
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CRIME AND DISORDER), 19 JANUARY 2023

Present:

COUNCILLORS: Elin Hywel (Chair)

Elwyn Edwards, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Annwen Hughes, Gwilym Jones, Linda Morgan, Edgar Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Elfed Powell Roberts, Peter Thomas and Gruffydd Williams.

Officers in attendance:

Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Ellie Evans (Democracy Services Administrative Assistant).

Present for item 5:

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being), Mannon Trappe (Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager) and Gwen Ffion Davies (Senior Operational Officer, Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership).

Present for item 6:

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader) and Sandra Lynne Thomas (Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager).

Present for item 7:

Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones (Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal Department and Gwynedd Consultancy) and Steffan Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department).

Present for item 8:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member for the Environment), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department) and Roland Thomas (Assistant Head of Environment Department).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Kim Jones, Robert Glyn Daniels, Stephen Churchman, Beca Roberts and Rob Triggs.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 27 October 2022 as a true record.

5. ANNUAL UPDATE BY THE (GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY) COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

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The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager and the Senior Operational Officer, Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was noted that this report detailed the 2021-22 period.
- It was explained that the partnership had been established in line with Local Authorities' statutory duty to work in partnership with the police, Health Service, Probation Service and the Fire and Rescue Service in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Police and Criminal Justice Acts 2002 and 2006.
- It was explained that the partnership was looking at crime and disorder, substance misuse and reducing reoffending.
- It was explained that the partnership's priorities for the 2023-24 year was to prevent crimes and anti-social behaviour, tackling violent crime and serious organised crime, and safeguarding and building resilient communities and maintaining public safety.
- It was stated that the partnership had faced challenges over the past year. Specifically, the partnership had lost all of its grants as they had come to an end or had moved to a regional level (whole of North Wales). In addition, technological developments meant that new types of crimes had now reached the Gwynedd and Anglesey area. Although these counties were some of the safest places to live, incidents of Organized Crime Groups and county lines in the area with the partnership being aware of them.
- It was elaborated that shoplifting had increased 53.8% in Gwynedd, compared with 2021/22. It was believed that this derived from the general increase in living costs and it was expected for these types of crimes to increase in the coming months.
- A summary was provided of the partnership's work over the past year:
 - Training sessions were held by the Police's Economic Crimes Unit for Local Authority staff who worked with vulnerable people to draw attention to scams used by fraudsters.
 - The Safer Streets 2 project was completed in Bangor, with the installation of 42 additional CCTV cameras and more lights in the Hirael/Deiniol area of the city.
 - A SOC Group had been introduced for Gwynedd and Anglesey.
 - The regional group had been attended regularly to develop the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy in both Councils.
 - The Violence Against Women and Girls group was established in March. The partnership attended meetings regularly to provide input into the work of fostering confidence between women and the police.
 - A Regional Prevent Delivery Group was developed.
 - Cyngor Gwynedd received a White Ribbon Accreditation following the work of the Corporate Support Department.
 - The police were consulted to investigate the possibility of extending the current Safe Spaces Scheme provision.
- It was confirmed that all of these projects would continue to run over the next year and the partnership was going to continue to support all regional meetings and projects. The partnership was aware of the cost-of-living crisis which was affecting the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey and was looking to see how the partnership could reduce theft and shoplifting levels in the next period.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

Additional information was requested on re-offending and how the partnership was attempting to reduce this.

- In response to the enquiry, the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership's Senior Operational Officer confirmed that crime figures were provided by the police. It was noted that the police were comparing figures from the previous year with the current year. It was confirmed that good collaboration was happening between the partnership and the police to see what the priorities were for the year to come. Should there be an increase in re-offending, the partnership would deal with this by means of projects in order to deal with the needs of the police and the public. Unfortunately, it was not possible to gauge from the figures whether or not these were re-offences at this point in time.

In response to a member's questions, the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager noted that the Fire and Rescue Service was involved in creating the plan and were contributing to meetings.

A request was made for further information regarding the questionnaire drawn up in order to set the foundation to develop the partnership's plan.

- In response to the enquiry, the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager noted that the members of the partnership met face-to-face in pre Covid-19 times to discuss the plan. She explained that this was now done in the form of a simple questionnaire which sought a priority from all members of the partnership. She elaborated that the partnership would discuss the members' priorities in order to develop the plan for the following year. This had been a successful process during the lockdown period and therefore the partnership had continued to use it. It was felt that the questionnaire allowed members to provide more information than the former procedure since members had more time to consider their priorities.

A discussion was held on the future funding of the partnership since grants had been removed from Gwynedd and Anglesey and were now being controlled by the North Wales Region. A member asked whether there was a risk that the money that could be used in Gwynedd and Anglesey was likely to be used in the more urban areas of the region.

- In response to the enquiry, the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership's Senior Operational Officer confirmed that there was no risk for Gwynedd and Anglesey to lose the budget completely. She elaborated that a section of the budget had been earmarked for Gwynedd and Anglesey and that Gwynedd and Anglesey could apply to the region for funding. She noted that the collaboration between the partnership and the region was very close.

It was considered how the partnership was dealing with the cost-of-living crisis from the perspective of domestic cases that were not crimes, since these had increased by 18.9% from the previous year.

- In response to the enquiry, the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager noted that this would be a major factor for the 2023/24 plan. It was not a factor for 2022/23 since the cost-of-living crisis had not started. She explained that the partnership would work closely with the third sector to provide financial support.

The partnership was praised for the Radicalisation Reduction Fund. It was believed that it was a major problem for the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey, particularly the young people in the areas. Enquiries were made as to whether work was being done to collaborate with schools to tackle the problem.

- In response to the enquiry, the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager noted that the police were leading on this via their Anti-terrorism Unit. She explained that they were learning about different skills to

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ensure that people were being safe on-line. Unfortunately, it was not possible to see how successful these sessions were as it was a new project. It was hoped to obtain measures in the future in order to be able to see whether the radicalisation figures had reduced.

The Chair asked whether it would be possible to obtain this information when it was available to the partnership.

Members gave thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, noting the observations and supporting the priorities and direction of the work to the future.

6. SCRUTINISING THE DRAFT WELL-BEING PLAN

The report was submitted by the Council Leader and the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was explained that the Well-being Plan would be published in May, with the consultation being held until 6 March 2023.
- It was elaborated that the work to carry out the draft Well-being Plan had been developed over the past 18 months. Workshops had been held over the summer with board members in order to learn lessons from the previous well-being plan and set criteria in order to agree on new objectives. It was noted that the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board was eager to ensure that they added value by working together without duplicating work that would be carried out in any case.
- It was confirmed that the Public Services Board had drawn up three Well-being Objectives for the 2023-2028 period. These were fields where the Board believed that it was possible for the members to collaborate better to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people of Gwynedd and Anglesey. The draft objectives were:
 - We want to work together to mitigate the impact of poverty on the well-being of our communities.
 - We want to work together to prioritise the well-being and success of our children and young people.
 - We want to work together to support our communities to shift towards Zero Net Carbon.
- It was emphasised that the Welsh language was a golden thread that would be promoted in every field in the Board's plan.
- It was explained that the Board was continuing to consult by sharing the Draft Well-being Plan with town and community councils, the third sector, older people forums, looked after children and students at colleges and sixth forms.
- It was confirmed that the Board would adapt the draft well-being plan after a consultation period if needed before it would be submitted to the Full Council and published in May.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. Members were reminded that the Committee was a statutory consultee. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

Concern was shared about protecting the Welsh language in the Plan, particularly following the results of the recent Census. It was noted that although the report noted that the language was a golden thread, it had not been included as a specific objective in the new Plan. It was asked whether the Board was considering changing one of the objectives to include the Welsh language or adding an additional objective.

In response to the above comments:

- the Programme Manager - Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board ensured that the language was embedded in all of the Board's work. The language had not been noted as an objective since all members of the Board were operating through the medium of Welsh already and therefore it was not a new target. It was noted that the Board would consider amending the plan in order to highlight the status of Welsh within the Plan.
- the Council Leader noted that the language sub-group was also working hard to ensure that the Welsh language was used by all members of the Board.

It was considered how the objectives would be funded and how likely it was that residents would succeed to follow them during the cost-of-living crisis.

- In response to these observations, the Council Leader confirmed that funding projects such as the Well-being Plan was very challenging. Since the UK Government was managing a lot of the funding, it would affect this. Nevertheless, the Board was seeking to come together to resolve the problems of the impacts of poverty in order to recover the situation.

Reference was made to well-being objective 2 and it was asked how partners were identified. In response, the Programme Manager - Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board noted that discussions had been held with the Youth Service and consideration was given to amending the Board's membership after adopting the well-being objectives.

It was asked how the Board was hoping to aim towards carbon net zero, and the impact that this would have within the rural areas of Gwynedd and Anglesey.

In response to the query:

- the Council Leader noted that it was very important to attempt to reach carbon net zero. He emphasised that every local authority had a responsibility to reach for this goal. It was hoped that every partner within the Board would commit to reduce their carbon footprint and promote and facilitate the aspiration of reaching carbon net zero. It was not possible to share specific plans at present until the Board was able to share ideas in terms of what could work and what systems did not work as effectively.
- The Programme Manager - Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board confirmed that it was possible to assess whether the partners were managing to commit to reaching carbon net zero by setting measures. She explained that the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board was collaborating with similar boards nationally in an attempt to identify an effective method of measuring this.

RESOLVED

- (i) To accept the report.**
- (ii) To ask the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board to ensure protection for the Welsh language in the Well-being Plan.**
- (iii) That the Committee supports the well-being objective 'We will work together to alleviate the effect of poverty on our communities' well-being' as it is essential.**
- (iv) That we need to ensure that our children and young people are given every fairness.**

7. GRASS CUTTING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy and the Head of Highways and Municipal Services. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

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- It was explained that the report was an update to the proposed grass cutting arrangements submitted to the Committee in January 2022.
- It was reported that grass cutting and collecting trials were in the process of being held in order to promote the needs of wildlife and biodiversity. It was elaborated that the work of seeding the areas in the trials had been completed in October and that it would be possible to see whether they had been successful or not from April 2023 onwards.
- It was stated that the trials had been funded through grant receipts. The Council had managed to purchase grass cutting and collecting machines with this money and they could be used in the future.
- It was confirmed that the trials would be promoted at the Council's stall at the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod 2023 in Boduan. It was shared that visitors to the eisteddfod were likely to pass by the trial areas and it was hoped that the wild-flowers would have grown by then so that they could notice the difference. It was hoped to share a positive message about the trials to the public and that the new system would save money.
- It was emphasised that health and safety was a very important consideration within the trial and it would not consider adding any area to the trials if it would have a negative impact on health and safety.
- The Environment Department was thanked for working so closely with the Highways and Municipal Department on these trials.
- It was expressed that a new contract with the grass cutting service was currently being developed for the next growing season. It was confirmed that it could be amended after the outcome of the trials was known, when the new policy would have been developed.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

It was asked whether problems were likely to derive from the fact that the policy would not be ready before the contract was in place.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Highways and Municipal Department noted that this would not be a problem since the provision was included within the contracts in order to allow for such changes.

It was noted that the Committee had considered a report on this matter at the meeting on 13 January 2022. There was a query regarding the timetable in terms of adopting a new policy. In response to the query, the Head of Highways and Municipal Department noted that the policy had not been developed to date since full seasons were required for the trials. He explained that preparations for the trials had been carried out at the end of the last growing season. He confirmed that it was important for the department to assess how the trials were progressing before a policy was created. He noted, as a result, that it was possible to develop the policy by the end of September/October 2023.

Following the response, it was considered to invite the Department back to a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee around December 2023.

It was asked whether there would be difficulties for the work in the future should further grant funding not be available.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Highways and Municipal Department noted that the grant was only one payment and the Council had managed to purchase machines to cut and collect grass with that money. He explained that the work could continue in the future because the machines continued to be in the Council's possession.

Members gave thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

- (i) **To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- (ii) **To ask the Department to present the results of the trials and the new grass-cutting policy to the Committee when timely.**

8. AN OUTLINE OF THE WASTE AND RECYCLING REVIEW WORK PROGRAMME

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, the Head of Environment Department and the Assistant Head of Environment Department. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was confirmed that the waste and recycling collection service had been transferred to the Environment Department since October 2022. The Head of Department had been learning more about the service and becoming familiar with the work by going on routes with some of the workforce.
- It was explained that the service's workforce was very committed since they were providing a weekly service to around 63,400 dwellings across the county.
- It was stated that the recycling percentages of Wales were very good in comparison with other countries. It was explained that a target had been set by Welsh Government to recycle 70% of all domestic waste by 2025. It was a challenge for every local authority.
- Gratitude was expressed to the Highways and Municipal Department for the development of systems to ensure that the Gwynedd domestic recycling percentage was static at around 64%. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that there was a need to do something major in order to meet the target of 70% by 2025. He noted that it was not possible to reach this by making minor changes to current procedures.
- It was explained that the service's working arrangements had changed from 12-hour shifts (three days on, three days off), to be working the same hours over 5 days a week. This was challenging over the Covid-19 period but now the workforce had adapted to this and was working on the Task and Finish baseline. It was hoped that this would lead to savings within the service, but unfortunately the costs were more than anticipated. The department would revisit this arrangement to assess whether this optimised the service to its full potential.
- It was reported that waste collection costed £232 per dwelling. It was explained that this was the second highest amount in Wales.
It was considered that this was because Gwynedd was a very vast county. Nevertheless, the service's performance was very good in terms of the recycling percentage.
- It was confirmed that there was a substantial overspend in the field of waste collection and treatment. Due to the physical nature of the work, staff sickness levels were high. It was acknowledged that this level was higher than some of the other authorities in Wales. This meant that some members of the workforce had to work additional hours. It was assumed that the overspend figures would be around £1.4 million this year on a budget of around £5 million.
- It was emphasised that workforce health and safety was central to the service. The Council did not have an obvious waste and recycling strategy. The department was hoping to develop this in the future to ensure that staff health and safety was protected.
- It was noted that the department received regular complaints that recycling boxes and bins had been damaged and that waste was blowing along the road as it had not been collected. It was assumed that this was an impact of staff sickness and the department was reassessing how to deliver the service in the most effective way. The Government was hopeful that local authorities would be able to sort waste on the kerbside.

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- It was stated that the department was attempting to receive new technological systems to monitor the service in a timely way and to evaluate the service's performance. It was also hoped to develop a Portal so that people could see the reason why the waste had not been collected and when the next collection would be.
- It was confirmed that there were many contracts with providers so that the service could be maintained. It was reported that the department was eager to strengthen those contracts to reduce costs and improve the quality of the service.
- It was explained that the department had received support from WRAP Cymru to look at how the department could improve the service, in order to make it as simple and effective as possible.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

It was asked whether a system existed where the Councillors received a message when waste had not been collected in order to share the information with the residents of their ward.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department noted that such a system was not in place at this time. The department hoped that such a system would be developed after looking at the workforce figures and receiving data to feed into the system.

A member suggested that the possibility of using the existing system of the Clean and Tidy Communities Team should be considered for members. It was noted in the meantime that steps should be taken to contact local members.

It was discussed that the department had altered routes so that the same staff members worked on the same routes. It was believed that this had been effective and it was considered whether the standard of the service was consistent through the county following the change.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department confirmed that the quality of the service being provided by the service was very good across the county. However, the department was seeking to change which routes the workers completed from time to time in order to avoid boredom and staff sickness. This meant that some difficulties arose when changing a route as different considerations needed to be kept in mind for different routes and therefore problems could arise from time to time.

In response to a question from a member in the context of income deriving from recycling materials, the Head of Environment Department provided assurance that recycling materials were processed responsibly. He explained that the income received for the materials was good but could be maximised if the materials were cleaner.

It was asked whether the department had a stock of recycling materials and how residents could enquire for new materials should anything happen to their boxes or bins.

- In response to the query, the Head of Environment Department noted that the department had a stock of recycling bins and boxes on a site near Clynog Fawr. He explained that the first step would be to attempt to repair the recycling boxes, carts and bins, before issuing new materials to residents, in the hope of saving costs.

Attention was given to residents living in populated areas of the county, or in estates and flats and considering whether individuals should be more considerate of what they did with their waste in order to ensure that they did not blow away. Consideration was also given to whether the department would consider issuing large green bins in such situations, with keys supplied to those who used them. In response to the query:

- the Head of Environment Department confirmed that it would be excellent if everyone could handle their recycling equipment with care - such as ensuring that the lids were

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placed correctly on the containers. Nevertheless, this would be effective in all areas of the county, and not just in the most populated areas. It was confirmed that the plastic on the equipment was very hard and it was acknowledged that the boxes broke easily.

- the Assistant Head of Environment Department agreed that issuing large bins was a good option for some buildings and communities. However, unfortunately, the department's existing lorries could not pick up those types of bins and so they could not be emptied.

The recycling percentages figures of Gwynedd were compared with Ceredigion and Powys and it was considered how these counties were managing to recycle high percentages of waste. In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department noted:

- one factor that was likely to impact Gwynedd's recycling percentages was that people did not necessarily place the recycling materials in the correct box or placed them in the green bin instead of recycling them. It was assumed that the other counties collected all recycling items in one bag and then staff and equipment sorted them. This is why the Department supported the idea of sorting recycling waste on the kerbside.
- the department encouraged anyone to contact them with complaints in order to obtain an understanding of the difficulties facing people and being able to develop resolutions. It was hoped that a number of complaints reduced in time as fewer problems arose within the service.
- Pembrokeshire had a fun and very innovative attitude towards the service and it was assumed that this led to more items being recycled. It was a similar county to Gwynedd but it was smaller. It was also noted that the service's workforce in Pembrokeshire had a close relationship with the staff of the county's offices, which encouraged good performance at work. A relationship like this was something that the department hoped to nurture here in Gwynedd.

It was discussed whether the Department had considered obtaining large community bins in order to collect recyclable waste in some areas.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department noted that bins like these had been effective in some communities in the past. However, the department would have to consider the public's attitude towards them before installing new bins since they were a very easy item to damage or misuse, creating additional costs to the department.

The fact that staff sickness rates were high was detailed, and it was asked how the department was supporting its workforce.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department noted that the health and safety of staff was central to the service. Staff circumstances were being monitored as soon as possible to ensure that nobody hurt themselves at work. He elaborated that the department was arranging training for the workforce on a regular basis to ensure that rules and good practice were followed.

In response to a member's question in the context of the workforce's view on the working method, the Head of Environment Department noted that the workforce was eager to discuss the work pattern. It was explained that initial discussions in terms of sickness issues and costs had been held with the unions and it was intended to visit the workforce with union officers.

It was enquired whether the department had any guidance regarding when the work programme would be ready. They were asked to return to the Scrutiny Committee when it was ready.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Environment Department noted that the Council's current cuts had affected the department's ability to develop a work plan at present. As the financial situation emerged, the department could work on its work programme. It

was suggested that some elements of the work programme could be presented before this committee so that members could consider them.

Members gave thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.

9. COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2022/23

The report was presented by the Scrutiny Advisor and she briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was reported that the Chair and Vice-chair attended regular meetings with the relevant Cabinet Members and Heads of Department. At a recent meeting with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy, reference was made to the 'Local Flooding Strategy' item that had been scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 27 October 2022. The Head of Department and Cabinet Member were very eager for the committee to scrutinise the 'Flooding Risk Assessment' at the scrutiny committee in March since it was timely in the development of the Local Flooding Strategy.
- The members were asked to approve this amendment to the work programme.

RESOLVED

To adopt the amended work programme for 2022/23.

10. PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETINGS

The report was presented by the Scrutiny Advisor and she briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was reported that one performance challenge meeting was held for the Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) work fields following the transfer of YGC to the Highways and Municipal Department.
- Members were reminded that there was an empty seat to represent the Communities Scrutiny Committee at the Environment performance challenge meeting.
- It was confirmed during the informal meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2022 that the four existing representatives were given the opportunity to declare an interest. After responses were received, it was recommended:
 - That Councillor Llio Elenid Owen filled the empty seat on the Environment Performance Challenge meeting.
 - Councillors Stephen Churchman and Rob Triggs would represent the committee at the Highways and Gwynedd Consultancy performance challenge meetings, with Councillor Arwyn Herald Roberts acting as a reserve member.

RESOLVED

To elect Councillors Rhys Tudur and Llio Elenid Owen to attend performance challenge meetings for the Environment area of work.

To elect Councillors Stephen Churchman and Rob Triggs to attend performance challenge meetings for the Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy area of work, with Councillor Arwyn Herald Roberts as reserve.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 and concluded at 13:15.

CHAIR