

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held via video conference on Thursday, 10 March 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley, Gwyneth Ellis, Tina Jones, Merfyn Parry, Anton Sampson, Peter Scott, Graham Timms (Vice-Chair), Cheryl Williams and Huw Williams (Chair)

Lead Members (at the invitation of the Committee):

Councillor Brian Jones (Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment)

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets)

Councillor Mark Young (Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services)

Non-committee member who was a signatory to the Call-in Request (business item 5): Councillor Rhys Thomas

Non-committee members who were members of the Task and Finish Group (business item 6): Councillors Barry Mellor and Peter Scott

Observers: Councillors Meirick Lloyd Davies Martyn Holland and Emrys Wynne.

ALSO PRESENT

Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW), Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation (AS), Head of Finance and Property (SG), Head of Highways and Environmental Services (TW), Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services (EJ), Countryside and Heritage Services Manager (HR), Lead Officer – Corporate Property and Housing Stock/Corporate Landlord (DL), Climate Change Project Officer (LW-J), Flood Risk Manager (WH), Section Manager – Network Management (TT), Planning Officer (GC), Development and Control Manager (PM), Planning and Compliance Officers (AT & SW), Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE), Democratic Services Officer (KE) and Committee Administrators (SLW, KJ & RhT-J) along with Fergus O'Brien representing Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hugh Irving.

Councillor Melvyn Mile, one of the signatories to the call-in request, had also tendered his apologies due to a prior appointment as had Councillor Tony Thomas, Lead Member for Housing and Communities.

Representatives from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water and Waterco had also tendered their apologies for not being in attendance for business item 6, 'Flood Risk Management and Riparian Land Ownership Task and Finish Group', this was due to prior arranged engagements.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were raised.

Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies was advised that assisting a resident in relation to flooding matters in his capacity as the ward member did not constitute a matter which needed to be declared as a personal interest for business item 6.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised with the Chair prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 January 2022 were submitted. It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 be received and approved as a correct and true record of proceedings.

No matters were raised in relation to the contents of the minutes.

5 REVIEW OF CABINET DECISION RELATING TO THE PROPOSES SCHEME OF DELEGATED DECISION MAKING FOR LAND ACQUISITION (FREEHOLD AND LEASEHOLD) FOR CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT PURPOSES

Prior to the commencement of this business item Councillor Huw Williams vacated the Chair as he was one of the signatories to the call-in request and was therefore required to take part in the discussion. The Vice-Chair, Councillor Graham Timms, took the Chair for this item of business.

The Vice-Chair informed the Committee that a notice of a 'call-in' had been submitted by 6 non-Cabinet councillors in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The notice called for a review by one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees of a decision taken by Cabinet on 15th February 2022 in relation to a proposed scheme of delegated decision making for land acquisition for environmental and ecological purposes. He proceeded to explain that the Cabinet decision had been published on the 17th February 2022. The 'call-in' procedure allowed non-Cabinet councillors 5 working days in which to submit a notice of 'call-in' to request that Scrutiny review the decision. Once invoked the decision-maker was not permitted to implement the decision until such time as Scrutiny had reviewed it and reported back to the decision-maker on the conclusions of that review. Scrutiny was expected to hold a meeting to review the decision within 5 working days of the valid 'notice of call-in' being received. However, as there was

no immediate urgency for this decision to be implemented the decision-maker, Cabinet, had agreed that the Scrutiny review could be deferred until the next available Scrutiny Committee meeting, which was the current meeting. Councillor Merfyn Parry submitted a notice of 'call-in' electronically on 23 February. The request was supported (via individual e-mails) by five other non-Cabinet councillors, namely Councillors David G Williams, Melvyn Mile, Huw O Williams Rhys Thomas and Peter Evans, all of whom had been invited to attend the Committee meeting to outline their reasons for supporting the call-in request.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Rhian Evans, introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) which explained the background to decision taken by Cabinet and the grounds on which it had been called-in to Scrutiny for review. She then proceeded to detail the procedure that would be followed at the meeting for consideration of the decision called-in for review.

Councillor Merfyn Parry, as the lead signatory for the call-in, was invited to introduce the reasons why the signatories were seeking a review of the decision. In his address he advised that they had concerns that the Council would, if the decision was confirmed, be in a position to 'land grab' at auction potentially out bidding any local farmers or landowners. Whilst, they understood that the Council would not be interested in purchasing prime agricultural land, they did however feel that decisions to purchase land for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes needed to be discussed with the local Member(s) and the local Member Area Groups (MAGs) pre-bidding, as it was important for the Authority to understand local knowledge and need prior to bidding for a parcel of land.

The Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment, Councillor Brian Jones, was then invited summarise the discussion and decision taken at Cabinet on 15 February 2022. He outlined the consultation which had taken place to date and confirmed that there were no plans to purchase Grade 1 agricultural land for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes.

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets confirmed that the purpose of the proposed delegated decision-making process for this particular purpose was to make a small change to the current scheme to enable the Council to act quicker in future. He assured the Committee that local members would automatically be consulted in respect of each proposed acquisition as a matter of course, unless the timescale was extremely tight, and even then every effort would be made to contact the local member(s). As land could be put up for auction at any time the process needed to be handled extremely quickly. He assured the Committee that the Council could not enter an over-inflated 'bidding war' with external buyers as the District Valuer would set a limit which the Council could not exceed, as the Authority was required to demonstrate that it utilised public funds wisely. It was however emphasised that, if the Council was to achieve its net carbon zero target, it would require to purchase land in order to offset its carbon usage.

The Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation, drew members' attention to the report and the Well-being Impact Assessment which stated how local members

and other local stakeholder had been consulted for land suitable for carbon sequestration and ecological purposes. To date all but one of the sites identified as potential contenders for carbon sequestration purposes had been suggested by local communities or local members.

Councillor Merfyn Parry detailed the reasons why he and fellow members had instigated the call-in of the Cabinet decision:

- they felt the proposed delegated decision process for this purpose was a means of by-passing the democratic process, for example the use of Asset Management Group (AMG) meetings to discuss potential purchases and any justification for them.
- they acknowledged the need for quicker decision-making to purchase land, however, they felt that Denbighshire County Council could possibly speed up their current processes for taking such decisions. Land auctions did not take place overnight, agents advertised parcels of land for sale for a number of weeks prior to an auction being held or tenders closing, it provided ample time for the Council to make a decision on a potential purchase. There may be the odd occasion where a private owner would place a plot of land on the market for a quick sale, but such instances were few and far between.
- the report to Cabinet and its appendices referred to the involvement of local members, Community Councils and Member Area Groups (MAGs), however some of these references stated that members would be informed not consulted. This could be interpreted that local members would be told that a purchase would take place, but that they nor the local MAG, would have any involvement or influence in the process. Quick decisions could still be made by involving members.
- it seemed that the Council was concerned that it could not meet its net carbon zero target to address the climate and ecological emergency challenge without purchasing parcels of land. If that was the case the Council was running the risk of being perceived as adopting an approach similar to that of certain national and international corporations in attempting to address its carbon footprint problem by purchasing land to plant trees instead, of actively adopting low carbon measure and practices.
- they were concerned that if local agents became aware that the Council had a dedicated budget for the purchase of land for this purpose that the value of such land would become inflated. If that were to happen it would be to the detriment of hill farmers who would be priced out of the market when wanting to purchase parcels of land adjacent to their holdings for the purpose of improving and extending their enterprises.
- there seemed to be very little reference in the report to the responses received from the Farming Unions and the Young Farmers Clubs to the consultation exercise. How many had responded, what were the contents of the responses received and had they been given sufficient time and information to enable them to provide comprehensive responses.

The Vice-Chair invited each of the other signatories to the call-in request to address the Committee on their concerns and reasons for calling-in the decision. As Councillor Melvyn Mile was unable to attend the meeting he had submitted a written statement which the Vice-Chair duly read out. In his statement Councillor Mile stated that:

- he appreciated the Council's need for expediting land procurement processes but had concerns that local members will not be given sufficient consultation time in the matter;
- whilst prime quality farm land would not be bought by the Council to plant trees, however food production would be just as important in future as reducing the offset of carbon so farmers need a fair opportunity to purchase land;
- local members know their localities and their residents, therefore they needed to be kept informed of any potential acquisitions in their area so that they could be involved in any pre-bidding discussions at the earliest stages.

Councillor Huw Williams stated that:

- there was a minimal amount of Grade 1 agricultural land and people needed to be aware of that;
- private farmers and landowners were already aware of their carbon sequestration and ecological duties and were themselves planting trees and supporting environmental schemes where possible;
- there was a need to speed up processes within the Council
- there was also an urgent need to raise the profile of food production and security, particularly given the potential impact of the war in Ukraine on the world's supply of grain.

Councillor Rhys Thomas stated that his concerns with the decision were:

- that the Council's carbon reduction policies were not going to work
- that it could lead to the market value of lower grade agricultural land (grades 4 and 5) being over-inflated and therefore out of the reach of local farmers;
- the potential for local member(s) and MAGs' influence being marginalised. Local councillors were residents' representatives and therefore should be involved with the decision-making process, not told the outcome of it at the end with no opportunity to influence;
- that the Council's Countryside Services did not have sufficient staff capacity to advise on potential suitable acquisitions or to support the delivery of the Council's ecological and carbon reduction ambitions.

Councillors Peter Evans and David Williams were not in attendance and had not submitted any written statements.

Prior to seeking the Committee to determine whether Cabinet should be recommended to review its original decision in light of the points made, the Vice-Chair invited the Lead Members and officers to answer the points raised.

The Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment and the Lead Member for Property and Finance:

- advised that staff capacity within Countryside Services was at present sufficient to support delivery of climate and ecological work. However, potential pressures going forward had already been identified and would need to be managed through the Council's budget-setting process;
- gave further assurances that the District Valuer's involvement in the process would ensure that the Council would not be paying above market value for

any land. It would also ensure that the Council was not responsible for inflating the price of any land;

- acknowledged that the report did not provide detailed information on the feedback received as part of the engagement process. Whilst the volume of responses was not high, the observations received were positive. Low response rates to consultation exercises were generally interpreted to mean that those consulted were not against the proposals put forward, people and organisations were more likely to respond if they fervently opposed or had concerns about proposals;
- advised that the AMG and the Strategic Investment Group's (SIG) involvement would generally be confined to setting the strategic direction and determining the principles in order to deliver policy, they would examine the merits of purchasing individual parcels of land. Hence the need to speed up the Council's process in relation to facilitating land purchase practices;
- confirmed that no one area of work would be sufficient by itself to ensure that the Council would achieve its net carbon zero ambition. An array of different types of schemes would be required e.g. improving the Council's fleet, carbon reduction methods within Council buildings etc. However, by the fact that the Authority had and would continue to have buildings, it would have a carbon footprint as buildings had carbon embodied within them. The need for the Authority to buy additional land for sequestration purposes had been highlighted during the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy's journey through the Council's democratic process, because without that the Council would not realise its net carbon zero objective; and
- acknowledged that land prices may rise by having the Council as an extra potential buyer in the market, but it would not be the only extra buyer in the market. Commercial buyers would also be entering the market, and if prices were driven up, public authorities would be the first ones to be driven out of the pricing structure as they were not permitted to spend over the market value;

The Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation; the Countryside and Heritage Services Manager; the Head of Finance and Property, and the Lead Officer Corporate Property and Housing Stock (the Council's Corporate Landlord):

- confirmed that whilst the consultation/engagement exercise on the proposals had not generated a great volume of responses, officers were currently contacting people individually to seek their views on the proposals;
- advised that one of the encouraging features of the responses received was that they welcomed the Council's participation in land management because they viewed public ownership of land as responsible stewardship.
- acknowledged that more work was required in relation to engaging with the stakeholders and with local communities on what they want, what works well for them and what practical decisions need to be taken.
- appreciated members' concerns about capacity within Countryside Services for managing the emerging agenda. A number of discussions had already taken place at the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Board on the matter and there were no capacity issues at present, although the position would be monitored going forward;
- confirmed that the Council had acknowledged that additional resources would be required every year for 9 years in order to deliver the programme.

As part of the budget setting process for 2022/23 additional staffing had been approved for the purpose of delivering the building efficiencies aspect of the programme. The programme's delivery would be a feature of the Council's budget setting process for the programme's lifetime;

- provided assurances that there was a matrix in place which would deter purchase of quality agricultural land for tree planting purposes. The Corporate Landlord's role in relation to land purchases was to ensure that there was valid justification and grounds for purchasing it using public funds. It was anticipated that the majority of proposed sites for purchase would be put forward by Countryside Services. The Scheme of Delegation would only be used as and when a need arose, any major purchases would need Cabinet approval. The spirit of the proposed delegated decision scheme was to enable the Council to purchase the right type of land, for the right reasons, when it needed to do so; and
- the Council was exploring the potential of establishing a focus group with the farming unions and the Federation of Young Farmers Clubs as a means of engaging with them on various issues.

Committee members and observers were given an opportunity to ask supplementary questions to Lead Members and officers to which the following responses were given:

- the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer confirmed that there would not be a need to change the Council's Constitution for the purpose of enabling emergency/extraordinary MAG meetings, as MAGs were not decision-making committees, they were discussion and consultation fora;
- the Countryside and Heritage Services Manager, advised that there were 6 agricultural land quality classifications, ranging from 1 (excellent) to 5 (very poor) – there were two grade 3 classification (3a – good to moderate and 3b – moderate).

The Vice-Chair thanked all signatories to the call-in request for outlining their reasons for seeking a review of the Cabinet decision, the Lead Members and officers for responding and answering the points raised during the discussion, before proceeding to ask the Committee to determine whether, having listened to representations made whether it wished to refer the decision back to Cabinet seeking it to reconsider its original decision. He emphasised that if it was the Committee's wish that Cabinet be requested to reconsider its original decision members needed to clearly identify the reasons why it should be reviewed.

Councillor Gwyneth Ellis was of the view that, due to the strength of feeling amongst Committee members that Cabinet should be asked to review the decision taking into account members' concerns with regards to member consultation, seeking assurances that local members will be properly consulted as part of the process, and making sure that land acquisition for carbon sequestration purposes is the proper thing to do and not used as a means to plug gaps in the Council's own carbon reduction measures. Councillor Ellis proposed that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Merfyn Parry. Further discussion then took place on the final wording of the

recommendations to Cabinet, prior to Councillor Merfyn Parry proposing the wording, seconded by Councillor Huw Williams.

Following an in-depth discussion, the Committee having considered all the information presented to it, unanimously:

Resolved: to seek Cabinet at its next appropriate meeting to reconsider its original decision relating to the 'Proposed Scheme of Delegated Decision Making for Land Acquisition (Freehold and Leasehold) for Carbon Sequestration and Ecological Improvement Purposes. With a view to expediting the decision-making process for purchasing land -

- (i) that prior to reviewing its decision Cabinet should work with the Farming Unions and the Federation of Young Farmers Clubs to seek comprehensive responses from those organisations in relation to the Proposed Scheme;***
- (ii) that Cabinet amend the wording within the Proposed Scheme of Delegated Decision Making (and any associated documentation) as it relates to liaising with local councillors and Member Area Groups (MAGs) to read 'consult/consultation' rather than 'notify/notification';***
- (iii) that at the appropriate time a review is undertaken of staffing resources within the Council's Countryside Service to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to deal with the additional duties that will be placed on the Service in future in connection with carbon sequestration and ecological improvement work; and***
- (iv) that detailed information on agricultural land grading in Denbighshire (including illustrative maps) are provided to the decision-maker when reviewing the decision.***

The Chair presided over the meeting from this juncture.

6 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AND RIPERIAN LAND OWNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee Chair, in his capacity as the Chair of the Flood Risk Management and Riparian Land Ownership Task and Finish Group, introduced the report (previously circulated) which updated the Committee on the Task and Finish Group's activities. Attached to the covering report was the Task and Finish Group's final report, which detailed its findings and recommendations, and which sought the Committee's approval for those recommendations.

At this juncture, Councillor Huw Williams (Chair) thanked all internal and external members of the Group for their diligent work. He also thanked Karen Evans, Democratic Services Officer, for the work she had done and for the excellent report which had drafted on the Group's behalf.

The Chair outlined the background to the Task and Finish Group's establishment by the Committee, which was primarily to examine methods to further strengthen interaction and working relationships between public flood management authorities and riparian landowners. He advised that all Group members had learnt a

considerable amount about each other's roles, responsibilities and work practices during the course of the Group's work. As a result, all agreed that working relationships and mutual trust had been strengthened through the existence of the Group. The Group had also answered a number of myths in relation to responsibilities and permissions sought for river and riverbank maintenance work, such as the actual number of applications received for Flood Risk Activity Permits (FRAPs) from landowners, riparian land ownership responsibilities within the Rhyl Cut and Prestatyn Gutter catchment area etc., all of which were documented within the report. The Group's work had also highlighted the wide range of information available on each flood risk authority's website for the public, including an extremely useful frequently asked questions section on the Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's website. As a result, one of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations was that, for ease of access to the public, the Council's own Local Flood Risk Management Strategy page should be relaunched and should include links to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's relevant webpages. The new page should also include information on the responsibilities of Flood Risk Management Authorities and those of riparian land owners.

Responding to members' questions the Chair, Task and Finish Group members and officers advised that:

- all stakeholder's understanding of each other responsibilities and their working relationships with each other had improved during the course of the Task and Finish Group's work.
- the recommendation to work in partnership to produce and deliver a generic information leaflet on the roles and responsibilities of flood risk authorities and householders along the Rhyl Cut and Prestatyn Gutter was due to the complexities involved with multiple 'riparian landownership' in a densely populated area and a wide misconception that NRW was responsible for private boundaries abutting the watercourses. Similar exercises were not deemed necessary in other areas of the county where larger landowners were familiar with their responsibilities;
- the local authority had powers conferred on it under the Land Drainage Act to intervene in certain instances. However, whilst it had the powers to intervene it was not duty bound to do so;
- riparian land owners had certain responsibilities in relation to not blocking watercourses etc. and there were recourses for action with regards to cutting off natural water supplies through common law; and
- new developments were required to be serviced by separate surface and foul water drainage systems, this was not the case for older residential developments where both surface and foul water were eventually channelled into the same sewer system;
- circulating the report to all city, town and community councils would help in communicating useful information regarding flood risk management responsibilities to all residents and businesses in the county.

Task and Finish Group members emphasised the benefits of the Group's work, at which issues which had been highlighted at a number of different groups and committees had been discussed openly with all stakeholders. This had generated good, open and constructive discussion which had led to all having a better

understanding of each other's roles as well as the constraints within which they had to work. There was a mutual feeling amongst all involved with the Group's work that a high level of mutual trust and understanding had been fostered. Consequently, the Group wished to continue to meet on at least an annual basis to discuss issues of concerns and future plans.

Committee members thanked the Task and Finish work for its work and its comprehensive report. It supported the Group's enthusiasm to continue to meet on an annual basis and its appetite to work with all stakeholders going forward. It was therefore suggested that the Group report to Communities Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis on its discussions. At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee unanimously:

Resolved: subject to the above observations to thank the Task and Finish Group for its work, to receive its report and endorse its contents including the following recommendations:

- (i) that a Flood Risk Working Group comprising of the flood risk management authorities and landowner representatives continue to meet on an annual basis for an updated position on issues and expectations, and report on its discussions to Communities Scrutiny Committee;***
- (ii) that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy page on the Council's website be re-launched including:***
 - (a) links to related Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water web pages; and***
 - (b) an explanation of the responsibilities of Flood Risk Management Authorities and riparian landowners,***
- (iii) that working in partnership with Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water a generic information leaflet/letter be created on the responsibilities of riparian landowners and distributed to properties adjacent to the Rhyl Cut and Prestatyn Gutter; and***
- (iv) that the report presented to the Committee be translated and circulated to City, Town and Community Councils for inclusion on their websites.***

7 PLANNING COMPLIANCE CHARTER

The Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated), the purpose of which was to seek the Committee to review the Planning Compliance Charter's effectiveness to date. It also sought members' support for proposed amendments to its contents and/or to increase the resources available for planning compliance work across the county.

Prior to inviting questions, the Planning and Compliance Officer drew members' attention to the proposed amendments to the Charter, as highlighted in Appendix 1 to the report.

Members commented on how useful the Charter had been to them in dealing with residents' planning compliance queries and the prioritisation process for dealing with such complaints.

