEP in the report and referred to the proposed completion by December 2023. The Programme Manager explained that development of the Flintshire LAEP had started only recently and work was progressing on the data to develop the Plan in Flintshire and identify the internal and external stakeholders which needed to be involved. She clarified that the updates on progress referred to in section 1.11 of the report were for the Regional Plan and the LAEP.

Councillor Peers thanked the Programme Manager for the verbal update and asked that a written action plan be submitted which provided details of contacts, timelines, and progress for the Flintshire LEAP. The Programme Manager agreed to provide the information in written format as soon as available. The Chief Officer suggested that the Flintshire LAEP be included as an item on the Committee's Forward Work Programme so that a draft of the local Plan could be considered at a future meeting.

The recommendations in the report were moved and seconded by Councillors Dan Rose and Councillor Mared Eastwood.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the attached North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed; and
- (b) The commencement of Local Area Energy Planning in the County be noted.

**76. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

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

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 10.55 am)

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**Chair**