

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 JULY 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J.D. James (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Councillor S. Allen - Substitute for Councillor T.A.J. Davies.

Also in attendance:

Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Executive Board Member for Environment;
Councillor C.A. Davies, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs;
Councillor P.M. Hughes, Executive Board Member for Public Protection.

The following Officers were in attendance:

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities;
S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways;
S.E. Watts, Environmental Protection Manager;
J. Edwards, Business Improvement Manager;
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;
K. Davies, Sustainable Development Manager;
R James, Performance Planning & Business Officer;
A. Rees, Pollution and Wellbeing Lead;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Virtual Meeting: 10:00am - 11:45am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor T.A.J. Davies.

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

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Jeanette Gilasbey	5 - Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme For 2021/22	Executive Board Forward Work Programme – School in her ward is named.

There were no declarations of any prohibited party whips made.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Committee received an Annual Report for its work during the 2020/21 municipal year which had been prepared in accordance with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution.

The report provided an overview of the work programme and the key issues considered by the Committee. It also detailed the development sessions held for members as well as their attendance at committee meetings.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21 be approved.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

(NOTE: Councillor J Gilasbey had earlier declared an interest in this item)

The Committee, in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's constitution, considered its draft 2021/22 Forward Work Programme detailing issues and reports to be considered during the course of the municipal year.

The Committee also considered its Task and Finish arrangements for the 2021/22-23. The Committee noted that at its informal Forward Work Programme development session, it had agreed in principle, subject to a short review period, the Task and Finish review on the fly-tipping should be undertaken prior to the Dog Breeding Task and Finish. Therefore, it was proposed and duly seconded that this arrangement would supersede the Committee's previous decision 'unanimously resolved that dog breeding in Carmarthenshire be the subject for Committee's next Task and Finish review in 2021' which was made at its meeting held on 15th November 2019.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:-

5.1 the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be approved;

5.2 the Committee's task and finish arrangements for 2021/22-2023 be carried out in the following order:-

- 1) To review the Management of Fly Tipping within Carmarthenshire**
- 2) To review dog breeding within Carmarthenshire.**

6. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION TASK & FINISH GROUP 2021/22 - DRAFT PLANNING AND SCOPING DOCUMENT

The Committee, having agreed to undertake a Task and Finish on the issues of fly-tipping at its informal Forward Work Programme Development Session held on 9th April 2021, received the Task and Finish Draft Planning and Scoping Document on the Management of Fly-tipping within Carmarthenshire.

The Committee considered the aims and scope of the work of the Task & Finish Group, as set out within the planning and scoping document.

It was noted that it was intended that the Task and Finish review be carried out within a short-focused review period not exceeding 3 months.

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

In accordance with the Committee's earlier decision on the Task and Finish Review arrangements for 2021/2022-23 [Minute 5.2 refers] it was proposed that the review commence in September following the August recess period.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:-

- 6.1 the Draft Planning and Scoping Document – To Review the Management of Fly Tipping within Carmarthenshire be received;**
- 6.2 the aims and scope of the work of the Task and Finish Group as stated within the Planning and Scoping Document be endorsed;**
- 6.3 the politically balanced Membership of the Task and Finish Group on the Review the Management of Fly Tipping within Carmarthenshire be as follows:-**

	COUNCILLOR	PARTY
1.	Councillor Jeanette Gilasbey	Plaid Cymru
2.	Councillor Dorian Phillips	Plaid Cymru
3.	Councillor Dai Thomas	Plaid Cymru
4.	Councillor John James	Labour
5.	Councillor Tina Higgins	Labour
6.	Councillor Arwel Davies	Independent

- 6.4 the Task and Finish Group commence the review in September 2021.**

7. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/2021

The Committee received a report presented by the Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs on the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21, produced in accordance with the requirements of both the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

It was noted the impact of Covid-19 on council services had meant it had not been possible this year for the report to act either as a progress report on performance or as a comparator with other local authorities. It therefore reflected on the actions the Council had taken to support its residents, communities and businesses throughout the pandemic.

The report referenced in turn each of the Council's 15 Well Being Objectives and assessed the progress and adaptations made during the year. Members focussed on the following sections within the document relevant to the Committee's remit:

- **WBO 8.** Help people live healthy lives (tackling risky behaviour and obesity)
- **WBO 9.** Support good connections with friends, family and safer communities
- **WBO 12.** Looking after the present and future cultural and natural conditions of the environment
- **WBO 13.** Improving the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity
- Appendices

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

- Reference was made to the Active Travel graph on page 62 of the report. In light of the significant increase of cycling and pedestrians throughout the lockdown period, it was highlighted that a number of Councillors had made applications for Safer Routes in the Community, however the progress seemed to be considerably slow. It was asked if there was any way of speeding up the process of the implementation of Safer Routes in the Community.

The Head of Transportation & Highways stated that in terms of the Safer Routes in the community, the number of bids that could be submitted each year was restricted. Expressions of interests for bids were sought from Community Council's on an annual basis. In addition, it was reported that in a broader sense currently, there had been a significant investment injected into Active Travel and plans to support Active Travel had been developed for towns. It was highlighted that Safe Routes to Schools was a separate funding which similarly to Safer Routes in the Community the number of bids that can be submitted was also restricted.

It was proposed to write to the Welsh Government to seek 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. This was duly seconded.

- In reference to the Bwcabus service, gratitude was expressed to officers for achieving further funding as the service was invaluable to the community.
- Reference was made to page 56 of the report where it was observed that the figures in relation to the success measures of the energy consumption was not available. It was asked, if an update on these figures was available prior to receiving the report?

In response, the Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs stated that whilst she tried to get the figures in readiness for this meeting, unfortunately the figures were currently being finalised and therefore was not ready for reporting as yet.

Following on from the response, it was asked if, in terms of energy consumption, that further consideration be made to proposed targets and what would success look like.

- In reference to the Net Zero Carbon section of the report (page 57), it was highlighted that the Council had agreed its Net Zero Carbon plan and that it was currently considering Scope 1, which included 'Direct Emissions' from activities as set out in the report. With the data in the report suggesting that the energy consumption was reducing, it was asked if energy consumed by staff members working at home was being measured? Furthermore, as the Council had opted not to measure Scope 2 which encompassed the 'Indirect Emissions' caused by activities within the Council, it was asked, with homeworking likely to continue, would this measure be placed within Scope 2? In summary, it was asked the energy consumption of Officers and Councillors working from home was being measured as part of Scope 1 – Direct Emissions?

In response to the queries raised, the Sustainable Development Manager explained the 3 scopes within the Net Zero Carbon plan to the committee as follows:-

Scope	Emission Type	CCC Footprint
1	Direct	Fleet Mileage
2	Indirect	Non-domestic buildings Street lighting
3	Indirect	Business Mileage – staff using their own vehicles

It was reported that homeworking would fall under Scope 3 and that it was the most difficult to measure. The Net Zero Carbon Plan was developed using a pragmatic approach by identifying the areas that had been traditionally measured. In addition, the Welsh Government had released the reporting guidance for public services on 24th May 2021 which contained the methodology that needed to be applied. In receipt of the Welsh Government guidance, an implications report was being developed. It was explained that in complying with the methodology of the Welsh Government it was anticipated that an increase in footprint of over 30% would be seen, due to the difference in the Scope and methodology that the Council adopted.

In response to a query, the Sustainable Development Manager clarified that not every local Authority in Wales had committed to be net zero by 2030, as the Welsh Government guidance was not mandatory.

Reference was made to the future funding for public transport and the implication of the reduced usage. The Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs stated that the reduced usage was due to the reduced carrying capacity to adhere to the social distancing rules. This has caused a County wide problem where buses reach their maximum capacity prior to the end of the route. The Executive Board Member for Environment added that this would be an ongoing issue until the Covid regulations were eased. The Head of Transportation and Highways explained that Welsh Government had supported the public transport sector with significant funding to ensure services continue during the pandemic. However, since the commencement of the recovery further funding had seen further services restored. In addition, it was reported that the Wales Transport Strategy included significant ambitions in relation to increased modal shift and modal sharing with public transport and Active Travel. As part of the arrangements one of the priorities within the Wales Transport Strategy included working with bus providers which would help deliver priorities and attract bus group company investment in Welsh services, with longer term funding horizons. In summary, it was reported that funding was currently available to support recovery which included rural areas and that any future challenges would be managed through the bus emergency scheme.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:-

- 7.1 the Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2020/21 be received;**
- 7.2 the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee 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.**

8. AIR QUALITY DELIVERY PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Committee received a report presented by the Executive Board Member for Public Protection 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 following questions/issues were raised on the report:-

- In response to a query raised on 'Introduce a School Street' as stated within measure G10 of the Plan, the Pollution and Wellbeing Lead clarified that this measure was currently being considered by the Highway and Transportation department. It would encompass the introduction of a series of measures to improve the air quality around the school area such as introducing restricted road traffic entries to a specific area, including drop-off, pick-up and anti-idling area.

In addition, the Executive Board Member for Public Protection stated that the Active Travel Plan would also support the cleaner environment by way of encouraging more walking and cycling to schools.

- In response to a query raised regarding when the Tywi Valley Path would be opened to the public, the Executive Board Member for Environment reported that Jonathan Edwards MP had applied for funding from the Levelling Up Fund on behalf of Carmarthenshire County Council towards the Tywi Valley Path and that development work continued.
- With the encouragement of more people walking in the countryside, concern was raised that shared footpaths were being locked and which presented legal issues. It was asked if there was a timescale to resolve the issues? The Executive Board Member for Environment stated that this matter was being managed by the Public Rights of Way department who in the first instance work to resolve matters with respective landowners prior to issuing enforcement notices. The Head of Highways added that legal processes were often a lengthy process.
- An observation was raised that the plan included many ideas from behavioural change behaviours to large capital projects which both presented challenges.
- In reference to measure G20 - Consider a Feasibility study for Low Emission Zones, it was asked what would this look like and how would it work? The Pollution and Wellbeing Lead stated that this was currently being considered as part of the Clean Air (Wales) Bill, the consultation on the Bill had now closed and that the summary of response document would be available in September 2021. Therefore, more detail in relation to low emission zones would be available on the publication of the document, however it was important to dedicate a measure to this in order to ensure that this matter was explored.
- Reference was made to measure C11 – ‘Install AQMA signage’ further clarification was sought on what this entailed and would it provide an option to inform the public with information on air quality in real-time. The Pollution and Wellbeing Lead stated that in relation to signage, it was important to exercise caution in terms of the messages to the public to avoid causing unnecessary alarm. It was recognised that individuals with pre-existing health conditions who reside and visit the 3 recognised areas could benefit from receiving such information, however the difficulties lay with data protection and confidentiality. It was identified that in order to overcome some of these barriers and find a solution to present information on air quality to individuals it would be necessary start a dialogue with Public Health Wales and other bodies.

In response to a query raised in relation to lane closures on dual carriageways and the utilisation of the zip merging method in order to cut down idling and shorten queue time, the Head of Highways and Transportation stated that the Traffic Management system utilised on the high-speed roads was designed to protect the workers and the public in terms of safety. Signs to encourage drivers to utilise both lanes were utilised, however it was acknowledged that queues still form.

The Head of Highways and Transportation stated that he would liaise with the Trunk Road team within the Welsh Government to explore the possibility of using zip merging with a view to improve air quality.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:-

- 8.1 the work undertaken in respect of Air Quality in Carmarthenshire be noted;**
- 8.2 the Committees comments be included within the draft Air Quality Delivery plan consultation.**

9. ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22

At its last meeting held on 19th April, 2021, the Committee after considering the content of the plan requested for further information to be included in the actions and measures (Minute 6 refers).

The Committee Members considered a revised Environment Departmental Business Plan 2021/22 in relation to those services falling within its remit as follows:

- Highways and Transport
- Waste and Environmental Services
- Business Improvement

The Executive Board Member for Environment presented the report and explained that in line with the Committees request to undertake further work the whilst the Plan provided a summary of the key actions and measures required to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy it had now included an additional column to reference the measures/outcome to the relevant Council Well-being Objective. The Plan was supported by detailed divisional plans which was subject to regular review.

The following issues/questions were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the fire incident at CWM recycling plant, Nantycaws in April this year, a member of the Committee asked if there was any truth in a rumour that was circulating in relation to the fire damage and that the insurers had refused to pay circa £15.5m as the Council did not have adequate insurance to cover the equipment. The Executive Board Member for Environment, corroborated by the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that this rumour had not been heard of and reassured the Committee that this was fictitious. It was explained that all the equipment at CWM was insured appropriately with no associated causation arising from the incident emphasising that the rumour was invalid.

- In response to a concern regarding levels of dog fouling, the Executive Board Member for Public Protection stated that out of hours patrols are possible and there was a specific rota for out of hour patrols (*on weekends*) and encouraged Committee Members and members of the public to report any incidents and/or irresponsible dog owners to the Council using the online reporting method. Enforcement personnel would be deployed to areas of concern based on the intelligence received e.g. location and time, description of offenders. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services further explained that a team of 8 Enforcement Officers operated throughout Carmarthenshire and therefore intelligence was key in increasing the possibility of capturing offenders.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Environment Departmental Business Plan 2021/22 be received.

10. COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22

At its last meeting held on 19th April, 2021, the Committee requested for further information to be included in the actions and measures (Minute 7 refers).

The Executive Board Member for Public Protection presented the report explaining that the Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2021/22 in relation to public protection had been revised in accordance with the Committees request.

The Committee considered the plan which also contained the Planned Improvements for 2021/22.

An observation was raised that the departmental business plans across the different sectors seemed to differ in their approach and was not consistent. The Head of Homes & Safer Communities stated that he would refer this observation to his colleagues in the Planning and Performance team.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Public Protection elements of the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2021 relevant to the remit of this Scrutiny Committee be received.

11. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22

At its last meeting held on 19th April, 2021, the Committee requested for further information to be included in the actions and measures (Minute 8 refers).

The Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs presented the report and explained that the Chief Executive's Departmental Draft Business Plan 2021/22 relevant to this scrutiny's remit had been revised in accordance with the Committees request.

The extracts from the Chief Executive's Department Business Plan for the ICT & Corporate Policy Division included actions relating to:

- Community Safety
- Net Zero Carbon

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the elements of the Chief Executive's Business Plan 2021/22 relevant to the remit of this Scrutiny Committee be received.

12. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 4th October, 2021 and was afforded the opportunity to request for information to be placed in to the reports.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 4th October, 2021 be noted.

13. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 19 APRIL 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 19th April 2021 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE