

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 2 February 2017 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Chair), Martyn Holland, Anton Sampson, Cefyn Williams and Cheryl Williams

Co-opted Members Kathy Jones and Gareth Williams attended for agenda item 6

Observers – Councillors Meirick Davies, Stuart Davies and Arwel Roberts

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM), Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation (AS), Head of Education (KE), Education Planning and Resources Manager (IL), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Councillors Bill Cowie, Rhys Hughes, Bob Murray and David Simmons

Cabinet Members – Councillors Bobby Feeley, David Smith and Eryl Williams

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Brian Blakeley declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 – Police and Crime Commissioner because he was the Council's representative on the North Wales Police and Crime Panel.

Councillors Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Anton Sampson, Cheryl Williams and Cefyn Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 – Denbighshire's Draft Home to School Transport Policy because they were school governors.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts also declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 – Scrutiny Work Programme because reference was made to the local Nat West Bank closures and he ran Ruthin Post Office which provided banking services.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 15 December 2016 were submitted.

Matters Arising –

Page 8, Item 4 Minutes (County-wide impact of the increase of car parking charges) – Mold Town Council had advised that they did not subsidise car park charges in Mold. A small amount of benefit from the Nett car parking income was received – not in “hard cash” but the Town Council was able to specify what projects the amount should be spent on. The works agreed were then carried out in partnership with Flintshire County Council and all projects were infrastructure related. Mold Town Council had also advised that Buckley Town Council had agreed to pay a set sum to Flintshire County Council over the Christmas period so that visitors would benefit from free parking for the couple of weeks leading up to Christmas.

Page 10, Item 6 Water Management and Flood Mitigation – Councillor Martyn Holland referred to (1) discussions with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) at the last meeting who had advised of work to mitigate the risk to life and property of flooding from main rivers, and (2) the Council’s Bridge Maintenance Strategy recently considered by Performance Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Holland hoped that bridges would be included in the property categorisation referred to by NRW for the purposes of mitigation work given the potential damage to bridges as a result of fallen trees, etc., and subsequent repair/maintenance cost implications. It was noted that water and flood management in Denbighshire would be discussed at Council Briefing in June and it was agreed that the issue be raised at that time.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed Mr. Arfon Jones, North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner who was attending the meeting at the Committee’s invitation to discuss his vision and priorities for the region. Members noted the distinction between the Commissioner’s strategic role and the Chief Constable’s operational role in policing and it was agreed to invite the Chief Constable to a future meeting to discuss his vision and priorities.

Prior to his formal address the Commissioner advised that the Police and Crime Panel had earlier that week approved his draft budget for 2017/18, which would result in 17 additional police officers and 6 other members of staff being recruited. Of the 17 additional police officers to be recruited, 10 would be deployed ‘on the beat’ across North Wales to deal with low level crime, such as anti-social behaviour, whilst the remaining 7 officers and 6 other members of staff would be employed in specialist roles, mainly investigating child exploitation and cyber-crime. To fund this budget the Panel had agreed to set the Police precept at 3.79%, which equated to an increase of £9 a year, or 17p a day, on a Band D property across North Wales.

Mr. Jones addressed the Committee outlining his role and responsibilities as the elected Commissioner, the public’s representative for liaising with North Wales Police. These duties included –

- setting the budget and precept for the Police Service

- holding the Chief Constable to account for fulfilling his main duty, of providing an effective and efficient police service for North Wales, providing value for money and reducing crime
- allocating revenue to prevent crime and disorder to groups across North Wales
- drawing up a Police and Crime Plan, setting out the strategic direction for policing in North Wales.

The Commissioner was currently in the process of consulting on his Police and Crime Plan, his first plan since his election in May 2016. As part of his consultation on the Plan an online questionnaire had been available for residents to complete and a series of public meetings had been held across North Wales. He informed members that following his election he had not changed his predecessor's Plan as he agreed with the majority of the actions in it. However, his Plan would reflect the changes and threats facing North Wales as well as, where possible, residents, statutory agencies, voluntary sector and the business community's priorities across the region.

