

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28 March 2019

**PRESENT:** Councillor G.B. Thomas (Chair)

**Councillors:**

S.M. Allen (In place of H.B. Shepardson), D.M. Cundy, C.A. Davies, W.R.A. Davies, H.L. Davies, R.E. Evans, S.J.G. Gilasbey, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, H.I. Jones, S. Matthews and A.Vaughan Owen

**Also in attendance:**

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

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

I. Jones, Head of Leisure  
L. Quelch, Head of Planning  
J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities  
S. Walters, Economic Development Manager  
J. Davies, Senior Cultural Services Manager  
A. Thomas, Group Accountant  
I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager  
M. Jewell, Library Services Manager  
R James, Performance Planning & Business Officer  
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 - 11.00 am**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.B. Shepardson.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

The Committee noted this item had been included on the agenda in error.

**3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTERESTS AND PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM**

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

The following declarations of interest were made.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
R. Evans	5 – Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020	Daughter works in Llanelli Library
J. Gilasbey	7 – Quarter 3 – 1 <sup>st</sup> April to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	Kidwelly Industrial Museum – Has been

	Performance Monitoring Report	granted dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak, but not vote
A Vaughan Owen	8 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report	Licence Holder for Gwendraeth Sports Hall

#### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

#### 5. WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS 2017-2020

(NOTE: Councillor R. Evans declared an interest during consideration of this item)

The Committee received a report on Carmarthenshire Library Services' Annual Assessment 2017/18 produced in accordance with the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 that placed a Statutory Duty on all Public Library Authorities 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service' and on Welsh Ministers 'to superintend and promote the improvement' of public library services in Wales. In accordance with that requirement, the Welsh Government had completed its assessment of Carmarthenshire's Library Services Annual Return for 2017/18 against the 6<sup>th</sup> Quality Assessment Framework, with Carmarthenshire meeting all 12 core entitlements in full. Of the ten quality indicators which had targets, Carmarthenshire had achieved nine in full, with one having been partially met.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:-

- With regard to a question on visitor numbers for the mobile library, the Library Services Manager advised that the service was still 'bedding in' and quarterly reviews were being undertaken to ensure it was meeting community needs. He reported that although the level of stock issues had remained relatively static, the community was utilising the service as a means of obtaining information on the council's and other services. In that respect, the level of service provision had recently been extended to include attendance by representatives of both the Council's 'Hwbs' and the Housing Division.
- Reference was made to the issue of internet coverage in the more rural areas of the county and to the difficulties that could cause for the public particularly, school children who required internet access to complete homework. A question was asked on whether the library service would be able to assist in providing access to the internet.

The Library Services Manager confirmed the service was aware of such difficulties and was examining ways in which it could assist. That could include extending the mobile library's hours to evenings and weekends and also allowing access to the main libraries outside of normal manned opening hours. For example, the Llandeilo Library, although only manned for 15 hours per week remained open throughout normal office hours, similarly for Y Gat in St Clears.

- The Committee welcomed the statement within 3.1 of the report whereby 96% of children surveyed had stated that visiting the Council's libraries had

helped with their learning and had awarded an overall score of 9.1. out of 10 representing an improvement on the results under the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the report be received.**

**6. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE WIND AND SOLAR ENERGY AND HIGHWAYS DESIGN GUIDE ADOPTED CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Committee considered a report which provided details of two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents prepared to support and elaborate upon the policies and provisions of the adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP).

It was noted that the Draft Wind and Solar Energy SPG had initially been considered by the Committee at its meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 where it had recommended to the Executive Board/Council that it be approved for consultation. Subsequent to that decision, the current report detailed the six consultation responses received together with the Head of Planning's recommendations thereon.

With regard to the Draft Highways Design Guide SPG, that had initially been considered by the Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018. The Current report was now being re-presented as Supplementary Planning Guidance for endorsement for a period of public consultation prior to subsequent formal adoption.

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

- It was confirmed the outcomes/responses received to the public consultation on the Highways Design Guide would be reported back to the Committee/Council for consideration.
- In relation to section 4.7 of the Wind and Solar SPG on 'Community Energy' the guidance detailed the expectations of the local planning authority on community energy groups. The seeking of any community benefits from such schemes was outside the scope of planning considerations and any negotiations thereon would be between the community and the developer.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD / COUNCIL THAT:-**

- 6.1 The responses received in respect of the Draft Supplementary Guidance on Wind and Solar Energy be received and the recommendations detailed within the report be approved;**
- 6.2 The Wind and Solar Energy Supplementary Planning Guidance be adopted subject to the recommendations detailed within the report;**
- 6.3 The Draft Highways Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance, as set out within the report be approved for a formal 6 week public consultation;**
- 6.4 Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning to correct typographical, cartographical or grammatical errors and**

**to make amendments in order to enhance accuracy and clarity of meaning.**

## **7. QUARTER 3 - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER 2018 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

(NOTE: Councillor J. Gilasbey declared an interest during this item as a Trustee of Kidwelly Industrial Museum, and had been granted dispensation by the Council's Standards Committee to speak, but not vote, on matters relating to the Museum)

The Committee received for consideration the Quarter 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Performance Monitoring Report detailing the progress made against the actions and measures in the New Corporate Strategy 2018/19 on the delivery of the Well-Being Objectives within its remit.

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

- In response to a question on the unviability of retrofitting renewable technology to the Council's housing stock, the Head of Homes and Safer Communities confirmed the department was examining the possibility of using 'Homes as Power Stations' as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal project and a report thereon would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, which would include the Council's care homes
- The Committee was reminded that at its meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 it had, as part of the 2019/20 revenue budget consultation, suggested to the Executive Board/Council that consideration be given to Council directly funding the estimated £150k cost to primary schools of providing school swimming lessons. As that had not proved possible as part of the budget, a suggestion was made that it be referred to the Education Department for consideration. If adopted, whilst assisting schools financially, it would also help promote fitness amongst young children as part of the Health agenda

The Head of Leisure reminded the Committee that whilst swimming lessons were provided by the schools as part of the key stage 2 curriculum, there were other avenues available to children to learn to swim. The Welsh Government provided free swimming during school holidays, which included a few free lessons. The Council also provided swimming lessons, at a cost, outside of school hours.

- The Committee was reminded that previously council had considered the feasibility of introducing a 'county card' to offer discounts/incentives for residents to visit/use the council's facilities. A question was asked on whether that initiative had been progressed.

The Head of Leisure confirmed the department was examining the practicalities of pursuing the county card, or something similar, and possibly linking with other organisations such as the National Trust. However, there were technical issues associated with the proposal in so far as the sharing of databases and technologies were concerned, and those were being examined by the Council's Digital Transformation Group.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

- 7.1 That the report be received;
- 7.2 That the Education and Childrens' Services Department be requested to give consideration to funding the estimated £150k cost incurred by primary schools in providing swimming lessons as part of the key stage 2 curriculum.

## 8. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

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

The Committee considered the 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports for the Housing, Regeneration, Planning and Leisure and Recreation Services for the period up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. It was noted that the revenue budget was forecasting a £225k overspend, the capital budget a £1.442k underspend, whilst the Housing Revenue Account was forecasting to be on target. It was also noted there was an expectation that at year end the £160k of managerial savings would not have been delivered, but that the policy savings were projected to be on target.

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

- The Head of Planning in response to a question on the projected £355k overspend within the Planning Division advised the position was not expected to change in the near future, and that mirrored the trend across Wales where planning services were recovering an average 60% of costs. Whilst the Division was examining alternative ways of increasing its income, and a report thereon would be submitted through the political process in due course, it should be noted there were some services for which it was not allowed to charge such as enforcement duties and challenges to planning applications.

She also advised that Welsh Local Authorities had previously made representations to the Welsh Government for an increase in fees, especially in light of a 20% increase introduced for English authorities. The Welsh Government had established a Working Group to consider that issue, with its findings anticipated to be available in approximately a year.

- The Head of Leisure in response to a question on the £75k budget for the Bro Myrddin Indoor Bowling Club confirmed it related to central non-controllable costs and that responsibility for its day to day maintenance and operational costs lay with the community group managing the club.
- In response to a question on the budget head titled 5 x 60(E), the Head of Leisure advised it related to an external scheme funded through Sports Wales to encourage every secondary pupil to undertake 60 minutes of physical activity at least 5 times per week. That sat under a wider banner of Active Young People which covered a similar scheme called Dragon Sport in primary schools aimed at establishing extra-curricular physical activity clubs in the schools.
- The Head of Homes and Safer Communities confirmed the £750k overspend on void properties reflected additional investment to undertake major repairs to bring those back into use. It was anticipated the division would see a reduction in their number over the next 3-6 months as a result of that investment.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report be received.

9. **TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 14TH FEBRUARY, 2018**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 be signed as a correct record.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**