

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillor J.D. James (Chair)

Councillors:

J.A. Davies, P.M. Edwards, A.L. Fox, S.J.G. Gilasbey, T.M. Higgins, T.A.J. Davies,
A. Vaughan Owen, B.D.J. Phillips, J.S. Phillips, D. Thomas and C.A. Campbell.

Councillor K.V. Broom – Substitute for Councillor A.D.T. Speake.

Also in attendance:

Councillor H.A.L. Evans – Executive Board Member for Environment;
Councillor C. Campbell, Chair of Fair and Safe Communities Group.

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways;
R. Staines, Head of Housing and Public Protection;
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;
R. Edmunds, Trading Standards Services Manager;
J. Edwards, Principal Business & Development Officer;
A. Howells, Business & Development Manager;
D.W. John, Waste Services Manager;
J. McEvoy, Road Safety & Traffic Manager;
K. Thomas, Community Safety Manager;
R. W. Waters, Highways and Transportation Manager;
R. James, Group Accountant;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen – 10:00am - 11:30am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. James, A.D.T. Speake and P.M. Hughes [Executive Board Member for Public Protection].

With regard to Agenda Item 5, Fair and Safe Communities Group Annual Report 2016/17, the Chair announced that he had received apologies from Chief Inspector Steve Thomas, Vice Chair of Fair and Safe Communities Group.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
K.V. Broom	7 – Environment Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 - 2021	Her husband works for National Resources Wales

3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. FAIR AND SAFE COMMUNITIES GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Committee considered the Fair and Safe Communities Annual Report 2016/17 which was presented to Committee by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group. The report provided Members with the progress made by the Fair and Safe Communities group and its predecessor, the Community Safety Partnership, in tackling crime and disorder in 2016/17. The report also reviewed progress made against the Integrated Community Strategy.

The Committee was informed that the Group took pride in creating strong links with partners and working collaboratively in making communities safe places to live.

The Committee noted that the report included contributions from two of the group's 'Responsible Authorities' as statutory partners, the Fire and Rescue Service and Probation organisations. Furthermore, Governance arrangements for the Fair and Safe Communities group have been embedded within the Public Service Board Structure.

The Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group informed the Committee that the rise in crime levels could be attributed to the recent improvements in Police reporting processes. It was emphasised to the Committee that the Dyfed Powys Police force area remained one of the safest places to live with the lowest number of crime levels in England and Wales.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

In response to a query the Community Safety Manager stated that currently third sector were not represented on the Fair and Safe Communities Group, however, the group maintains strong links with third sector providers such as Age Concern Cymru and Women's Aid who are represented on a number of groups the Fair and Safe Communities group lead on. In light of this, Members raised concern that third sector organisations should be included on the group. The Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group agreed and would discuss this matter further with the Community Safety Manager.

A query was raised in relation the rise in the number of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) thefts. The Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group stated that the rise could be attributed to the recent developments that have been made in the way Police record crimes. It had been recognised there had been a spate in ATV thefts recently and the Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group stated that some research would be undertaken and information would be forwarded onto Members.

In response to a comment raised regarding the need for PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings to work more collaboratively, the Chair of the Fair and Safe Communities Group stated that a review of the Public Service Board (PSB) structure was due to be carried out in early 2018 which would be an opportunity for PSB's to consider PACT meetings in order to provide communities with a stronger voice.

With reference to page 13 of the report, a comment was raised regarding the 29 fixed penalty tickets issued since the introduction of the PSPO's for dog fouling, it was felt that considering this matter was a significant problem in communities the number of fixed penalties issued seemed surprisingly low. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that detecting dog fouling crime was quite difficult to detect and resource intensive due to the level of proof required. On the issue of allowing the Police service via its PCSOs to issue fines for dog fouling, The Head of Waste and Environmental Services said that the Environmental Enforcement Manager was currently looking into this possibility and had been working closely with the Police in order to reduce the problem. Due to this matter being resource intensive, Members were encouraged to report any dog fouling incidences that they witness with relevant information such as location, dates, times etc.

In addition to a further query, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services recognised that whilst other Local Authorities may carry out DNA testing in order to catch persistent offenders, the environment team had carried out some research into possibility of adopting this method. It was found that the difficulty with this approach was that because dog owners do not have to register their dogs, those irresponsible dog owners that fail to clean up after their dogs would be unlikely to register their ownership details and DNA testing as a basis of proof would become ineffective. In addition, the Head of Housing and Public Protection informed the Committee that Local Authorities were approaching the Welsh Government as they currently do not have the power to introduce mandatory dog registration schemes.

It was emphasised that the problem of dog fouling remained a significant issue within the communities of Carmarthenshire and that it was important to ensure that work was being done to reduce the ongoing problem.

In pursuit to improve the ongoing dog fouling problem, it was suggested that it may be beneficial to carry out a media campaign in order to educate dog owners on what they can do to be a more responsible dog owner. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that this matter had been publicised previously but agreed that a fresh campaign would be beneficial in raising the profile of the issue and provide information how dog owners can help improve the position.

With reference to a comment raised at the last Committee meeting [minute 5 refers], it was emphasised that the current lack of provision for a 24 hour dog warden service needs to be reviewed. With respect to detection of dog fouling, where there is a known problem, The Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that Environmental Enforcement resources could be targeted to problem areas if sufficient information was provided to justify concentrated action.

In response to a query raised regarding improving the accessibility of speed management data for local members, the Head of Highways and Transportation explained that speed monitoring data was considered at the Speed Management Group which included partner organisations such as Road Policing Units, Go Safe and the Fire and Rescue Service. The Road Safety & Traffic Manager added that the recording and access of speed monitoring data was currently being reviewed with a view to move to a digital mapping system which once established would allow for the data to be more readily available to multi-agencies and local members.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2018/19 to 2020/21

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 27th November 2017. The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2018/2019 together with indicative figures for the 2019/20 and 2020/2021 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending need and took into account the provisional settlement issued by the Welsh Government on 10th October 2017.

Members considered detailed budget information which was appended to the report as follows:

- **Appendix A** – Corporate Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21;
- **Appendix A(i)** – Efficiency summary for the Environment and Public Protection Services (none for the Community Safety Service);
- **Appendix A(ii)** – Growth Pressures summary for the Environment Service (none for the Public Protection and Community Safety Services);
- **Appendix B** – Budget extracts for the Environment, Public Protection and Community Safety Services;
- **Appendix C** – Charging Digest for the Environment, Public Protection and Community Safety Services.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that although the announced provisional settlement of -0.5% was significantly better than the anticipated -2%, however, this still meant the authority was required to identify efficiency savings for 2018/19 of £8.544m compared to the initial £12.527m and would continue to have a negative impact on the Council's resources.

With regard to the Environment Department the Committee noted that within the 2017/18 performance, based on the August 2017 monitoring, there had been an £533k overspend. The Director of Corporate Services highlighted that the over spend was primarily due to the non-achievement of car park income targets and a decrease in planning application income. Furthermore, the Committee noted that in the setting of the current financial year's budget, from a total sum of £2.515m allocated to services, £1.027m was allocated to Environment, a detailed breakdown of the budget extract was appended to the report in Appendix B.

In summary, the budget proposals would assume full delivery of the £25.6m identified savings. Furthermore, the budget proposals assumed a Council tax increase of 4.12% and that a 1% movement in council tax levels equated to +/- £820k.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

With reference to the Budget Extract (Appendix B of the report), a query was raised regarding the Animal Licence Movement Scheme and the possible duplication of work between the Local Authority and agencies such as DEFRA particularly since the introduction of Electronic Identification (EID). The Head of Housing and Public Protection recognised the potential duplication of work and acknowledged that this was an area where improvements could be made in conjunction with a number of agencies.

In response to a comment regarding pest control the Head of Housing and Public Protection informed the Committee that since the cessation of the pest control service, staff within the Public Health team provide advice to the public and have received specialist training and equipment to prevent vermin infiltration. The Authority offers a paid service to the public, which provides a variety of benefits including a better understanding of the sources of vermin avoiding reoccurring pest problems.

Reference was made to Appendix B of the report. A comment was raised regarding CCTV and that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was currently looking to re-instate the CCTV provision throughout Carmarthenshire. The Community Safety Manager confirmed that the PCC had pledged to improve the CCTV provision and that the initial work would be starting in Carmarthen. The Committee was informed that whilst the CCTV system would be managed by the Police, both the Community Safety Manager and the Community and Safeguarding Manager were working closely with Police colleagues in order to ensure a smooth transition.

In response to a query, the Community Safety Manager stated that currently there were a significant number of CCTV cameras which were out of action and that she was currently awaiting the results following a comprehensive review.

With reference to Appendix C, disappointment was expressed regarding the high cost of £370 for a car parking 12 month season ticket within Ammanford, it was further commented that the general idea of a season ticket was to provide a discount as an incentive. The Head of Highways and Transportation stated that the number of season ticket purchases had been reducing in recent years which was perceived as a positive step in order to provide more scope for general shoppers, helping to sustain turnover levels in car parking spaces on a daily basis.

RESOLVED:

- 6.1 that the 3 year Revenue Budget Consultation 2017/18 to 2019/20 be noted;**
- 6.2 that the Charging Digests as set out in Appendix C of the report be endorsed.**

7. ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

[NOTE: Councillor K. Broom had earlier declared an interest in this item].

The Committee considered the Draft Environmental Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 - 2021 which outlined the priorities for the department and identified how the department supported the five ways of working and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The report included extracts of the aspects relevant to the Environmental and Public Scrutiny Committee including the following elements:-

- Transport and Engineering
- Waste and Environmental Services
- Business Improvement

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the Key Performance set out in page 5 of the report. In response to a query regarding the percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill which was off target with a result of 15% against a target of 10%, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services clarified that even at the 15% performance figure, Carmarthenshire was still meeting its statutory target for landfill diversion and acknowledged that the 10% target was ambitious, given that there were difficulties across the industry for disposing of residual waste. Residual waste included all municipal waste that could not be recycled. Furthermore, in order to meet future targets and improve results, negotiations were currently taking place to obtain new residual waste outlets.

With reference to page 33 of the report, Sickness Absence, it was asked, if the high level of sickness absences reported was a cause for concern. The Highways and Transportation Manager stated that the department would be focusing on this matter and would be receiving regular monitoring reports. It was recognised that in general, Local Authorities were being requested to 'do more with less' which would inevitably have a detrimental impact upon resources. Management were currently working closely with Human Resources to assist in improving staff well-being.

RESOLVED to receive the Draft Environment Departmental Business plan 2018/19-2021.

8. COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENTAL DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

The Committee considered the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 which provided Members with comprehensive overview of the Communities Departmental progress. It was noted that whilst the plan enveloped the whole of the Departments' priorities, the Committee's role was to scrutinise the Public Protection elements set out in pages 24 and 25 of the report.

RESOLVED that the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 be received.

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

The Committee considered the Report on the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 - 2021. The report contained extracts of the aspects relevant to the Environment & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee in relation to Community Safety.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executives Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 be received.

10. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the non-submission of the 5 year Capital Budget Consultation which would be considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved that the non-submission of scrutiny report be noted.

11. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 15th January 2018 and was afforded the opportunity to request for information to be placed in to the reports.

Clarification was sought on the green waste report. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services clarified that the report would be an overview of the first season of operation of the green/garden waste scheme, which was based on a bin collection system. No other type of receptacle was offered, other than where bins would not be suitable from an operational perspective. The Committee was informed that the Green Waste report due to be presented in January would provide Members with more information on the proposals for next season.

In response to an additional query, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that green waste bags had ceased and would not be re-introduced.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items be received.

CHAIR

DATE