The Commissioner's Plan would focus on the vulnerability of people rather than seek to deal with everyone and everything. Consequently it would include plans to address domestic abuse, child abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking. Whilst the basic principles of policing had stayed the same as when he was a serving police officer, other aspects of policing had changed as had the types of crime they were dealing with on a day to day basis. Abhorrent crimes such as child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery were far more prevalent now as were cyber-crime incidents. Statistics now indicated that these days more crimes were committed online than on the streets. As a result more of the Police's resources were required to deal with crime that was to an extent 'hidden', or not visible to the majority of the population. Whilst this 'hidden' crime could initially seem easy to investigate, the speed and power of cyber and social media crime meant it was a complex area which could extend around the globe and involve dozens, if not hundreds of perpetrators, i.e. the sharing of indecent images, etc. To emphasise the extent and complexities of these types of cases he referred to specific high profile cases which had featured in the media in recent months. Quite often victims of such offences, due to their vulnerability, did not recognise themselves as victims, therefore time and commitment of specialist staff from the Police and other agencies were required in order to compile the evidence of the crimes committed.

Modern day slavery was another 'new' crime that was becoming more prevalent in North Wales. The port of Holyhead made North Wales a key area in the UK for human trafficking and modern day slavery. This specific type of crime required more investment and was an example of a number of areas where the Police could not deal with the problem alone. Matters arising from cases involving modern slavery, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, and other serious crimes very often had much wider implications and resource requirements than policing alone. For these crimes to be tackled successfully effective partnership working between all public bodies and agencies was essential.

More than twelve months had elapsed since a multiagency plan had been drawn up and agreed to deal with the increasing problem of sexual exploitation. However,

the lack of progress made since its approval was disappointing. The Commissioner thought this was due to a lack of commitment from partners. He asked elected members to question the role of local authorities and seek assurances that everything possible was being done to safeguard children and the most vulnerable members of society. Another project which he was keen to progress was one to support children whose parents were in prison. Whilst all six local authorities and the Health Board had participated to establish the project, further progress seemed to have stalled.

The Commissioner emphasised that children and young people were another of his priorities. It was his opinion that the youth justice system had been ineffective for years and that there was a need to intervene sooner to prevent children and young people from finding their way into the criminal justice system in the first place. He advised that the four Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales were calling for powers in relation to youth justice to be devolved as part of the Wales Bill as they felt that this could improve the situation. In his view the benefits of a restorative justice system far outweighed those of taking young people to court.

In relation to his statutory responsibility for awarding grants to prevent crime and disorder he advised that his office currently provided funding to community safety partnerships across North Wales. This was an arrangement that he had inherited but did not support. He would prefer to see a model where the Safer Communities Board, which presently acted without funding, was given funding to commission services throughout the year in order to deal with areas of concern. He was willing to invest the grant to prevent crime and disorder in the Safer Communities Board for the Board to commission prevention services throughout the year and to ask partners to match fund his contribution. The Commissioner asked the Committee to support this proposal so that together all partners could secure the provision of front line services where they were most needed.

Responding to the Committee's observations and questions the Commissioner –

- confirmed that he contributed £17k to each of the six local authorities in North Wales towards their CCTV services. He was willing to speak to council officials regarding their proposed plans for returning to a 24 hour monitored service to explore possible support. However, he could not commit providing financial resources towards proposals over and above his contribution to other local authorities
- agreed that using volunteers to monitor CCTV footage was also an option that merited further exploration
- acknowledged that there were concerns amongst the public with regards to the lack of visible Police presence on the streets and in communities. Due to the impact of austerity cuts, an increase in mental health problems, collaboration work with other agencies, e.g. Ambulance Service and the increase in 'hidden' crime rates, i.e. cyber-crime police officers now only spent approximately 25% of their time undertaking 'traditional' police duties
- confirmed that a large number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Special Constables had joined the Police Service as part of their career progression

- outlined the number and varied roles of staff employed directly in the Commissioner's team. The Commissioner's office costs were in the region of £800k per annum, this compared with the former Police Authority's annual costs of circa £750k. However the Commissioner's responsibilities were wider than those of the Police Authority as he was responsible for commissioning services, some in partnership with other public bodies etc., worth £4m to £5m
- detailed the complexities involved with investigating cyber-crime, the role of agencies such as the National Crime Agency (NCA), international crime agencies, i.e. FBI, the determination process for deciding who would lead national and international investigations and who would undertake surveillance work on the ground, including who would be responsible for bearing costs of such investigations. The Home Office was keen for police forces to work together to tackle cyber and digital crime and had awarded Transformation Funding for a project to improve methods of sharing crime data and crime images between forces
- confirmed that crimes such as murder investigations were extremely resource intensive and expensive to conduct
- advised that the Rural Crime Team, established by his predecessor, was now well established. It had increased in size and capacity and now included a PCSO. However, rural crime could be reduced further if more farmers invested in security equipment or technology such as dashcams etc., as footage from such equipment could be used by the Police to catch and prosecute perpetrators
- stated that there would be an impact on the region, particularly on the Wrexham area, as a result of the new prison HMP Berwyn. There would be positive impacts on employment opportunities for the area and there would also be implications on the local infrastructure such as schools, health service establishments, etc. Potential impacts on local policing requirements or crime rates were not yet known
- confirmed that PCSO's and Special Constables had enforcing powers with respect to moving vehicles which were causing an obstruction. Special Constables, although volunteers, had more enforcement powers than PCSO's in a number of crime and disorder areas
- advised that he was not convinced that all police officers should be required to be educated to degree level. For policing to be effective officers should have a range of educational and inter-personal skills
- advised of his view that recreational drugs posed more of a threat if pushed 'underground'. He felt that if they were regulated, similar to alcohol, the problem could be better managed. In certain countries the use of drugs was classed as a public health matter, not a criminal matter. In these countries drug users were not entered into the criminal justice system they were instead offered treatment. Drug dealers on the other hand continued to be subject to the criminal justice system in those countries. Due to the controversial nature of this approach politicians in the UK were very reluctant to even discuss the matter
- confirmed to the Chief Executive that he would appreciate a meeting with him with a view to moving forward the multiagency plan to deal with the increasing problems of child exploitation
- advised members that some of the grant funding allocated during his first year had been provided to groups which supported work with victims of crime, as he

was well aware that the trauma for victims did not end once a court case had concluded. Some victims would require support for some considerable length of time. He was also aware that current high profile investigations, such as the Professor Alexis Jay Independent Inquiry and the Offside Football Child Abuse Inquiry, would place extra pressures on victim support groups and require additional financial resources

- confirmed that he would be discussing with the Fire and Rescue Authority in the near future the viability of using Fire and Rescue Service Staff who undertake Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) to alert the Police if they suspected domestic abuse in any homes they entered. He was of the view that this proposed partnership approach could help tackle domestic abuse in the area.

Reference was made to problems with the 101 non-emergency police number which led to some callers being cut-off before their call was answered. It seemed that in these cases the cut-off was instigated by the caller's telephone provider. However members emphasised the importance of the Police having a system in place to at least acknowledge the call and advise that the call may be terminated if unanswered within a specific period of time, or for the caller to leave a message for the service to call them back.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Chair thanked the Commissioner for attending and answering members' questions and the Committee –

RESOLVED to write to the Chief Constable to seek clarity on the powers conferred on Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Special Constable with respect to enforcement action, and to invite the Chief Constable to a future meeting to discuss his vision and priorities for North Wales.

At this juncture (10.50 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for a refreshment break.

6 DENBIGHSHIRE'S DRAFT HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

The Head of Education introduced the report (previously circulated) updating members on the progress to date with the review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. A copy of the latest revised draft of the policy had been attached to the report for members' consideration and observations.

The Committee was advised that the majority of legal advice sought on aspects of the policy had been received and the version presented to them had been amended in line with that advice. The Education Resource and Support Manager highlighted the main changes in the draft policy as outlined in the report, these being –

- 'feeder school' relationships were recognised in the new draft policy. The current policy only recognised nearest suitable school, and this factor could have a detrimental impact on children being able to stay together at transition to secondary school. Applications for secondary school transport under the proposed new policy would therefore be assessed on nearest suitable school or whether they had attended a 'designated primary feeder school'. Transport on the basis of feeder school would be provided as a discretionary arrangement

- that the guidance in relation to pick-up points and hazardous routes would be incorporated into the new policy to aid transparency and clarity
- clarity on discretionary travel provision
- an extended timescale for the appeals process to ensure that all elements relating to an appeal were properly investigated, and
- a number of other minor changes throughout the document for strengthening or clarifying purposes.

In response to members' questions, officers –

- informed the Committee that the revised policy had been drafted having regard to the requirements of recent legislation, i.e. the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- confirmed that for pupils in the south of the county who attended faith schools, or who wished to access faith based secondary education, their nearest faith based school would be in Wrexham. They would not be expected to travel to Rhyl
- advised that they would shortly be looking at improving transport links across county boundaries with a view to exploring whether Denbighshire pupils could utilise transport commissioned by other authorities to transport their pupils to Denbighshire schools, and vice-versa to see if pupils from other counties could travel on Denbighshire commissioned transport to schools outside of the county
- informed the Committee that the policy's provisions in relation to designated pick-up points and hazardous routes would require to be applied in a fair and equitable manner, with due regard being given to all considerations presented
- once the revised policy was approved for consultation every effort would be made to promote the consultation exercise via the media, schools and any other appropriate methods, with a view to attracting maximum stakeholder engagement with the process
- the Education Service worked closely with the Highways and Environmental Service in relation to monitoring whether school routes could become hazardous during the growing season, particularly those routes in the south of the county that were subject to biodiversity verge cutting. The safety of the pupils would always be paramount
- confirmed that the timetable for the new policy's approval and implementation was as laid out in paragraph 4.5.1. of the report. However, where able Education Support would apply the same principles to school transport applications received in the interim
- advised that as part of the consultation exercise on the policy a clear definition would be communicated with respect of the term 'discretionary transport', including information on the length of discretionary transport awards, and
- confirmed that the actual cost of the policy could not be calculated until the consultation phase had concluded and the new policy had received final approval. It may transpire that the actual cost could be higher than the one which had been budgeted for originally. Nevertheless, the new policy once implemented would be applied consistently and therefore be equitable to all pupils. It would keep pupils safe and not contravene any legal duties. Once the policy received approval provision would need to be made for it within the

Service's budget, including potential ways of securing the most cost effective routes to ensure the policy would be sustainable for the future.

Members acknowledged that the latest draft of the policy was a far better, clearer and more flexible policy than the original. It recognised and safeguarded the special relationships which had been forged between secondary schools and their 'feeder primary schools' and incorporated a fair and independent appeals process for parents and guardians.

Summing up at the conclusion of the discussion the Chair emphasised that the Committee had considered this specific topic on a number of occasions since the decision had been taken to apply the policy robustly. Whilst there had been a resistance in some areas to its implementation, and a number of anomalies had come to light through the implementation process, he was of the view that Scrutiny and officers had listened to those affected and consequently adapted the policy to reflect the concerns raised, to ensure pupils' safety and safeguard the good relationships fostered between feeder schools and their designated secondary schools. The Committee –

RESOLVED that subject to the above observations –

- (a) to support the approach outlined in the new draft policy;
- (b) support progression to the consultation phase, with the Wellbeing Impact Assessment being undertaken beforehand, and
- (c) that a report be presented to the Committee during the summer of 2017 detailing the results and findings of the consultation exercise on the draft policy, and that the report include information on the proposed re-aligned school routes.

7 WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICE TRUST

Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) representatives David Scott (Non-Executive Director), Sonia Thompson (Interim Head of Operations Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Area) and Claire Bevan (Executive Director for Quality, Nursing and Patient Experience) were introduced and welcomed. WAST representatives had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss with the Committee the problems and pressures faced by the service in Denbighshire and across Wales, and how they were addressing those pressures.

