

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 3 October 2019

PRESENT: Councillor F. Akhtar (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

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

The following Officers were in attendance:

H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities
L. Quelch, Head of Planning
A. Thomas, Group Accountant
S. Walters, Economic Development Manager
I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager
R. Stradling, Business & Projects Manager
L. McNicholl, Registered Manager Care Home
J Tillman, Information Governance and Complaints Manager
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 - 10.35 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D.C. Evans.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

The following declaration of personal interest was made:-

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
G.B. Thomas	7 – Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/20	Livestock Market at Nant y Ci - Has received dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak but not vote and make written representations on matters relating to or, likely to affect farming and agriculture

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19 (PLANNING)

The Committee received the Planning Division's Annual Performance Report for the period April 2018 – March 2019, produced in accordance with the Planning Performance Framework Table adopted in 2014. It was noted that the Framework required Local Planning Authorities to submit to the Welsh Government, by the 31st October each year, a report on their performance for evaluation against set targets. Following that evaluation, each local planning authority performance would be categorised into one of three performance bands of: Improve (red), Fair (amber), Good (Green) assessed across the following five key aspects of planning service delivery:-

- Plan making;
- Efficiency;
- Quality;
- Engagement;
- Enforcement.

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

- Reference was made to page 25 of the report on the Planning Division's operating budget over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 with particular attention being paid to the 17/18 and 18/19 financial years where actual income was approximately £400k less for each year than the targeted income of £1.25m. A question was asked on whether the budgeted income could be reduced to approximately £900k, effectively eradicating the budgetary differences.

The Head of Planning confirmed that considerations were being given to reducing the targeted budget income as suggested. However, those considerations would have to have regard to meeting staffing costs to ensure the authority was in apposition to meet its obligations in providing the statutory service.

She further confirmed that the current budget was being critically examined with a view to reducing costs wherever possible.

- Reference was made to the increase in the average number of days taken for the authority to determine planning applications which had risen from 95 in 2017 to 106 in 2018/19 whereas, in comparison, the Welsh average was only 77 days. Clarification was sought on the reason for the increase and to whether it could be related to staffing levels.

The Head of Planning reminded the Committee that in 2015 the Division had undergone a Transform, Innovate and Change review resulting in the introduction of a 'clean application service' that aimed to work with developers to achieve approval of planning applications, wherever possible. Whilst that service was achieving high customer satisfaction levels, it was at the expense of longer determination times. As a result, the Division would be undertaking a review of the service over the next six months.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received and forwarded to the Welsh Government by the 31st October Deadline.

5. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 ADOPTED CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Committee received the 2018/19 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) on the Adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan, being the fourth such report produced in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) Regulations 2015. It was noted that, pursuant to Section 76 of the Act, the authority had a duty to both produce the AMR for submission to the Welsh Government and publish it on the Council's website by the 31st October each year following the plan's adoption

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

- The Forward Planning Manager referred to a question on the designation of Air Quality Management Areas in Llandeilo, Carmarthen and Llanelli. He confirmed that the inclusion of 'xxx' within the report referred to pending data which, once received, would be included within the report prior to the AMR's publication and submission to the Welsh Government.
- Reference was made to the emerging role of Place Plans through the Positive Planning Agenda and Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and to the numbers of plans currently in place.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed that although no plans were currently in place, their development was a relatively new process and due to a lack of clarity, assistance and guidance would need to be provided on the role of Town and Community Councils and community groups going forward. The key point was that the plans had to be linked with the LDP and there was a need for the Planning Department to liaise with communities on the scope and preparation following the adoption of the revised LDP 2018-2033

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/COUNCIL that the fourth Annual Monitoring Report for the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan be approved for both submission to the Welsh Government and publication on the Council's website by the 31st October.

6. QUARTER 1 - 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2019 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received for consideration the Quarter 1 – 1st April to 30th June 2019 Performance Monitoring Report detailing the progress made against the actions and measures in the New Corporate Strategy 2018/19 on the delivery of the Well-Being Objectives within its remit.

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

- Reference was made to the performance of those services falling within the Committee's remit. Whilst it was recognised that approximately 90% of target performance was being achieved, 16 targets had been amended with a later completion date applied with no explanation provided for the amendment. A view was expressed that in order for the committee to scrutinise performance effectively, the report should incorporate reasons for amended target dates.
- Reference was made to action 13945 on the review of the infrastructure and programming of the Pendine Outdoor Education Centre. The Committee was reminded of its recent site visit to the Centre and the need for members to provide their support for its continued operation.

The Business and Projects Manager confirmed that although an options appraisal had been undertaken on the centre, further work was required on the physical condition of the dormitories and enhancing the visitor experience.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:-

6.1 That the report be received

6.2 That the Committee be provided with an explanation for why 16 of the actions detailed within the report had been provided with amended target dates

7. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

(NOTE: Councillor G.B. Thomas declared an interest in this item in relation to the livestock market at Nant y Ci)

The Committee considered the 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports for the Housing, Regeneration, Planning and Leisure and Recreation Services for the period up to the 30th June, 2019. It was noted that the revenue budget was forecasting a £574k overspend, the capital budget a £236k underspend, whilst the Housing Revenue Account was forecasting a £172k underspend.

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

- In response to a question on the anticipated £55k budgetary shortfall on the livestock market at Nant y Ci, the Committee was informed that whilst the information was not readily available arrangements would be made for members to be provided with a response.

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

8. COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Committee considered the Council's Annual Complaints and Compliments report for the period 2018/19 and, specifically, Sections 10.4 and 10.6 which were relevant to its remit. It was noted the report detailed:-

- the numbers of complaints investigated and responded to between April 2018 – March 2019, by department,
- statistics on communications received by the Complaints Team and redirected. Those related to enquiries and requests for assistance which, once presented, offered the opportunity to try and rectify
- complaints determined by the Ombudsman,
- analysis of complaints and compliments by department.
- Summary of councillor enquiries.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2018/19 be received.

9. COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Committee received for consideration its Annual Report on the work undertaken during the 2018/19 municipal year. It was noted that the report had been prepared in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's constitution and provided an overview of the work programme and the key issues addressed, whilst also incorporating any issues referred to or from the Executive Board, Task and Finish reviews and development sessions.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

10. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next meeting to be held on the 16th October, 2019.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items for the Committee meeting to be held on the 16th October 2019 be agreed.

11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 2ND JULY 2019

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 2nd July, 2019 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE