

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**9 JANUARY 2024**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 9 January 2024.

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

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

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillor Allan Marshall (for Councillor Roy Wakelam) and Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson (for Councillor Ray Hughes)

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillors Bernie Attridge and Andrew Parkhurst attended as observers

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Mike Allport and the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)

**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 Dave Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy), Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement), Councillor Mared Eastwood (Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Highway Network Manager and Operational Manager (North & Street Lighting). Service Manager (Enterprise and Regeneration)

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

**60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**61. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking report. An update was provided on the items being presented to the next meeting on the 6 February together with an overview of the items scheduled for the March, June and July meetings.

The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator then referred to the Action Tracking report and provided an update to ongoing and completed items. Members were invited to raise any further items they wished to include on the Programme.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to the minutes point on the action tracking report and reported on a conversation with the Democratic Services Manager who had confirmed that this information would be circulated shortly.

Councillor Richard Lloyd 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

**62. AMBITION NORTH WALES Q2 REPORT**

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) introduced the report which presented the Quarter 2 (July to September 2023-24) Growth Deal Performance Report. It was reported that £120m was provided by the UK and Welsh Government to support a series of capital projects. The Ambition North Wales team provided an Annual Report on progress with quarterly updates provided the Chief Officer to committee.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) referred members to point 1.4.2 in the report which outlined the changes to the projects which had dropped out. This had enabled six new projects to be invited to join the Growth Deal. Point 1.4.4 in the report included an update on the five red projects for Quarter 2 and the Chief Officer highlighted the traffic issues around the Wrexham Gateway project. He then referred to the reclamation of land within the Holyhead Harbour Project and the granting of the Harbour Revision Order by Welsh Government. It was explained that Appendix A of the report provided a brief summary of each of the projects.

Councillor Mike Peers raised several questions which were answered by the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy).

In response to the site compliance point at Warren Hall, it was explained that a Development Brief was required to set parameters for the site. He referred to the Airfields Safety Report which was received in October and had raised concerns around

the glide path of the larger aircraft going into Broughton. The report had confirmed that no earth works were required at Warren Hall which was a positive step in moving this development forward.

In response to the question on the impact of the LDP at Warren Hall, the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) confirmed that this was also a positive step forward. He outlined how the Planning Strategy Group would bring forward the supplementary Development Planning Brief for the site and would then push Welsh Government to develop this site.

In responding to the point on the RAG status against investment and risk, the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) said the risks were reflected in the summary risks profile and mostly related to obtaining consent. He referred Members to point 1.4.4 in the report which provided detail on the five project which were currently showing as red and provided more information on this.

In response to the scrutiny point the Chief Officer it was explained that Ambition North Wales were not only scrutinised by Overview & Scrutiny Committees but also by the Wales Audit Office and Auditors on behalf of the UK Government with a review undertaken every year.

In response to the comment made concerning the Welsh dates in the English version of the document, the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) agreed to feed this back to the Ambition North Wales team.

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

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee considered and noted the Quarter 2 Performance Report.

### **63. STREETLIGHTING POLICY**

The Highway Network Manager introduced Darrell Jones, the Operational Area Manager (North & Street Lighting). The report provided information on the periodic review of the Policy in line with industry and legislative changes.

The Operational Area Manager provided an overview on the Streetlighting, Traffic Signals and Associated Equipment Policy and Specifications. This was an update from the previous agreed policy and included requirements relating to adopting highway network infrastructure for the Council. Information was provided on the policy, equipment installation and standards which included street lighting, traffic signals and signs and other external items such as EV chargers and defibrillators which had not previously been included. The Policy and Specifications now included all relevant standards.

Councillor Mike Peers raised a number of questions :-

In response to the Vehicle Activated Signs question the Operational Area Manager confirmed that the 30 mph signs were currently switched off and had been covered. They were being maintained electrically and structurally but were not in use.

In response to the column and lighting assets question the Operational Area Manager reported on the lifespan of the variety of infrastructure which existed in the county. A project replacing the lanterns was undertaken a number of years ago but the issues now were with the infrastructure and columns. Information was provided on the work of the external company undertaking a rolling programme of inspections together with an explanation of the traffic signals site inspections.

In response to the question on Night Inspections it was agreed there was an error in the document and it was agreed to correct this. In response to the question by Councillor Peers for a criteria to be included in the Policy, the Operational Area Manager explained that the 10 day repair time was for inspection by the Streetscene Electricians, with the aim for the remedial works to be undertaken as quickly as possible. In some instances such as DNO (Direct Network Operators such as Scottish Power) if it was identified as a mains fault, then the information would be passed to Scottish Power who defaulted to the OFGEM Regulations with regard to the repair of that light. This was published on the Council's website and Infonet.

With regard to the part night lighting question the Operational Area Manager explained that this had been trialled on numerous occasions in areas within Flintshire and was still being undertaken in some areas. Consultations and assessments had been carried out with local members, emergency services and local groups and an outline was provided of the savings which could be achieved and areas which could be considered for part night lighting.

In response to the Dimming question the Operational Area Manager explained that this was covered under the previous policy to dim all lanterns by 30%, this excluded the vulnerable areas and CCTV areas. This provided the savings during the darker hours when less vehicle traffic and footfall was undertaken.

The Operational Area Manager confirmed that the Policy would be changed to show that Ward Members would be consulted when considering part-night lighting or dimming.

In response to the Integrated Impact Assessment question, the Highway Network Manager confirmed that as this policy revision was a Strategic report Officers were required to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment and he outlined what this entailed. The Operational Area Manager clarified that the Policy and Specifications were not solely for street lighting but also covered traffic signals, electrical infrastructure,

CCTV and items in and over the highway. The Highway Network Manager confirmed that the title would be extended to cover the other areas which were covered.

In summing up the questions from Councillor Peers the Highway Network Manager confirmed that they would be more specific with regard to the Policy name across the documents, night inspections would be amended to correctly reflect the 14 day and 28 day distinction, part night lighting and dimming would be split within the Policy and point 5.9 will be amended state will consult with interested parties and include the criteria for part night lighting within the Policy.

In response to questions from Councillor Dan Rose the Operational Area Manager said following earlier discussions the criteria would be attached to the policy to cover dimming, part night lighting and trimming.

In response to visually impaired point it was confirmed that a large number of organisations were consulted on larger schemes, such as the Holywell Town Council Scheme. Calls were also received by the service from people wanting an enhanced or reduced level of lighting and he explained what measures were undertaken.

The Operational Area Manager explained that a range of illumination colour temperatures were used when considering Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI). It was explained that 95% of the current infrastructure was set at 4,000K which was the old standard when the LEDs were replaced 8 years ago and was still low on the scale when referring to illumination and output.

Cllr Rose sought clarification that 4,000k were put in because it was slightly less energy and for carbon saving but ignoring nocturnal animals for those areas as badgers exist in urban areas. He felt the carbon footprint was important but not at the expense of biodiversity and he wanted this to be included in the criteria. In response the Operational Area Manager explained the lanterns, apart from the heritage lanterns, had zero upward waste light with nothing going out from the target zone. He explained how the LEDs were raised within the body of the lantern and had even less waste light. The lanterns could be positioned to where they were needed and manipulated away from hedgerows. It was also explained that a 360 shielding arrangement could be applied to the lanterns which reduced the light spillage even further to just target the area. These were used when applications were received from residents who said the lights were too bright or shining into properties. The Operational Area Manager then referred to the 4,000k lights saying that these were already installed and would have a lifespan. It was not possible to mix lanterns with 3,000K to 4,000K as this would causing banding and affect people with visual impairment. He explained that legislation governed where the columns could be placed and he outlined the balance between meeting the regulations with regard to light spill, the current infrastructure, the age of the equipment and duties with regard to biodiversity and the environment.

In response to a question from Councillor Bernie Attridge on the adoption of lights from Town & Community Councils, the Operational Area Manager confirmed that

this was included within the specification and criteria within this policy. The principle was the same for Town and Community Councils and Developers.

In response to the question of the costs involved for Town & Community Councils requesting Flintshire to adopt the lighting, the Operational Area Manager outlined the processes and assistance that Flintshire had provided over the last 8 years. It was explained that the costs were not within the policy as they were covered under Fees and Charges and the Highway Network Manager agreed to include these in the Fees and Charges Review. It was explained that this policy document would be used collaboratively across North Wales for consistency and to ensure cost savings for the procurement of brackets, columns etc.

With regard to the Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) point the Operational Area Manager commented that he would have to consult colleagues and agreed to ask the Highway Network Manager to provide an update to committee.

With regard to Mayrise question it was confirmed that this was developed in the 1990s with streetlighting the first service to use it. There were issues with this system when trying to report faults on the system and he agreed to speak to the Contact Centre with regard to this.

With regard to the point of speeding up Scottish Power faults it was confirmed that they worked to the Ofgem National Standards which they had to adhere to. If they were outside of those Standards then they had to apply for an exemption and provide explanation of the reasons for the delay and they were also fined.

With regard to dangerous illuminated road signs it was confirmed that when a report was received the team would attend immediately to ensure it was made safe. The repair works would then be programmed into their work schedule. The speed would depend on the actual sign and its location.

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson raised a number of questions which the Operational Area Manager responded to.

In response to the night-time inspections point it was confirmed that there had been no change. As previously discussed, it would be clarified within the policy with regard to the 14 and 28 day inspections in the summer and winter months.

With regard to the response time standards point the Operational Area Manager was not aware of any changes but was aware of the review being undertaken with regard to the service standards. The Highway Network Manager explained that the review was part of the forward work programme looking to be clearer on the standards within policies, but he would not expect Streetscene standards to erode policy standards.

Referring to the response time question the Operational Area Manager confirmed that it would progress with the fastest response time which could be taken. The faults were not always repaired instantly but the team would attend, make safe and then the 10 day timeframe would be included to repair the fault.

Councillor Allan Marshall commented that this was a large document and asked if he could forward any comments to the Operational Area Manager following the meeting. He asked the following questions :-

In response to the timing and switching of photocells question the Operational Area Manager commented that this was dependent upon whose assets it was, but the majority of Flintshire's assets were photocells. The issue of pole brackets was a huge problem as well as the porcelain fuses which were no longer accepted under the regulations. Scottish Power had to be involved in the transfer of service and Flintshire could do everything else. This also applied to columns but Flintshire owned more so were able to undertake more of the repairs.

In response to the night-time inspections in rural areas point the Operational Area Manager agreed with the comments made but said that these could not be inspected during the day as they were off. He commented that the Area Electricians would be able to locate and inspect the lighting within their area.

In response to the errors in the policy with regard to names and job titles the Operational Area Manager agreed to look at these.

In response to the increasing number of faults at point 1.06 the Operational Area Manager reported that it was not just the street lighting fault but the entire infrastructure which included signs, cabling, photocells, porcelain fuses which encompassed what was maintained on the aging infrastructure. It was noted that lighting failure can also be reported via my account.

In response to the point on the replaced LED lighting and cost reduction in energy the Operational Area Manager confirmed that once the light was changed the power supplier should have been contacted. If they were changed during maintenance then he would have to speak to his colleague Jamie Bennett. This would change on Mayrise if the asset was included and an invoice should have been sent to the Community Council. He agreed to look into this.

In response to the adoption and non-compliance question from Councillor Chris Bithell the Operational Area Manager commented that this was why the detailed specification was included in this policy. This related to everyone including developers and outlined the clear understanding of what was expected and the timeframes for carrying out the installations.

In response to the Section 38 point raised the Operational Area Manager would have to refer to his Highway Development Control colleagues. Bonds were still required and he agreed to come back with a more detailed response.

The Chair referred to the term DNO for example and asked if something could be included to outline what these abbreviations referred to. The Operational Area Manager agreed to include this in the policy. With regard to Section 38 which was covered under the Highways Act 1980 he confirmed that links had been included to this Act or Standards at the beginning of the paragraph.

Councillor David Coggins Cogan asked a number of questions which were answered by the Operational Area Manager.

In response to the question the Trunk Road Agency costs it was reported that this related to the previous policy and that there was no costs burden for Flintshire.

In response to the question on the capital budget for replacing street columns the Highway Network Manager confirmed that there was no dedicated capital programme for streetlighting columns and that this was included in the Highways Asset Management Plan. Carriageways was a priority with £1.5m received in capital which was allocated to get the most benefit from that available money. This was not enough to maintain a steady state which was estimated at £3.2m per year and Inflation also needed to be considered. He reported that around £150,000 per year was being allocated to column replacements. He referred to the Highways Inspection Review which would look at risk assessments for the highway network and presenting some of the risks and challenges as part of that review included on the Forward Work Programme.

In response to the question on the trimming and dimming the Operational Area Manager explained that trimming referred to the reduction in the switching time for when the photocell came on. He then outlined the two standards which were used for dimming depending on the location.

Councillor Mike Peers proposed that recommendation 1 was accepted but that recommendation 2 was amended to “that the Committee noted the revised Street Lighting Policy.”

He then proposed a Recommendation 3 “that the Street Lighting Policy as presented was to be revised as agreed by Officers and brought back to Committee for approval.” Following discussion on the viability of changes being made and shared with the Committee ahead of the Cabinet meeting, it was suggested that the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy put forward an amendment at Cabinet to support the proposed changes to the Policy by the Committee. The Deputy Leader and Councillor Mike Peers agreed with this suggestion as a way forward.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee note the portfolio's performance against the current standards and policy;
- (b) That the Committee note the revised Street Lighting policy; and
- (c) That the proposed changes agreed with Officers be submitted to Cabinet.

**64. BAILEY HILL, MOLD**

In presenting the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) explained that this was an update report outlining the works which had taken place at Bailey Hill in Mold.

The Service Manager (Enterprise and Regeneration) commented that the report marked the end of a development period and set out the work which had been carried out on this Council owned green space. Information was provided on the partnership between the County Council, Mold Town Council, the Friends of Bailey Hill Group and Aura. Point 1.04 of the report provided information on the £1.7m external funding received by the project with point 1.05 highlighting the works which were undertaken. A successful programme of events had also taken place with schools and other organisations to raise awareness and ensure that the site was used. It was explained that Cadw and archaeologists were involved throughout these works which were unfortunately delayed because of Covid. The report contained information on the archaeological items and human remains which were found together with evidence of the castle walls which had delayed the project and affected its design, and it was explained how these were managed and supported. The play area had been relocated because of the items found on the site and was moved to the outer bailey and was due to be completed soon. Moving forward the emphasis was on maintaining the site and improving biodiversity to maintain the green status for the site and an explanation was provided on how this was being managed. An overview of the different organisations using the site was given and the community work supporting it.

The Chair commented that he had visited the site saying it was beautiful and was an exceptional area within the town.

In response to a question from Councillor David Coggins on the resource implications the Service Manager said he was unable to provide that information because the centre had been operational for a full year. It was part funded by National Lottery and funders, but a better indication would be available in March this year from Mold Town Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Mike Peers on the resource implications at point 2.01 the Service Manager explained that part year figures had been obtained from Mold Town Council which highlighted a deficit. It was difficult to charge a higher rate of income for the small building and work would be undertaken with the Town Council to keep the deficits to the minimum whilst providing that community resource.

Responding to a question regarding the Green Flag status from Councillor Mike Peers the Service Manager explained that this was a kite marked status for green spaces, parks predominately. It was explained that the site had achieved three out of the seven years, with four years to go. The criteria involved managing of the park effectively as regards litter and dog waste and include safety management and community involvement. The feedback received had been very positive.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) commented that this would be brought to committee once the full year's figures were available. The increase in energy bill had also impacted this. He encouraged members to visit and to hire the facility as it is very beautiful.

In response to questions from Councillor Richard Lloyd, the Service Manager firstly referred to accessibility saying the site had been redesigned as far as possible. Ramped access had been installed to the centre and inner and outer baileys but not to the motte that the castle sat on which was not accessible because of the steps. With regard to the costs the site generates income from the residential accommodation and small income from the groups booking the downstairs space.

In response a question from Councillor Bernie Attridge on any shortfall being consumed by the Environment and Regeneration budget, the Service Manager explained that all costs were borne by Mold Town Council as they held a lease from the County Council to run the visitor centre and residential accommodation. He understood the concerns of Members of the committee and suggested that an update come back to committee later in the year with a business plan and proposals for the centre which could be reviewed.

The Chair suggested that this be brought back in early summer and could be coordinated with a site visit.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the successful completion of development at Bailey Hill in Mold.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair asked for the committee's approval to move into Part 2. This was proposed by Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson and seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd.

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**65. FLEET CONTRACT**

In presenting the report the Highway Network Manager provided background information with regard to the discussions held with the contractor the legal advice which had been obtained and the Options available for the Authority.

During the discussion, several questions were raised by Members with answers provided by the Highway Network Manager. It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy would highlight the Committee's concerns at the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson moved the recommendations in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee noted the update on the fleet contract and proposal to present the update to Cabinet in January 2024;
- (b) That the Committee supported the preferred option to bring the fleet operations and management back in-house to ensure the seamless continuation of this critical service; and
- (c) That the Committee support Cabinet approval of a further short-term with the current supplier for no more than 12 months, to allow the council time to make alternative provision.

**66. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m and ended at 13.25 pm)

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**Chairman**