

**ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16TH DECEMBER 2016**

PRESENT: Councillor A.P. Cooper (Chair)

Councillors:

I.J. Jackson, A. Davies, D.B. Davies, J.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, A. James, J.P. Jenkins, W.J. Lemon, A.D.T. Speake, S.E. Thomas, D.E. Williams

Councillor D.J.R. Bartlett – Substitute for Councillor P.M. Edwards

Councillor J.D. James – Substitute for Councillor W.G. Thomas

Also in attendance:

Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Executive Board Member for Technical Services

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources (Deputy Leader)

Councillor T.J. Jones, Executive Board Member for Environmental & Public Protection

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Mullen, Director of Environment

O. Bowen, Head of Financial Services

S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways

R. Staines, Head of Housing & Public Protection

A. Williams, Head of Waste & Environmental Services

L. Quelch, Head of Planning

J. Edwards, Business Improvement Manager

A. Howells, Business & Development Manager

K. Thomas, Community Safety Manager

J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance as an observer:

M. Hughes, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen - 10.00 - 11.45 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, W.G. Thomas and P. Edwards.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Cllr. D. Davies	6. Update on the situation regarding the kerosene leak incident at Nantycaws	Member of the Carmarthen & District Fishing Club

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. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on Monday, 16th January, 2017 be noted.

6. UPDATE ON THE SITUATION REGARDING THE KEROSENE LEAK INCIDENT AT NANTYCAWS

The Committee, in accordance with Minute 5 of its meeting held on the 11th November 2016, received for consideration a report on the latest situation on the kerosene leak incident which took place on 4th October 2016 at Nantycaws, Carmarthenshire. Members noted that the report did not cover the cause of the incident or the initial emergency response (to be considered by a multi-agency meeting on the 19th December), however, members considered the following key areas of the incident as of the 29th November 2016:-

- Monitoring
- Health Implications
- Community Engagement
- Cost Recovery (Agencies)
- Cost Recovery (Community Councils and Private Residents)

The following was raised during consideration of the report:

A number of concerns were raised regarding the potential contamination and the future farming capabilities of around 40-50 acres of farming land. The Director of Environment informed the Committee that the matters relating to these concerns and queries were the responsibility of National Resource Wales (NRW). Members were informed that should they wish to contact NRW directly, she would be happy to provide contact details accordingly. Concern was also raised regarding water contamination of nearby properties and the health implications for residents.

In response to a further query, the Director of Environment informed the Committee that any potential prosecutions would be discussed at the Recovery Group, but would be a matter for NRW.

A concern was raised with regard to the 'black coloured' effluent that had recently been found entering Nant Pibwr and it was hoped that the NRW would undertake a robust investigation. The Director of Environment stated that it was her understanding that following this initial report, NRW were still investigating the source of the incident.

Reference was made to the suspected well water contamination where concerns were raised regarding the timing of when the samples were taken. It was felt that in order to get the most accurate reading, samples should have been taken immediately following a period of heavy rain. In response the Director of Environment informed members that in order to obtain an accurate reading, samples were taken directly from the well bore hole. Apart from the initial sample taken shortly after the incident, no contamination had been detected. However, the affected property would remain temporarily connected to the mains supply while monitoring continued to rule out any future contamination. The residents of the property would be contacted by representatives from Carmarthenshire County Council's Environmental Health Team and Valero's monitoring consultants to explain the rationale behind the additional monitoring of their water supply.

In response to a query regarding community engagement, the Director of Environment stated that whilst she acknowledged the frustrations of the local member and Community Councillors, the meeting of the I Recovery Group was normally representatives from those agencies directly involved in the operation and recovery. However, the Recovery Group had offered to send representatives to attend a Llangunnor Community Council meeting to provide feedback on the incident. Furthermore, NRW were also holding meetings with representatives from the local fishing community.

It was asked if the Committee could invite a representative from Valero to provide feedback following the multi-agency meeting on the 19th December 2016. The Director of Environment agreed that she would contact Valero inviting them to attend a future Committee meeting once the incident investigation report was complete to discuss this matter further.

The matter of compensation for businesses in Carmarthen Town due to the impact of the A48 road closure was raised. Following a discussion, the Director of Environment informed the Committee that Valero had stated that any claims for compensation should be submitted to them directly.

At this point, Cllr. D. Davies declared an interest in that he was a member of the Carmarthen & District Fishing Club

It was asked if representation from the Carmarthen & District, Abergwili and Ammanford Fishing Clubs could attend any future meetings relating to the incident. In response, the Director of Environment reminded the Committee that the Natural Resource Wales would be holding meetings with representatives from local fishing groups.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. WASTE SERVICE STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the Waste Service Strategy update report which provided Members with an update on the agreed actions approved by the Executive Board on the 27th July 2015. It was noted that the purpose of the report was to set out route maps and planned procurement processes to enable statutory recycling targets set by Welsh Government, to be met.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

In response to a concern regarding the review of the current green/garden waste collection arrangements which were terminated at the end of October 2016, the Executive Board Member for Technical Services acknowledged that until the new green waste fortnightly collection service was introduced in April 2017, residents might be placing their green/garden waste within the normal black bag collection. However, she emphasised that this was not Council policy and not recommended.

It was stated that numerous comments had been received from residents regarding different rubbish collection days for those in the same area, which was seen as an inefficient use of resources. In response, the Head of Waste & Environmental Services stated that as part of the route rationalisation programme new collection rounds were introduced on the 31st October 2016, affecting around 65,000 households across the County. Furthermore, in order to deliver a more efficient service the route rationalisation exercise was considered as a whole and not in isolation which involved complex boundaries to be drawn causing 7,000 households to experience a change in method of collection as well as collection days.

In response to a query about the cost of the new refuse collection vehicles, the Head of Waste & Environmental Services stated that the vehicles cost in the region of £163,000, with the total amount for all the new vehicles costing approximately £4m.

As a result of the trial of the kitchen caddy food bin liners, disappointment was expressed with regard to the low number of additional properties that were now participating in food waste recycling. The Head of Waste & Environmental Services stated that a further review and possibly further trials would be required in order to inform future strategy.

Reference was made to the future recycling and treatment contract. The Head of Waste & Environmental Services assured the Committee that whilst the procurement timescales would be tight, preliminary work had already started including the set-up of a project board. Progress had been made in preparing tender documents and a project manager would be employed to manage the whole process.

RESOLVED to note the Waste Service Strategy update report.

8. COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

The Committee considered the Communities Departmental Summary Business Plan 2017-20 which provided an update of progress made against action for Public Protection Services. It was noted that the full business plan would be presented to members early 2017 following a series of workshops with senior managers and staff.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

A concern was raised in relation to the extra duties and responsibilities placed on the service with little revenue to support these functions. An example included the monitoring of RADON in private water supplies. Additional concerns were raised regarding the impact the extra legislative burden was having on the department. In response, the Head of Housing & Public Protection stated that work was currently ongoing with Public Health Wales and the Directors of Public Protection Wales to draw up a remedial plan. Furthermore, in order to relieve some of the departmental pressures, the Head of Housing & Public Protection stated that work was ongoing in order to collaborate on a regional basis by sharing expertise and workloads.

RESOLVED to receive the Communities Departmental Summary Business Plan 2017-20.

9. DRAFT ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

The Committee considered the Draft Environmental Departmental Business Plan 2017-20 which outlined the priorities for the department and identified how the department supported the five ways of working and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the Transportation & Highways Risks section of the business plan in which concerns were raised regarding to the reduction of funding on highways and bridge maintenance in comparison to previous years. It was felt that more priority should be given to road and bridge maintenance. The Committee acknowledged that £12m spend had been facilitated over recent years through borrowing, but that further money was not available at present. The Head of Financial Services stated that whilst Members comments would be taken on board, unfortunately, in order for additional money to be injected into this area, savings in other areas would be need to be identified. The Head of Transportation & Highways added that as part of the capital programme, £1.4m had been identified to assist this matter.

In response to a query regarding to the transport infrastructure links, the Head of Transportation & Highways stated that planning applications were currently in progress. The Head of Planning added that the planning team met on a regular basis to discuss this matter.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential of surface water flooding and it was requested that an additional gully cleaner be provided to help manage flooding in the area. The Head of Transportation & Highways stated that three gully cleaners currently operated throughout Carmarthenshire. Furthermore, in order to be proactive, a review would be undertaken so that effective planning could take place going forward.

In response to a request for an update in relation to the Carmarthen West Link Road, the Director of Environment clarified that the land acquisition was currently being processed and that the works were on schedule. Further concerns were raised with regard to the lack of information to local residents. The Director of Environment stated arrangements would be made to ensure that local residents were provided with more information.

Information was sought with regard to what was being done to relieve the congestion in Ammanford Town Centre. In response the Head of Transportation & Highways stated that he acknowledged Members concerns and clarified that Llandeilo was funded by the Welsh Government and that with regard to the Road Infrastructure Investment Priorities, both Carmarthenshire West and Ammanford were next in line. In addition, in terms of priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan, the roundabout scheme was seeking to reduce the congestion in and around Ammanford town.

RESOLVED to receive the Draft Environment Departmental Business plan 2017-20.

10. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

The Committee considered the Report on the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2017-20. The report contained extracts of the aspects relevant to the Environment & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee in relation to Community Safety.

The Community Safety Manager provided an overview of the work that had taken place over the last year which included a number of safety campaigns being publicised in the summer edition of the Carmarthenshire News. It was noted that Carmarthenshire remained one of the safest areas in the UK, despite levels of recorded crime increasing by 10.1% from 2015/16. Furthermore, it was reported that anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents had seen a reduction of 15.5% which was due to the targeted multi-agency work and improved partnership that had taken place to help reduce ASB incidents.

The Community Safety Manager also highlighted the Integrated Community Strategy priorities for the next year.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

11. 3 YEAR REVENUE BUDGET CONSULTATION 2017/18 TO 2019/20

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 21st November 2016. The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2017/2018 together with indicative figures for the 2018/19 and 2019/2020 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending need and took into account the provisional settlement issued by the Welsh Government on 19th October 2016.

It was advised that the announced provisional settlement was significantly better than was expected, however it was recognised that the cash neutral settlement would continue to have a negative impact on the Council's resources.

In summary, the budget proposals would assume full delivery of the £24.6m identified savings. Furthermore, the budget proposals assumed a Council tax increase of 2.5% in the Strategy and a 1% movement equated to +/-£790k.

In response to a query regarding the budget consultation timeline, the Head of Financial Services informed the Committee that the public consultation ended on the 4th January 2017, and would be considered at the Executive Board meeting scheduled to take place on the 2nd February 2017.

RESOLVED to note the 3 year Revenue Budget Consultation 2017/18 to 2019/20.

12. 5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 TO 2021/2022

The Committee considered the Five Year Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2021/22 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 21st November 2016. It was noted that feedback from the consultation process, along with the outcome of the final settlement, would inform the final budget report which would be presented to members for consideration in February, 2017.

The report highlighted the provisional settlement received from the Welsh Government on the 19th October 2016, which indicated capital funding of £9.400m for the Authority in 2017-18. The funding was made up of Supported Borrowing of £5.844m and General Capital Grant of £3.556m. It was noted that in the absence of any forward indications by the Welsh Government this level of funding had been assumed for each year of the five year programme.

The proposed capital programme was £208m over the 5 years, which aimed to deliver a number of key projects including, to create jobs and improve the quality of life for the people of Carmarthenshire. In summary, the overall position proposed funds of £120.035m by the County Council with external funding equating to £85.337m, thus leaving a shortfall of £3.123m.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the lack of funds dedicated to Coastal Defence from 2018/19 onwards and it was suggested that the Council should be pro-active in this area by allocating funds as a preventative measure, which in turn, would avoid unplanned reactive spend. In response, the Director of Environment informed the Committee that it was planned that funds would be allocated to specific schemes on a rolling programme.

RESOLVED to note the Five Year Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2021/22.

13. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 11TH NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee held on the 11th November 2016 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE