

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday, 17 February 2017

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

**Councillors:**

J.M. Charles, S.L. Davies, S. Matthews, W.R.A. Davies, H.I. Jones, D. Tomos, G.B. Thomas and M.J.A. Lewis (In place of J.K. Howell)

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor L.D. Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

W. Walters, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration & Policy)

R. Staines, Head of Housing and Public Protection

I. Jones, Head of Leisure

H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager

J. Edwards, Development Management Manager

S. Walters, Economic Development Manager

A. Thomas, Senior Accountant

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen - 10.00 - 10.35 am**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Cundy, T. Devichand, J.K. Howell and H.B. Shephardson.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS**

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

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

No public questions had been received.

**5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

The Committee received a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its meeting to be held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2017.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

**6. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2016/17**

The Committee considered the 2016/17 Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring reports for the Housing, Regeneration, Planning and Leisure and Recreation

Services for the period up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. It noted that the revenue budget was forecasting a £122k overspend, the capital budget a £9.297m underspend, whilst, the Housing Revenue Account was forecasting a £392K overspend.

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

- In response to a question on the projected £56k overspend on the Un Sir Gar facility at Llanelli, due to lower than anticipated income, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that officers were examining ways of increasing the income stream.
- In response to a question on the current position regarding the Laugharne car park scheme, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the delay in its provision was attributable to the need for additional ground contamination tests to be undertaken. It was confirmed that, at the current time, the scheme would be delivered within budget, with any additional costs being met from the scheme's contingency fund.
- Reference was made to the recent revenue budget consultation exercise and to the potential impact that could have on the provision of services at the Council's leisure facilities. Clarification was also sought on whether the current capital underspend was attributable to a lack of investment in those services to attract additional service users.

The Head of Leisure advised that the current £2,316m underspend on the leisure capital programme was attributable to slippage, with some schemes yet to commence and any unspent allocation would be carried forward to the next financial year. With regard to the revenue overspend, that was partly attributable to reduced income at the authority's main leisure centres at Carmarthen and Llanelli whilst capital works were undertaken to improve those facilities. In relation to the authority's smaller leisure facilities, it was hoped the St Clears Leisure Centre could remain open, with investment being made to other facilities as finance became available.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report 2016/17 be received.**

## **7. 2016/17 IMPROVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER, 2016**

The Committee received for consideration the 2016/17 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 in respect of the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

The following issues were raised on the report:-

- In response to a question on Action 12153 and the reference therein to difficulties encountered in recruiting suitable staff, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that an officer had recently been appointed and the issue had now been resolved.
- In response to a question on Action 12173, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that where grants were provided by the Council to external organisations, as part of a policy to promote the use of Welsh Language, successful applicants would need to have a Welsh Language Policy in place prior to any grant award.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

## **8. HOUSING SERVICES PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Further to minute 7 of its meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016 the Committee received a report on the Housing Services' Performance Framework providing examples of performance information and how that supported the Council's strategic direction and key objectives. It was noted that whilst the report provided two examples of performance measurement in relation to a Health Impact Study (Appendix 1) and Housing options and advice (Appendix 2), the Housing Services' Division regularly collected over 150 pieces of information data that included:-

- National performance indicators and statistical returns to Welsh Government;
- Key performance objectives supporting the Public Service Board;
- Performance Indicators linked to the Improvement Plan and Integrated Strategy;
- Data for political scrutiny;
- Data to manage the business;
- Data to assess legal compliance e.g. Homelessness and Homes Standards.

The Head of Housing and Public Protection, in referring to the examples quoted within the report's appendices, confirmed that more detailed performance data could be provided on any specific area of the Division's activity, if the Committee was so minded.

The following issues were raised on the report:-

- In response to the Head of Housing and Public Protection's statement above, a view was expressed that the Committee should be presented with more detailed performance data relating to Anti-Social Behaviour, the provision of accurate and timely housing advice and homelessness.
- In response to a request for clarification on the data provided within Appendix 2, the Head of Housing and Public Protection confirmed he would examine and provide members with details relating to the recorded 'dip' in customer satisfaction during the period January – March 2016.
- The Head of Housing and Public Protection referred to the wide ranging impact of improvements undertaken to the Council's housing stock. Those included a reduction in service requests by tenants, addressing fuel poverty and tenants' ability to pay scheduled utility bills such as electricity, water and gas and also studies being undertaken by both Cardiff and Swansea Universities in relation to the value of the improvements to the Health Service in terms of reduced demand over the period 2009-2016.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:**

**8.1 That the report be received**

**8.2 That reports be submitted to future meetings of the Committee on Performance Data collated by the Housing Services Division in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, the provision of accurate and timely housing advice and homelessness.**

## **9. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the non-submission report be noted.**

**10. COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report detailing the progress achieved in relation to actions, requests or referrals emerging from its previous meetings:

The following issue arose as part of the report's consideration:-

- In response to a question on the proposed Task and Finish Group on large empty buildings blighting town centres, the Committee was advised that, initially, the matter was being progressed by the Ammanford Task Group.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

**11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 20TH JANUARY 2017**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 be signed as a correct record.**

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**