Through a PowerPoint presentation WAST representatives illustrated to members –

- data on the number of calls and website enquiries received by the service last year, which showed a substantial increase on the previous year, and the number of patient care journeys undertaken by the service and its volunteer network
- data on the number of calls responded to by Community First Responder volunteers

- the perverse effect of meeting ambulance response times – being able to meet the set targets, but not improving the experience or the outcomes for the patient, apart from the most critically ill
- the measures being implemented with a view to improve call management and patient assessment to aid appropriate dispatch of emergency ambulances and other response vehicles, including the anticipated benefits of this approach to the patient and to WAST
- the improvements realised to date from adopting the New Clinical Model, including a 38% reduction in the number of Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) stood down
- work undertaken with Health Service and Police staff with a view to reducing the number of ‘frequent callers’ and the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to preventing falls
- the increase in the number of patients who had been clinically assessed by the Clinical Telephone Assessment Team which had resulted in them not requiring an emergency ambulance
- the pan-Wales Transition of Care Closer to Home initiative, which had led to fewer patients being conveyed to hospital in North Wales than the rest of Wales
- work currently in progress and proposed to drive improvements with respect to managing calls for assistance which were deemed to be non-emergency calls
- the work underway to try and improve handover times from WAST to the Health Board, currently performance in BCUHB’s area against this specific indicator was consistently the worst in Wales
- initiatives underway across North Wales with a view to driving improvements. These included a team of clinicians based in the Police Control Centre and at WAST’s Control Room which could assess the patient’s needs, and the development of Alternative Care Pathways – including a Community Assistance Team in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service, District Nurse Pathway, a revised Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) Protocol, and in March 2017 a Mental Health Pathway pilot would commence at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd
- in addition a Rapid Handover Protocol would be rolled-out pan North Wales to support the timely handover of patients who do not require a clinician to clinician discussion, the Community First Responder Service would be expanded to work in areas of North Wales which did not currently have a significant CFR presence; and work would continue with frequent service users with a view to supporting their needs without them having to call out the service.

WAST representatives informed the Committee that initial feedback from the public and Welsh Government (WG) Ministers to the New Clinical Model approach had been favourable, staff morale had also improved.

The Committee heard evidence from a member of the public in attendance on how he had called for an ambulance to an accident in Llangollen, and the delay experienced before an ambulance actually arrived as there were no ambulances available within close proximity to the town. Despite a firefighter being nearby at the time he had not been mobilised to attend the incident to administer first aid. WAST representatives advised that they were concerned to learn of the gentleman’s experience and asked if he could discuss the matter with them following the meeting so that they could investigate it on this behalf. Committee

members also gave examples of delayed responses to emergency calls which had been brought to their attention. WAST representatives encouraged councillors to forward any such concerns to them because investigation of complaints was an effective way of improving services.

Responding to members' questions WAST representatives –

- advised that the Health Board commissioned WAST to deliver an ambulance service
- confirmed that they were looking at potential areas where they could work collaboratively with other emergency services and public bodies across Wales to deliver co-ordinated responses or services as well as preventative services. Part of this exploratory work included looking at the potential of co-locating WAST teams, including Control Room staff, with other emergency services. Potential co-location plans to date could not be progressed due to premises capacity limitations
- advised that work was taking place with the Older People's Commissioner with a view to securing a co-ordinated approach by all agencies to health and well-being matters, including responding to emergency calls
- reassured the Committee that any delay in responding to an emergency request was deemed as unacceptable, emphasising that a concerted effort was required across all health care services and external agencies to support people at home where possible
- advised that with an ageing population there was a need to expand areas, such as falls prevention work. Often these days patients conveyed to hospital by the Ambulance Service had a range of complex needs
- confirmed that upon arrival at a general hospital if the patient could not be transferred immediately to the care of the hospital nurses would attend to the patient in the ambulance. At that point the patient would become the joint responsibility of the hospital and the Ambulance Service
- informed the committee that work was currently underway on modelling the anticipated demand and capacity of community hospitals for the forthcoming five years
- advised that a new Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) system was due to be introduced during the summer of 2017. This system, based on an internationally recognised system, would help triage emergency calls to determine the most appropriate response to them
- explained the process for dealing with request for passenger transport for planned hospital appointments
- confirmed that WAST did not class persistent callers as 'nuisance callers' as they obviously were in need of assistance. WAST had worked closely with the other emergency services in a bid to raise awareness of the impact such calls had on the emergency services and on other residents who were in urgent need of the emergency services. Awareness raising campaigns in relation to this would continue to be held on a regular basis
- agreed with members and council officers that loneliness was a hidden, but growing problem, within the population. It was one of the causes why some individuals were persistently calling the emergency services for non-emergency assistance. It was anticipated that the triaging system introduced with the

Clinical Assessment Team and the services that would be provided by the Community Assistance Team, a team consisting of Fire, Police and Single Point of Access (SPoA) staff which was currently being piloted in Denbighshire, would help ease pressures on WAST as these teams could direct the callers to the most appropriate services for their needs. Whilst no authority or organisation had a statutory duty to address loneliness, the problem was impacting on a range of front line services

- confirmed that the Air Ambulance was an independent charity. The Wales Air Ambulance Service was different to its counterparts in other parts of the UK as it had a range of highly qualified clinicians attached to it who could be called upon as and when required. A decision on whether to call on the services of the Air Ambulance would be made based on the assessed need of the patient.

The Chair thanked WAST representatives for attending and answering members' questions. He also thanked the member of the public for attending and sharing his experiences of the Ambulance Service. Both the Chair and members emphasised to WAST representatives the importance of maintaining regular communication between the Ambulance Service and those who had called for assistance in order to reassure the patient that appropriate assistance was on its way to them. At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee –

RESOLVED that subject to the above observations to receive the presentation and extend an invitation to the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust to attend another meeting at an appropriate time in the future.

8 DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESIDENTS SURVEY 2017

The Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation presented the report (previously circulated) which outlined the proposed process for undertaking the 2017 Residents Survey in Denbighshire.

In his introduction the Head of Service outlined the importance of the Residents Survey exercise as a way of measuring citizens' satisfaction with the Council's services and for gauging their views on the services they would like to receive in the future. He outlined the Council's proposals for increasing residents' engagement with the survey process for the forthcoming survey and advised that if between 2000 – 3000 respondents could be secured the authority would regard that as an appropriate response rate. The survey responses would be analysed alongside the responses to the Corporate Plan consultation and both analysis would contribute towards the new Council's strategic planning for future years.

With a view to maximising residents' engagement with the process members requested officers to enquire whether an incentive could be offered to entice residents to complete a survey, i.e. free 12 month leisure membership for one/two people. The Committee was keen that members had an opportunity to comment on the draft survey before it was issued to residents, therefore the Committee –

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *subject to the above comments and enquiries being made to establish whether an incentive in the form of a prize could be given to one respondent for completing the survey, that the proposed new arrangements for undertaking the Residents Survey be supported, and*
- (b) *that the draft Residents Survey be submitted to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chair's Group (SCVCG) for comments prior to its publication.*

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the Committee's work programme and provided an update on relevant issues.

Discussion focused on the following –

- it was noted that Nat West officials had declined the Committee's invitation to attend its meeting in March to discuss the rationale for closing branches in the county and future proposals for delivering banking facilities but had offered to meet with officers or members on an individual basis. Members expressed concern that Nat West officials had not been willing to engage and discuss matters in a public forum with a view to working with the Council for the benefit of customers and future delivery of services. It was agreed that a press release be issued highlighting the Committee's disappointment and frustration in that regard. Councillor Cheryl Williams asked that alternative means of delivering those banking services to local communities be explored, including the use of one stop shops. The Chair advised that Ruthin Post Office provided some banking facilities
- members agreed to invite the relevant Lead Cabinet Members to attend the Committee's next meeting for items relating to Supporting Independence in Denbighshire; Review of Primary School Provision in the Ruthin area, and Water Management (Glasidr area, Ruthin), and
- the Committee also reaffirmed their decision to receive a report back on Denbighshire's Home to School Transport Policy following the consultation process to also include the review of school transport routes and pick up points.

RESOLVED *that, subject to the above, the forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.*

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Martyn Holland advised that the Equality Group was reviewing the way in which it operated in the county in the future.

RESOLVED *that the verbal report be received and noted.*

The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.