

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 27 October 2016 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Chair), Martyn Holland, Rhys Hughes (Vice-Chair), Bob Murray, Anton Sampson, Cefyn Williams and Cheryl Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Meirick Lloyd Davies, Alice Jones Gwyneth Kensler and Merfyn Parry.

Councillor Bobby Feeley (Lead Member for Social Care, Adults and Children's Services) and Councillor David Smith (Lead Member for Public Realm) were in attendance at the Committee's request.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bill Cowie, David Simmons and Hugh Evans (Leader and Lead Member for the Economy)

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 as a Ruthin business owner.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 8 September, 2016 were submitted:-

***RESOLVED** – that the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.*

5 DWP / PEOPLEPLUS PROVISION IN DENBIGHSHIRE

The Strategic Planning Team Manager introduced her report (previously circulated) which informed the Committee on the background to the relocation of Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned services to help unemployed people into work from Rhyl to Flint. She explained that the DWP had commissioned Rehab Jobfit to deliver these services on its behalf, they had in turn subcontracted the work to PeoplePlus. The contract for delivering the current programme of services was due to expire at the end of March 2017. From April 2017 the DWP was

planning to deliver a new Work and Health Programme, the contract for this Programme was yet to be awarded.

Mr John Bisby (Regional Manager, North and Mid-Wales for DWP), and Mr Joel Payne (Regional Manager North and South Wales, PeoplePlus) and Mr Brett Smith (PeoplePlus Manager, Flint) were welcomed by the Chair to the meeting. The PeoplePlus' Regional Manager explained with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation the reasons behind the organisation's decision to relocate part of its work from Rhyl to Flint. He emphasised that it still operated an outreach service in Rhyl for the purpose of providing employment support and skills training.

PeoplePlus' services success in getting more people into work meant that fewer individuals were being referred to it at its Rhyl base. Anyone in the area being referred were redirected to the Flint office, where more services were available. Those who were directed to Flint would be reimbursed their travelling costs and staff would work with them in a bid to assist them to access services and the jobs market.

The Regional Manager explained that a number of 'myths' had arisen following the announcement of the decision to relocate services from Rhyl to Flint, emphasising that people who were unable to travel to Flint would be seen at the Rhyl outreach office, which was now located in the centre of the town attached to the 'Rhyl Hub'. Members were also advised that whilst the organisation had to vacate its previous premises in Rhyl earlier than originally anticipated it had consulted at length with both the landlord and staff on relocating to another site in the town for some considerable time at it felt that the premises was not 'fit for purpose'.

The Regional Manager provided details:

- of the organisation's customer base in the Rhyl area (including their feedback on the changes following the relocation of the majority of services to Flint, which was generally positive); and
- of the statistics on total job conversion rates and performance against set targets (the majority of which had been met or exceeded)

The DWP's Regional Manager then outlined the transformation that his service was currently undergoing as part of the introduction of the new 'Work and Health Programme', which would be 'going live' in April 2017. This programme had a less restrictive approach and would focus on the needs of the individual and the employer.

The emphasis of the new service would be to assist and support people into work, working with them and with employers on the skills required in an ever evolving jobs market. He explained that from the end of March 2017 DWP would cease to refer people to PeoplePlus for work programme services, but would however continue to support existing customers accessing PeoplePlus services.

In response to members' questions representatives from both organisations:

- emphasised that they were always willing to listen and help individuals who contacted them;
- PeoplePlus assisted individuals access training, qualifications, information and support to set-up social enterprises etc. It also worked with other public services such as GPs etc. on problems such as obesity, other agencies to help get people back into work e.g. innovative job application methods, money for work clothing etc. and securing sustainable work opportunities for people;
- PeoplePlus agreed to provide statistics on the reduction in people who now required their services, including information on the types of employment secured. They also offered to provide members with a monthly Newsletter detailing current projects and statistics, which the Committee accepted;
- gave an overview of the work with which the DWP was involved in relation to the Anglesey Energy Island project, via the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, with a view to maximising the benefits for the entire North Wales area of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear power station by developing long-term career opportunities in the power industry and supporting supply industries;
- confirmed that discussions were also underway between DWP and Denbighshire County Council officers with a view to developing a similar approach to the Wylfa B approach for skills and career opportunities for Denbighshire based companies; and
- services were available through the medium of Welsh across North Wales.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Chair thanked representatives from both organisations for attending the meeting and for clarifying their positions; for clearing up the misconceptions in the community about the impact of the relocation of services from Rhyl to Flint and for reassuring the Council and residents that their services were available to all residents who needed and wanted to access them. He also suggested to both organisation that, if in future the press were not reporting the full facts of any decisions, they may want to contact the Council with a view to ensuring that residents were provided with the entire facts. Members:

RESOLVED - *that the Committee receive the presentation and based on the above information that a press release be issued to clarify any misconceptions in the community.*

6 MANAGING SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Lead Member for Social Care (Adults and Children's Services) introduced the report advising that the report outlined the potential benefits of streamlining the management of the Supporting Independent Living (SIL) and the Reablement Services, whilst retaining the independence of the operational delivery side of the services. Members were advised that funding indications for the SIL Service, via the Supporting People Grant from Welsh Government (WG), for 2017/18 seemed

favourable. Responding to members' questions the Head of Community Support Services and officers:

- explained the terminology contained in the report in relation to the different 'care provider' posts, emphasising that the integrated Health & Social Care Support Workers (HSCSW) could deliver elements of both health and social care services;
- stated that in addition to realising financial efficiencies for the Council in having one manager instead of two, the bringing together of the services under one manager should also improve service delivery on the ground and deliver a more seamless service to the service-user;
- confirmed that there could potentially be more career progression opportunities for staff ;
- in acknowledging that the streamlining of the management of the services was partly budget driven, also advised that the new structure should also deliver better quality intervention services on the ground and consequently improve the resilience of service-users. It would also support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities of protecting vulnerable people and helping them to live independently for as long as possible and ensuring that people had access to good quality housing;
- advised that every vacant post would be reviewed to determine whether it met Welsh Language Standards requirements;
- confirmed that 7 of the 21 recommendations in the Supporting People Service Review were outstanding at present, the majority of the outstanding actions were linked to the current restructure and should therefore be delivered within the agreed timescale;
- advised that when hospital in-patients were considered for discharge there was a hospital discharge procedure which had to be followed to ensure that they were fit enough to be discharged and would be safe in their own home;
- informed the Committee that if residents, carers or councillors wanted to initiate enquiries on services available they should in the first instance contact the Single Point of Access (SPoA) service. Contact with SPoA initiated the "What Matters" conversation which led to prioritising services for each individual to suit their specific needs. It was also a gateway for individuals who did not have family or friends nearby to support them to access help and support; and
- confirmed that consultation with staff on the new structure and the associated terms and conditions would commence on 8 November 2016.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee requested that:

- information on the indicators used to measure the services' effectiveness in delivering outcomes be presented to the Committee during early spring 2017;
- information on the Supporting People grant funding award for the above services be provided to members as soon as it was available; and
- every effort be made to ensure that all individual cases referred to the services be given full consideration for receipt of the requested services and others that may be appropriate for them.

It was:

RESOLVED -

- (i) subject to the above observations and receiving assurances that the streamlining of the management of the services would not affect frontline service delivery and would support the delivery of effective integrated health care and support services to residents, to receive the report; and*
- (ii) that a further report on the progress in streamlining the management structure, including information on the indicators to be used to measure the services' effectiveness in delivering the intended outcomes be presented to the Committee in early spring 2017.*

7 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introducing the Wales Audit Office (WAO) report on 'Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management in Wales' (attached to the previously circulated report as appendix 1) the Lead Member for Public Realm emphasised that this was a national report. The Head of Highways and Environmental Services, deputising for the Flood Risk Manager, drew members' attention to paragraph 4.1 of the covering report which highlighted the main points of interest in the national report from Denbighshire's perspective. He also advised that attached as appendix 2 to the report was a progress update on the implementation of the objectives, outcomes and measures of the Council's own Flood Risk Management Strategy, for members' information.

In addition to actions identified in the Strategy for the purpose of mitigating flood risk in Denbighshire other measures had already been taken in a bid to reduce risk, for example operational measures such as regular inspections of culverts, gully emptying etc.

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member for Public Realm, the Head of Highways and Environmental Services and Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm advised that:

- 'riparian' in the context of the reports meant land adjacent to a river. Responsibility for flood mitigation measures in these areas was usually the responsibility of the landowner;
- they were under the impression that National Resources Wales' (NRW) flood risk mapping system was amended to reflect any flood alleviation/mitigation work undertaken;
- whilst 'coastal re-alignment' and 'managed retreat' were terms used in the WAO report as ways for managing excess water and flooding incidents in the future, there were a lot of unanswered questions relating to such proposals;
- whilst the WAO report concentrated on coastal flooding and land erosion, inland flooding and land erosion was also a known problem in Denbighshire and as such flood alleviation measures had been put in place i.e. in the Corwen area;
- flood risk maps were considered as part of the planning process when applications for planning permission were received;
- planning applications for large developments, such as those within the Local Development Plan (LDP), would be required to outline both flood risk management and water management strategies/schemes within their detailed applications, as well as consequential impacts of their development applications;
- the local authority planning process considered NRW flood assessments when determining planning applications. Planning permission could be refused on the grounds of material flood risk;
- it was too early yet to determine whether the eventual loss of European funding for flood mitigation work, as a result of the Brexit vote, would be replaced by UK or Welsh Government (WG) funding in due course;
- discussions were underway with bridge maintenance experts on the level of work required to maintain the safety standards of the county's bridges;
- there were concerns with respect to the fact that rivers were not routinely dredged which increased the risk of flooding and of additional pressures being placed on the county's bridges during periods of heavy rainfall and high tides.

Members were of the view that it would be useful if a partnership could be formed between the Council, local landowners and NRW for the purpose of dredging and maintaining waterways to reduce the risk of flooding. The Committee therefore felt that it would be useful to invite NRW to a future meeting to discuss water management issues.

During the discussion the Chair asked members who raised matters relating to very specific local flood concerns or mitigation measures with the Flood Risk Manager

and to report any known problems with culverts (including overgrown or obstructed culverts) to the Customer Services Centre so that they may be listed on the Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system immediately and listed for inspection.

Additional questions raised during the meeting on the contents of the reports and which required technical or specialist knowledge would be forwarded to the Flood Risk Manager and other experts for written responses. These included information on:

- the AMX system;
- the number of gulley clearing/emptying appliances the Council operated and their suitability to access areas with limited/restricted accessibility;
- whether the Council had a regular gulley/culverts clearing programme of works;
- whether there was any evidence that insurance companies and/or mortgage companies recognised work done by the local authority/NRW in relation to flood alleviation i.e. lower insurance premiums; permitting mortgage offers in areas which previously were considered to be at a in high risk of flooding etc.;
- whether there was sufficient capacity within the LDP etc. to deal with surface and drainage water coming from new sites in order to mitigate the risk of flooding further downstream etc.;
- whether the Council had a robust water management strategy or more local water management schemes to deal with excess water i.e. one known problem that was cited was St. Asaph Business Park;
- whether the Highways Department had a policy to divert surface water into ditches, as this then caused further problems, particularly when ditches had not been maintained or dredged. A long standing problem in the Bodelwyddan area was cited as an example.

Prior to the conclusion of the discussion the Committee endorsed the suggestion to extend an invitation to representatives from NRW to a future meeting for the purpose of discussing water management issues, including the:

- impact of coastal flood barriers/defences on low-lying properties and land e.g. in the Vale of Clwyd, particularly given that they would be at risk of flooding anyway during periods of heavy rainfall;
- and water management guidelines/advice given by NRW on both domestic and business/industrial planning applications, particularly the potential effect of large developments on water management outside of the immediate area due for development.

Members were also keen to have a greater understanding of coastal and river related flooding risks in Denbighshire, as well as having information on current and planned water management work (including 'managed retreat') with both public and private sector partners in the area.

The Committee was of the view that elected members, through their community leadership role, could potentially facilitate all stakeholders, including local communities, to work effectively together to reduce and manage the risk of flooding in their local areas.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

RESOLVED:

(i) subject to the above observations, to receive the report and endorse the Council's approach to discharging its responsibilities as a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authority and for carrying out the measures and objectives set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; and

(ii) To invite representatives from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss with members water management/flood mitigation matters and to explore potential areas where elected members and the local authority can work effectively with NRW to reduce the risk of flooding in local communities.

8 COUNTY-WIDE IMPACT OF THE INCREASE IN CAR PARKING CHARGES

In his introduction the Chair reminded the Committee that the methodology for setting appropriate car parking charges across the county had been examined by the Committee in July 2015 and that the Committee had recommended that the lower of the two proposed charges be implemented. Decisions on fees and charges is a power delegated to the Chief Officer and having considered all the relevant information the Lead Officer had decided that it would better to charge the higher of the two charges.

Consequently, when implemented this decision had attracted some unfavourable reaction from residents and businesses. In response to these concerns the Committee had requested that a report on the impact of the increased charges on the county's towns be presented to members for consideration. The Chair welcomed two members of the public who had attended the meeting and advised them that they could share their observations with the Committee at the conclusion of the report's formal introduction.

Introducing the report and associated appendices the Lead Member for Public Realm reminded the Committee that the increases in parking charges introduced in April 2016 was the first increase in Denbighshire since 2009. He emphasised that not all charges had increased, for example the cost of an annual parking permit had remained unaltered.

The long-standing initiative permitting each town council to nominate five free parking days in their town per year had also been retained, as had the practice of permitting free car parking in each town from 3pm daily during the four weeks running up to Christmas.

The Lead Member informed the Committee that once notified of the new car parking tariffs two town councils had been innovative and decided to subsidise parking charges in their particular towns from within their own funds, others were of the view that this was not necessary.

Addressing the Committee a member of the public present stated that:

- she had been surprised that only 35 complaints had been received, particularly as she was personally aware of a petition that had been handed in from the Ruthin area which had in excess of 1,100 signatures;
- short stay car parking charges had increased by 300%, which made Denbighshire's car parks considerably more expensive than those in neighbouring authorities;
- as parking permits could only be purchased for long stay car parks it meant that this restricted parking options for disabled people.

During the discussion the following points were raised by Committee members:

- the availability of annual parking permits needed to be promoted far more widely;
- concerns that due to such a substantial increase in parking charges people would be looking at going shopping further afield, where charges were lower;
- every town had its own individual needs, and the impact had felt worse in Ruthin as until this year the cost for motorists had been subsidised by monies given from the from a fund established by local members during the previous Council's term of office. However, this fund had now ceased and as this coincided with the introduction of the new charges, Ruthin had experienced a 'double blow' effect. Ruthin Town Council had decided not to adopt the approach adopted by both Denbigh and Prestatyn Town Councils of subsidising parking costs in their towns;
- whilst the income in the majority of car parks had increased since the introduction of the new tariffs, there had been fewer actual ticket sales;
- the fact that parking tariffs were far lower in Mold than in Ruthin;
- a feeling that car parking was not a major problem in Rhyl due to the fact that the major shops had relocated to Prestatyn, nevertheless people were reluctant to park in the underground car park operated by the Council due to cars left there being vandalised;

- the number of complaints should not be used as the only benchmark for residents and others' dissatisfaction with the new charges, consideration should be given to previous car park users who were now driving elsewhere to shop or find parking spaces, sometimes impacting on residential areas;
- concerns on the lack of designated motorcycle/scooter parking bays in the county's car park which resulted in smaller vehicles using full car parking bays in certain car parks;
- acknowledged that the recent increase in car parking charges had caused some concern amongst residents, nevertheless they were considerably lower than in some other areas, particularly tourist areas. Reference was made by one councillor to a number of places he had visited during the summer across North Wales and Shropshire. Only in two places had he not parked in a public car park due to excessive tariffs, both locations were coastal tourist towns in Gwynedd;

Councillor Rhys Hughes registered his personal objection to town councils subsidising car parking charges within their towns, as he was of the view that charges across the county should be uniform and consistent.

Other members present stated that whilst everyone would like free parking, the reality of the current financial climate meant that this was not possible if the Council wanted to invest in its car parks. Whilst it was acknowledged that parking charges may have an impact on town centre footfall and businesses in general, the public's shopping habits had also changed. People tended to visit out of town retail parks, Sunday shopping and even 24 hour shopping was now available in a number of places, as well as internet shopping. All of these aspects had impacted on traditional town centre shopping.

There was no quantifiable evidence to demonstrate whether the £50K subsidy given by local members in the Ruthin area to subsidise parking charges over a five year period had actually made a difference to footfall or businesses in the town. Committee members were also reminded that Denbighshire had its own out of town outlets e.g. Tweedmill and the Clwyd Retail Park which employed a number of residents and contributed towards the local economy.

Responding to the points raised the Lead Member and officers advised that:

- the number of complaints received, a total of 35, referred to the number of individual specific complaints received via the Council's Customer Services Centre. Signed petitions were not included in these figures;
- recommendation 9 in appendix 2 recognised the need to promote the availability of annual parking permits and of exploring the viability of an option to pay for annual permits by instalments;
- parking permits were only available for long stay car parks, the only exception being Market Street car park in Llangollen. The rationale behind this was that long stay car parks were more likely to be used by people who were working rather than shoppers;

- whilst percentage wise a 300% increase did seem a very steep hike, in money terms it related to short stay car parks where the cost of the minimum stay had actually increased by 20p;
- the Council would not want to revise parking charges on a regular basis as undertaking such an exercise has some considerable associated costs i.e. the reprogramming of the pay and display meters across the county cost £11K, this did not include staffing costs;
- Denbigh Member Area Group (MAG) had requested Parking Services officers to attend a meeting of Denbigh Town Council to discuss the car parking charges increase. It was as a result of that meeting that the Town Council offered to introduce a subsidy;
- whilst the number of actual tickets sold was lower than during the same period the previous year, the number of annual permits sold had increased considerably by 18%. Further work was required on this data, including a footfall survey in order to analyse the actual impact on town centre businesses, but initial analysis of ticket sale figures seemed to suggest that individuals who had in the past purchased two half day tickets were now purchasing annual permits because this was cheaper in the long run;
- with respect to parking charges in car parks in Flintshire, car parking charges in Mold were subsidised by the town council whereas elsewhere in the county car parking charges were higher. With respect to comparison with other counties Denbighshire's new tariffs were on a par with Conwy County Borough Council and other neighbouring authorities;
- the availability of parking spaces, both short stay and long stay did not seem to be as much of an issue in Rhyl as elsewhere in the county, as the town had a number of easily accessible public and private car parks;
- they were aware of the lack of designated motorcycle/disability scooter/cycle parking bays in the county and were currently working on plans to address this shortage;
- all council-owned car parks across the county were subject to the same charging regime, however some town councils had opted to subsidise the charges and were therefore reimbursing the County Council the balance of income due from those car parks. The County Council was therefore receiving full payment for each ticket purchased;
- the Council had committed to invest in the county's car parks in the long-term. An asset management review was currently underway in relation to all county owned car parks with a view to establishing the level of maintenance and improvement works required in each one, including a list of priority projects. It was envisaged that replacing all pay and display machines with better quality, more functional machines would cost in the region of £300K to £400K.

- there was a need to update and improve signage and undertake public realm work to make car parks more welcoming, particularly as they were the gateway to Denbighshire for tourists etc.;
- the draft asset management plan could be presented to scrutiny for consultation in due course if members so wished;
- a decision had been taken not to vary the cost of an hour's car parking between long and short stay car parks. It was only the three hour rated that had been varied;
- discussions were currently underway with the Council's Property Services Department on the viability of opening staff car parks as pay and display car parks at weekends and bank holidays etc., in particular the one in County Hall, now that the building and land was owned by the Council;
- parking enforcement officers did enforce parking rules on Sundays up until the end of October, and continued with their enforcement work on Sundays after that date when events were being held;
- a number of innovative options should be explored to help deliver the corporate priorities of developing the local economy, having clean and tidy streets, and investing in the county's forty plus car parks. These included transferable car park passes, hotel and B&B parking voucher schemes etc.; and
- information sharing on the changes in car parking charges would have benefitted from better communication across the county, particularly the benefits of purchasing annual permits

The Chair advised the Committee that in future the Chief Officer delegated decision process would be subject to the same level of scrutiny, including an option of calling-in a decision for scrutiny, as Cabinet and Lead Member delegated decisions were at present.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee was of the view that there was no merit in reviewing the car parking charges at present and that there would be far more benefit in adopting a proactive approach to managing and investing in the Council's car parks. There was also a need to keep residents informed of plans and developments for the Council's car parks. Following a detailed discussion the Committee:

RESOLVED: *subject to the above observations, recommended that:*

- (i) *The Council retain the existing County-wide charging scheme, (as detailed in Appendix B to the report).*
- (ii) *Officers could amend the management arrangements in car parks, including introducing variations to the County-wide charging scheme, through discussions with MAGs, Town Councils and the Lead Member.*

- (iii) Officers should attend each of the six Member Area Groups (MAGs) over the next six months (October 2016 to March 2017) to discuss the management arrangements for the car parks in their area.*
- (iv) a car park asset management plan be developed to help prioritise investment, to include more modern pay and display machines; improved signage; improved general maintenance, environmental improvements including additional planting etc.*
- (v) options be explored for using parking payment machines to issue vouchers for use in local shops, cafes and Council facilities. This could range from simple printed vouchers that print on the rear of every ticket to more sophisticated payment machines that offer multiple options.*
- (vi) pay and display tickets should be made transferable between car parks within the County to improve flexibility especially for visitors, so someone could buy an all-day ticket in one car park, which would allow parking that day in any other Council car park across Denbighshire.*
- (vii) potential expansion of the existing parking permit system to include more options aimed at tourists be explored. For example, parking permits with a duration of one week, or one weekend could be sold in local newsagents, as they do in places like Jersey.*
- (viii) officers look at options for hotel and B&B parking voucher schemes which would allow hoteliers to issue their guests with a permit/parking voucher to cover the duration of the stay, and avoid instances of guests having to go out to buy a pay and display ticket first thing in the morning to avoid receiving a parking fine.*
- (ix) Better promote the annual long stay parking permit and consider the introduction of payment in instalments and*
- (x) a further progress report be presented to the Committee in six months' time on the impact of the increase in car parking charges, along with the draft car park asset management plan for members' observations.*

9 PROCESS, METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA FOR UNDERTAKING ROAD SAFETY AUDITS IN RELATION TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Lead Member for Public Realm introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) and the Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager detailed the process and methodology utilised for undertaking road safety audits in relation to planning applications, including the criteria which merited the requirements for a road safety audit. Responding to members' questions the Lead Member, Head of Service and the Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager advised:

- that a developer applying for planning permission would appoint a design a consultant for the proposed development. As part of the early design process a preliminary road safety audit would be undertaken. This preliminary audit would consider matters such as visibility at road junctions etc.;

- all road safety points raised by planning officers during the application process would require to be documented in the final planning application, including the measures that would be incorporated into the development plans to mitigate any identified risks;
- the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' guidance, a copy of which was attached to the report, was the technical document adhered to when undertaking road safety audits. This document specified that at least one person undertaking the audit had to hold a 'Certificate of Competency'. Upon receipt of the audit report one of the Council's qualified road safety engineers would quality assure the assessment, and if necessary refer it back to the developer with a request that any queries be addressed prior to the application moving forward to the next stage;
- any proposed road markings or drainage plans included in planning applications would be quality assured by qualified engineers employed by the Council;
- once planning permission was granted, and if work on the highways was one of the stipulated conditions for the granting of the permission, the road safety audit process would proceed to Stage 2. At this stage the developer would need to seek highway approval for changes to the highway e.g. the building of a roundabout, line painting etc.;

Councillor Alice Jones advised the Committee that, despite assurances given by officers of the robustness and independence of the road safety audits, she was firmly of the view that the process had failed residents of Bodelwyddan during a recent planning application in the centre of the village. She detailed to the Committee the circumstances relating to this particular planning application, emphasising that in her view the Road Safety Audit prepared for this application had not conformed to all the suggested criteria listed in the section on 'Road Safety Audit Brief' in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' document. Councillor Jones felt that a number of important factors had been omitted or overlooked in the road safety audit for this particular application e.g. disabled access, safe route to school etc.

Following an in-depth discussion a consensus was reached that it would be useful if a training workshop could be arranged for all Planning Committee members in order to clarify the process, methodology and criteria for the road safety audit process and its application in relation to planning applications. The workshop should be a half-day session and be chaired by the Lead Member for Public Realm and the Bodelwyddan example cited by Councillor Alice Jones should be used as one of the examples at the workshop. Any recommendations emanating from the workshop that required formal elected member approval should be submitted to the Planning Committee for approval in due course.

The Committee therefore:

RESOLVED -

- (i) *subject to the above observations, to receive the report and the information imparted; and*

(ii) to request the Head of Planning and Public Protection to arrange a half-day training workshop, to be chaired by the Lead Member for Public Realm, for all members of the Council's Planning Committee on the process, methodology and criteria for the road safety audit process and its application in relation to planning applications

10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (SC), which requested the Committee to review and agree its forward work programme and which provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A copy of the 'Member's proposal form' had been included in Appendix 2 The SC requested that any proposals be submitted to herself. The Cabinet Forward Work Programme had been included as Appendix 3, and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising on progress with their implementation, had been attached at Appendix 4.

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme for future meetings, Appendix 1 and the following amendments and additions were agreed:-

- Natural Resources Wales be invited to attend Communities Scrutiny Committee at their earliest convenience;
- Supporting Independent Living and Car Parking items be added to the 23rd March 2017 agenda.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above additions and agreements, the Forward Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

11 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

There were no reports to be presented.

The meeting concluded at 13:50