In response to members' questions on the Charter and the proposed amendments, the Lead Member and officers advised:

- that whilst the Service continued to deal with a backlog of planning compliance queries, which in the main had been instigated during the first COVID-19 lockdown period, the workload was reducing in terms of caseloads. The appointment of a second Planning and Compliance Officer in August 2021 had helped ease the pressure.
- some cases were historic and extremely complex and would therefore require some considerable time and resources to resolve;
- that circumstances when the Council could divulge the names of complainants etc. were clearly set in regulations e.g. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) etc. However, they did not prohibit the Council from informing councillors or city, town or community councils (CTCC) that they were investigating alleged breaches. We are currently exploring how, using available software, we can keep local members and CTCC's regularly informed on planning breaches within their areas;
- that regular meetings were held with local members when concerns were raised about unauthorised development issues in open countryside and woodlands;
- that a lot of enquiries were directed to the pre-planning application process for relevant advice on when planning permission was required;
- that the Charter had to work on two different fronts, signposting residents to the types of developments which required or did not require planning permission, whilst also drawing the attention of contraveners to the potential consequences of developing unauthorised dwellings or non-compliance with conditions stipulated as part of the granting of planning permission;
- there was a risk that, individuals who had not sought planning compliance advice and developed or refurbished their property without the necessary consents, could fall foul of the system at a later stage if they attempted to sell their property and the property searches process alerted prospective buyers to non-compliance issues;
- people's expectations regarding the enforcement and ultimate remedying of non-compliance matters needed to be managed appropriately;
- the revised Charter made provisions for alleged breaches that were approaching immunity from enforcement actions due to the passage of time to be treated as 'high priority' cases;
- that the prioritisation process was aimed at dealing in a pragmatic way with potential breaches. Officers illustrated examples of how this would be done;
- that the Council did operate a 'bring-up system' which did flag-up cases with time-limited conditions on them and alerted officers to check that residents/applicants were continuing to conform with the conditions granted for those properties before the expiration date;
- that Planning Compliance training was being prepared for the new Council; and

- that councillors were advised to act as fact-finders rather than mediators in planning disputes between neighbours in their wards. It was advisable for them to signpost individuals to the Council's Planning Compliance Service for technical advice on planning and development matters.

Members emphasised the importance of having a clearly worded document that was easily accessible on the Council's website, to enable them to signpost residents to it and demonstrate that the Council did take planning compliance contraventions extremely seriously and would act to rectify them via enforcement action.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) subject to the above observations, and the strengthening of the wording and advice in relation to breaches of planning control in paragraph 1.2 of the revised draft Charter, to endorse the draft Charter entitled 'Planning Compliance in Denbighshire – Planning Compliance Charter' (Appendix 1);***
- (ii) to support officers' intention to present the final version of the Charter for Lead Member approval; and***
- (iii) to confirm that they had read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) as part of their consideration.***

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) seeking members to review the Committee's work programme in preparation for its transfer to its successor Committee post the local authority elections in May 2022. It would then be a decision for the new Committee on whether it wished to proceed with the items already listed.

Members were advised that the report on the 'Mistreatment of Dogs' which was originally scheduled for presentation at the current meeting had, due to Public Protection Service staff still being deployed on Test, Track and Protect (TTP) duties, been rescheduled for presentation until the autumn of 2022. Nevertheless, in order to provide reassurance to members on this matter an information report had been prepared and circulated as part of the Information Brief document ahead of the current meeting.

As part of its regular review of scrutiny committees' forward work programmes the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) had rescheduled some items on each of the committees' forward work programmes in order to avoid discussion of controversial items in the lead-up to the pre-election period. These were illustrated on Appendix 1.

The follow-up report requested during the discussion on the Flood Risk Management and Riparian Landownership Task and Finish item on the current business agenda would be included on the Committee's forward work programme for the spring of 2023.

Members were advised that they could continue to submit topics for consideration by Scrutiny on the form at Appendix 2. Unless the topics were of an urgent nature, the SCVCG would consider the requests following the local authority elections.

The Cabinet's forward work programme (Appendix 3) and the table illustrating progress to date with the recommendations made by Committee's at its last meeting (Appendix 4) were provided for information purposes.

Work was now underway to prepare for the production of an information report on a 'Community Impact Assessment on the communities of Rhewl and Llanynys' following the closure of the local school. The report should be available during the summer.

The Committee:

Resolved: subject to the inclusion of the item agreed during the course of the meeting, to confirm the Committee's draft forward work programme for presentation to the new Committee post the local authority elections in May 2022.

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

Prior to bringing the meeting to a close the Chair extended his sincerest gratitude to the Vice-Chair for all his support, to Committee members for their diligent and constructive work on the Committee, and to the staff for all the support they had provided during the current Council term. He conveyed his good wishes to all for the future.

Meeting concluded at 12.55pm