

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2nd October 2017

PRESENT: Councillor J.D. James (Chair).

Councillors: A. Davies, J.A. Davies, P.M. Edwards, S.J.G. Gilasbey, T.M. Higgins, A. James, T.A.J. Davies, A. Vaughan Owen, B.D.J. Phillips, J.S. Phillips, D. Thomas, H.A.L. Evans and P.M. Hughes.

Councillor K.V. Broom – Substitute for Councillor A.D.T. Speake;
Councillor J.G. Prosser – Substitute for Councillor A. Fox.

Also in attendance:

Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Executive Board Member for Environment;
Councillor P.M. Hughes, Executive Board Member for Public Protection.

The following Officers were in attendance:

S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways;
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;
S.E. Watts, Environmental Protection Manager;
A. Maynard, Community and Safeguarding Manager;
J. Edwards, Principal Business & Development Officer;
R. James, Group Accountant;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen – 10:00am - 11:10am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Fox and A. Speake.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
T. Higgins	5 – Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2016/17	Her brother works for Valero
K.V. Broom	10 – Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Her husband works for National Resources Wales
A. James	10 – Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Owns land in which a public footpath crosses
K.V. Broom	10 – Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Owns land in which a public footpath crosses
B.D.J.Phillips	10 – Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Owns land in which a public footpath crosses
J.A. Davies	10 – Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Owns land in which a public footpath crosses

3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

[Note: Councillor T. Higgins declared a personal interest but remained seated throughout the consideration of this item].

The Committee received an Annual Report for its work during the 2016/17 municipal year which had been prepared in accordance with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution.

The report provided an overview of the work programme and the key issues considered by the Committee. It also detailed the issues referred to or from the Executive Board, development sessions held for members as well as their attendance at committee meetings.

Members took the opportunity to enquire upon the progress of the scrutiny items within the report:-

- In response to a query regarding the Review of LED Conversion Project, the Head of Transportation & Highways informed the Committee that a further project review would be undertaken near to the completion of Phase 2 and that in accordance with the Committee's Forward Work Plan an update report would be provided in March 2018.
- Reference was made to a concern that was raised within the item relating to Carmarthen County Council's Environment Act Forward Plan. The concern related to the safety impact of delays in cutting verges and hedgerows and was raised as an ongoing problem that rural communities were facing. The Head of Transportation and Highways informed the Committee that in addition to the programmed annual cut, adhoc cutting also took place following inspections undertaken by Highways Officers if there were visibility issues at junctions. Examples of local issues were provided to Officers where hedgerows had not been cut consequently causing visibility problems. The Head of Transportation and Highways reiterated that a clear programme was in place to cut hedgerow and verges in rural areas on an annual basis which contractors should be adhering to. Members were reassured that Officers would look into the matter further.

The Chair highlighted that the Committee had suggested this matter be a subject for review by the Task and Finish group.

- Reference was made to the Kerosene Oil Spill, Nantycaws, Carmarthen – October 2016. In response to a comment made regarding the impact of the trees in the vicinity of the Kerosene Oil Spill, the Public Health Services Manager stated that she was not aware of any impact on trees. It was agreed that the more information be provided to the Officer.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2017/18 which had been developed following the Committee's informal planning session held in July 2017.

The Committee **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that its Forward Work Programme for 2017/18 be endorsed.

7. 2017/18 WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report detailing progress against the actions and measures in the 2017/18 Well-being Objectives delivery plan relevant to the Committee's remit, as at 30th June, 2017.

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

- Reference was made to the action, 'We will help older people contribute to recycling through the *'assisted lift' scheme for people unable to take waste to the kerbside.*' It was asked how this action was being marketed in order to raise awareness of this service. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services informed the Committee in addition to the service being advertised on the Council Website, information of this service was available in supporting documents from Health Care Professionals. In response to an additional query, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that currently there were approximately 1,300 assisted lifts in operation across the County.
- Reference was made to the action regarding *'inspection of highways, footways and lighting infrastructure on a regular basis to identify any defects posing a danger to the public'*. It was asked if more details on this matter could be provided. It was felt that more details would benefit Councillors when receiving queries of this nature. The Head of Transportation and Highways stated that he would not be possible to inform Members of every repair due to the scale of works across the County every day. However, he would update the Local Member with further detail outside of the meeting.

