

# ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2019

**PRESENT:** Councillor J.D. James (Chair)

**Councillors:**

J.M. Charles, T.A.J. Davies, J.A. Davies, K. Davies, P.M. Edwards, S.J.G. Gilasbey, B.D.J. Phillips, J.S. Phillips, A.D.T. Speake, D. Thomas and A. Vaughan-Owen.

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor D.M. Cundy, Substitute for Councillor T. Higgins;  
Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Executive Board Member for Environment;  
Councillor P.M. Hughes, Executive Board Member for Public Protection.

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities;  
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;  
R. Davies, Municipal Services and Compliance Manager;  
R. Edmunds, Consumer and Business Affairs Manager;  
H. Neil, Senior Consumer Protection Officer;  
A.J. Passenger, Trading Standards Officer;  
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen – 11:30am - 12:15pm**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Higgins and Councillor J. E. Morgan.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

**4. DRAFT LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report which appended a draft Local Toilets Strategy which had been developed in accordance with Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 whereby the County Council had a statutory duty to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for Carmarthenshire.

The Strategy incorporated the feedback and responses received following a Needs Assessment survey undertaken during October / November 2018. Outlined within the report were the key findings of a consultation exercise which was undertaken between the 25<sup>th</sup> March and the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 via the consultation facility on the Council's website.

In addition, an Equalities Impact Assessment appended to the report, identified no negative impacts and an increase of public access to toilet provisions were being sought.

Members noted that whilst there was no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilets, the strategy aimed to mitigate any potential impacts where a loss of toilet provision may occur. The proposals set out within the Draft Local Toilets Strategy were developed to enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities and promote additional, appropriate and accessible toilet provision for public use. In addition, the recommendations from this strategy would support the vision of a healthy Carmarthenshire which values diversity, equality and social inclusion, as well as providing support to the people, businesses and the communities within the County.

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

- In response to a query raised regarding cleansing public toilets, the Municipal Services and Compliance Manager explained that whilst the Council supervise the running and services of 19 public toilets throughout the County, Danfo were currently contracted to maintain the cleanliness of the 9 public toilet blocks which the Council's Waste and Environmental Services were responsible for, extra visits were arranged as and when necessary. Further information in relation to the Individual responsibilities for each facility was provided in Appendix A of the Strategy.
- Reference was made to the feedback received following the consultation, it was commented that whilst it was noted that it was not a statutory duty for the Council to provide toilet facilities, strong concern was raised regarding the provision of facilities and cleanliness particularly as the Council were promoting to increase tourism across the County. A further comment was raised which echoed the concern adding that the provision of toilets was essential in tourist locations.
- A query raised regarding additional toilets, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that the Council did not have any plans in place to provide additional toilets as there was no capital budget. In response to an additional query regarding the lack of public toilets available within out of town developments such as Pensarn, Carmarthen, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that whilst the Council had no powers to insist that new developments open their toilets to the public, options could be considered whereby the Council could potentially pay a contribution to encourage businesses to open their toilets to the public.

- It was asked, if it was possible to transfer the ownership of public toilets to the private sector? The Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that this could be an option and would be considered on an individual basis.
- Reference was made to the development project within Pendine and the increase in tourism, a concern was raised regarding the current provision of public toilets within Pendine. The Municipal Services and Compliance Manager reported that the main toilet block of containing 14 toilets had been demolished to make way for the new development. In the meantime, limited facilities were available, the Cliffside/Springwell facility had been opened temporarily for the summer period on a 24hour basis, whilst construction was underway at the seafront and there was a very limited facility at the Parry Thomas Centre.
- It was commented that the consultation had not sought any views from tourists visiting Carmarthenshire. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services acknowledged the comment and stated that one of the recommendations within the strategy included the formation of a Toilet Strategy Study Group (TSSG), which would be an initial driver to assimilate all relevant information gathered and held on public provision across the Council. It was reported that, once the study group had been assembled the next phase would be to liaise with local commercial/business representatives and other representative groups to have an input on future opportunities.

It was proposed that a representative of the Environmental and Public Protection scrutiny Committee attend the TSSG.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD that:-**

- 4.1 that the Draft Local Toilets Strategy be approved;**
- 4.2 a representative from the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee attend the Toilet Strategy Study Group.**

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION TASK & FINISH GROUP 2019/20 PLANNING AND SCOPING DOCUMENT**

Following consideration of a number of suggestions for Task and Finish project, the Committee, at its informal Forward Work Programme Development Session held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019, agreed in principal to undertake a review into the Carmarthenshire County Council Trading Standards initiative – The Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme (FESS).

The Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme (FESS), a multi-agency initiative created and developed by Carmarthenshire Trading Standards works to detect and prevent the financial exploitation of vulnerable people by carers, family members, doorstep criminals, mail fraud, telephone and email scams.

The Committee considered the aims and scope of the work of the Task & Finish Group, as set out within the planning and scoping document and noted the timescale for completion, which included five Task and Finish Group scheduled meetings with a view to present a final report to the Committee in April 2020.

The Committee noted that officers from the Trading Standards Department had contributed to the development of the Planning and Scoping Document and would continue to support the work of the Task & Finish Group.

In order to form a politically balanced Task and Finish Group, the Chair requested for up to 6 nominations from the Committee.

#### **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:-**

- 5.1 that the Task and Finish Scoping Document be received;**
- 5.2 to endorse the project aims and scope of the Task and Finish Group;**
- 5.3 that the membership of the Task and Finish Group be as follows:-**
  - **Councillor Joseph Davies**
  - **Councillor Karen Davies**
  - **Councillor Penny Edwards**
  - **Councillor Jeanette Gilasbey**
  - **Councillor John James**
  - **Councillor Dai Thomas**

#### **6. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 and was afforded the opportunity to request for information to be placed in to the reports.

In preparation for paperless Committee Services in September 2019, the Committee agreed that the Council Annual Report 2018/19 would be a paperless item and therefore would not be included within the hard copy of the agenda sent out to Committee Members. The Chair encouraged Members to utilise their iPad devices to view the next meeting's agenda.

#### **RESOLVED that:**

- 6.1 the list of forthcoming items be received;**
- 6.2 the revised Environmental and Public Protection Forward Work Plan be noted;**
- 6.3 the Council Annual Report 2018/19 be a paperless agenda item at the next meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019.**

**7. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR**

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