

Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2021 - 2022

Scrutiny
in Carmarthenshire



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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



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Chair's Foreword

For the final time during this election period, I am pleased to present this Annual Report of the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee which provides an overview of the work undertaken during the period between May 2021 to April 2022.

Having gone through a Pandemic with lockdowns and firebreaks, the aftermath has been just as challenging. Whilst in hope that the world and our communities can return to (a cautious) normality in the very near future a heartfelt condolence to the those who have lost loved ones and strength to those businesses who have made it through.



Following on from last year this Council continued to remain focused on protecting its residents whilst ensuring key functions are maintained.

In developing this report, it is evident that this year, Committee Members have received and scrutinised a lot of information for the benefit of the Communities in Carmarthenshire. The Committee has successfully managed its forward work programme and in doing so has exercised good quality scrutiny through questioning and debate.

This year, Committee Members have taken a more active approach by not only holding the Cabinet Members to account but by writing to Welsh Government Ministers in seek of support on important matters including Climate Change and Safer Routes in Communities.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Cabinet Members who have presented reports and officers for providing the Committee with detailed technical and operational information enabling Members to better understand the processes.

I would like once again to thank my Vice Chair, Councillor Aled Vaughan Owen, his support and passion to provide good quality reporting has been invaluable.

On a final note, my sincere thanks to all the Committee Members for your attendance, professionalism and providing excellent scrutiny for and on behalf of our communities.

Councillor John James
Chair of Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee 2021/2022

1. Introduction

The scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision-making process. Although not a decision-making body, Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the County.

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all scrutiny committees to "prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year."

This report provides an overview of the work of the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee during the reduced six-month committee cycle for 2020/21 municipal year. It aims to highlight the work of the Committee and reflect on the achievements identifying what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny. In addition, this report may aid to facilitate discussions on items which could be identified for inclusion within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by the Councillor John James and is made up of 14 Elected Members. Support is provided to the Committee by the Democratic Services Team and other Council officers as and when required.

The Committee helps deliver a number of key outcome measures within the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-23:

- **Wellbeing objective 8** –
Live Well-Help people live healthy lives

- **Wellbeing objective 9** –
Live Well/Age Well – Support good connections with friends, family and safer communities

- **Wellbeing objective 12** –
Healthy and Safety Environment – Look after the environment now and in the future

- **Wellbeing objective 13** –

Healthy and Safe Environment – Improve the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity

Some of the measures and actions within Wellbeing objective 12 overlap with Community Scrutiny, however the necessary information was also be provided to this Committee.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2021/22

2.1 Management of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 6 meetings during the 2021/22 municipal year.

All meetings proceeded in line with the Forward Work Programme as planned except for the first meeting of 2021, May which with the consent of the Chair was cancelled due a delay in the reports being presented and the last meeting in April due to it falling within the pre-election period.

In accordance with the provisions for section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 all meetings were held by virtually means via the platform Zoom. All members, by embracing the new way of working, continued to carry out their scrutiny role with confidence and professionalism.

2.2 The Role of the Cabinet Member

The Council, at its meeting held on the 22nd October, 2020 agreed a number of changes to its Scrutiny Procedure Rules and remits. The principal change was that the Cabinet Members would be expected to attend, present the reports placed on the Forward Work Programme by the Committee and answer questions raised by Scrutiny Members thus holding the Cabinet to account. Relevant Officers were called upon in order to provide additional information on operational issues.

Note: As of 16th August 2021 the Executive Board and Executive Board members was renamed Cabinet and Cabinet Members respectively. This report reflects the name known at the date of the meeting.

Environment –

The Committee has responsibility for monitoring the work of the Environment Department which includes the work of the Waste and Environmental, Highways and Transport, Property Services and Policy & Performance divisions.

Cabinet Member for Environment is responsible for:

Refuse	Caretaking
Street Cleansing	Building Cleaning
Highways and Transport Services	Emergency Planning
Grounds Maintenance	Flooding
Building Services	Public Rights of Way

Public Protection –

The Committee has responsibility for monitoring the work of the Public Protection / Trading Standards Services, which are part of the Housing & Public Protection Division.

Cabinet Member for Public Protection is responsible for

Trading Standards;	Unlicensed Waste
Environmental Health	Parking Services;
Environmental Enforcement;	Biodiversity
Planning enforcement	

Community Safety / Crime & Disorder –

One of the key roles of the Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee is its capacity as the Council's Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee. The Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee has specific additional Terms of Reference whereby it has exercise of powers relating to crime and disorder ([6.4 within the Constitution](#)).

Cabinet Member for Communities and Rural Affairs is responsible for

Rural Affairs and Community Engagement	Community Safety; Police
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	Tackling Poverty;
Third Sector Liaison	Wellbeing of Future Generations
Climate Change Strategy.	Equalities

In addition, the Cabinet Member for Resources attended meetings to present finance related reports including the budget monitoring reports and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health attended to present the relevant actions within the Corporate Performance Monitoring reports associated to substance misuse.

2.3 The Forward Work Programme

The Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee develops its Forward Work Programme with matters that fall within remit which covers:-

- **Waste and Environmental Services including:-**
 - Refuse Collection,
 - Street Cleaning,
 - Grounds Maintenance,
 - Building Cleaning (including Schools, where relevant),
 - Public Toilets

- **Transport and Streetscene including:-**
 - Highways, Street Lighting,
 - Bridges,
 - Traffic Management,
 - Parking Services,
 - Cycle paths and Rights of Way;

- **Environmental Enforcement including:-**
 - Litter, Dog Fouling;
 - Abandoned Vehicles etc;
 - Planning Enforcement;
 - Trading Standards;

- **Community Safety issues including:-**
 - Crime and Disorder Referrals
(to include a power to make a report or recommendations to the County Council and/or the Council's Cabinet);

- **Environmental and Public Health Pest Control:-**
 - Social Inclusion;
 - the Community;
 - Biodiversity;
 - Zero Carbon.

In April 2021, the Committee at its annual Forward Work Programme development session developed its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) by identifying and prioritising agenda items for consideration during the next municipal year.

In addition to the standard items such as performance and budget monitoring reports as well as action plans and monitoring reports the Committee identified pre-decision reports from the Cabinet's Forward Work Programme 2021/22.

Whilst the Committee has the option to co-opt non-voting employees, officers or members of Responsible Authorities or co-operating persons or bodies in respect of its crime and disorder functions, [subject to the provisions of the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009] did not do so during the 2021/22 municipal year.

2.4 The Gateway Framework and reports circulated under a separate cover

The Committee at its Forward Work Programme development session on 9th April 2021, utilised the Gateway Framework method in order to manage the number of reports being presented at each meeting. Considering the number of reports for consideration enables the Committee to undertake a quality scrutiny process.

The Committee, following the identification of the reports for the Forward Work Programme, further shaped their programme by taking each subject/report through the Gateway Framework.

In line with the Framework Members agreed to the following reports being circulated to members by e-mail. Members scrutinised the reports as they would in a formal meeting and forward any queries and/or concerns to the Scrutiny Support officer to arrange a response. Any queries raised together with responses were included within the Forthcoming Items report.

- Budget Monitoring reports
- Public Rights of Way Network Hierarchy

The Committee regularly reviews its Forward Work Programme and as a flexible working document on occasion reports were moved to manage the Scrutiny process accordingly.

2.5 Performance Monitoring

Departmental Business Plans (within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee) -

The following Departmental Business plans were presented by the respective Executive Board Members to Committee Members in April 2021:-

- Environment Departmental Business Plan 2021/22
- Chief Executives Departmental Business Plan 2021/22
- Department for Communities Departmental Business Plan 2021/22

During the consideration, Members raised several comments and concerns regarding the actions and associated measures presented in the departmental plans and after discussion, the Committee unanimously resolved that further information be included in the actions and measures and that the Departmental Business Plans 2021/22 be submitted to the next meeting for consideration [May 2021].

However, in order to enable Officers additional time necessary to act on the comments raised by Scrutiny Members, following consultation with the Chair, it was agreed to present the reports to the meeting in July and subsequently in respect of the light agenda the meeting in May was cancelled.

At its meeting in July 2021, the Committee was presented with the revised Departmental Business Plans which had been updated to include additional information to provide a summary of the key actions and measures required to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy as well as an additional column to reference the measures/outcome to the relevant Council Well-being Objective.

Whilst Members had observed that the departmental business plans across the different sectors differed in their approach and in understanding that the detailed information were provided in Divisional Plans, Members expressed gratitude to officers for acting on the requests of the Committee providing more informative plans.

The Chair and Vice Chair continued to work with Officers to further improve the Departmental Business Plans in readiness for 2022/23.

In March 2022, the Committee received the Environment and Chief Executives Departmental Business Plans 2022/23 for consideration.

The Environment Departmental Business Plan had adopted a new-style which was applauded by Committee Members. The revamped version included more information, more readable, easier to understand, provided the direction of travel and what success would look like. Praise was expressed in the development of the new-style business plan. Appreciation was extended to the officers involved in the development of the plan. Members suggested that this version be consistent across other departmental business plans.

In March, a non-submission report was received in relation to the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2022/23 deferring the plan to July 2022 to enable the new Sustainability and Place Division to be established. This would be placed onto the 2022/23

[Carmarthenshire Council Annual Report 2020/21](#) – In July 2021 the Committee was provided with a report which contained the Council's 15 Well Being Objectives and assessed the progress and adaptations made during 2020/21. However, Scrutiny Members focussed on the sections which were relevant to the Committee's remit. Members raised questions/concerns on pertinent matters including

- Active Travel and the funding for Safer Routes in the Community.
- The proposed targets for the energy consumption towards Net Zero
- Implication of the reduced usage of public transport

The relevant Executive Board members supported by Officers provided Scrutiny Members with detailed explanations.

Outcome:

The Committee, feeling strongly about Safer Routes in the Community, resolved to write to the Welsh Government to express their support of the Safe Routes in the Community funding and seek the Deputy Minister's support in providing additional funding to help with the future development of safer routes to schools across all areas of the County. *Letter was sent from the Chair on behalf of the Committee to Mr Lee Waters MS, 3rd September 2021.*

A response from Mr Waters MS was circulated to Members by e-mail an extract of which is provided below:-

"We were pleased to be able to increase the funding in 2021/22 and allocate £6.5m to Safe Routes in Communities schemes this year. My officials are currently refining the application and guidance to enable local authorities to bid for funding for 2022/23. I am encouraged that you have received a positive response to the call for schemes for the next financial year."

[2020/21 Performance Reports relevant to this Scrutiny](#) - One of the principal roles of a scrutiny committee is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. In October 2021, the Committee considered the performance report detailing the progress as at the end of *Quarter 1* of the deliverables linked to the Corporate Strategy and the 13 Well-being objectives. Quarter 2 report was considered at the meeting in December 2021.

[Scrutiny Committee Actions Update](#) – Throughout the municipal year, the Committees requests and referrals are logged and the action updates are then presented to Committee for information.

2.6 Revenue and Capital Budgets

[Budget Monitoring Reports](#) – were circulated to Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee members by e-mail in line with the Committee’s 2021 decision to scrutinise outside of the Committees formal process.

The Committee, received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets in

- May 2021 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 28th February 2021
- October 2021 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 30th June 2021 and
- November 2021 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 31st August 2021.

The reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in connection with any capital works.

The budget monitoring report in respect of the budgetary position as at 31st October 2021 was included onto the agenda to be considered in February 2022.

[Consultation - Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25](#) - In February 2022, the Committee as a statutory consultee received the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 for consideration and comment. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 together with the indicative figures for the 2022/23 to 2024/25 financial years.

The Committee raised a number of queries and concerns in regard to the proposed budgets including the

- car parking charges and the proposal to introduce charges to additional car parks
- Future Sponsorship in regard to Road Safety Innovation
- Lack of Maintenance and Aesthetic car of the infrastructure within Ammanford
- Financial position of Highways
- School Crossing Patrols
- Fixed Penalty Notices and charges

Outcome:
The comments, concerns and recommendations raised by the Committee helped to shape the Revenue budget strategy for 2022/23 – 2024/25 which was considered at full Council on 2 nd March 2022.

2.7 Pre-Decision Scrutiny Reports

2.7.1 Emergency Flood Response – Storm Event Arrangements – October 2021

The Committee received the report prior to Cabinet consideration which provided detailed information on how the Council currently dealt with and responded to storm events that cause widespread flooding and included the actions that could be expected of the Council.

- Clarification was sought on the level of responsibility that Welsh Government and Natural Resource Wales (NRW) had on the river which caused the significant flooding in Pensarn, Carmarthen.
- what work was being undertaken to encourage communities and in particular vulnerable communities to have an emergency plan and trained emergency wardens?
- Ahead of the COP 26 Conference in Glasgow held in November 2021. A proposal was made that the Committee write to the First Minister and the Minister for Climate Change as the Welsh Government representatives attending the COP 26 Conference, requesting that they pursue to mitigate climate change.
- Plans to improve flood defences
- Vulnerable coastal areas

Outcome:

Unanimously resolved that the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee write to the First Minister and the Minister for Climate Change requesting that in support of Carmarthenshire County Council's ambition to cut carbon emissions by 2030 they pursue to mitigate climate change at the COP 26 conference in November 2021.

Letter was sent from the Chair on behalf of the Committee on 26th October 2021.

2.7.2 Future Waste Strategy – October 2021

The Committee received this report which provided information on the proposed future strategy, actions and considerations for the Waste Service, in order to achieve 70% recycling by 2024/25 and provide a base for improvements to achieve zero waste by 2050.

Responses to comments raised on the following main points were provided by the Cabinet member supported by Officers:-

- Comparison Performance – other local Authorities in Wales
- Material to raise awareness and promote recycling
- The future of glass recycling sites
- Concerns of the environmental impact of the proposed collection of 3 black bags every three weeks including nappies (Absorbent Hygiene Products).

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend that the Cabinet that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

2.7.3 Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) Maintenance Manual – November 2021,

The Committee was presented with a report requesting Members to consider and comment on parts 4.1 to 4.4 of the HAMP Maintenance Manual prior to adoption by the Cabinet. The main concern raised was in relation to the low priority of rural roads status and that rural roads were inspected only once a year. The Cabinet Member supported by Officers responded to the concerns and provided a thorough explanation of the prioritised system of assessment, inspection and repair.

Outcome:

Unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that Parts 4.1 to 4.4 of the Highways Asset Management Plan Maintenance Manual be adopted.

2.7.4 Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy - Decarbonising Transport – November 2021

The Committee, ahead of Cabinet consideration, received a report which set out a proposal to adopt an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for Carmarthenshire. Following consideration of the 13 key policies the following main points were raised:-

- Electric Bikes – if they could be added to the 13 key policies
- Future plans for Charging facilities to be placed in rural areas
- Funding applications and who bears the costs of the charging facilities
- Suitability of charging facilities for disabled users
- The consideration of the availability of wider facilities in relation to the charging facility
- The provision of charging points through the planning process
- Queries raised in relation to the number of charging facilities being available for use by 2030.

The Cabinet Member supported by Officers provided comprehensive responses.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the proposed Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for the Council be adopted.

2.7.5 Draft Planning Enforcement Statement – December 2021

The Committee considered a draft Planning Enforcement Statement which had been developed in response to the significant backlog of unresolved complaints within Carmarthenshire’s Planning Enforcement service. Following consideration, Officers responded to matters raised in relation to enforcement staffing levels and unsolicited siting of caravans in woodland

Outcome:
The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the Draft Planning Enforcement Statement be endorsed.

2.7.5 Local Toilet Strategy Interim Progress Report – December 2021

The Committee considered this Strategy which included 10 key recommendations to enhance Carmarthenshire’s long term toilet provision. Members in their scrutiny function raised the following main comments:

- Future changes to charges to access toilets
- Contract cleaning

Members commented that there had been a noticeable improvement on the cleanliness of the toilets within town centres and commended the Officers on a well written report.

Outcome:
The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the Local Toilets Strategy Interim Progress Report be endorsed.

2.7.6 Local Environment Quality Management Plan 2022-2026 – February 2022

The Committee considered the Local Environment Quality Management Plan which provided information on the direction of the Council’s litter management within the County for the next four years and aimed to demonstrate how litter management would be undertaken.

- Enforcement staffing levels
- Publicity of information to encourage and aid Members of the public and Town/Community Council to engage in setting up groups to clean villages and rural areas
- The provision to support adhoc litter picking
- Matters relating to dog fouling

The Cabinet Member supported by Officers provided comprehensive responses and clarified matters that were of concern with future plans to improve.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the Local Environment Quality Management Plan 2022-2026 be approved.

2.7.8 Extension of Public Space Protection Order (Carmarthenshire Dog Orders) – March 2022

This report was received by the Committee in respect of extending the current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which was due to expire at the end of June for a further 3 years. Members in feeling strongly about matters relating to dog fouling and irresponsible dog owners were keen to extend the current PSPO for a further 3 years.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the duration of the Carmarthenshire County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2016 be extended for a further period of 3 years with effect from the 1st July 2022 and that the Council makes an Extension Order to give effect to the above extension and endorses the 2016 Order with suitable wording to reflect the fact that the duration of the 2016 order has been extended.

2.8 Additional Reports and Update Reports

2.8.1 Air Quality Delivery Plan Consultation Draft – July 2021

The Committee received a report on the Air Quality Delivery Plan – Consultation which provided an update on the work undertaken in respect of Air Quality in Carmarthenshire, and to consult on the draft Air Quality Delivery plan. The Committee raised a number of issues in relation to the plan which was captured and included as part of the consultation, the main points were as follows:-

- Air quality around the school areas – introduce a school street
- Progress of the Tywi Valley Cycle Path
- Timeline to resolve legal issues in respect of locked shared footpaths
- Low Emission Zones – what this looked like
- Clarification was sought on the installation of AQMA signage

2.8.2 Highways Asset Management Plan Annual Statement update – November 2021

The Cabinet Member for Environment presented the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) Annual Statement Report 2021 to the Committee at its meeting in November 2021. The Committee considered information on the highway network and provided detail on the following three key highway asset areas:

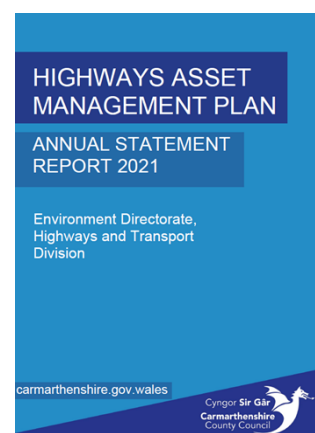
- Highways (carriageways, footways and cycleways)
- Bridges and Structures
- Highway Lighting and Traffic Signals

The Committee considered the information contained on each of the above asset categories which provided the conditions and reported how the conditions had changed since the last report together with future changes based on funding scenarios.

The Cabinet Member supported by officers responded to a number of queries raised including the following:

- The low expenditure in comparison to other Councils; Concerns in relation to the failures of the new method of re-surfacing on some roads and the length of time taken to repair;
- The concerning data collected from drainage surveys and the impact that blocked pipes could cause impairment of road surfaces;
- A request in relation to the progress of Cardi Bach footpath;
- Road impairments arising as a result of repair works by utility companies;
- Investment options and the continuation of Welsh Government Funding.

Outcome:
The Committee resolved to note the Highway Asset Management Plan – Annual Statement Report 2021.



2.8.3 Future Accessibility Options at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update position and future option for the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) and provided information in regard to a future strategy of accessibility for the HWRC service in Carmarthenshire. Members after consideration received the report for information.

2.9 Referrals

The Committee had received one referral during the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The referral was received by Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee which at its meeting held on 1st July 2021 had raised concern regarding the lack of provision of pavements in rural areas to facilitate increased levels of walking and cycling and the backlog of requests.

Committee members in accepting the referral as it resided within the remit of Environmental and Public protection Scrutiny requested a report providing more information.

The Committee received a report in March, 2022 which stated that there had been a longstanding pressure on the Council from the large number of requests received for highway improvements such as upgraded junctions, traffic calming, new sections of road and new footways. Members were informed that the requests being received far exceeded the available resources through the Council's annual capital budget allocated for Highway Infrastructure and Road Safety Improvements.

Members of the Committee in receiving the report acknowledged the limited resources available and emphasised that the current provision of pavement in rural areas continued to be a huge concern.

2.10 Public Engagement and Scrutiny Topic Suggestions

Listening to and giving the public a voice is key to scrutiny's effectiveness. It was important to the Committee to grant the people of Carmarthenshire (and beyond) an opportunity to shape the Forward Work Programme. The Communications department provided active involvement through social media throughout the municipal year picking up on various topics on the Scrutiny's Forward Work Programme.

In addition, complying with Legislation regarding promoting public awareness at Scrutiny, in April 2018, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Forum agreed to send correspondence to Town and Community Councils which would contain information to encourage an increase in public attendance at Scrutiny Committees and also seek suggestions for future topics for consideration. In response to this the Environmental and Public Protection received requests direct from two Town and Community Council which was considered as part of the Scrutiny's Forward Work Programme development session in April 2021. One of the request went on to become a Task and Finish review – see section 3.1 for more information.

3. Scrutiny Committee Activity

3.1 Scrutiny Investigations (Task and Finish)

The Committee at its Forward Work Programme Development Session held on 9th April 2021, considered a topic suggestion received from Llandyfaelog Community Council suggesting that the Committee consider the issues in relation to fly-tipping in Carmarthenshire. Committee Members in recognising that fly tipping was an increasing problem in Carmarthenshire and that the consequence of fly-tipping had a detrimental effect on the environment and communities suggested to consider this matter be a review for the Task and Finish Group.

The Committee, in ratifying its Forward Work Programme on 2nd July 2021 unanimously resolved that its Task and Finish arrangements for 2021-22-23 would be as follows:

- 1) *Review on the Fly tipping within Carmarthenshire
- 2) Review on Dog Breeding in Carmarthenshire.

*The Committee in making the above decision superseded the Committee's previous decision made at its meeting held on 15th November 2019 – "unanimously resolved that dog breeding in Carmarthenshire be the subject for Committee's next Task and Finish review in 2021".

The Committee, having agreed to undertake a Task and Finish on the issues of fly-tipping, received the Task and Finish Draft Planning and Scoping Document on the Management of Fly-tipping within Carmarthenshire and agreed the politically balanced Membership of the Task and Finish group. The Task and Finish Group commenced the review in September 2021.

However, the Task and Finish Group at its first meeting on 8th September, 2021 received an unexpected update from the Director of Environment on internal matters that had arisen since the Scrutiny Committee agreement on its Task and Finish arrangements and the endorsement of the review planning and scoping document in July. Considering the information received, the Group unanimously agreed to defer the review on Flytipping to 2022 following the Election process.

At its meeting in November, the Committee received an update report from the Task and Finish Group which outlined the Groups decision and reasons

Outcome:
The Committee unanimously resolved that the Group's decision to defer the review of the Management of Fly-tipping within Carmarthenshire until after the 2022 elections be accepted.

3.2 Member Development and Site Visits

The following all-member development sessions /seminars were held during 2021/22, to which Committee members were invited:-

- Microsoft Teams Training for online meetings – numerous sessions in June 2020
- Historic Buildings and Carmarthenshire’s Net Zero Carbon Commitment (May 2021)
- The Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (June 2021)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Covid Briefing (September 2021)
- Planning Services Seminar (September 2021)
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Workshop (October 2021)
- Planning Service Phosphates Briefing (November 2021)
- Digital Connectivity Event (January 2022)

In addition to the above, several budget seminars were held during January as part of the Council’s consultation process on the 2021/22 Revenue Budget and the five-year capital programme.

Due to the restrictions associated with the Pandemic the Committee was unable to carry out site visits during 2021/22.

4. Challenges

As with the previous year due to Covid, the past year has been a challenging period for both the Authority and the Committee but has continued to undertake a constructive role in scrutinising performance and contributing to policies and decisions. The Committee recognise that departments have been subjected to significant pressure during the Coronavirus pandemic, but everyone involved performed over and above expectations to ensure the continuation of business as usual.

Committee members continued to embrace the virtual way of undertaking their role of Scrutiny and have operated professionally in the webcast environment to provide a way of open and transparent scrutiny. Whilst virtual platforms have enabled scrutiny to continue Members are hoping return to physical meetings in the near future.

In respect the Task and Finish review on Fly-tipping, whilst Members were disappointed to have to defer a matter of significant importance to communities, it was recognised that a short deferment would enable a successful review.

5. Committee’s Future Work

There is no doubt that the Committee has continued to make progress during what has been another challenging year for all involved. It is hoped that following the Elections in May 2022, the new cohort of Committee Members would continue to concentrate on topics where Member’s input would result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement.

The future work of the Committee will be considered regularly as part of the Forward Work Programme and will continue to be monitored during the course of the year.

As part of the development of the forward work programme, the Gateway Framework will aid Committee members to develop a Forward Work Programme to enable focused Scrutiny to take place ensuring that there is a more equitable distribution of reports, that statutory responsibilities are focussed and are properly aligned with the council's strategic priorities.

The Committee will continue to seek topics for discussion from Town and Community Councils annually more information on how to submit a topic for consideration and ask questions at a Scrutiny meeting is available on our Scrutiny webpage:

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/committees-meetings/scrutiny/#.Xp7Am6aQxMs>

6. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum, and the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive Board Forum;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of scrutiny task and finish groups, authoring reports in conjunction with the groups, and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Managing the Scrutiny member development programme;
- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including forward work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

7. Committee Member Attendance

A total of 6 meetings were held by virtual means between May 2021 and April 2022. The scheduled meetings in May 2020 and April 2021 were cancelled. Attendance by members of the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 year is shown in the table below.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended	%
Cllr. Mansel Charles	6	100
Cllr. Arwel Davies	5	83
Cllr. Joseph Davies	5	83
Cllr. Karen Davies	5	83
Cllr. Penny Edwards	2	33
Cllr. Jeanette Gilasbey	5	83
Cllr. Tina Higgins	6	100
Cllr. John James	6	100
Cllr. Eryl Morgan	4	67
Cllr. Aled Vaughan Owen	6	100
Cllr. Dorian Phillips	6	100
Cllr. Susan Phillips	6	100
Cllr. Alan Speake	4	67
Cllr. Dai Thomas	6	100
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	1	
Cllr. Tyssul Evans	1	
Cllr. Dot Jones	1	
Cllr. Kevin Madge	1	
Cllr. Elwyn Williams	1	
Cabinet Member	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. H.A.L. Evans (Environment)	6	
Cllr. P. Hughes (Public Protection)	6	
Cllr. Ann Davies (Communities & Rural Affairs)	2	
Cllr David Jenkins (Resources)	1	
Jane Tremlett (Social Care & Health)	2	