

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FRIDAY 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

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

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

**Councillors:** A. Davies, D.B. Davies, J.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, I.J. Jackson (Vice-Chair), A. James, J.P. Jenkins, A.D.T. Speake and D.E. Williams

Councillor J.D. James – Substitute for Councillor K.P. Thomas  
Councillor M.J.A. Lewis – Substitute for Councillor W.J. Lemon

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor H.A.L. Evans – Executive Board Member for Technical Services  
Councillor P.A. Palmer – Executive Board Member for Communities (including Community Safety, Social Justice / Crime & Disorder)

In attendance as an observer: Councillor D.J.R. Bartlett

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

Mr. E. Bowen – Acting Director of Environment  
Chief Inspector C. Templeton – Dyfed-Powys Police (*for Item 6*)  
Mr. R. Edmunds – Trading Standards Services Manager (*for Item 8*)  
Ms. R. James – Group Accountant  
Mr. J. McEvoy – Road Safety & Traffic Manager  
Ms. K. Thomas – Community Safety Manager

**Venue:** County Hall Chamber, Carmarthen (11:20am – 12:30pm)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W.J. Lemon, K.P. Thomas and W.G. Thomas.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Cllr. D.E. Williams	8. Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16	Legal owner of Cystanog Bends (on B4300, Capel Dewi)

### 3. DECLARATIONS 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 Thursday 12th November 2015, be noted.**

### 6. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The Chair welcomed Councillor P.A. Palmer (Chair of the Community Safety Partnership) and Chief Inspector C. Templeton (Dyfed-Powys Police) to the meeting.

The Committee received the annual report from the Carmarthenshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) which was presented by the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Police Liaison, Community Safety, Social Justice / Crime & Disorder (and Chair of the Partnership). The report included progress made in tackling crime and disorder during 2014/15 and updates from two key partners, namely the Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Probation Services. It also highlighted key areas of partnership working and current priorities for the multi-agency action groups which were driving forward the community safety agenda.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to safety risks in and around inland waterways and it was asked who had responsibility for leading on such matters as the RNLI did not have sufficient manpower to carry out this work. The Executive Board Member for Communities informed the Committee that she had recently held a meeting with a new group in Carmarthen (the Carmarthenshire Water Safety Partnership) and the matter was due to be discussed at the next Community Safety Partnership meeting. Issues that needed addressing included clarifying which organisation took responsibility for maintenance of safety equipment such lifebuoys. She reassured the Committee that the various organisations would work in partnership to address this and was happy to provide an update at a future meeting of the Committee.

In response to a question about the amount of data from CCTV cameras had been used to solve crime, the Community Safety Manager informed the Committee that this information had previously been included in the annual report. However, as of June 2015, there was no longer any statistical collation following the end of live monitoring.

It was asked whether volunteers could be used to monitor live CCTV cameras from their own homes. The Community Safety Manager stated that operators had to abide by Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) and Data Protection requirements and that it would be inappropriate for untrained volunteers to view live images of members of the public. However, discussions were on-going with Police representatives as to the future and best use of the cameras.

A question was asked about the '#PaulsPledge' campaign and clarification was sought as to what support Paul Pugh was receiving from the Partnership. The Community Safety Manager informed the Committee that Dyfed-Powys Police were leading on this campaign and that the Authority provided travelling expenses for Mr. Pugh when promoting his campaign at events throughout the county. Other charities were also supporting Mr. Pugh's work.

The reduction in most categories of crime was welcomed but concern was expressed about seasonal crime in rural areas (e.g. sheep rustling during lambing season), as it was suggested that many residents in rural areas felt somewhat alone in facing these problems. The Chief Inspector acknowledged that whilst crime figures had reduced, the Force understood that it still needed to improve its operations and understand its communities, especially those in the rural areas. The introduction of mobile police stations was an element of this work.

Reference was made to speeding on roads in the vicinity of the first phase of the Cross Hands East development (e.g. Black Lion Road) and that signage needed to be improved to remind drivers of the 30mph limit. The Chief Inspector agreed to feed this information back to the relevant officers in the Police Force.

It was asked whether there had been a change in the types of crime being reported and recorded. The Chief Inspector informed the Committee that offences relating to historical sexual abuse had increased significantly during the past 12 months. It was particularly encouraging that victims were prepared to come forward and the Police was prepared to deal with this increase.

Concern was expressed at the number of high number of fatalities amongst motorcyclists and it was suggested that the many initiatives in place were not reducing these figures. The Road Safety & Traffic Manager and Chief Inspector acknowledged that the number of fatalities was of great concern and that education was key. The Road Safety & Traffic Manager reminded the Committee that the engagement initiative in Llandovery was only introduced during 2015/16 and its impact would be reviewed in due course. This was a partnership approach alongside the Police and the Fire Service where officers met motorcyclists and discussed road safety issues as well as offering opportunities to attend the Authority's road safety course. He also added that the Welsh Government was currently investigating innovative approaches to target the problem and more details were expected early in the new year.

In response to a question about the Rural Route Treatment initiative, the Road Safety & Traffic Manager informed the Committee that this initiative which had commenced in 2007, focused on high-speed routes with a history of accidents rather than just simply improving specific junctions or bends. The projects typically involved engineering works, new signage and road markings and revised speed limits. The initiative had been recognised by the Welsh Government as an example of best practice and the Authority had been successful once again in

securing funding from the Welsh Government for specific schemes in 2015/16.

A question was asked about the A40/A48 routes in and around Carmarthen. The Road Safety & Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the Welsh Government and the South Wales Trunk Road Agency had recently reviewed and amended speed limits across the trunk road network in Carmarthenshire and there had been changes made to speed limits on the approaches to Carmarthen. The Authority liaised with the Trunk Road Agency on a regular basis.

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

## **7. SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES VISITS UPDATE**

The Committee considered an update on the visits made by the Executive Board Members, with responsibility for substance misuse and health and social care, to substance misuse service providers. The visits had been undertaken in response to a recommendation by the Committee's Task & Finish Group, following its review of Substance Misuse Services during 2013/14.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

It was suggested that it was those individuals who did not ask for assistance, were the ones causing the most disruption in communities. The Council was applauded for recently utilising new legislation to tackle ongoing anti-social behaviour at a property in Pen-y-Groes by issuing a Closure Notice to safeguard tenants and residents next to the property. The Executive Board Member for Communities agreed that it was important to show that unacceptable anti-social behaviour would not be tolerated but also to remind individuals that assistance such as that provided by the substance misuse treatment services, was available.

The Chair suggested that for future visits, the Chair of the Task & Finish Group which undertook the review of substance misuse services, be invited to attend alongside the relevant Executive Board Members. The Committee agreed to the proposal.

**RESOLVED that:**

**7.1 The report be received**

**7.2 That the Chair of the Task & Finish Group (during the Substance Misuse Review) accompanies the Executive Board Members on future visits.**

## **8. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2015/16**

*Cllr. D.E. Williams declared an interest in that he is the legal owner of Cystanog Bends (on B4300, Capel Dewi).*

The Committee considered the Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Environment Department, Public Protection Services and the Community Safety Team, as at 30th June 2015 in relation to the 2015/16 financial year. The

following issues were raised in relation to the report:

In response to a question about the current status of the transfer of public conveniences, the Group Accountant noted that the £44,000 variance was related to the costs still being incurred as part of the three-year rolling programme of transfers.

Reference was made to the variance of £50,000 in the Civil Design service and clarification sought regarding the source of income. The Group Accountant informed the Committee that the income came from both internal and external clients and that a review of hourly rates and productivity was currently being carried out to try and make good the possible shortfall in income. The Interim Director of Environment informed the Committee that the Highways and Non-Highways Design Teams were being brought together at present. This had been proposed by the previous Director and the restructuring was being undertaken to pool skills and knowledge, lessen the reliance on external consultants and address the peaks and troughs in demand.

In response to further comments regarding income generation and costs associated with vacancies, the Interim Director of Environment agreed that the work of the Design Service was an opportunity to generate income for the Authority. One example of this was the work being undertaken with external public sector organisations to manage regional contractor frameworks. The costs associated with vacancies showed that all posts in this service created income for the Authority and that employing staff was a risk when demand for work reduced. This was another reason that the Local Authority was working with other public sector organisations, thus ensuring better planning of future work programmes.

It was asked why there was a variance of £393,000 in the Property Services budget due to an unachievable income target, when it was known that the Carmarthenshire Home Standard work would eventually decrease as the project was completed. The Group Accountant and the Interim Director of Environment informed the Committee that the Service was considering various efficiencies and that the matter was being looked at by senior officers as it was a long recognised issue which was now coming to a head.

It was asked whether earmarked reserves (corporate or departmental) would be utilised to address the forecasted end of year variance of £379,000. The Group Accountant informed the Committee that there were departmental and specific reserves which could be used to meet the overspend but that the most recent budget monitoring exercise for the end of August 2015, had shown that the overspend had reduced. The Interim Director of Environment noted that reserves were often held for projects that would save the Authority money in the long-term (e.g. upgrading public lighting network with energy efficient bulbs) but that a list of those reserves and what they were specifically allocated for, could be circulated to the Committee.

Clarification was sought regarding the variance of £17,000 in the Public Protection Service in underachievement of fee income in 2015/16. The Trading Standards Services Manager informed the Committee that this reflected the current financial climate and was related to the Safety Work undertaken to monitor and regulate storage of dangerous materials (e.g. explosives). The variance was also influenced by court cases and the Authority's ability to recover costs.

In response to a query about the work at the Trebeddrod Reservoir, the Group Accountant acknowledged that there were no details in the report but that £112,000 had been spent on the project to date. She added that further information could be circulated to the Committee.

**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 Impact of Local Authority Trading Standards in Challenging Times report, the Street Lighting Review report as well as the Protection Services Annual Report 2014/15, be noted.**

**10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 26TH JUNE 2015**

Councillor D.C. Evans requested that the minutes be amended to reflect the fact that he had been present at the last meeting.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26th June 2015 be signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment noted above.**

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

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