

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

## FORTHCOMING ITEMS for next meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

In order to ensure effective Scrutiny, Members need to be clear as to the purpose of requesting specific information and the outcome they are hoping to achieve as a consequence of examining a report.

Proposed Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report	Cabinet Member
Revenue Budget Consultation 2022/23 – 2024/25	As part of the Council's consultation procedures on the development of its 2022/23 – 2024/25 budget strategy, all scrutiny committees are provided with the opportunity of considering commenting on the Strategy.	To enable the scrutiny committee to consider and comment on the budget settlement, departmental service budgets and efficiency savings proposals and to make any recommendations for change to the Cabinet and Council	Cllr David Jenkins
Departmental Business Plans	As part of the Business Plan Development process the Committee is invited to consider and comment on the Environment, Communities and Chief Executive Departmental Business Plans 2022/23 – 2023/24 relevant to its remit.	To afford the Committee the opportunity of commenting on and making any recommendations for changes to the Departmental Business Plans in respect of Environment, Communities, Chief Executive relevant to its remit.	Cllr Hazel Evans Cllr Philip Hughes Cllr Ann Davies

## Items to be circulated under a separate cover to Scrutiny Committee members

(as agreed at the Committee's Forward Work Programme development session on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021.)

Proposed Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report	Cabinet Member
Local Environment Quality	This report sets out how the Waste and Environmental Services Division of the Environment Department undertakes litter management activity for public spaces within its portfolio.	To enable members to exercise their scrutiny role.	Cllr. Hazel Evans
Budget Monitoring Report [April to October 2021]	This is a standard bi-monthly budget report covering the revenue and capital budgets for the Environment Department, Public Protection Services and Community Safety which fall within the remit of the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee	To enable members to exercise their scrutiny role	Cllr. David Jenkins

**Items circulated to the Committee under separate cover since the last meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

*(in accordance with the Committee's Forward Work Programme)*

In line with the Environmental and Public Protection Committee's decision to receive and scrutinise reports outside of the formal committee process, the following reports were forwarded to all members of the Scrutiny Committee by e-mail on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021:

- **Budget Monitoring Report (1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021)** [Click here to view.](#)

The following queries were raised in relation to the abovementioned report:-

Question	Cabinet Member
<p><b>1. Reference to Sustainable Drainage approval Body Unit (SAB) [Page 9]. - £63k income not generated. Is the income fixed per development or can developer negotiate out of these fees?</b></p> <p>The range of Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) fees are based on the size of development in hectares. There are no negotiations entered into on any terms because SuDS application fees are determined using a set of area based calculation formulas provided through the regulations by WG. Essentially, the bigger the development the bigger the fee up to a maximum limit. <i>Appendix A is an extract from the Charging Digest which provides details of the fees.</i></p> <p><b>1.b) Has income not matched expectation because less developments have taken place or are their other factors at work?</b></p> <p>The Sustainable Drainage Approval Body is a statutory function introduced through WG legislation in 2018 and promoted as being principally self-funding. An income target of £165k was set based on an assumption of 300 SAB applications being received per year however this income target has not been achieved since the introduction of these charges. As the size of developments and the number of developments are difficult to predict it is not surprising that former forecasts have not been achieved. However, the predicted number of 300 SuDS application per year was a reasonable estimate given that approx. 1,100 planning applications had been identified as requiring a SuDS application over the past 3 years. It would be expected that the number of SuDS applications should mirror planning application numbers, at least partially at say 60% to 70%, certainly far more closely than has been experienced since implementation of the SuDS legislation back in Jan 2019.</p> <p>The difference between the number of projects identified as needing to submit a SuDS application and the number of actual applications received is remarkably high, ie. approximately 220 received compared to about 1100 planning application identified through the planning consultation process as requiring a SuDS application. In reality, not all planning applications are constructed and there is a 5-year period in which to commence works (potentially causing a time lag). However, the lack of SuDS applications is worrying compared to the number of planning applications. We have undertaken random checks of developments based on building regulation submissions but have found no unauthorised site activity.</p>	<p>Councillor David Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Resources</p>

For information, this SuDS Application trend is being experienced throughout the 22 Welsh LA's. Reluctance and ignorance, whether deliberate or unintentional may, in part be an attributable factor. A lack of awareness on the part of key stakeholders in the planning process throughout Wales should not be alluded to, since WG and SAB bodies have been very active in providing guidance and advice. Another probable factor at play might be the lack of specialist expertise available to applicants. Hence, there may be a backlog due to supply issues.

The estimated income for the year included in the budget monitoring report at the end of August, was £55k (£25k of income had already been received and we projected another £30k to year-end.) Previous years' income has been £27k in 2019/20 and £42k in 2020/21, therefore, even though we are predicting an increase year-on-year, it is highly unlikely that we'll receive the original estimate.

**2. Reference to parking fees [Page 10].  
What is the plan to claw back income from car parks??**

The following reimbursements have been received from WG for the loss of parking fees:

	<u>£</u>
Loss of income Claim Q1 2020/21	<b>-701,000</b>
Loss of income Claim Q2 2020/21	<b>-277,280</b>
Loss of income Claim Q3 2020/21	<b>-248,601</b>
Loss of income Claim Q4 2020/21	<b>-485,307</b>
Loss of income Claim Q1 2021/22	<b>-174,617</b>
Loss of income Claim Q2 2021/22	<b>-125,877</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b><u><u>-2,012,682</u></u></b>

Quarters 2 and 3 of 2021/22 will be reimbursed by WG at a similar level.

**2.b How do we square the need to significantly increase use of public transport and sustainable modes of travel with car use?**

The Council's Parking strategy sets out the need to account for the important economic role that parking plays in supporting town centres and revenue generated from parking helps sustain key infrastructure and public transport to provide sustainable travel options. The Wales Transport Strategy recognises the need for increased investment in public transport and active travel by 2040 to reduce car usage. Once investment levels by Government are in place to provide people with the more sustainable travel options our parking strategy will be reviewed and updated.

*The Parking Strategy has been e-mailed to Members for information.*

Councillor David Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Resources

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Question	Cabinet Member
<p><b>3. Reference to property maintenance and design <a href="#">[Page 10]</a>. Significant income based on increase in internal charging. This seems like moving money from departments inside authority. Has this had a detrimental impact on other depts budgets? i.e. overspends due to unforeseen charges from this department or has the income come from additional grants/government pots to pay for the maintenance and design work?</b></p> <p>The surplus of £302k equates to 0.73% of the total estimated income of £41m for the 2021/22 financial year, therefore it is not significant but relatively modest when compared to the Property Maintenance section's overall turnover. There is a variable amount of work year on year and the Property Maintenance section might generate surpluses in one year but deficits in another which the business unit would have to bear if, for whatever reason, the income target was not met. The charges are set to cover overheads and a very small element is built into the job costings to allow for unforeseen unproductive time with the onset of covid a good, if not a little extreme, example of when the business unit couldn't generate income due to strict covid measures.</p> <p>The fees and costs are charged to grants, capital and HRA expenditure codes.</p>	<p>Councillor Hazel Evans, Cabinet Member for Environment</p>