

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and via video conference on Thursday, 27 October 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Joan Butterfield (Chair), Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Kelly Clewett, Pauline Edwards, Bobby Feeley, Martyn Hogg, Terry Mendies, Raj Metri, Peter Scott (Vice-Chair), David Williams and Elfed Williams

Observer - Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts

ALSO PRESENT

Lead Member for Health and Social Care; Councillor Elen Heaton.
Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment; Councillor Barry Mellor.

Corporate Director: Governance and Business and Monitoring Officer (GW), Interim Head of Highways & Environmental Service (AC), Interim Waste and Recycling Manager (JL), Head of Regional Collaboration (CR), Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE), Committee administrators (SJ, Host) (NH and RhTJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Nicola Stubbins, Corporate Director: Communities. Gary Williams, Corporate Director: Governance and Business & Monitoring Officer was in attendance as corporate support.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kelly Clewett declared a personal interest in business item 6, 'Regional Partnership Board's Annual Report 2021/22', in her capacity as Team Leader of the Denbigh Community Resource Team (CRT) and an employee of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB).

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

None.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 July 2022 were submitted. The Committee:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

No matters arose from the contents of the minutes.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT SERVICES CONTRACT PROVISION

Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment, Councillor Barry Mellor, introduced the report (previously circulated) alongside the Interim Head of Highways and Environmental Service and the Interim Waste and Recycling Manager. The report provided members with an update on the progress of this outsourced arrangement at the end of the contract period and detailed proposed future arrangements for the continued delivery of these services across the Denbighshire area, highlighting the risks to this outsourced arrangement and how those risks were being managed. The Lead Member explained that whilst the decision to award the contract could have been taken by the Head of Highways and Environmental Service, under powers delegated to him, both the Head of Service and Lead Member were keen to seek members' views on the contract specification, in particular the proposed amendments to the contract.

The service provider delivered Environmental Enforcement officer patrols county-wide (publically accessed land) to raise awareness and issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for low-level environmental crime offences. Most offences related to littering and contraventions of Denbighshire's Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Dog Control. They also issued FPNs for other environmental violations, including fly posting and graffiti and the enforcement of smoke-free legislation. The service provider was also responsible for a range of back-office support in relation to Fixed Penalties, including managing payment rates and preparing case files for potential prosecutions (for non-payment of FPNs and walk-offs.) They were also required to be the first point of contact for complaints and representations from the public.

The Committee was informed of the contract variations, which were –

Three Variations to the 2019 contract specification, these had come into force on 10th October 2022:

- (i) To extend the current contract for 24 months (Substantial Variation) to 9th October 2024.
- (ii) To extend the scope of the contract by including two additional areas of environmental enforcement – initially through two six-month pilots. (Not considered a substantial variation);
- (iii) The inclusion of a “termination for convenience” clause, enabling the contractor to terminate the contract with 12 weeks' notice should the contract fail to be commercially viable for them. (Not considered a substantial variation)

Members discussed the following in further detail –

- Concerns were raised regarding the low number of patrols recorded for the county's more rural areas, i.e. the Dee Valley, Denbigh and Ruthin areas, as some members felt that the patrols currently focused on tourist areas. The Committee felt that there needed to be a whole Denbighshire approach to the new contract. Officers confirmed that this matter had been identified and was currently being part of an on-going discussion between the Council and the company.

- The Committee had concerns relating to the cost and profit margins for the company for delivering the service, Members were worried that this could push the company to go to sources of profit rather than dealing with the issues that concerned residents, littering and dog fouling. The officers clarified that the proposal to raise the fine levels with regards to dog fouling offences would hopefully deter such offences and reduce the levels of such offences in future. Dog fouling was regarded by the general public as a crime against people and communities therefore it was important that fines were set at a level to help deter reoffending whilst also educating persistent offenders of the impact of the crime. The Committee agreed that educating people was vital, and a good working relationship with the Communications Teams would be vital to tackling the issue effectively.
- Members referred to the possibility of some people evading being caught and fined as they walked their dogs during unsociable hours when no officers would be present. Officers clarified that they had no direct control over where and when the enforcement would occur, but discussions were underway with the service provider seeking it adapt its working hours to run from 7am to 7pm on a daily basis.
- The availability of sufficient number of bins was raised, and whether there was any method of having additional bins in rural areas. Officers advised that they used C360 enquires and complaints to determine if new or additional bins were required in certain areas.
- outdated signage was raised and needed to refresh signage across the county. Officers stated the matter was currently being reviewed, and Caru Cymru (previously Keep Wales Tidy) was being be looked at as a potential funding source for new signage.
- Regarding legal fees entailed with prosecuting offenders for non-payment of FPNs, members were advised that the Council would recover all costs via the magistrates' court system.
- It was confirmed that the Council's own Environmental Enforcement officers dealt with fly-tipping incidents, the proposal in this particular contract was for the company (District Enforcement) to complement the work of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team by undertaking duties such as checking that businesses are in possession of the required licences and had arrangements in place to legally get rid of their waste.
- Councillor Martyn Hogg advised that he was in agreement with the proposed contract and its variations, but it would be imperative that its delivery was closely monitored and that essential data should be available to highlight the business' success.

Following an in-depth discussion, the Committee:

Resolved: - having considered the information within the report, to support the proposed contract variation extending the current outsourced arrangement with District Enforcement to 9th October 2024, and subject to the observations made during the course of the discussion:

- (i) to endorse the Delegated Decision Report 'Review of Denbighshire Council's Fixed Penalty Notice Fine Amounts for Environmental Crime***

- Offences' so that the Council may continue to deliver environmental enforcement patrols through a cost neutral arrangement (as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report); and***
- (ii) recommend that a communications plan be drawn up and instigated with a view to ensuring that the county's residents, businesses and all city, town and community councils are informed of the proposed changes prior to their implementation.***

6 REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care alongside the Head of Regional Collaboration presented the Regional Partnership Board – Annual Report 2021/22 (previously circulated). The purpose of the report was to provide information to partners with regard to the North Wales Regional Partnership Board (NWRPB) and its activities during 2021/22.

In March 2018 the Welsh Government issued Guidance for the completion of the Regional Partnership Board Annual reports and Boards were expected to use this guidance for the completion of their reports. The report presented to the Committee contained all the information which was required to be included in accordance with the Guidance. The NWRPB report was written in a format that captured all information which required to be presented. The report also included views of a number of the Board's members.

The Board had been established to meet the requirements of Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. The Act required local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation with their relevant partners and others, in relation to adults with needs for care and support, carers and children. It also placed a duty on relevant partners to co-operate with, and provide information to, the local authorities for the purpose of their social services functions.

The Head of Regional Collaboration highlighted specific areas of interest within the report –

The Regional Partnership Board's role is to bring together health, social services, housing, the third sector and other partners to work together to integrate health, social care and well-being services across the region.

To support the work undertaken there is a complex governance structure as you can see on page 6 of the Annual report. The main board is the Regional Partnership Board which meets monthly and is responsible for setting a clear direction for partnership working and ensuring that this is achieved. The NWRPB formally reports to the North Wales Leadership Board.

Welsh Government provide us with revenue and capital funding to support this work.

The Integrated Care Fund (ICF) was established in 2014 and enables health and social care services to work together to support: older people with complex needs and long term conditions including dementia people with learning disabilities

children with complex needs due to disability or illness carers, including young carers children at risk of becoming looked after, in care or who are adopted.

And the transformation programme which commenced in April 2018 to improve health and social care services across Wales.

Both programmes were there to help deliver the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Welsh Government Strategy, A Healthier Wales through the Regional Partnership Board.

The last 12 months has seen the previous two programmes for Integration – Transformation Programme and the Integrated Care Fund come to an end and a new fund developed – the Regional Integration Fund.

- The Population Needs Assessment 2022 - the Board had successfully completed a full review of the North Wales Population Assessment in partnership with local authority and health board leads, supported by the Research, Innovation and Improvement Coordination Hub and Public Health Wales. The data and analysis contained in this Assessment would be used to help shape regional priorities and area service plans going forward.
- The establishment of a Children's Sub-Group of the NWRPB to provide strategic direction in respect of supporting families of children with specific health and social care needs.

The information contained in the Population Needs Assessment and Annual Report would assist the Board to scope and develop its regional priorities and to plan and improve services across the region.

During the discussion members raised the following matters –

- concerns regarding with the multitude of different boards across North Wales and whether they causing resources to be spread too thinly. Responding officers clarified that the various boards had their own remits and dealt with matters accordingly. The NWRPB had been established by the Welsh Government (WB) as a statutory Board and therefore its remit was defined in legislation.
- The NWRPB was undertaking some really interesting and useful work with a view to delivering better integrated health and social care services, nevertheless the general public were not aware of the amount of work which was carried out by the Board. This needed to be addressed and promoted.
- The digitisation of the work was highlighted as a challenge as many of the Board members represented different authorities/bodies and the software systems of the various organisation were not compatible with each other. This led to delays and frustration for those delivering services on the ground. Problems had been encountered by the Community Resources Teams (CRTs) and the Learning Disabilities (LD) Services with regards to this.
- Members raised the issue with staffing in the care sector, and highlighted that staff were not being paid enough and appreciated for their work. The

NWRPB Workforce Board was actively engaging with Social Care Wales to address issues relating to pay, recruitment and retention, as well as attempting to influence WG and UK governments decisions in relation to these matters.

The Committee:

Resolved: -

- (i) to confirm that it had read, understood and taken into account the work that was required to be undertaken by the Regional Partnership Board; and***
- (ii) subject to the above observations on the work and progress during 2021/22 on the work areas being taken forward through the North Wales Regional Partnership Board, to receive the Annual Report and endorse its contents.***

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the Committee's work programme. Members were informed the purpose of the report was to review the Committee's future work to ensure it included all items requested by members.

Members were informed that items of the previous meeting which was cancelled had been moved to the December meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator queried with the committee whether they had any nominations for the representative to serve on the Project Board for Bwthyn y Ddôl. Councillor Bobby Feeley was happy to be a representative on the board, which was seconded by Councillor Martyn Hogg all present were in agreement with the proposal.

The Committee:

Resolved: *subject to the above amendments and additions to –*

- (i) confirm the Committee's draft forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and***
- (ii) to appoint Councillor Bobby Feeley as Denbighshire County Council's Scrutiny Committee representative on the Bwthyn y Ddôl Project Board.***

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm.