

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 December 2017

PRESENT: Councillor S.L. Davies (Chair)

Councillors:

D.M. Cundy, C.A. Davies, W.R.A. Davies, H.L. Davies, J.K. Howell, B.W. Jones, H.I. Jones, S. Matthews, H.B. Shepardson, A.Vaughan Owen, S.J.G. Gilasbey (In place of G.B. Thomas) and J.G. Prosser (In place of B.A.L. Roberts)

Also in attendance:

Councillor L.D. Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing
P. Hughes-Griffiths, Executive Board Member for Culture, Sport and Tourism

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
W. Walters, Director of Regeneration & Policy
R. Staines, Head of Housing and Public Protection
I. Jones, Head of Leisure
L. Quelch, Head of Planning
S. Walters, Economic Development Manager
J. Fearn, Head of Property
I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager
S. Jones, Senior Accountant
S. Sauro, Performance Review Officer
R. Phillips, European Programmes Manager
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen - 2.00 - 4.05 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B.A.L. Roberts and G.B. Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Aled Vaughan Owen	5 - Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2018/19 – 2020/21	Licence Holder – Gwendraeth Sports Hall
Hugh Shepardson	5 - Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2018/19 – 2020/21	Season Ticket Holder for Pembrey Country Park
Shirley Matthews	5 - Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2018/19 – 2020/21	Season Ticket Holder for Pembrey Country Park
Ann Davies	6 - Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021	Towy Valley Path affects land she farms

3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

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

(NOTE: Councillors S. Matthews, H. Shepardson and A. Vaughan-Owen had earlier declared interests in this item)

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 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending need and took into account the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on 10th October 2017.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that although the announced provisional settlement of -0.5% was significantly better than the anticipated -2%, it still meant the authority had 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.

In summary, the budget proposals would assume full delivery of the £25.6m identified savings over the plan period. Furthermore, the budget proposals assumed a Council tax increase of 4.12% for 2018/19 and that a 1% movement in council tax levels equated to +/-£820k.

The Committee considered the following detailed budget information appended to the Strategy relevant to its remit:

- **Appendix A(i)** – Efficiency summary for the Regeneration, Leisure, Planning and Non HRA Housing Services;
- **Appendix A(ii)** – Growth Pressures summary for the Planning Service (none for the Regeneration, Leisure and Non HRA Services);
- **Appendix B** – Budget extracts for the Regeneration, Leisure, Planning and Non HRA Housing Services;
- **Appendix C** – Charging Digest for the Regeneration, Leisure, Planning and Non HRA Housing Services;

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the impact on the budget of school based Early Voluntary Retirement and redundancy costs and what measures were being taken to address those.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed they were being examined as part of the Council's Human Resources Policies and included the possibility

of staff facing redundancy being relocated to an alternative school seeking to employ staff.

- The Director of Regeneration and Policy in response to a question on the Physical Regeneration Budget, advised that the increased budget was, in part, attributable to the inclusion within the accounts of the asset value of the Council's properties, including recent acquisitions within Llanelli Town Centre.
- Reference was made to a past proposal for introduction of a Universal Pass for residents of the County to access the councils' country parks and other attractions and information was requested on the current position.

The Head of Leisure confirmed discussions were continuing on the proposal, specifically the I.T requirements. He also advised that consideration was being afforded to introducing a 5-7 day pass to the Council's country parks which, if realised, would be included within the Charging Digest at a later date.

- The Head of Leisure referred to a question on the proposed reductions in the fees and charges levied by the Council for the hire of equipment at its theatres, and confirmed they were being suggested as a means of making the service more cost effective and, hopefully, increase hire rates.
- In response to a question on cross linking the council's leisure and tourism destinations with the public sector, it was confirmed that was undertaken wherever possible and included publication of a hotel brochure and working with the private sector on introducing discounts.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 5.1 The 2018/19 – 2020/21 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation be received.**
- 5.2 The Charging Digest for the Regeneration, Leisure, Planning and Non HRA Services, as detailed in Appendix C to the report be endorsed.**

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

(NOTE: Councillor A. Davies had earlier declared an interest in this item).

The Committee considered the Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 in relation to those services falling within its remit i.e. Housing Services and Leisure Services. It was noted that further work would be undertaken on the draft following comments and engagement by the Committee and Executive Board Members.

The following issues/questions were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the increased popularity of cycling and whether the Authority had/could produce maps of cycle routes within the county for placing within Tourist Information Centres and other appropriate venues.

The Head of Leisure advised that whilst responsibility for the promotion of those routes lay with the Environment Department, in association with Sustrans, the Leisure Services Division was currently preparing a report on a new cycling strategy for submission to Council in the New Year.

The Director of Regeneration and Policy advised that she would ascertain what information was currently available on cycling routes within the County and arrange for that to be displayed on the Council's website, if possible.

- In response to a question on the development timescale for the Towy Valley Path, the Committee was advised that whilst it had initially been programmed for development within the Council's Five Year Capital Programme, it was now programmed for completion in three years subject to a number of factors including land acquisition negotiations and funding.
- Clarification was sought on the proposal to celebrate Carmarthenshire's Culture through the establishment of an Annual Culture Award event.

It was confirmed the event would be held on the 6th April, 2018 in the Ffwrnes Theatre and was aimed at providing an opportunity of celebrating Carmarthenshire's culture. The event would include honouring individuals together with an Awards Ceremony spread over six categories.

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

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

The Committee considered the report on the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 in relation to those services falling within its remit i.e. Economic Development and Property and Major Projects.

The Director of Regeneration and Policy provided an overview of the work undertaken during 2017/18 and proposals over the plan period including responsibility for the governance of £476m of funding from the City Deal , development of the Wellness Centre, job creation, Phase 2 of the Cross Hands Development and evaluating the potential impact of Brexit on the County.

The following issues/questions were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the future of the Council's Parc Amanwy Offices and it was confirmed that, as a consequence of an expression of interest by the private sector in occupying the property, consideration was being afforded to the options available to the Council to accommodate staff currently based in the building including, relocation and agile working. It was confirmed the property was not closing.
- Concern was expressed at the impact of bank closures, particularly in attracting people to rural towns and villages within the county. The Director of Regeneration and Policy advised that the point was recognised, and such impacts were being considered as part of a future Rural Towns Initiative to support communities affected by such closures. A similar position had occurred with the closure of rural post offices whereby, the post office was encouraged to provide its services in partnership with other businesses and perhaps an opportunity existed for the banks to pursue a similar course of action. However, such closures were ultimately a commercial decision taken by the banks, and the Council, as a local authority had little, or no, influence over their decisions.
- In response to a question on the proposals for the further development of Un Sir Gar via the use of 'outreach vans', the Director of Regeneration and

Policy confirmed proposals were advanced for their introduction in 2018 in the three main town centres by utilising the existing mobile library vehicles.

- Reference was made to the promotion of the Welsh Language on strategic development sites and to what influence the Council had on encouraging those businesses to promote the Language.

The Director of Regeneration and Policy advised that although the Council had little influence over private business, any business grant aid awarded by the Council was conditional upon the recipient complying with its Welsh Language Policy.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 be received

8. ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

The Committee considered the report on the Environment Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 – 2021 in relation to those services falling within its remit i.e. Planning Services and Property and outlining the priorities for the department over the Plan's timeframe.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:-

- The Forward Planning Manager in response to a question on the importance of linking planning with the Council's Well Being Objectives confirmed the issues of sustainability and sustainable development were embedded within the planning processes.
- Concern was expressed on the impact large developments planned within the Llanelli area could/were having on the local infrastructure and services. The Forward Planning Manager acknowledged past difficulties had occurred with such developments and confirmed the planning division now placed an emphasis on drawing various parties together at the outset of a development e.g. Local Health Board, Education and Highways to discuss potential infrastructure implications.

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

9. CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006 - 2021 REVIEW REPORT

The Committee considered a report on proposals for a review to be undertaken of the Local Development Plan in accordance with Council's decision at its meeting held on the 20th September, 2017 (minute 10.3 refers). It was noted that the Review Report detailed the extent of the changes required to the LDP together with the review procedure to be followed in preparing a replacement LDP for a plan period up to 31st March 2033. The Review Report had been informed by the findings of previous Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) (including feedback on the implementation of the current LDP) and on- going surveys. It was recommended a full revision of the plan be undertaken for the following principal reasons:-

- To ensure the revised plan was adopted prior to the expiration of the Current LDP at the end of 2021;

- To recognise the outcomes of the AMR's, notable where it indicated failures in the delivery of the LDP strategy, the settlement framework and the spatial distribution of growth. In that respect both the level and spatial distribution of growth needed to be considered in order to establish whether the current strategy was the most appropriate for delivering growth up to 31st March 2033;
- To ensure the implications of the 2014 based Local Authority Population and Household Sub-National Projections and the significant variance in population change and household requirements which were indicated were robustly considered. There was a need to understand the implications of those revised projections, and to consider them within the context of Carmarthenshire and of job creation, growth and inward investment, (including regeneration through the City Deal). To achieve that would require a review of the strategic approach set out within the LDP.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the importance of the LDP revision and a view expressed that the Executive Board should be requested to arrange for members to receive a presentation on the proposals
- The Committee's attention was drawn to the 15,187 Housing Provision within the existing LDP and to the Welsh Government's projection for that to reduce to 3,000. Concern was expressed at the level of reduction and whether the WG's projections were accurate, having regard to the level of development proposed for the county, especially in the Llanelli area with the creation of the Wellness Centre and other planned developments which, together, totalled in excess of 1800 units.

The Forward Planning Manager advised that whilst the WG's projections were trend based and took no account of policy interventions by the Council, the Council was able to challenge those and formulate figures more appropriate for the county

The Head of Housing and Public Protection referred to the projected allocation, and advised that whilst based on demographics, it did not represent need within the county for residential/retirement homes and different types of tenure. As a local housing authority, the Council undertook regular local housing market assessments to obtain a better understanding of the types of homes required which, was then reflected in strategic plans.

The Forward Planning Manager expressed the view that the projected allocation understated demand within the County and a figure in the region of 8,000 residential units, spread across the county, would be more appropriate. Any allocation in the region of the revised projection could hinder development.

The Director of Regeneration and Policy reminded the Committee that a significant degree of regeneration and development occurred as a consequence of housing developments which, in turn, was re-invested within the County. It was unlikely the revised housing projection did not take account of all the regeneration projects currently proposed for the

county, or the fact housebuilders were actively targeting Carmarthenshire for development.

- Reference was made to the Council's hierarchy for development across the county set out in four clear 'tiers'. Whilst evidence supported the fact tiers 1 and 4 were delivering development expectations, tiers 2 and 3 were not. A view was expressed that the revised LDP should enable development to occur within all four tiers.

The Forward Planning Manager reminded the Committee that in developing the Plan the Council would need to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework. However, the way the Plan provided for settlements and supported communities was equally important.

- In response to a question on the proposed development master plan for Llanelli Town Centre, the Director of Regeneration and Policy advised that work was continuing on its development with a view to it being presented to the Town Forum. If the Forum's support was forthcoming, the masterplan would be submitted to the Council for consideration.

Arising from the above, reference was made to the significant development proposals for the Wellness Centre and other developments within the area. A view was expressed that as those developments could impact on the town centre, and its infrastructure, it was imperative all elements of the masterplan dovetailed.

The Director of Regeneration and Policy advised that a Transport Strategy had been developed to assess the potential impact of such developments on the Town Centre which would be taken into consideration as part of the masterplan's formulation and ensure the viability of any future regeneration proposals for Llanelli Town centre.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/COUNCIL:

- 9.1 That the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021 Review Report be accepted and a full review of the Plan be undertaken**
- 9.2 That a Members Seminar be arranged on the Review Report.**

10. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee considered the explanation provided for the non-submission of a report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the non-submission report be received.

11. REVISED CARMARTHESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018 - 2033 - DRAFT DELIVERY AGREEMENT AND DRAFT SITE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The Committee received the revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Delivery Agreement and Site Methodology produced as part of

the Council's decision in September 2017 to undertake a full or partial review of the Existing LDP. It was noted the Draft Delivery Agreement detailed the timetable for the Plan's preparation and the Community Involvement Scheme in relation to consultation and engagement.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the fact allocated housing sites within the existing LDP would not automatically be included within the revised Plan, with landowners having to re-apply for their inclusion. Clarification was requested on whether those land owners had been advised accordingly.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed all land owners/developers had been advised of the requirement to re-register their sites 12 months previously. Notices would also be issued shortly advising them of the need to examine the Review Report, be aware of the site candidate process and what information would be required as part of any application for a site's inclusion within the Plan.

- The Forward Planning Manager confirmed preparation of the Draft Agreement/Site Methodology were required to be produced as part of the Plan's processes for submission to the Welsh Government for approval to commence the Review. It was anticipated the revised plan would be subject to formal inspection by a Welsh Government appointed inspector in 2020.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/COUNCIL THAT the Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018- 2033 Draft Delivery Agreement and Draft Site Assessment Methodology reports be adopted.

12. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee received a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next meeting to be held on the revised date of the 30th January, 2018 and noted that the proposed report on the New Vision Theatre Services Report had been deferred to its February meeting.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that, subject to the above amendment, the list of forthcoming items for the meeting of the Committee to be held on the 30th January, 2018 be received.

CHAIR

DATE