- Clarification was sought in relation to whose responsibility it was to clear up a highway following contamination. The Head of Transportation and Highways stated that it would be the responsibility of the person/organisation that contaminated the highway to clear it up. In response to a query regarding the number of road sweepers currently in operation within the fleet, the Head of Transportation and Highways emphasised that the road sweeper fleet had not reduced in the last two years and added, that there had not been any recent changes in policy.
- In relation to the action which stated 'we will increase the amount of energy generated from renewable technologies (kWh) it was asked if a target had been set? The Executive Board Member for Environment stated that the Council were looking to increase the number of solar panels particularly on Council premises. Reference was made to the report within Agenda Item 10 - Draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2016/17, which stated that use of renewable energy consumption for 2016/17 was at 670,400 kWh. It was commented that this amount represented just over 0.9% of total energy consumption and was considered to be a very low level of renewable energy, therefore clarity was sought on what the Council's target was for renewable energy. The Head of Transportation and Highways stated that the Council currently procure energy from green energy suppliers and that further information would be shared with the Committee in due course.
- In response to a query regarding green waste, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that in accordance with the Committee's Forward Work Plan an update report would be provided to the Committee in January 2018. The Committee noted that the roll out had been successful with 2,500 customers to date.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive and note the report.

8. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

The Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report in relation to the services of Environment, Public Protection and Community Safety which provided an update on the latest budgetary position as at 30th June, 2017, in respect of the 2017/18 financial year.

The Committee noted that the Environment and Public Protection was projecting an overspend of £130k on the revenue budget and a net variance of £2,479 against the 2017/18 approved capital budget.

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

- A comment was made to Waste Services and the amount of savings realised was due to the closure of Llangadog household waste recycling centre.

- Reference was made to the recent waste amnesty held at Llangadog. The Committee was informed that the local people were disappointed with the organisation of the amnesty which resulted in long tail backs and lengthy waiting times.

The Executive Board Member for Environment reminded the Committee that the Council had a number of provisions in place for recycling and encouraged Councillors to inform people within their areas of the current recycling arrangements available to them.

The Head of Waste and Environmental Services informed the Committee that this was the third waste amnesty to be held in the area of Llandovery/Llangadog, and that this recent amnesty received an unprecedented response. Furthermore, social media was used in order to gauge the appetite for future waste amnesties.

- It was asked why the Public Rights of Way was showing and forecasting an underspend and was this due to the lack of staff within that department? The Head of Transportation and Highways stated that a number of changes had occurred over the last few years, however, the Rights of Way department currently had a compliment of 5 staff.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. DRAFT - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016/17

The Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2016/17 which included the second year progress report on the Corporate Strategy 2015-20, the Summary Annual Report 2016/17 and the full Annual Report.

When the Corporate Strategy was published in 2015/20 it was agreed that an annual progress report would be produced setting out 24 outcome measures to judge our progress against. The Corporate Strategy would be reviewed for 2018/19 as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires our Well-being Objectives to be incorporated within the Corporate Strategy.

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

- In response to request for an update on the plans for a cycle path from Whitland to Llanglydwen and a footpath between Login and Llanglydwen, the Head of Transportation and Highways stated that currently there were no County Council plans to develop this path. However he believed there was a voluntary group looking at a project in the area, he would make further enquiries and agreed to provide the Councillor with a response.

- Reference was made to page 28 of the report in which a query was raised regarding the table that showed year on year energy consumption, cost and CO² emissions. The table states that the total data was 'not available until September, it was asked when the data would be available as it was now October. The Executive Board Member for Environment informed the Committee that she would forward the information to the Committee as soon as the data was available.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the draft Annual Report, including the Second Year Progress Report on the Corporate Strategy, be received.

10. CARMARTHENSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)

[Note: Councillors A. James, K. Broom, A. Davies and D. Phillips, declared a personal interest but remained seated throughout the consideration of this item].

The Committee considered a report on the Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) which provided the Committee with the progress on the revision and amendments proposed to the existing ten year policy document – Carmarthenshire ROWIP 2007-2017.

The Committee noted that Carmarthenshire's ROWIP 2007-2017 was published in 2007 and therefore required a review. Furthermore, in order to comply with statutory requirements and with the relevant guidance, publication of a revised ROWIP for the County should be achieved by January 2018.

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

- It was raised that National Resources Wales utilise cameras whilst walking routes and coastal paths in order to be able to gain information. The Head of Transportation and Highways stated that he was aware that cameras had been utilised to survey routes and added that the Department was keen to exploit the use of technology. For example drone surveys could be used to assist in future.
- In response to a query raised, the Head of Transportation and Highways informed the Committee that Officers would investigate any obstructions to Right of Way. However, there was currently a back log of cases involving obstructions which can involve a lengthy legal processes to resolve.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the progress on the Carmarthenshire rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

11. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the non-submission of the Parking Strategy report. The Transportation and Highways Officer explained that due to the extensive nature of the review and the specialist external input and data analysis this report had been delayed and that the revised submission date was December 2017.

Resolved that:

11.1 The non-submission be noted;

11.2 The Parking Strategy report be presented to the Committee in December 2017.

12. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

Whilst considering the forthcoming items, the Chair asked that if there were any matters/areas/issues that Committee would like to see reported within the forthcoming reports, to raise it within this Agenda item.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on Friday, 17th November, 2017 be noted.

13. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 21ST APRIL 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee held on the 21st April, 2017 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE