

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 25 April 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley (Chair), Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Alice Jones (Vice-Chair), Pat Jones, Margaret McCarroll, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry and Huw Williams

Observers: Councillors Bill Cowie and Gwyneth Kensler

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Directors: Economic and Community Ambition (RM) and Modernisation and Wellbeing (SE), Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management (WH), Community Engagement Manager (DD), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (KEJ) together with Keith Ivens and Mark Pugh from Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

1 APOLOGIES

Councillors Joan Butterfield and Bill Tasker

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2013 were submitted.

Accuracy – Page 7 – Item No. 5 Capacity of Adult Safeguarding Services – For clarity members agreed that the reference to paid carers be amended to reflect that 31% of abuse allegations had been made against paid carers.

Matters Arising – Page 6 – Item No. 5 Capacity of Adult Safeguarding Services – Councillor Ann Davies expressed concern that confirmation was still awaited on whether the POVA leaflet quoting the wrong telephone number had been included in the Carer's Pack provided by NEWCIS and whether those leaflets had been recalled and amended. The Scrutiny Coordinator advised that requests for an urgent response had been made and the Corporate Director Modernisation and Wellbeing (CDMW) agreed to take up the matter personally. Councillor Alice Jones referred to her concerns expressed regarding abuse allegations and threshold criteria and reported upon a meeting she and Councillor Ann Davies had attended with the CDMW and Head of Adult Services with respect to care monitoring. The

CDMW advised that as a consequence Adult Services would be exploring the possibilities of carrying out spot checking of care agencies. Councillor Jones highlighted the need for additional funding to monitor care agencies and the Chair suggested that the matter be discussed further at their July meeting when social care matters would be considered.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2013 be approved as a correct record.

5 FLOOD INVESTIGATIONS: NOVEMBER 2012 INCIDENTS

The Corporate Director Economic and Community Ambition (CDECA) presented a report (previously circulated) updating members on progress with investigations into the flooding events across Denbighshire in November 2012 and sought members' views on potential emerging recommendations. The terms of reference and commission for investigation had been attached to the report. A full report would be submitted to Council following completion of the investigations.

The report detailed the significant flooding which occurred at 12 separate locations involving approximately 500 properties. The Council's investigation was being supported by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) with independent experts having been commissioned to carry out the investigation at Glasdir, Ruthin due to the complexities at that location. Work was being coordinated by the Flood Investigation Working Group and two Stakeholder Briefings had been provided which included summaries of findings to date and emerging recommendations. Details of interim action to address identified flood risks had also been provided.

The CDECA provided some further context to the report advising of recent legislation governing flood risk management and the Council's responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority in that regard. Overall initial findings suggested that –

- it was an exceptional weather event (flood risk rating of close of 1:200) with high river levels, persistent rainfall and already saturated ground resulting in river banks being breached and flood defences overtopped
- Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water confirmed that water had not been released from Llyn Aled and Llyn Aled Isaf Reservoir and therefore had not been a contributory factor
- river levels records demonstrated that the tide was not the cause of flooding at Rhuddlan and St. Asaph

She also verbally updated the committee on progress with the investigations into each of the 12 separate locations subject to flooding. Members questioned various aspects of the investigation process in order to satisfy themselves that all avenues were being explored and also sought clarification on the responsibilities of all those involved in both managing and maintaining flood defences. Mr. Keith Ivens and Mr. Mark Pugh, NRW provided further information regarding the technical points covered during the investigation together with the role of NRW as part of that process and their responsibilities on flood risk in terms of preparation, maintenance and responding to incidents. During the detailed debate the following action points were raised –

- residents in other parts of Ruthin had also been refused insurance cover or faced significantly higher premiums due to historical flood events and members asked that the effectiveness of the Ruthin Flood Alleviation Scheme be brought to the attention of the insurance industry with a view to ensuring flood risk was also assessed appropriately within those areas
- due to under-capacity and restrictions associated with culverts in the Llanbedr DC area members asked that the practicalities be explored of ensuring that all future planning applications for areas affected by surface water flooding included adequate sized culverts/gulleys within the plans prior to planning permission being granted
- reference was made to Rhyll's Flood Plan and resident Flood Wardens and it was suggested that this best practice initiative be extended to other parts of the county
- members requested that enquiries be made with the Welsh Government as the Trunk Road Agency on whether recent work undertaken on the A494 had affected the drainage channels for surface water
- it was suggested that NRW become more proactive in issuing evacuation alerts to residents in known flood risk areas
- officers be asked to explore the possibility of establishing a multi-agency group of all stakeholders, including the Council (officers and members), NRW, Dwr Cymru, land owners and fishing groups, to devise and implement a long-term management strategy for river maintenance from source (spring) to coast with a view to mitigating future flood risks, and
- agreed that a separate meeting be arranged between Councillor Alice Jones and the CDECA, Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management, and NRW to discuss her specific concerns including the erosion of the river bank in St. Asaph and possible tidal effect on the flooding incident in November 2012. An information report back on that discussion be submitted prior to the committee's next meeting.

[RM to progress the above action points]

RESOLVED that, subject to the above action points, the progress report on investigations into the flooding incidents in November 2012 be received and noted.

6 FLOOD RISK WITHIN DENBIGHSHIRE

[This item was brought forward on the agenda with the consent of the Chair]

The Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management (SE) submitted a report (previously circulated) and delivered a power point presentation on the sources and extent of flood risk within Denbighshire, the Council's duties and responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority and sought members' support for the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The committee was advised that flood risk management was supported by the Welsh Government through grant aid. The reduction and changes to future funding provision was highlighted together with the need for innovative solutions and prioritising investment. The SE advised that the findings of the flood investigations

would inform the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. He responded to members' questions as follows –

- explained the criteria used to identify areas at risk of surface water flooding which showed there were no flood risk areas in Denbighshire
- elaborated upon the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy highlighting initial objectives and proposed measures to deliver those objectives, together with the opportunity to reduce flood risks faced by communities, and
- advised of the low number of sites within the Local Development Plan in flood risk areas and provided assurance that identified risks would be managed through the planning process.

Members discussed with officers and representatives from NRW the guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15) which related to development and flood risk and its application in practice. Councillor Ann Davies expressed concern that no flood risk had been identified during the planning process for earlier developments in Marsh Road, Rhuddlan which had been an area affected by flooding in November 2012. Councillor Alice Jones raised concerns regarding the robustness of the guidance contained in TAN15 and the findings of the Council's Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment carried out in 2007 in light of subsequent flooding events. The SE explained the cautionary approach in respect of developments in areas at risk of flooding summarising the planning processes and tests to ensure that proposed developments were appropriate and that consequences of flooding were acceptable. The findings of the flood investigations would provide further information in respect of specific areas such as Rhuddlan and Glasdir which may impact on future development proposals. Mr. Keith Ivens added that NRW's flood risk maps were updated every quarter and models were also reviewed following flooding events.

Councillor Alice Jones disputed the initial flood investigation findings into the incidents in November 2012 which had found that the tide had no effect on the flooding in Rhuddlan and St. Asaph advising that she had documentary evidence to the contrary. Mr. Keith Ivens understood that the tidal effect had not been seen as far as St. Asaph but advised that once modelling work had been verified more scenarios could be carried out using actual tidal data from the period in question to determine any impact. The issue would be further discussed with Councillor Jones outside of the meeting.

The Chair highlighted that the frequency and extent of flooding incidents would likely increase as a consequence of climate change and welcomed the development of a Strategy to manage flood risk within the county. In supporting the document the committee felt that the Strategy should be more widely circulated with a final draft submitted for scrutiny before submission to full Council.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be supported;*

- (b) *the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be circulated for comments to all councillors, Town and Community Councils, and Member Area Groups (with local areas of interest highlighted for each individual Member Group area), and*
- (c) *following the public consultation process the final draft of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be submitted to the appropriate scrutiny committee as determined by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs' Group prior to submission to full Council.*

[WH to action above recommendations / RE to confirm which scrutiny committee will consider strategy]

At this juncture (12.10 p.m.) the meeting adjourned for a refreshment break.

7 RECOVERY FROM NOVEMBER 2012 FLOODS PROGRESS REPORT

The Corporate Director Modernising and Wellbeing (CDMW) presented a report (previously circulated) updating the committee on progress with recovery from the November 2012 floods and sought members' views on the findings of an initial debrief report on this first phase of the recovery process.

An overview of the work undertaken to support communities affected by the floods was provided including the work of the Corporate Recovery Group and sub groups to ensure continued support. A structure for managing recovery and an update on those groups' activities had been attached to the report. Voluntary organisations had also secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund to be used to maintain a range of welfare services to the flooded communities.

The Recovery Phase 1 debrief report (attached as a confidential appendix to the main report) covered the period immediately following the floods up to the end of December 2012. The CDMW referred to the debrief process and elaborated upon the findings and reasoning behind each of the six main recommendations arising from the report which covered the following elements –

- R1 – Procedural Guidance
- R2 – Learning and Development
- R3 – Establishment of Hubs
- R4 – Contact Lists
- R5 – Information Management
- R6 – Communications

The committee paid tribute to the work carried out by staff in responding to the flooding incidents both during and after the event and asked that their appreciation be conveyed to all those involved. Members also commended the approach in evaluating the recovery work undertaken in order that lessons were learnt and procedures drawn up for future major incidents. During the ensuing debate the CDMW responded to members' questions and comments as follows –

- acknowledged the delay in responding to some flooding incidents due to the initial lack of information received which would be addressed in future through improvements to information management systems
- confirmed that procedures for dealing with various aspects of the recovery phase would be developed in order to work across different types of settings
- reported upon the development of clear evacuation systems in terms of sheltered housing accommodation situated in flood risk areas
- elaborated upon the difficulties of sharing information between agencies in order to track those receiving help/advice
- agreed with the need to increase capacity of the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) during such incidents and look into the possibility of contingency cover for CRM calls in extremely busy periods caused by unforeseen emergencies.

Members also discussed with the CDMW how the Council would respond to major incidents/emergencies in large rural areas. Councillors Merfyn Parry and Alice Jones referred to the recent snow which had affected the farming community in particular. They highlighted the isolation of some of those affected and both the emotional and financial impact which continued to be experienced. Consequently the committee asked whether similar support could be offered to those affected by snow in terms of addressing emotional wellbeing and financial needs through the targeted provision of information and advice; drop in sessions; community meeting together with specific support for agricultural businesses affected and their activities.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the progress report on recovery from the November 2012 floods be received and noted;*
- (b) *the CDMW be asked to explore the possibilities of contingency cover for CRM calls in extremely busy periods caused by unforeseen emergencies, and*
- (c) *the CDMW be asked to consider the provision of emotional and business support to those residents in rural areas who had been affected by the recent snow.*

[SE to progress recommendations (b) and (c)]

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the committee's future work programme and providing an update on relevant issues. A draft forward work programme (Appendix 1); proposals for future agenda items (Appendices 2a & 2b); Cabinet's forward work programme (Appendix 3) and Progress with Committee Resolutions (Appendix 4) had been attached to the report.

The Scrutiny Coordinator reported upon changes to the work programme since its preparation and sought the committee's views on managing their future workload and various matters requiring their attention. During discussion the committee –

- noted that the committee's Chair would be appointed by the Labour Group and that expressions of interest for Vice Chair would be sought prior to formal election at the next meeting
- agreed to convene a pre-meeting briefing immediately before the June meeting with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and to submit any questions to the Scrutiny Coordinator by 22 May
- agreed that the Chair, Corporate Director Modernisation and Wellbeing and Scrutiny Coordinator discuss the prioritisation of items for the meeting with BCUHB in June and the practicalities of holding an additional meeting in October to deal with forward work programme pressures
- agreed that the report on Heritage and Arts Assets be moved from December to the November meeting
- approved the committee's representatives for the In-House Provider Visits.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *subject to the above the work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, and*
- (b) *the following members be appointed the committee's representatives for the In-House Provider Visits as follows –*

Awelon, Ruthin & Dolwen, Denbigh – Councillor Ann Davies

Cysgol y Gaer, Corwen – Councillor Dewi Owens

Ty Mor, Rhyl – Councillor Pat Jones

Hafan Deg, Rhyl – Councillor Margaret McCarroll

[RE to action above]

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No reports from committee representatives had been received.

The meeting concluded at 1.40 p.m.