

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 June 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S.L. Davies (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor L.D. Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing
P. Hughes-Griffiths, Executive Board Member for Culture, Sport and Tourism
L.M. Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council

The following Officers were in attendance:

I. Jones, Head of Leisure
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
L. Quelch, Head of Planning
S. Walters, Economic Development Manager
J. Morgan, Acting Head of Homes & Safer Communities
A. Thomas, Group Accountant
J. Davies, Senior Cultural Services Manager
E. Retallick, Principal Arts Officer
I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer
S. Morris, Monitoring and Implementation Officer
S. Casey, Theatres Development Manager

Chamber, - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 - 11.50 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Davies, H.I. Jones and S. Matthews

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Aled Vaughan Owen	7 – Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18	Licence Holder – Gwendraeth Sports Hall

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. CARMARTHENSHIRE ARTS STRATEGY

The Committee received a presentation on the Carmarthenshire Arts Strategy for the period 2018-2022 providing a framework for service development to support the County's vision of being a place where exceptional arts experiences engaged and enthused communities, whilst also celebrating its unique and bilingual culture. In order to underpin that vision, the strategy identified the following four key objectives:-

- Cultural wellbeing;
- Physical and mental wellbeing;
- Economic wellbeing through supporting creative and cultural organisations and;
- Developing and sustaining an efficient and effective arts service (through improved income generation, innovative ways of working, collaboration and deepening public engagement).

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

- In response to a question on the establishment of creative and social hubs, that related to the council's facilities being used in a more focussed community approach by granting access to communities for a range of communal uses for example theatre productions, dance classes and venues for older people to come together in a social gathering.
- References were made to the proposed redevelopment proposals for Oriel Myrddin, to include 26-27 King Street, Carmarthen. It was confirmed that whilst the scheme had been estimated to cost in the region of £2.5m, Arts Council Funding in the sum of £1m could be available to assist with that cost. The Council had already contributed the sum of £250k thereto for the purchase of 26-27 King Street. The remaining £1.25m would have to be match funded by the council or via alternative income streams/grants.
- Reference was made to the operation of the St Clears Craft Centre, which, between the 2014/15 and 2017/18 financial years, had seen an increase of expenditure from £74,498 to £110,747 whilst experiencing a 5,000 reduction in visitor numbers from 41,765 to 36,240.

The Principal Arts Officer advised that in relation to the 17/18 financial position, that increase could be attributed to a number of factors. It was the first year the centre had been fully staffed. Secondly, capital expenditure had been incurred in upgrading both the conference facilities and café equipment following the café's operation being taken in house. In essence, it had been necessary for the authority to incur costs in the centre to facilitate its development. For 2018/19 efforts were being concentrated on controlling costs and increasing income.

With regard to the reduction in visitor numbers, strategies had been introduced with the aim of increasing those for example an emphasis on Arts and Health, food and friendship clubs and pottery classes together with alternative income streams.

- In response to a question on taking the arts into schools, it was confirmed that Oriel Myrddin had recently appointed an Arts Education Officer with the aim, over the next few years, of proactively engaging with schools. The service also liaised closely with the Arts Council for Wales in that regard.
- Reference was made to the strategy's four key objectives and to whether consideration had been given to adopting a fifth to 'identify ambitions,

talents and skills through our schools to further sustain our cultural strategic priorities'

It was confirmed that could be discussed with the Education Department as implementation of the strategy progressed.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that it be recommended to the Executive Board that the Strategy be adopted.

6. DRAFT - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18

The Committee considered the Council's Draft Annual Report for 2017/18 produced in accordance with the requirements of both the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It was noted that the report provided:-

- An overview of the 2017/18 performance,
- Two page progress reports for each of the 15 Well-being Objectives,
- A link to track progress on every specific action and target set for each Well-being objective,
- Within the appendices, other performance information on Out-turn data (September) and National Survey for Wales Results (June) which would be updated as results became available.

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

- Reference was made to the increase in childhood obesity levels within the county and to how increased physical activity could be encouraged/promoted when parks and other leisure facilities were being closed.

The Head of Leisure confirmed one of the Leisure Division's key aims was to promote and develop physical activities by working with local communities and sports clubs, where it was recognised community ownership often resulted in increased participation levels. It was noted the report had recognised a 10% increase in the numbers of children who regularly participated in sport throughout the county, increasing to 47%. However, it was accepted more work was required to achieve higher activity levels, not only amongst children but throughout the population.

- The Committee's attention was drawn to the councils' aims of promoting economic growth of rural market towns and to how that was being hindered by the practice of 'land banking'

The Economic Development Manager confirmed that whilst the availability of land in such areas for the creation of employment opportunities was limited, the Council was, by the means of grant aid and other inducements, able to provide incentives to promote and facilitate their development.

The Forward Planning Manager reminded that Committee that work had recently commenced on a New Local Development Plan for Carmarthenshire with applications currently being sought for candidate sites for inclusion in that plan. As part of that process, land owners would have to

demonstrate a commitment to a sites development to justify its inclusion, with a desire to develop no longer being sufficient.

- In response to a question relating to the development of 'Yr Egin' in Carmarthen Town, and to occupation levels by spin-off companies, the Economic Development Manager confirmed that discussions/negotiations were on-going to achieve full occupation. Should the level of interest exceed capacity, endeavours would be made to identify suitable alternative accommodation. It was noted that Yr Egin was one of the eleven Swansea Bay City Deal Projects and aimed to develop creative industry throughout the region.
- Reference was made to the 'Lift Programme' and clarification sought on whether it included helping people learn Welsh to get back into work and if information could be provided on the numbers of people on the programme who had learned, and continued to use Welsh.

The Economic Development Manager confirmed officers would be looking at the development of Welsh Language Skills and would provide the requested information.

- In response to a question on the long standing proposals for the Llandeilo by-pass, the Economic Development Manager confirmed the Welsh Government had not yet been made a decision on a preferred route.
- Reference was made to the use of Section 106 Agreements to facilitate the provision of 43 homes for low cost ownership. The Committee's attention was drawn to the possibility of developers going into liquidation with the potential those homes may no longer meet the 80% requirement under the Agreement, leaving owners unable to sell their properties.

The Forward Planning Manager advised that the department was aware of that possibility and was liaising with the Council's legal department on the terminology used in the Agreements.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2017/18 be received.

7. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

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

The Committee considered the 2017/18 end of year Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports for the Housing, Regeneration, Planning and Leisure and Recreation Services. It was noted the revenue budget was showing an overspend of £311k, the capital budget a £7,228m underspend, whilst the Housing Revenue Account was forecasting a £22k underspend.

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

- In response to a question relating to the projected £264k shortfall in Development Management, the Head of Planning confirmed the projected income levels were market led and the shortfall for 2017/18 could be attributable to a number of large anticipated schemes not having been submitted.
- In response to a question on the £249k overspend on premises within the Housing Revenue Account, the Acting Head of Homes and Safer

Communities advised it was largely attributable to expenditure incurred in undertaking maintenance works within some of authority's housing estates e.g. fence repairs for which there was no budgetary provision. However, provision had been made within the 2018/19 budget.

- In response to a question on the provision for bad debt within the Housing Revenue Account, the Committee was advised that the authority made provision within its accounts every year to address bad debt. For 2017/18 the provision had been £472k, however, the level of actual bad debt was £218k resulting in a budget underspend of £254k.
- Reference was made to the £475k underspend on the budget head to bring Void properties back into use and to meet the CHS standard. The Interim Head of Homes and Safer Communities informed the Committee that the scheme involved undertaking improvement works to approximately 70 properties, each of which required expenditure averaging £30-£40k to comply with the standards. Whilst the budget for the works had been set aside for completion in 2017/18, it had not been possible to complete all the scheduled works and the slippage would be carried over to 2018/19.
- The Head of Leisure, in response to a question, provided an update on developments at Pembrey Country Park which included:
 - The provision of additional electrical hook up's at the caravan park
 - The introduction of an online booking system for the caravan par,
 - The installation of Wi-fi in the near future,
 - The existing restaurant was to be refurbished over the winter in readiness for the 2019 season,
 - The closed circuit cycle track was nearing completion
 - The ski shop had now closed and would be converted for multi-disciplinary use
 - The 2018 Tour of Britain Bike Ride would commence at the park on the 2nd September
- The Committee referred to the Tour of Britain Bike Ride and expressed its congratulations to all staff involved in bringing that prestigious event to Carmarthenshire.

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

8. DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER - LLANELLI TOWN CENTRE

The Committee, subsequent to its meeting held on the 30th March, 2017 (minute 5 refers) received an update report on the proposed introduction of a Draft Local Development Order for Llanelli Town Centre, together with the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken from the 18th December, 2017 to the 9th February, 2018 and officer responses.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the inclusion within the report of the Flood Risk Map for Llanelli Town and clarification sought on whether the 'Rainscape Project' being undertaken by Dwr Cymru could affect that risk.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed the works could have an impact and the understanding thereof would be fed into the flood risk analysis. The situation was continuously changing and the position would be continually

monitored and re-appraised as time progressed, in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales.

- In response to a question on the proposed three year duration of the Order, the Forward Planning Manager advised the timescale was considered to be appropriate to allow time to assess its outcomes, whilst linking in with the development of the new LDP.

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

- 8.1 To note the representations received in respect of the Draft Local Development Order for Llanelli Town Centre;**
- 8.2 To accept the officer recommendations detailed in the report;**
- 8.3 To note the submission of the Local Development Order (inclusive of the report recommendations and evidence updates) to the Welsh Government for agreement;**
- 8.4 To note the requirements to update the evidence base and to make any consequential changes to the Local Development Order, and to ensure any additional matters of legal compliance were also integrated.**

9. OVERVIEW OF SECTION 106 AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Committee received a report on Section 106 Agreements outlining the background to planning obligations, the process of applying for developer contributions together with an overview of the income and expenditure for 2017/18.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- In response to a question on the allocation of Section 106 money, the Forward Planning Manger confirmed it could be used on non-capital schemes within communities provided it was in accordance with the provisions of the legal agreement.
- Reference was made to the potential for more than one scheme to be proposed for Section 106 funding and clarification sought on how those would be appraised and the successful scheme chosen.

The Forward Planning Manager advised that would be achieved by the authority working and consulting with applicants including local town/community and county councillors, together with other interested bodies, to assess which scheme would best meet both the terms of the Section 106 Agreement and the needs of the community.

- In response to a view expressed on the early involvement of local county councillors in Section 106 discussions, the Forward Planning Manager encouraged members to discuss with Development Management Case Officers the potential for S106 contributions Agreements as early as possible and referenced the publication of the weekly planning lists.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

10. AFFORDABLE BUNGALOWS WITHIN CARMARTHENSHIRE

The Committee, in accordance with minute 7 of its meeting held on the 29th March, 2018 received a scoping document on the potential for the establishment of a Task and Finish Group on the provision of Affordable Bungalows within Carmarthenshire relating to their future need and delivery options.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

- 10.1 That the scoping document be received.**
- 10.2 That the Committee establish a Task and Finish Group to examine the provision of Affordable Bungalows within Carmarthenshire**
- 10.3 That the Task and Finish Group comprise 6 members, politically balanced, and that the political groups be requested to submit nominations from their members on the Committee to serve on the Group.**

11. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee received a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next meeting to be held on the 21st September, 2018.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items for the meeting of the Committee to be held on the 21st September, 2018 be received.

12. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee considered the explanations provided for the non-submission of two reports.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the non-submission report be received.

13. SCRUTINY ACTIONS UPDATE

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

14. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON the 11TH MAY, 2018

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 11th May, 2018 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE