

# Document Pack



Mark James LLM, DPA, DCA  
Prif Weithredwr,  
Chief Executive,  
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP  
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

**TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, 3 SPILMAN STREET, CARMARTHEN AT 10:00AM ON MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016 FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA.

*Mark James*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**



PLEASE RECYCLE

<b>Democratic Officer:</b>	<b>Matthew Hughes</b>
<b>Telephone (Direct Line):</b>	<b>01267 224029</b>
<b>Fax:</b>	<b>01267 224911</b>
<b>E-Mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>AD016-001</b>

# **ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **14 MEMBERS**

### **PLAID CYMRU GROUP – 5 MEMBERS**

- |    |            |               |
|----|------------|---------------|
| 1. | Councillor | A. Davies     |
| 2. | Councillor | W.J. Lemon    |
| 3. | Councillor | A.D.T. Speake |
| 4. | Councillor | S.E. Thomas   |
| 5. | Councillor | D.E. Williams |

### **INDEPENDENT GROUP – 4 MEMBERS**

- |    |            |                           |
|----|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | D.B. Davies               |
| 2. | Councillor | J.A. Davies               |
| 3. | Councillor | I.J. Jackson (Vice-Chair) |
| 4. | Councillor | A. James                  |

### **LABOUR GROUP – 4 MEMBERS**

- |    |            |                     |
|----|------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | A.P. Cooper (Chair) |
| 2. | Councillor | D.C. Evans          |
| 3. | Councillor | K.P. Thomas         |
| 4. | Councillor | W.G. Thomas         |

### **UNAFFILIATED – 1 MEMBER**

- |    |            |              |
|----|------------|--------------|
| 1. | Councillor | J.P. Jenkins |
|----|------------|--------------|

# AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST
3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS
4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)
5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS 5 - 6
6. RURAL CONSERVATION UNIT UPDATE 7 - 24
7. HIGHWAYS UPDATE 25 - 34
8. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP 2015/16 - PLANNING AND SCOPING DOCUMENT 35 - 42
9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 12TH NOVEMBER 2015 43 - 50
10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 11TH DECEMBER 2015 51 - 58

This page is intentionally left blank

**ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016**

**Forthcoming items for next meeting –  
Friday 26th February 2016**

Discussion Topic	Background
Impact of Local Authority Trading Standards in Challenging Times	On 21st March 2015, the UK Government published a research report entitled 'The Impact of Local Authority Trading Standards in Challenging Times.' The report highlights examples of best practice, where local authorities have found new ways of working to improve efficiency, but it also contains important messages for the future about the adverse impact of budget cuts on trading standards services. This item will provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment on the report and its recommendations.
Budget Monitoring 2015/16	This standard quarterly item enables members to undertake their monitoring role of the Environment Department, Public Protection Services and Community Safety Team's revenue and capital budgets.
Actions & Referrals Update	This quarterly report provides an update on progress made in relation to actions and requests from previous meetings.

This page is intentionally left blank

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Rural Conservation Unit Update

**To consider and comment on the following issues:**

- That the Committee consider and comment on the update of the Rural Conservation Unit's activities during 2015.

**Reasons:**

- That the Committee is kept informed of the work of the service and members are enabled to exercise their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.

**To be referred to Executive Board for decision: NO**

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:**  
Cllr. Meryl Gravell (Regeneration & Leisure)

<p><b>Directorate:</b> Environment</p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Llinos Quelch</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Rosie Carmichael</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p>Head of Planning</p> <p>Rural Conservation Manager</p>	<p><b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p>01267 228918 <a href="mailto:lquelch@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">lquelch@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01267 228727 <a href="mailto:racarmichael@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">racarmichael@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
---	---	--

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Rural Conservation Unit Update

The report highlights the activities carried out by the Rural Conservation Unit in 2015, and its purpose is to inform Committee of these.

The Rural Conservation Unit promotes the understanding, conservation, enhancement, and responsible management of Carmarthenshire's natural resources, including its landscapes and its habitats and species, consistent with Carmarthenshire's Integrated Community Strategy and Carmarthenshire County Council's core values.

The Unit carries out the following statutory functions:

- Tree Preservation Orders – Town & Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- Commons Registration Act 1965

It also works to ensure that the Council's operations are compliant under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

The Unit provides specialist advice to development management, to other officers in the council and to the general public on woodlands, trees, hedgerows, common land biodiversity and landscape. It ensures that approved development, and other projects comply with relevant legislation and the various policies that relate to the natural environment in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Unit runs practical conservation projects such as the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Unit works effectively with partners such as Natural Resource Wales, West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Butterfly Conservation and the Wildlife Trusts. It has also worked collaboratively with local authorities in both Pembrokeshire and Swansea.

A detailed overview of the work of the Unit is attached.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**



## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Llinos Quelch** Head of Planning

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: **Llinos Quelch** Head of Planning

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – All staff within the section have contributed to this report.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information**  
**List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

This page is intentionally left blank

# Rural Conservation Business Unit Annual Report 2015 to the Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee

## 1. Introduction

Carmarthenshire's landscapes and its habitats and species are some of the county's most important natural resources. They make up the green infrastructure which provides a framework for our social, economic and environmental health. The Rural Conservation Business Unit promotes the understanding, conservation, enhancement, and responsible management of these resources, consistent with Carmarthenshire's Integrated Community Strategy and CCC's core values. The Unit directly contributes to the delivery of Outcomes F1, F3 and F4 within the Council's Improvement Plan 2014/15 (for further details see table at the end of this report).

The Unit provides advice to development management, other CCC departments and the general public on landscape, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, biodiversity, common land and on development within the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SPG area. It is also instrumental in ensuring that approved developments and other projects comply with relevant legislation and meet the various policies that relate to the natural environment in the Local Development Plan.

The Rural Conservation Business Unit carries out the following statutory functions:

- Tree Preservation Orders - Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- Commons Registration Act 1965

It also works to ensure that the Council's operations are compliant under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

## 2. Coed Cymru

Coed Cymru is a partnership of organisations (including local authorities, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales) dedicated to bringing Welsh native woodlands into sustainable management and creating new native woodlands in appropriate locations. Carmarthenshire County Council employs two Coed Cymru officers, one full-time and one part-time, totalling 1.6 posts currently 60% funded by Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government. Coed Cymru officers advise on the whole spectrum of issues from the planting of new trees through to the management of existing woodland for biodiversity, amenity and the production of high quality Welsh timber products. Officers also provide advice and support in the management of woodland on the Council estate and assist the Arboricultural Officer in ensuring that the Council meets its statutory obligations for responsible tree management.

In 2014/15 in addition to the above activities Coed Cymru officers delivered the Welsh Government Nature Fund *Soil, Water and Conservation* project in Carmarthenshire. This involved the preparation of 5-year farm plans for participating land owners and the administration of payments for activities including: creating shelterbelts, restoring

hedgerows, fencing riparian zones and improving farm buildings and yards to prevent dirty water polluting watercourses.

In 2014/15 Carmarthenshire Coed Cymru Officers realised the following outputs:

- 179 woodland advisory visits made;
- 8 Glastir Woodland Management plans and 30 Nature Fund project plans approved; 21 other management plans prepared (including Glastir Woodland Management and Creation schemes in preparation)
- 66 woodland management and tree planting schemes managed with a total of 77 ha (192 acres) of woodland brought into management;
- Over £80,000 in NRW grant payments claimed by local farmers and land owners, resulting in 409 contractor days being worked;
- 14 promotion shows and events attended;
- 9 tree safety surveys completed on Council properties.
- Preparation of felling licence application for woodland management at Pembrey Country Park and provision of advice for Llyn Llech Owain Country Park woodland management and habitat restoration projects.

In 2014/15, in addition to a continuation of the work above, Coed Cymru officers are advising on habitat restoration projects at Pembrey Country Park and Llyn Llech Owain Country Park and are assisting the rangers there in planning woodland operations and preparing felling licence applications and environmental impacts assessments.

### **3. Common Land**

Carmarthenshire has the third largest area of Common Land in Wales, some 15,000ha (37,000 acres) covering 6.35% of the County. The county has 120 commons and village greens, and there 49 ownerless commons in Carmarthenshire which the local authority has the power to protect.

The Authority has a statutory duty to keep and maintain a register of common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and the Commons Act 2006. Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006 requires commons registration authorities to update the common land registers by recording past changes which may not have been recorded under the Commons Registration Act 1965. Commons registration authorities will have significant new powers to correct the many mistakes which exist in the current registers. It is anticipated that the Welsh Government will implement Part 1 of the Act in 2016.

This year we have carried out 39 apportionments and 637 common land searches, and the Common Land officer has had 15 meetings with members of the public who wish to inspect the register.

Carmarthenshire's Common Land officer is the only Welsh director of ACRA (Association for Commons Registration Authorities) which provides advice and guidance to our members with regard to all matters relating to the registration and management of common land and village greens. He is also a member of the Commons Act 2006 Advisory

Group which provides advice and guidance to the Welsh Government with regard to the implementation of the Commons Act in Wales.

Over the last 12 months the Common Land officer has also been closely involved in the Resilient Ecosystem funded Carmarthenshire Bogs Project that attracted £20,000 of grant aid from the Welsh Government. All six sites covered by this project are areas of common land with no known owners; as such the County Council is expected to protect these sites from illegal activities. The officer has provided the project and local communities with advice on the legal aspects of common land and has been able to advise on approaches to management. Following on from the Bryn Llewellyn public inquiry the officer is similarly involved in trying to improve the management of one (small) part of Llanllwni Mountain, where CCC acts in the interests of the landowner. Common Land is important natural resource within Carmarthenshire that supports a range of wildlife habitats as well as agricultural activities and is one to which the public have open access under the CROW Act 2000.

#### **4. Trees**

The Council's arboricultural officer is primarily concerned with managing Carmarthenshire's 215 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), processing application for works to existing TPOs and placing new orders when appropriate, supervising contractors and taking enforcement action when trees have been removed without permission. He manages applications for works to trees in the conservation areas within Carmarthenshire, as well as dealing with queries from other departments, elected members and the general public. He comments on planning applications where trees are affected by proposals. The officer is also currently involved with two long running enforcement cases.

The tree officer produces surveys and assists the head of planning with High Hedge cases that are covered by the anti social behaviour law. He assists the highway officers under the 154 Highways Act advising on health and safety issues, and advises on planning applications that have impacts on trees.

The Tree Safety Strategy is progressing and Education is contacting all head teachers asking them to inform the section of schools where there are trees on site that should be surveyed. Surveys of the country parks have also taken place this year and the Arboricultural Officer has completed further training in tree safety inspections.

#### **5. Hedgerows**

The Unit is responsible for implementing the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. It advises the public on applications to remove hedgerows, and carries out the hedgerow surveys required. It investigates instances of unauthorised removal, and carries out enforcement action where hedgerows have been removed without consent, and covers the appeals procedure. The Unit advises other CCC departments on projects where hedgerows may be affected, and provides advice to development managers regarding planning applications and hedgerows. Over the last 14 years the Unit has developed considerable expertise in translocating hedgerows, and where appropriate will encourage the retention of a hedge in

a new position, rather than its removal. In 2015 we have received 2 requests to remove hedgerows and have dealt with 8 enforcement cases, one of which involved the removal of over 1300m of hedgerow.

## **6. Landscape**

Carmarthenshire's landscapes, its uplands, river valleys and coasts, are justly recognised as being of high quality and the protection and enhancement of these landscapes are objectives of the LDP, the landscape officer's role is to help to deliver these objectives.

The landscape officer acts as an internal and external consultee and adviser on the landscape and visual aspects of development within the county. This role includes providing advice to development managers, planning applicants and agents on the following: -

- the impact of proposed developments upon landscape character and visual amenity
- the acceptability of proposed development against landscape related planning policy
- the requirements of appropriate landscape measures to mitigate for impacts of development
- the requirements of landscape design schemes to deliver successful and attractive development

The landscape officer also provides internal advice to other CCC departments, particularly in terms of potential development on council land. The officer is involved in the formulation of landscape policies and supplementary planning guidance within CCC's Forward Planning Unit. In addition, as part of the Rural Conservation Business Unit, the landscape officer fulfils the role of providing direct advice to members of the public on rural and landscape issues.

Renewable energy schemes – wind turbines and solar farms – have remained a major part of his work load over the last 12 months, in addition to a large number of large scale residential, commercial and infrastructure projects, including addressing planning applications, and ongoing compliance monitoring for Cross Hands East and West, and Carmarthen West development areas.

Previous collaborative work with the landscape officers from the other South Wales Local Authorities has led to the development of a number of guidance documents:

- Planning Guidance for Wind Turbine Development Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Requirements
- Wind Turbine Development Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study – Methodology
- Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire: Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines on Landscape and Visual Amenity Guidance.

In addition to these documents, within the last 12 months, the landscape officer has been involved in preparing the brief, commissioning and ongoing management of an additional study which will provide a landscape capacity and sensitivity assessment for wind turbine

and field scale solar photovoltaic development for the county. The study is due for completion in early 2016.

All of the recent guidance documents will underpin the forthcoming SPG for renewable energy; the landscape officer will play an important role in providing an input upon landscape and visual considerations within this SPG. Development of the SPG will follow completion of the landscape capacity and sensitivity study.

The landscape officer has established and maintains the CCC database and GIS mapping layer for all operational and approved wind turbine development within the county. This data forms the basis for assessment of ongoing sensitivity to cumulative development.

The landscape officer is developing a series of Landscape Advice Notes which provide guidance on the landscape requirements for planning applications, and Landscape Design Guidance Notes which provide guidance on the content of the constituent elements of an approvable landscape design scheme for new development. These guidance documents are increasingly useful as part of the input required from the landscape officer within the pre-application consultation system currently encouraged by the Development Management Section

The landscape officer is also on the steering group of a Seascape Character Assessment Study, covering the coastline between Pendine and Porthcawl Point.

The landscape officer works closely with the Planning Ecologist to ensure that the interrelated issues of landscape and ecology are addressed consistently in consultation responses to planning applications.

## **7. Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC project**

This ground-breaking project has been developed to offset the impacts of development in the Cross Hands area on the European protected marsh fritillary butterfly. It has been put in place to demonstrate that the Council's Local Development Plan is compliant with EU Habitat Regulations. It is funded by contributions from developments within the project area and will secure sufficient habitat to support the butterfly in this area through management agreements and land purchase.

The marsh fritillary butterfly was once fairly widespread in the UK, but the number of places in which they are found has dropped by 60%. Areas of south and west Wales such as Cross Hands now hold the bulk of the UK's population. It has been suggested by Natural Resources Wales that in 50 years time this area may support the only remaining population of this butterfly in Wales.

The butterfly requires a network of marshy grassland to thrive, and the habitat which supports it supports a range of other scarce and protected species of birds, insects, reptiles and mammals, as such the project is of wide ranging benefit to biodiversity in the local area. The project involves the local community through work with local contractors and volunteers, and it provides opportunities to raise awareness of conservation in the area with local residents.

In the last 12 months the project has continued to increase the area of habitat it manages through new agreements and habitat management operations. Key achievements include:-

- Continued management of 10 sites, with 4 additional management agreements. One 7ha site has been purchased by the project
- Mowing to reduce the density of vegetation on neglected sites in preparation for grazing at 8 sites
- Clearance of scrub encroaching on the grassland at 2 sites
- Fencing installation and repair at 5 sites to facilitate grazing
- Hedge laying at 1 site to facilitate grazing where fence installation was impractical
- Drainage work at 3 sites to ensure they are safe for grazing stock, whilst remaining damp enough to support the marshy grassland habitat
- Installation of track, access point or stock handling infrastructure was carried out at 5 sites, assisting grazing management and ongoing habitat management
- Provision of water for stock at 3 sites
- 4 managed sites were grazed for the first time in a number of years and the results have been very promising
- Working with volunteers from different organisations, Devil's bit scabious seedlings grown by Aberystwyth University students have been planted out on 2 sites. This will increase the larval food resource at the sites and therefore increase the area of breeding habitat for the butterfly
- The project is currently negotiating the purchase of 2 sites which will safeguard the habitat for the future.

2015 was not a particularly good year for Marsh fritillary numbers due to unsettled weather, but despite this there were encouraging signs of habitat recovery on the site managed by the project. A survey showed that the butterfly is now breeding on one site where no evidence of this had been found in recent years, and a previously neglected site also revealed evidence of the butterfly's presence.

The project is monitored by the Council's PIMS system and is on target to meet the March 2016 milestone of managing 75ha of habitat that is suitable for the butterfly, some of which is on designated sites (SACs and SSSIs). At present there are 70.96ha of habitat in suitable condition for the butterfly.

## **8. Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity, and has an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities consistent with the Integrated Community Strategy, and K10P 5. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is vital in our response to climate change and in the delivery of key ecosystem services such as food, flood management, pollination and provision of clean air and water. The Council's biodiversity work is also vital for the delivery of the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in Carmarthenshire, as it provides a mechanism for ensuring that the Council delivers the WG goal of delivering resilient ecosystems.



## *Contributing to the Integrated Community Strategy*

The Biodiversity provision within the Rural Conservation Unit contributes towards the following themes in the Integrated Community Strategy:

- 4.3 Supporting opportunities for the building of economically viable and sustainable communities;  
...by working with and providing advice to local schools and communities to ensure that projects have realised their potential to integrate and enhance biodiversity as well as avoid adverse impacts on protected species and habitats (e.g. community at Pentregwenlais regarding management of the George V playing field and Tycroes school regarding management of their grassland for conservation and education potential).  
...by contributing to the development and implementation of a Green Infrastructure project that will help ensure that people are able to live, work in and visit a good quality environment and provide and enable opportunities for people to learn in, about and enjoy the environment.
- 4.5 Protect, enhance and conserve our natural and built environment and champion biodiversity in the County;  
...by facilitating the production and implementation of the County's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), which seeks to take positive action for a series of priority habitats and species in the county, raise awareness of the benefits of our natural environment and how people can get involved. It provides a secretariat for the Carmarthenshire LBAP Partnership and is instrumental in drawing down funding for projects that will conserve and enhance Carmarthenshire's species and habitats, - £6000 in 2013–14 and £5400 in 2014–15.  
...by organising public events, walks and talks throughout the year, including during Wales Biodiversity Week in June and producing a biodiversity newsletter and maintaining the biodiversity pages on the CCC website.  
...by facilitating the NRW grant for LBAP projects - £6000 in 2013–14 and £5,400 in 2014–15.
- Developing resilient and sustainable communities;  
...through our work with other departments we ensure that CCC is compliant with the NERC Act 2006 and takes account of biodiversity in the carrying out of all its functions. This contributes to the development of truly sustainable projects where social, economic and environmental factors are considered together. The pollinator project in Llanelli demonstrates the biodiversity officer's work with Housing...and together with Economic Development and Natural Resources Wales we have safeguarded and enhanced the water vole habitat in Berwick, Llanelli.

## *Biodiversity Highlights 2015*

- *NRW Joint Working Partnership Fund*

Approx £20,000 to support outputs from the Biodiversity Officer and to support internal and partner biodiversity projects. Projects included:

- Habitat management at CCC site at Morfa Berwig, Bynea. Management is underway on this wildlife-rich council-owned site on to improve some of the brownfield habitats for invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, manage ditches for water voles and scrub management and fencing to maintain open grassland. This land has been moved from Corporate Property to the Leisure portfolio, and we hope to make this site a Local Nature Reserve and increase community use of this site.

- Dafen pond nature trail: A small nature trail will be installed with QR codes linked to more information on the CCC website that looks at less obvious features – bark, lichen, fungi, mosses, soil, etc. This is tied into a wider community project looking at the development of local natural resource management plans.

- The Council, working with local ecologists, has run or contributed to a series of training sessions on protected species. Officers and contractors had a session on the value of roadside verges habitats. Officers working on housing projects learnt about bats and bridge engineers learnt about otters and bats in sessions that discussed developing new protocols for working. In 2016 the council and NRW will arrange a session on water voles for council officers.

- *Heritage Lottery Funding*

A partnership led by Carmarthenshire County Council has been successful in receiving a grant of £43,000 HLF for an exciting project – Carmarthenshire Bogs – exploring their past, celebrating the present and conserving their future. The project continues work on five commons near Brechfa and Llanfynydd and is also supported with funding from Natural Resources Wales and the Council. It will seek to explore the botanical history of the peat bogs, raise awareness of the important bog habitats and species, and take action to conserve these important habitats for the future. Partners in the project are NBGW, Swansea University and Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

*Other*

The biodiversity officer facilitated the formation of the Carmarthenshire Meadows Group in 2015. Its aim is to inspire the establishment of a county-wide community that supports each other to conserve and enhance our wildlife-rich meadows, large or small, across Carmarthenshire. Walks, talks, site visits and a group [website](#) were established this year.

## **9. Project support**

The Business Unit is supported by a project support officer who oversees the financial arrangements for the various grants and income the Unit receives, and the expenditure that the various projects incur (e.g. LBAP projects, Carmarthenshire Bogs HLF project and Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC project). She is also able to provide financial support to other units within planning services.

## **10. Rural Conservation Business Unit and CCC policies and core values**

The work of the Unit is consistent with Carmarthenshire's Integrated Community Strategy as it delivers one of its five key outcomes. Its work also reflects one of CCC's core values

(see table on page 9 onwards) and directly contributes to the delivery of Outcomes F1, F3 and F4 within the Council's Improvement Plan 2014/15. The Unit is also instrumental in ensuring that approved development meets the various policies that relate to the natural environment, through the provision of advice to development management, other CCC departments and the general public on landscape, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, biodiversity, Common Land and on development within the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SPG area.

The CCC policies that the work of the Unit supports are listed below:

Relevant policy or strategy	Content	Delivered through
CCC's Core values	Treating people and the environment with respect. We aim to be a leader in the field of sustainability - improving the quality of life for local people while conserving the earth's resources and protecting the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coed Cymru project bringing woodlands into management</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders conserving trees, and advising on tree management</li> <li>• Ensuring Common Land is safeguarded</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the habitat required by the Marsh Fritillary butterfly</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan partnership and running grant aided biodiversity projects</li> <li>• Commenting on planning applications with respect to landscape, common land and trees</li> <li>• Implementation of the Hedgerow regulations 1997</li> </ul>
Carmarthenshire's Integrated Community Strategy	Carmarthenshire's communities and environment are sustainable	See below F1, F3 and F4
CCC's Improvement Plan 2014/15	<p>KIOP5 – Protect and enhance the environment and make a major contribution to sustainable energy and climate change policies</p> <p>Outcome F: Carmarthenshire's communities and environment are sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F1: Living within our environmental limits using only our fair-share of earth's resources and minimising our carbon emissions</li> <li>• F2: Reducing waste and moving towards becoming a zero-waste county</li> <li>• F3: Supporting opportunities for the building of economically viable and sustainable</li> </ul>	<p>The focus of the Unit is on the conservation and enhancement of Carmarthenshire's natural environment – common land, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, landscapes, biodiversity and EU protected Species (Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC project). Protection of peat based habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F1: Carmarthenshire Bogs Project - conserving peat habitats that act as carbon stores</li> <li>• F3: Commenting on planning applications with respect to landscape, common land and trees</li> <li>• Implementing the Hedgerow Regulations 1997</li> <li>• F4: Coed Cymru project bringing woodlands into management.</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders conserving trees, and advising on tree management.</li> </ul>

Relevant policy or strategy	Content	Delivered through
	<p>communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F4: Protect, enhance and conserve our natural and built environment and champion biodiversity in the County</li> <li>• F5: Developing resilient and sustainable communities</li> <li>• F6: Developing sustainable transport options</li> <li>• F7: Ensuring the promotion of the Welsh language and Welsh culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring Common Land is safeguarded.</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the habitat required by the marsh fritillary butterfly through S106 agreements.</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) partnership and running grant aided biodiversity projects.</li> </ul>
<p>Planning Division Business Plan 2014/15 Rural Conservation Business Unit</p>	<p>The Rural Conservation Business Unit actively works in partnership with local and national organisations, as well as the community, to assist in safeguarding a high-quality environment which retains its biodiversity, landscapes and historical and cultural heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carmarthenshire Bogs project funded by HLF working in partnership with others</li> <li>• Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC project steering group includes NRW, Butterfly Conservation Menter Cwm Gwendraeth, Wildlife Trust and RSPB</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire LBAP partnership includes 13 partner organisations and individuals</li> <li>• Commenting on planning applications with respect to landscape, common land and trees</li> <li>• Implementing the Hedgerow Regulations 1997</li> </ul>
<p>Local Development Plan (LDP) Strategic Objective 4</p>	<p>To ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is safeguarded and enhanced and that habitats and species are protected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coed Cymru project bringing woodlands into management</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders conserving trees, and advising on tree management</li> <li>• Ensuring Common Land is safeguarded</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the habitat required by the marsh fritillary butterfly</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan partnership administers grant aided biodiversity projects</li> <li>• Commenting on planning</li> </ul>

Relevant policy or strategy	Content	Delivered through
		<p>applications with respect to landscape, common land and trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997</li> </ul>
LDP Strategy and Strategic objectives	5.6.2 – The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the nature conservation and biodiversity value of Carmarthenshire, including its rich tapestry of habitats and species.	As above
LDP Strategic Policy 1 Sustainable places and spaces:	<p>Proposals for development will be supported where they reflect sustainable development and design principles by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the area’s biodiversity value and where appropriate, seek to integrate nature conservation into new development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commenting on planning applications with respect to landscape, common land and trees. Ensuring mitigation and/or compensation is provided as appropriate by means of habitat management and landscape design (Ecology matters are covered by the Planning Ecologist)</li> <li>• Providing pre application advice to other departments and the general public</li> <li>• Implementation of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997</li> </ul>
LDP Strategic Policy 14 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment	Development should reflect the need to protect, and wherever possible enhance the County’s natural environment. All development proposals should be considered in accordance with national guidance/legislation and the policies and proposals of this Plan, with due consideration given to areas of nature conservation value, the countryside, landscapes and coastal areas, including those outlined below.	As above
LDP also contains the following Environmental Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQ3 – Regional and Local Designations</li> <li>• EQ4 – Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQ3 – Provide advice on planning matters re designated sites, inc commenting on planning</li> </ul>

<b>Relevant policy or strategy</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivered through</b>
that reflect the work of the Conservation Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQ5 – Corridors, Networks and features of distinctiveness (including trees, woodlands and hedgerows)</li> <li>• EQ6 – Special Landscape Areas</li> <li>• EQ7 – Development within the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SPG area</li> </ul>	<p>applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQ4 – Delivery of Carmarthenshire LBAP and ensuring biodiversity advice is available pre application, and ensuring biodiversity is taken into account when determining planning application</li> <li>• EQ5 – Commenting on planning applications with regard to hedgerows, trees, woodlands and other landscape features</li> <li>• EQ6 – Review of SLAs and revision of these designated areas for the LDP. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect SLAs</li> <li>• EQ7 – Managing and delivering the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC project in the SPG area</li> </ul>

## **Glossary of Terms**

ACRA	Association for Commons Registration Authorities
CCC	Carmarthenshire County Council
CROW	The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
EU	European Union
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
KIOP	Key Improvement Objective Priority
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LDP	Local Development Plan
NBGW	National Botanic Garden of Wales
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PIMS	Carmarthenshire County Council's Performance Information Management System
QR Codes	A Quick Response Code is a two-dimensional barcode that can be read using a smart-phone or another QR reading device
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
S106	Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Importance
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
UK	United Kingdom
WG	Welsh Government



# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Highways Update

**To consider and comment on the following issues:**

- That the Committee consider and comments on the report.

**Reasons:**

- Provide an update on the highway service reviews undertaken to date, outlining preliminary proposals to amend levels of service so as to address the reduced budget available to the service for the next three years.
- A review of the service levels associated with the highway maintenance function is necessary due to the proposed reduction in available budget.
- That the Committee is kept informed of the work of the service and members are enabled to exercise their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.

**To be referred to Executive Board for decision: NO**

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Hazel Evans (Technical Services)

<p><b>Directorate:</b> Environment</p> <p><b>Name of Director:</b> Ruth Mullen</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Darren King</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p>Director of Environment</p> <p>Highways Services Manager</p>	<p><b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p>01267 224648 <a href="mailto:rmullen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">rmullen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01267 224544 <a href="mailto:dking@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">dking@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
---	---	--

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Highways Update

This report provides the Committee with an update on the highway service reviews undertaken to date, outlining preliminary proposals to amend levels of service so as to address the reduced budget available to the service for the next three years.

The length of highway network maintained in Carmarthenshire at 3343km or 2085 miles, is the second largest in Wales, and is more than double the Welsh average of 1566km. It also has the second largest length of Class 1 roads in Wales second only to Gwynedd. The highway asset consists of some 16 million square metres of carriageway.

This report includes the following:

1. Introduction to the service
2. Details of the service review to date
3. Future service proposals

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Ruth Mullen** Director of Environment

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: **Ruth Mullen** Director of Environment

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

This page is intentionally left blank

# **HIGHWAYS SERVICE REVIEW ~ UPDATE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Network Details**

The length of highway network maintained in Carmarthenshire at 3343km or 2085 miles (Lands End to John O Groats ~ 2 and a half times !) is the second largest in Wales, and is more than double the Welsh average of 1566km. It also has the second largest length of Class 1 roads in Wales second only to Gwynedd. The highway asset consists of some 16 million square metres of carriageway.

### **Current Budget Allocation**

The Highway Services revenue budget for 2015-16 is circa £8.1million. Capital funding of £250k has been agreed for the current year for highway resurfacing schemes in accordance with the 5 year capital budget plan.

### **Asset Value**

The highway asset is currently valued at £2.68 billion based on the 2014/15 WGA asset valuation return with annual depreciation assessed at £26.6 million. This figure relates to the carriageway only and is calculated from annual asset valuation based on CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) code of practice for Whole of Government Accounts (WGA).

### **Cost / Km**

The overall level of expenditure on carriageway maintenance in Carmarthenshire (£/km) is generally lower than the Welsh and UK averages and also that of our neighbouring authorities. This lower level of investment can be directly linked to the overall condition of the highway network, with insufficient corrective or preventative maintenance funding in place.

Continued levels of deterioration are anticipated with the end of Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) from 2015/16 and further reductions in revenue and capital maintenance funding.

The average investment in £/km for road maintenance across a group of similar authorities in England, Scotland & Wales (as collated by APSE for the period 12/13) was £7,149/km. The Welsh average that year was much lower at £4,124 with Carmarthenshire lower than average at £4,007/km. This figure has reduced year on year to an estimated investment of £2,826/km in 14/15 including Grant funds (LGBI) of £1.45m.

In 2015/16 the investment in Carmarthenshire will reduce to an estimated figure of £2424/km which takes into account the reduced budget provision.

## **Condition of the highway asset & investment to date.**

As a result of the recent LGBI funding we have seen a further improvement in the condition of our Class A, B & C roads during 2014/15 with 11.9% of our roads in a poor condition, compared to 15.7% in 2013/14. With Class A roads improving from 4.7% to 4.3%, Class B from 5.5% to 3.6% and Class C from 20.4% to 15.6%, despite this improvement our combined result remains in the bottom quartile. The combined PI for the A,B and C class roads in terms of the national performance indicator has reduced from 15.4% in 12/13 to 11.9% in 14/15. The higher the percentage correlates with a greater extent of deterioration.

In Carmarthenshire, the LGBI investment on carriageways has been: 12/13 ~ £3.59M; 13/14 ~ £1.3M; 14/15 ~ £1.45M. The additional funding from LGBI can be seen to make a direct impact on the overall condition of the network. However with the cessation of this external funding it is inevitable that we will see continued levels of deterioration in the highway asset.

The LGBI investment in Carmarthenshire was primarily targeted at A&B roads as outlined above. Investment in Class 3 roads in the final year would appear to have assisted with a recovery from 21.8% in 2012 to 15.6% in 2014 however this figure is significantly higher than target level of around 8%. Timely investments need to continue on all classes of road to prevent a reversal in these trends, with some increased focus on Class 3 roads. Investing in programmes of planned cost-effective long-term preventative maintenance will help avoid widespread failure of the road construction that will ultimately be more costly to repair. We need to consider that recent Winters have been relatively mild and any short term recovery is still vulnerable to rapid deterioration should we experience any hard winters.

## **Backlog of maintenance work**

The scale of backlog is such that there is a large (**£18m**) programme of capital maintenance work identified as part of a rolling programme of maintenance. This programme is increasing. The only capital investment or funding mechanism currently allocated for highway resurfacing is £250,000 per year for the next 4 years. This is a significant shortfall compared to previous levels of investment under the LGBI scheme. Clearly this level of funding will not address the long term aspirations of improving the serviceability, availability and safety of the network.

Without sufficient capital investment, the level of backlog (valued at **£54** million) will continue to grow and the network condition will deteriorate further. The backlog of highway maintenance repairs will become much more expensive to address and could lead to sections of the network being subject to restrictions or in the worst case scenario road closures which will affect economic development and tourism. This aspect of maintenance is identified as high risk to the Authority and has been included in the Streetscene Divisional Business Plan 2015-16.

## **Future budget cuts**

Providing funding for planned maintenance will assist the authority in meeting its statutory requirements under the Highways Act 1980 and significantly supports the County

Council's corporate objectives of Integrated Community Strategy. There will also be a reduction in reactive maintenance and revenue costs to assist in meeting on-going PBB targets.

The proposed PBBs for the next 2-3 years will see a further reduction of some £1million resulting in a revenue budget of circa **£6** million. A cut of some **£5** million compared to 4-5 years ago. To date the service has met the challenge of delivering services in line with budget reductions without a noticeable decrease in standards. However with the further severe budget cuts facing the Highways Service it is widely acknowledged that the service standards will inevitably be affected.

The highway network in Carmarthenshire is an asset to the county that promotes economic viability and social well being. Well maintained highways allow businesses to trade and people can live their lives. Maintenance is crucial to the safety of the road network and all those that use it.

## **2. SERVICE REVIEW TO DATE**

### **Reduction in manning levels**

Over the past 4-5 years one of the most valuable assets in the Highways Service it's labour force has reduced significantly from **160 in 2007** to **120 in 2015**. The reduction in manning levels has been necessary to meet the imposed budgets efficiency savings and PBB cuts. This reduction has been met through age related retirement, ill-health retirement, other employment and voluntary severance. Whilst it can be considered that the service is operating more efficiently we are however at our minimum manning levels and any further decrease in the workforce will affect operational efficiencies and reduce the authority's resilience in providing a winter maintenance and emergency service.

### **Fleet reduction**

A review of the Highways Service fleet has recently been completed and a fleet replacement programme has been agreed with procurement of new vehicles currently underway. The programme will see the complete replacement of the winter service fleet of gritters and its construction fleet of 18 tne HGV tipper lorries. The combined fleet of **35** vehicles are to be replaced with a new fleet of only **22** vehicles. A reduction of **13** vehicles should achieve annual savings of approx. **£180k** and will assist the service in delivering the required PBB targets over the next two years. The service will no longer have dedicated gritting vehicles which stand idle throughout the summer months but instead will have swap body type vehicles which can be used all year round thus increasing vehicle utilisation and efficiencies within the service. Swap body vehicles will be used for construction work during the day removing excavated materials from site / delivering tarmac and then swapping to a gritter body at the end of shift for gritting operations that evening. The operation associated with swapping bodies will not impact on service delivery.

## **Winter Service ~ New Forecast Domains / Gritting Route Efficiencies**

To date Carmarthenshire's winter maintenance forecasting arrangements have been based on two operational domains i.e. East / West. However it is apparent that these geographic regions do not lend themselves to climatic forecasting due to the varied topography across the County. The current East / West domains are both varied in topography with a mixture of coastal, inland, high and low ground. In addition the forecast for the East domain, particularly when snow is featured, can be dominated by the weather station forecast from Storey Arms, Brecon Beacons which is necessary to account for the A4069 Black mountain road of a similar height and region.

In order to improve service efficiency and target scarce resources effectively, the authority has reviewed the efficiency of it's existing 14 gritting routes prior to the start of this winter season and developed new routes based on the revised forecasting domains. These new domains have been established with similar topographic and potentially climatic properties. They consist of North, South and High Ground domains which are now more representative of the county's topographical and geographical areas..

It is anticipated that the revised domains will enable the weather forecaster to provide higher confidence forecasts for more distinct topographic regions. This will allow more selective regional treatments during winter conditions and reduce the number of blanket treatments across the County particularly in the South domain around the coastal fringes.

## **Restructure ~ Operational Boundaries / Workforce / Area Staff**

A complete review of the Streetscene Division was undertaken in 2014 to identify efficiencies within the service to meet the PBB targets for individual service units. A complete divisional restructure was subsequently approved and we are currently in the process of delivering the new staffing structure which is only partially complete for Streetscene. Restructure of the Highways Service unit is however complete and the new arrangements became fully operational on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

Summary of the restructure undertaken to date:~

- Operational area boundaries of East/West removed.
- County wide approach with creation of 5 No. sectors.
- Highway resource / asset equalised between each Asst Area Manager
- Existing boundaries and reporting lines rationalised as fully as possible to streamline operations, equalise workloads and support service efficiency



### **3. FUTURE SERVICE PROPOSALS**

#### **Network Hierarchy**

The highway network in Carmarthenshire is currently managed based on roads classification A, B, C and Unclassified. Whilst this is a reasonable approach it does not always fully take into account such factors as traffic flow, the location of primary centres, important facilities and key strategic routes within the County.

The department intends to develop a network hierarchy in line with recommended guidance in the National Code of Practice for Highways. This hierarchy will form a sound basis for improved asset management and resource allocation based on a prioritised network according to use and strategic importance.

The authority works closely with other Welsh authorities via County Surveyors Society (CSS) Wales and the Asset Management Project. The alignment of hierarchy and service standards is seen as crucial to allow better comparisons and performance measurement. Moving to a network hierarchy will also enable improved collaborative working with neighbouring authorities where possible, as hierarchies and standards will be aligned.

#### **Service standards**

Introduction of a network hierarchy within Carmarthenshire will present an opportunity to define service levels and target limited resources in a structured manner, according to Council policy. Routine maintenance functions such as gully cleaning; sweeping; drainage maintenance; grass cutting; weed clearance; sign cleaning will be assigned a level of service based on the network hierarchy.

#### **Winter Service ~ Prioritised Gritting Routes**

The provision of a Highways Winter Service i.e. Gritting and Snow clearance, is a significant cost item for the Authority. As such the service is subject to continual review with the aim to identify efficiencies and ensure best use is made of resources. The service is one that receives numerous requests to increase coverage against a backdrop of reducing budgets. A partial review has already achieved a reduction from 14 to 13 routes however a further review is essential in order to realise savings in the winter service budget. The aim of this review is to re-prioritise the routes for winter service based on a risk based scoring matrix and taking into account the new weather forecasting domains to identify essential savings whilst making best use of current resources.

#### **PBBs / Budget Cuts ~ Service Proposals**

For the Highways Service to meet the challenges of the PPB savings over the next 3 years it is critical that a Network Hierarchy is agreed for all sections of road within the authority. This will define the level of services across all types and classes of road primarily based on its level of usage and strategic importance and will form the basis of our highway maintenance regime in the county. This principle has been adopted by most

of the highway authorities in England and Wales and is seen as the most effective and efficient way of managing services within reduced budgets and sets out the key functions of a Highways Service.

Some initial proposals for year 1 are outlined below for information:~

<b>Highway Services ~ ( PBB proposals 2016/17 )</b>		<b>Agreed Target ~ £512,000</b>
<b>PBB Options</b>		<b>Saving £</b>
1	Reduce Surface Dressing budget by 10%	100,000
3	Reduction of Amenity Grass Cutting frequencies	20,000
4	Shrub Mtce to be undertaken in-house by Cyclic Gangs	15,000
5	Reduction in mtce of raised flower beds / Rdbts in Carmarthen & Llanelli	16,000
8	Reduction in Construction Gangs by 2 No. through voluntary scheme	280,000
9	Fleet Replacement ~ 3.5 tne pickup trucks ~ efficiency through new leasing contract	80,000
<b>Total Saving</b>		<b>511,000</b>

Some initial proposals for year 2 & 3 are outlined below for information :~

<b>Highway Services ~ (PBB potential proposals 17/18 &amp; 18/19)</b>		
<b>PBB Options</b>		<b>Saving £</b>
1	Reduce Surface Dressing budget by 10%	100,000
2	Reduce Surface Dressing Patching budget by 10%	40,000
3	Reduction in Sweeping function	70,000
4	Reduction in Gully Emptying frequency	70,000
6	Further Reductions in Amenity Grass Cutting frequency	20,000
7	Reduction in annual verge mowing ~ restricted to 30/40 mph zones ~ safety cuts only elsewhere	30,000
8	Reduction in Jetting function	25,000
9	Cease Mechanical Ditching function	15,000
10	Reduction in number of gritting routes & network coverage	30,000
<b>Total Saving</b>		<b>400,000</b>

### Summary / Conclusion

The proposals outlined in the tables above show that we can meet year 1 savings without greatly affecting the level of service however further work is required on the preliminary proposals for years 2 & 3 to adequately assess and prioritise service levels in accordance with a redefined network hierarchy.

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Environmental & Public Protection Task & Finish Group 2015/16 – Planning and Scoping Document

### To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To consider and note the aims and scope of the work of the Task & Finish Group.
- To consider and note the key milestones for the completion of the work of the Task & Finish Group.

### Reasons:

- The Task & Finish Group is required to report the progress of its work to the main scrutiny committee.

**To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: NO**

### Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:

Cllr. Pam Palmer (Communities and Council Business Manager)

<p><b>Directorate:</b> Chief Executive's</p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Linda Rees-Jones</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Matthew Hughes</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p>Head of Administration &amp; Law</p> <p>Assistant Consultant</p>	<p><b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p>01267 224010 <a href="mailto:lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01267 224029 <a href="mailto:mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
--	---	--

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

## Environmental & Public Protection Task & Finish Group 2015/16 – Planning and Scoping Document

At its meeting on 15th May 2015, the Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group “to research different approaches to car parking charges that could be applied in the county”.

The members of the Group are:

- Cllr. Peter Cooper (Chair)
- Cllr. Alun Davies
- Cllr. Ivor Jackson
- Cllr. John Jenkins
- Cllr. Elwyn Williams

The study main aims of the study will be to:

- Research different approaches to car parking charges that could be applied in the county.
- To formulate recommendations for consideration by the Executive Board.

The Group held its first planning meeting on 24th September 2015 and nominated Cllr. Peter Cooper as chair. The Group discussed the scope of the review, key issues to be addressed, key stakeholders to be consulted and key milestones to be met. These details are outlined in the attached document.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

**Signed:**            Linda Rees-Jones            Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

**Signed:**            Linda Rees-Jones            Head of Administration & Law

- 1. Local Member(s) – N/A**
- 2. Community / Town Council – N/A**
- 3. Relevant Partners –** If required, representatives from partner organisations will be consulted as part of the Task & Finish Group’s review.
- 4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations –** Officers from the Transport & Engineering Division (Environment Department) contributed to the development of the Planning and Scoping Document and will continue to support the work of the Task & Finish Group.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information**  
**List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Executive Board (28th September 2015)	<b>Agenda &amp; Minutes</b> <a href="http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&amp;MIId=122&amp;Ver=4">http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&amp;MIId=122&amp;Ver=4</a>
E&PP Scrutiny Committee (15th May 2015)	<b>Minutes</b> <a href="http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/ENMT20150515/MINUTES.HTM">http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/ENMT20150515/MINUTES.HTM</a>

This page is intentionally left blank

# Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group 2015/16

## *Car Parking Charges*

### Planning & Scoping Document

<b>Context</b>	<p>The Environmental &amp; Public Protection Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in monitoring services, development of key policies and strategies, as well as identifying areas for improvement or development.</p> <p>At its meeting on 15th May 2015, the Environmental &amp; Public Protection Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to research different approaches to car parking charges that could be applied in the county.</p> <p>Following consideration of a report on Llanelli Car Parks at its meeting on the 28th September 2015, the Executive Board also requested that the Group explore the option of introducing a pay on exit system at the Llanelli multi-storey car park in lieu of the pay and display / pay on foot system.</p>
<b>Membership</b>	<p><b><u>Elected Members</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr. Peter Cooper (Chair)</li> <li>• Cllr. Alun Davies</li> <li>• Cllr. Ivor Jackson</li> <li>• Cllr. John Jenkins</li> <li>• Cllr. Elwyn Williams</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Advisors / Support Officers</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve Pilliner (Head of Transport &amp; Engineering, Environment Department)</li> <li>• John McEvoy (Road Safety &amp; Traffic Manager, Environment Department)</li> <li>• Matthew Hughes (Assistant Consultant, Chief Executive's Department)</li> </ul>
<b>The main aims of the review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research different approaches to car parking charges that could be applied in the county</li> <li>• To formulate recommendations for consideration by the Executive</li> </ul>

	Board
<b>Scope of the study</b>	<p>This review will focus on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging Policy (to include Transport Strategy &amp; Policy)</li> <li>• Legislation relating to Traffic Management and Parking</li> <li>• The purpose of parking charges</li> <li>• Car park demand / usage</li> <li>• Revenue distribution and impact of reducing charges</li> <li>• Research evidence on the impact of car park charging</li> <li>• Main town centre footfall</li> <li>• Car park charges and competitiveness including socio-economic issues</li> </ul>
<b>How it will contribute to achieving corporate / community objectives and priorities</b>	<p>Contributes to the following outcomes from the County Council's Corporate Strategy 2015-20 and Carmarthenshire's Integrated Community Strategy 2011-16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the best use of resources</li> <li>• People who live, work and visit Carmarthenshire are safe and feel safer</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire's communities and environment are sustainable</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire has a stronger and more prosperous economy</li> </ul>
<b>Initial list of key officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve Pilliner (Head of Transport &amp; Engineering)</li> <li>• John McEvoy (Road Safety &amp; Traffic Manager)</li> <li>• Representatives from Regeneration &amp; Policy Division</li> </ul>
<b>What information / documents are required to inform the work of the study?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carmarthenshire parking data (e.g. charges and usage)</li> <li>• Parking data from other authorities for comparison purposes</li> <li>• Case studies from other local authorities (including initiatives)</li> <li>• Data and analysis from the Council's recent initiative in Llanelli offering two hour period of free car parking between 3:00 and 5:00pm during October</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any submissions from members of the public</li> <li>• Relevant traffic management and parking legislation</li> <li>• Car parking research reports (e.g. Welsh Government commissioned 'Impact of Car Park Charges' Research Report, Association of Town &amp; City Management, British Parking Association, RAC Foundation reports)</li> <li>• Integrated Parking Strategy for Carmarthenshire (December 2005)</li> <li>• Regional Transport Plan / Local Transport Plan / Wales Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Llanelli Car Parks report (Executive Board, 28th September 2015)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Timescale for completion of the review</b></p>	<p><b>Thursday 24th September 2015 – Group Meeting 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree aim and overall approach for the review</li> </ul> <p><b>Monday 9th November 2015 – Group Meeting 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging Policy (to include Transport Strategy &amp; Policy)</li> <li>• Legislation relating to Traffic Management and Parking</li> <li>• Car park charges and competitiveness including socio-economic issues</li> <li>• Research evidence on the impact of car park charging</li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday 17th December 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking trends / Car park usage data</li> <li>• Summary of recent consultation relating to car parking charges</li> <li>• Pay on Exit Systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday 15th January 2016 – Group Meeting 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of possible initiatives</li> <li>• Findings of Llanelli parking pilot</li> <li>• Town centre footfall data</li> </ul> <p><b>Tuesday 9th February 2016 – Group Meeting 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing Conclusions / Final Report (Summary of key findings / draft recommendations)</li> </ul>

This page is intentionally left blank

## ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

***(NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING)***

**Present:** Councillor A.P. Cooper (Chair)

**Councillors:** J.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, I.J. Jackson, A. James, S.E. Thomas, D.E. Williams

**Councillor D.J.R. Bartlett – Substitute for Councillor W.G. Thomas**  
**Councillor C.A. Campbell – Substitute for Councillor W.J. Lemon**  
**Councillor J.D. James – Substitute for Councillor K.P. Thomas**  
**Councillor M.J.A Lewis – Substitute for Councillor A. Davies**  
**Councillor D.W.H. Richards – Substitute for Councillor D.B. Davies**

**The following officers were in attendance:**

Mrs. R. Mullen – Director of Environment  
Mr. M. Cresci – Head of Street-Scene  
Mr. M. Davies – Interim Head of Property Maintenance & Construction  
Mr. S. Pilliner – Head of Transport & Engineering  
Mr. R. Staines – Head of Housing & Public Protection  
Ms. R. James – Group Accountant  
Mr. R. Edmunds – Trading Standards Services Manager  
Ms. J. Edwards – Principal Business & Development Officer  
Mr. J. McEvoy – Road Safety & Traffic Manager  
Ms. K. Thomas – Community Safety Manager  
Mrs. S. Watts – Public Health Services Manager  
Mr. A. Williams – Street-Scene Manager  
Mr. M. Hughes – Assistant Consultant

Present as an observer: Mrs. M. Kathrens – Technical Assistant

**Venue:** Spilman Street Chamber, Carmarthen (10:00 – 11:45am)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Davies, D.B. Davies, W.J. Lemon, A.D.T. Speake, K.P. Thomas and W.G. Thomas.

Apologies were also received from Councillor H.A.L. Evans (Executive Board Member for Technical Services) and Councillor T.J Jones (Executive Board Member for Environmental & Public Protection).

The Chair welcomed Mrs. Ruth Mullen to her first meeting as the new Director of the Environment Department.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Cllr. D.W.H. Richards	6. Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16	Owner of land adjacent to Trebeddrod Reservoir in Llanelli

## 3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of party whips.

## 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received.

## 5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Environment Departmental Budget Seminar for members was being held on Tuesday 8th December at 2:00pm in Y Ffwrnes, Llanelli.

**RESOLVED** that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on Friday 11th December 2015, be noted.

## 6. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2015/16

*Cllr. D.W.H. Richards declared an interest in that he owns land adjacent to Trebeddrod Reservoir in Llanelli*

The Committee considered the Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Environment Department, Public Protection Services and the Community Safety Team, as at 31st August 2015 in relation to the 2015/16 financial year. The following issues were raised in relation to the report:

Reference was made to the recent suspension of eight members of staff from the Environment Department and it was asked how the services were coping without their full complement of staff and what impact this was having on the Department's budget. The Head of Street-Scene informed the Committee that the services had alternative arrangements in place to accommodate staff absences, as was the case when dealing with sickness absence or annual leave. In certain situations, agency workers were employed to cover for core staff and such costs were provided for within the departmental budget. The Director of Environment informed the Committee that there was no impact on the delivery of the relevant services and whilst the Department wished to bring this matter to a close as soon as possible, the Authority was duty bound to adhere to the relevant legislation and human resources policies to ensure that each case was heard and dealt with fairly.

In response to a question as to when the transfer of public conveniences would be completed, the Head of Street-Scene reminded the Committee that the transfer of the public conveniences to Town and Community Councils was into its second year of a three-year process but agreed to check the progress and inform the Committee accordingly.

An explanation was sought for the variance relating to the Emergency Planning service, the work of the Local Resilience Forum and why the Authority was funding a post at Pembrokeshire County Council. The Group Accountant and Head of Street-Scene informed the Committee that the Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum was a multi-agency partnership comprising of key emergency and public services which would co-ordinate the response to a major incident in the region (e.g. severe weather, major transport or industrial accident). Outside normal office hours, an officer, employed by Pembrokeshire County Council, was on stand-by for the whole region and the £3,000 referred to in the report, was Carmarthenshire's contribution towards this regional arrangement.

Reference was made to the variance of £394,000 in the Property Services budget due to an unachievable income target and a question was asked as to what was being done to reduce this. The Interim Head of Property Maintenance & Construction acknowledged that this was a long-standing issue and that the Department was working with Financial Services to manage it. It was envisaged that the next budget monitoring report would show a reduction in this figure as the Department undertook a programme of restructuring and utilised workers in other areas.

The variance of £25,000 relating to car parking was questioned, as was the impact that the work of the Committee's Task and Finish Group would have on this and future budgetary proposals for this service. Reference was also made to the free-parking pilot scheme in Llanelli and the potential impact this would have on the service's budget. The Head of Transport & Engineering reminded the Committee that the variance was due to the proposed 20p increase to charges and introduction of evening charges not being implemented. The data gathered during the Llanelli pilot scheme were currently being analysed. He also informed the Committee that to date, the Task & Finish Group had met twice. The most recent meeting had focused on the policy and legislative basis for car parking charges and that it was envisaged that the review would be completed by March 2016 in order to inform the budget proposals for 2016/17 onwards.

In response to a query about the work at the Trebeddrod Reservoir, the Street-Scene Manager informed the Committee that work was continuing and that the final phase was due to be completed by the end of February 2016.

In light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Department, it was asked what steps were being taken to manage the workforce and prepare staff for possible changes and reductions in services. The Director of Environment acknowledged that it was right and proper to prepare for future efficiencies and that steps were in place to manage the workforce through this difficult time. These included the severance scheme and looking at opportunities to re-deploy staff to other duties within the Department.

Concern was expressed at the underachievement of fee income within the Trading Standards Service and it was asked why the Authority's fees had not been gradually increased in line with neighbouring authorities' fees. The Head of Housing

& Public Protection stated that this was being addressed but the underachievement could be traced back to the receipt of large sums of income for one-off events. This had subsequently been validated into future years' budgets even though the service would never have been able to achieve this same level of income in any 'normal' year. This was a problem faced by many other services across the Authority and needed to be resolved in conjunction with Financial Services.

Clarification was sought for the loss of the Community Safety Fund and where this funding had been allocated to instead. The Community Safety Manager informed the Committee that this was not an overspend but was a grant fund that had previously been received from the Police & Crime Commissioner as a contribution towards the operation of the CCTV service. However, this funding had been stopped by the Commissioner at the start of the financial year and in light of this the Executive Board had also ended the Authority's contribution to the service. However, until the service ended operations in July, the Authority continued to incur costs as outlined in the report. The figures continued to be shown in the report as the costs had been incurred during the current financial year.

The programme to replace the Authority's vehicle fleet was discussed and references made to the state of the current fleet and the reduction in the specialist vehicles available to service particular areas of the county. The Head of Transport & Engineering confirmed that an order worth £6m had been placed with suppliers which was envisaged to be fulfilled in 2016. This order had prioritised new waste collection vehicles and vehicles for social care services. Highways Services would be part of the next round of orders and that the priority was to identify the replacement strategy and work with the service users. He acknowledged that older vehicles were subject to longer down-time and this was monitored on a daily basis but it was not possible to finalise figures for the number of replacement vehicles as on-going service-reviews would impact on this. The Head of Street-Scene reminded the Committee that in light of the on-going financial pressures, the Department would need to redefine its service standards and these would be impacted by the number of vehicles available.

Concerns were expressed about the condition of the County's highway network and in particular, the rural road network. It was asked whether the Department had explored alternatives to the Local Government Borrowing Initiative which had ended in April 2015 in order to improve the roads and prevent the Authority from being held liable for any accidents caused by poor road surfaces. The Director of Environment acknowledged the comments but stressed that officers would be looking at generating and drawing down additional funding as well as prioritising the resources the Department already had to address the problem. As this was an issue facing all Welsh authorities, there were opportunities to work in conjunction with other local authorities to draw down additional funds and find innovative solutions to maintain the highway network. The Head of Street-Scene noted that local government officers with responsibility for highways, had been lobbying the Welsh Government via the County Surveyors Society for an extension to the Local Government Borrowing Initiative scheme but this had been rejected by ministers.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

**7. HALF-YEARLY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT – 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Committee received, for consideration, the Half-Yearly Performance Management Report for the services within its remit, for the period 1st April to 30th September 2015. The report included:

- Heads of Service Overview of Performance
- Improvement Plan Monitoring – Actions and Performance Measures
- Complaints and Compliments Monitoring
- Crime Statistics for Carmarthenshire

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the Community Safety Partnership initiatives and it was asked whether there was an opportunity for the Local Authority to utilise the disused Police house in Felinfoel, especially in light of the demand for social housing. The Head of Housing & Public Protection noted that the Authority did have funds to return empty properties to use as social housing and the Community Safety Manager agreed to clarify the matter with Dyfed-Powys Police.

In response to a question on the status of the public lighting upgrade, the Head of Street-Scene informed the Committee that an invest-to-save bid submitted to the Welsh Government had been successful according to a press release although officers had yet to be officially notified of this. The funding of £1.4m would assist in funding the replacement of about 12,500 street lights with LED units with expected savings of £600,000 per annum on energy and labour.

It was suggested that whilst the report noted reductions up until the end of 2014/15, the figures for road deaths would be higher following the number of fatalities during the summer of 2015. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged that the accident figures had risen during the year and the research undertaken with Dyfed-Powys Police indicated that driver behaviour was the prime cause. The increase in motorcyclist fatalities was of grave concern and the Authority continued to work hard to reduce such incidents, especially through joint operations with Dyfed-Powys Police (e.g. 'Operation Darwen') and educational initiatives.

In response to queries regarding the Llandeilo By-Pass, the Head of Transport & Engineering reminded the Committee that there was a commitment to the by-pass in the National Transport Finance Plan and that various studies relating to the proposed route would be commencing by the end of the year. There were however, a number of hurdles to be overcome, prior to any construction work. He added that the preferred route had been identified and protected from any housing developments but that any changes to this route would be considered by the minister as part of the statutory process.

Further to a question on the joint working between National Resources Wales and the Local Authority in relation to shellfish poaching, the Public Health Services Manager confirmed that officers did indeed work with both National Resources Wales and the Welsh Government, both of whom had specific responsibility for different areas of the Carmarthenshire coastline. However, due to the size of the area in question, the coastline was difficult to monitor and police due to the lack of resources experienced by the relevant agencies involved.

It was suggested that the Executive Board Member be asked to lobby the Welsh Government to increase its monitoring of the shellfish beds in the Carmarthen Bay area in order to prevent and deter poaching activity. It was also suggested that due

to the aggressive behaviour of poachers, both HM Revenue & Customs and the UK Border Agency be copied in on any correspondence sent to the Welsh Government. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

Clarification was sought as to the status of the TEEP (Technically, economically and environmentally practicable) Assessment of Carmarthenshire's waste and recycling collection arrangements, in response to the Welsh Government's desire to standardise processes across Wales for kerbside sort systems. The Head of Street-Scene confirmed that an external consultant employed by the Authority was undertaking an initial high-level overview assessment of Carmarthenshire's collection methodology, and would be reporting back in due course. The Authority had made its views on collection methodologies clear to Welsh Government officers in the past. The Director of Environment informed the Committee that the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council had also met with the Welsh Government and made strong representations to ministers on Carmarthenshire's views that local authorities should be free to use whichever process suited their needs best.

Disappointment was expressed that the Compliments and Complaints section of the report continued to omit Councillor enquiries which were often complaints but submitted via a different process. It was felt that the report was therefore not a true reflection of the complaints or compliments received by the Authority. The Chair and Assistant Consultant agreed to forward the comments to the relevant officer with responsibility for these reports.

**RESOLVED** that:

7.1 The report be received.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that:

7.2 The Executive Board Member (Environmental & Public Protection) be asked to lobby the Welsh Government to allocate (in conjunction with the relevant agencies), additional resources to enable increased monitoring of the Carmarthen Bay area in order to prevent shellfish poaching.

## **8. REFERRAL TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered a referral from the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee. The Assistant Consultant explained the background for the referral and updated the Committee on the proposals for a new format for the performance monitoring reports received by scrutiny committees which would be shared with elected members at a briefing session on the 14th January 2016 (2:00pm).

The Head of Housing & Public Protection suggested that this session offered an ideal opportunity for members to highlight their opinions regarding the content of the Complaints and Compliments section to officers.

Disappointment was expressed that the proposed briefing session would be held in the afternoon as such afternoon meetings made attendance difficult for elected members who worked and had children of school age.



The Assistant Consultant agreed to feed back members comments to the relevant officers.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

**9. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORTS**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the reasons for the non-submissions of the Review of the Gambling Policy and the Review of the Licensing Policy, be noted.

**10. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE**

The Committee considered an update detailing progress in relation to actions, requests or referrals emerging from previous scrutiny meetings. The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the joint meeting held with the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee in September in order to discuss the proposals for Sustaining Post-Sixteen College / School Transport and it was asked when this matter and the views expressed by the committees' members, would be considered by the Executive Board. The Head of Transport & Engineering reminded the Committee that the consultation had come to an end on the 10th November 2015 and that all comments received would be considered and form part of the final report. Part of the process would also include updating the Equalities Impact Assessment.

In response to further questions about the consultation process, the Head of Transport & Engineering and Principal Business & Development Officer reminded the Committee that all members had been welcome to attend the open evenings held at the county's secondary schools and further education college campuses and that a newsletter and email informing elected members of the process, had been circulated in October 2015. However, elected members were welcome to contact officers should they wish to discuss or clarify any matters relating to the consultation process.

Reference was made to the continued opposition expressed by elected members to proposals to charge for transport to education establishments. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged the strength of feeling expressed by elected members but reminded the Committee of the context within which the proposals had been presented, namely a £39m revenue reduction faced by the Local Authority. The budget strategy agreed by Council in February 2015 had included this proposal which was now being consulted on but any change to the policy would ultimately require the approval of County Council before it could be implemented.

**RESOLVED** that the report, be noted.

**11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18th September 2015 be signed as a correct record.

**12. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION AND EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEES, HELD ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the joint meeting held on Friday 18th September 2015 be signed as a correct record.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2015

**Present:** Councillor A.P. Cooper (Chair)

**Councillors:** A. Davies, J.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, I.J. Jackson (Vice-Chair), J.P. Jenkins, W.G. Thomas, D.E. Williams

**Councillor D.J.R. Bartlett – Substitute for Councillor K.P. Thomas**

**Councillor W.T. Evans – Substitute for Councillor W.J. Lemon**

**Councillor T. Theophilus – Substitute for Councillor D.B. Davies**

**Also in attendance:**

**Councillor H.A.L. Evans** – Executive Board Member for Technical Services

**Councillor D.M. Jenkins** – Executive Board Member for Resources

**Councillor T.J. Jones** – Executive Board Member for Environmental & Public Protection

In attendance as an observer: **Councillor J.D. James**

**The following officers were in attendance:**

Mrs. R. Mullen – Director of Environment

Mr. O. Bowen – Interim Head of Financial Services

Mr. S. Pilliner – Head of Transport & Engineering

Ms. R. James – Group Accountant

Mr. E. Jones – Principal Licensing Officer

Ms. K. Thomas – Community Safety Manager

Mrs. S. Watts – Public Health Services Manager

Mr. A. Williams – Street-Scene Manager

Mr. M. Hughes – Assistant Consultant

**Venue:** Spilman Street Chamber, Carmarthen (10:00 – 11:45am)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daff Davies, Andrew James, Winston Lemon, Alan Speake and Keri Thomas.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
J.P. Jenkins	8. Review of Gambling Policy	Works in the gambling industry.

### **3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS**

There were no declarations of party whips.

### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions were received.

### **5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

**RESOLVED** that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on Monday 11th January 2016, be noted.

### **6. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2016/17 TO 2018/19**

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th November 2015. The Interim Head of Financial Services advised that Welsh Government had announced the provisional settlement earlier that week (9th December) and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was based. Whilst the settlement would mean an extra £7.5m for Carmarthenshire, most of this additional funding would be allocated to cover other requirements such the shortfall in efficiency savings and the recently agreed Employees Pay Offer. He added that the extent of the Welsh Government's protection of schools budgets was as yet unclear, even though the Council's strategy had been based on there being no protection of school budgets. The Director of Environment and the Public Health Services Manager also gave a brief overview of their respective service areas.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the Welsh Government's settlement announcement and it was asked whether the figures outlined in the budget strategy would change and if so, would this not make consideration of the report irrelevant. The Interim Head of Financial Services strongly advised the Committee to consider and comment on the proposed efficiency savings and charging digests as delivery of the identified savings was essential and these would need to be confirmed early in the New Year. Deferring the report would not allow sufficient time for this.

Reference was made to the Environment Department's Policy & Performance Division and it was asked whether this, as an administrative function costing in excess of £900,000, should also be bearing significant efficiency savings when front-line services were being reduced or cut. The Director of Environment reminded the Committee that in order for the department to operate successfully, there would always be a need for a back-office function. However, there were always opportunities to make such functions more efficient and that this would be looked at as part of other corporate initiatives to rationalise back-office services, systems and infrastructure.

It was suggested that there was a dichotomy between the information presented in the report relating to public lighting and the information provided to members at the

Environment departmental budget session earlier in the week. It was claimed that whilst the report stated that the proposal was to reduce operating costs without turning lights off, the information at the seminar indicated that the savings might not be achieved and would result in total shut-off of the public lighting system. The Street-Scene Manager clarified that the Welsh Government Invest to Save funding would be used to install LED lighting and timers for part-night illumination during the first two years. The scheme would then be evaluated to assess the extent of its success against expected outcomes. The Director of Environment added that the business case had been developed on the basis that the savings would be realised but an evaluation would still be required after two years.

It was asked whether the managed car pool system savings of £200,000 would be achieved if other departments did not sign up to the scheme and clarification was sought as to how the pool cars were monitored to prevent misuse. The Head of Transport & Engineering informed the Committee that staff mileage in the current year had reduced significantly and the proposal was to roll-out a managed pool car scheme per building/site across the Authority to assist with the savings target and this would impact on all departments. The business case included a proposal to fit the pool cars with a GPS tracking system to monitor performance and active monitoring of mileage was required. Approximately 75% of the Authority's existing vehicle fleet was already fitted with tracking devices.

Reference was made to the proposal for charging for post-16 transport and it was suggested that it should not be included in the budget report prior to the findings of the recent consultation. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services reminded the Committee that this was included in the proposals as it had been passed as part of the 2015/16 budget by County Council in February 2015. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged elected members' feelings on this issue but reminded the Committee that officers were seeking to sustain the service for a modest charge of circa £5.60 per week and that following the extensive consultation, a report would be presented to elected members in due course. The Director of Environment noted that if the charge was not introduced, there would be a £516,000 gap which would need to be found. This might lead to a removal of the service completely. The proposal presented, sought to avoid this.

It was suggested that the annual budgetary proposals were about what the Council wanted rather than what residents needed and that there was no reference to opportunities to income generate. The Director of Environment noted that the proposals did include some income-generating proposals but it was an option that should be given more consideration.

It was asked what alternatives were in place for schools who faced not only cuts to their budgets but the loss of a school crossing patrol operative. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services reminded the Committee that assessments were made for all schools and where a road was deemed safe and a patrol was not required, such positions would not be re-advertised. However, no existing patrols were being removed. The Head of Transport & Engineering informed the Committee that where there was a vacancy, the Authority would always seek to recruit and when there had been difficulties covering absence due to illness or leave, schools and Police Community Support Officers had been contacted to provide assistance. In response to an additional suggestion that teaching staff could undertake crossing patrol duties, the Head of Transport & Engineering confirmed that the Authority's insurance would indemnify school staff if they were required to undertake such duties on behalf of the Authority. He added that the assessments

for the respective school sites (a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents assessment template), could be made available to local members if required.

Concern was expressed at the effects of global warming and reference made to the recent flooding in Cumbria. It was also suggested that the lack of specialist vehicles to maintain and empty gullies and culverts could also lead to unnecessary flooding in some areas of the county. The Street-Scene Manager clarified that the proposals outlined in the report would affect the provision of new works, but much of the County's flood defence infrastructure has been upgraded to modern standards over the past 10-15 years. Routine maintenance works on the existing defences would continue to be prioritised and the further development of flood risk plans would allow the Authority to target resources where required.

It was asked whether the current task and finish review of car parking charges would have any impact on the proposed 20p increase in car parking charges, outlined in the report. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services stated that this was also included in the proposals as it had been passed as part of the 2015/16 budget by County Council. Upon taking on her portfolio, she had requested that this not be implemented in 2015/16 and wished to wait for the Task and Finish Group to make its proposals.

Serious concerns were expressed at the state of the county's highways and bridges, the backlog of work that faced the Authority and its continued poor performance in respect of key performance indicators. It was also suggested that the Authority would be open to litigation due to poor maintenance of its infrastructure and it was asked when the corporate manslaughter development session, requested in a previous meeting, would be provided for elected members. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services acknowledged the concerns but reminded the Committee that Carmarthenshire did have the second longest highway network in Wales and that whilst it appeared that highway services were being reduced, officers were seeking to work in more effective and efficient ways in order to minimise the effect on these front-line services. The Assistant Consultant informed the Committee that its request for a development session had been included on the Elected Members' Development Programme but that a date had yet to be finalised. He agreed to clarify this with the Learning & Development Unit.

In response to a question on the tendering exercise for future waste and recycling services, the Street-Scene Manager informed the Committee that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to date, especially in conjunction with the Authority's Legal Services. Whilst no further details could be disclosed at this stage, the interim contract with CWM Environmental was still in place and he assured members that progress was being made with respect to scoping and preparatory work to provide valuable information to inform the debate with regard to the best solution for the future.

Concern was expressed at the potential 25% reduction in the Sustainable Waste Management (SWM) Grant and how this would impact on the Authority's ability to meet the Welsh Government's expectations in relation to reducing waste and increasing recycling. The Interim Head of Financial Services noted that at the time of writing, the forecast had been up to 25% but recent indications were now of a 6.5% reduction (approximately £250,000) for Carmarthenshire.

It was suggested that the information provided in relation to the pumping stations in Appendix A(ii) was insufficient and further detail was requested. The Director of

Environment informed the Committee that officers had since been in discussions with Welsh Water which would now carry out the work on behalf of the Authority and meant that these pressures would not now be as great. Discussions were on-going but more details could be provided for the Committee in due course.

It was asked why the Authority was continuing to fund CCTV operations as members were of the understanding that this service had ceased. The Community Safety Manager reminded the Committee that whilst the Executive Board had decided to cease 'live' monitoring of the cameras, it had made a commitment to cover on-going costs relating to the operation of the cameras, namely the electricity and links. The Police were able to review the recordings taken by the cameras should they be required in conjunction with a particular incident. However, the Police's contribution in the future had yet to be determined due to a Force review of the future use of CCTV. The Authority did not have any contractual agreements with the cameras' manufacturers/suppliers but a legal agreement between itself and the Police was being drafted in order to clarify the roles, responsibilities and financial contribution of each organisation in the future.

Reference was made to licence fee increases as it had been noted in a previous meeting that these would be reviewed. The Public Health Services Manager reminded the Committee that due to previous legal challenges brought against other local authorities, the Authority could only charge fees to cover the cost of its work and was not permitted to make a profit. She also reminded the Committee that this was the subject of the next item on the agenda.

Clarification was sought as to the funding prognosis for the Bwcabus service and its future operations. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged that this was a flagship service and dialogue with the Welsh Government was on-going in order to secure future funding. A detailed report was also being prepared for the relevant minister.

In response to a question about fees for sports pitches, the Executive Board Member for Technical Services informed the Committee that a meeting between officers and sports clubs representatives was scheduled for January. She believed that agreements had been reached with most clubs although there were some difficulties with other clubs which had declining memberships (e.g. lawn bowls).

Clarity was sought as to whether vets inspection costs were included within the proposed dog breeding and riding establishment fees. The Public Health Services Manager stated that there might be specific contracts in place with certain veterinary providers for these services but that she would clarify this for the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

## **7. REVIEW OF LOCALLY SET FEES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND LICENSING SECTION**

The Committee considered the Review of locally set fees in relation to the Environmental Health and Licensing Section which included stakeholders views on the proposed fees. The Public Health Services Manager informed the Committee that following its consideration by elected members, the proposed hackney carriage and private hire fees (outlined in Appendix 1) would be advertised for a period of 28

days, as required by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for persons to submit objections. However, she noted that whilst the recommendations outlined in the report were that the new fees be implemented immediately, the political consultation process and period of advertisement would last until the end of March and therefore, it would be preferential for the fees to commence from the 1st April 2016 at the start of the new financial year. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

It was suggested that proposed increase in charges associated with processing stray dogs contradicted the comments made in the executive summary which suggested that higher charges were in fact deterring owners in neighbouring counties from retrieving their dogs. The Public Health Services Manager informed the Committee that the increase in the charges was being proposed to reflect the dog wardens' costs as well as kennelling costs. It was then proposed and seconded that the 'first/part day' charge fee for processing stray dogs should remain at £60 rather than being increased to £80. Following a vote, the motion was defeated.

It was asked why there was such a significant increase in the charges for safety inspections at sports grounds, from no current fee to a proposed charge of £930. The Public Health Services Manager informed the committee that the legislation relating to this charge only applied to the county's largest sports grounds/facilities (with capacities of 500+) of which there were three: Parc y Scarlets in Llanelli, Richmond Park in Carmarthen and the Ffos Las Racecourse. The proposed charge had been calculated utilising the relevant fees toolkit.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Executive Board that:

- 7.1 The proposed hackney carriage and private hire fees in Appendix 1 be advertised for a period of 28 days as required by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for persons to submit objections. Where there are no objections, the fees shall be implemented from the 1st April 2016.
- 7.2 The remainder of the fees in Appendix 1 be advertised for a period of 28 days and that the reviewed fees be implemented from the 1st April 2016.

## 8. REVIEW OF GAMBLING POLICY

*Cllr. J.P. Jenkins declared and interest in that he works in the gambling industry.*

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Executive Board that the amended Gambling Policy be approved.

## 9. REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY (LICENSING ACT 2003)

The Committee considered the Review of Statement of Licensing Policy noting that the revised Licensing Policy document reflected the results of the consultation and review process. The Public Health Services Manager informed the Committee that sufficient evidence had been provided to justify retaining a Cumulative Impact Policy in relation to Station Road, Llanelli but that the responses received to the consultation justified the formulation of specific proposals for the adoption of a similar Cumulative Impact Policy for Lammas Street, Carmarthen and that a further



consultation exercise would be required to look specifically at whether such a cumulative impact policy should be adopted.

The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 9.1 The report be received.
- 9.2 The amended Statement of Licensing Policy be approved for consideration by the Executive Board.
- 9.3 The existing Cumulative Impact Policy be retained for Station Road Llanelli as detailed in Section 10 of the attached policy.
- 9.4 Further evidence be gathered in relation to the possible adoption of a Cumulative Impact Policy for Lamma Street, Carmarthen as a result of responses to the consultation exercise.

**10. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the reason for the non-submission of the Capital Programme Budget Setting 2016/17 – 2020/21 report, be noted.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

This page is intentionally left blank