



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.00 am, THURSDAY, 21ST MAY, 2015

Location

**Siambwr Hywel Dda, Council Offices,
Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1SH**

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(DISTRIBUTED Wednesday, 13 May 2015)

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (8)

Councillors

Craig ab Iago
Dilwyn Morgan
Eurig Wyn

Annwen Daniels
W. Tudor Owen
Linda Morgan

Annwen Hughes
E. Caerwyn Roberts

Independent (4)

Councillors

Eric M. Jones
Angela Russell

Nigel Pickavance
Mike Stevens

Llais Gwynedd (3)

Councillors

Llywarch Bowen Jones
Gruffydd Williams

Robert J. Wright

Labour (1)

Councillor Gwynfor Edwards

Liberal Democrats (1)

Councillor Stephen W. Churchman

Individual Member (1)

Councillor Louise Hughes

Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council

Other Invited Members

John Wynn Jones
Dafydd Meurig
W. Roy Owen

Cabinet Member for the Environment
Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory
North Wales Fire and Rescue Board Representative

AGENDA

1. **CHAIR**

To elect a Chairman for 2015/16

2. **VICE CHAIR**

To elect a Vice-chairman for 2015/16

3. **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

6. **MINUTES**

1 - 6

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee, held on 24th of February, 2015, be signed as a true record.

7. **EFFICIENCY SAVINGS 2015/16 - 2017/18**

7 - 8

Cabinet Member – Councillor John Wynn Jones

Consider the report of the Head of Highways and Municipal Department

8. **ON-STREET ENFORCEMENT**

9 - 10

Cabinet Member – Councillor John Wynn Jones

Consider the report of the Head of Highways and Municipal Department

9. **FOOD HYGIENE**

11 - 14

Cabinet Member – Councillor Dafydd Meurig

Consider the report of the Head of Regulatory Department

10. THE PLANNING SYSTEM - SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION BRIEF 15 - 16

Cabinet Member – Councillor Dafydd Meurig

- a) Present a scoping summary for a Scrutiny Investigation
- b) Nomination of members to serve on the Scrutiny Investigation

11. ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY 17 - 20

Consider the report of the Head of Corporate Support Department

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 24.02.15

1. PRESENT - Councillor Angela Russell (Chair)

Councillors:- Stephen Churchman, Annwen Daniels, Annwen Hughes, Louise Hughes, Eric M Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, W Tudor Owen, Caerwyn Roberts, Mike Stevens, Gruffydd Williams, Robert J Wright.

OFFICERS: Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager - Corporate Commissioning Service) and Lowri Haf Evans (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

ALSO PRESENT:

- i) In relation to item 6 on the agenda - Catherine Roberts (Delivery Manager - Community Safety) and Inspector Mark Armstrong (North Wales Police)
- ii) In relationship to item 7 on the agenda - Councillor Dafydd Meurig - Cabinet Member for Planning, Councillor Jason Humphreys (Local Member - Porthmadog East), Mr Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department) and Mr Iwan Evans (Legal Service Manager)
- iii) In relation to item 8 on the agenda - Councillor John Wynn Jones - Cabinet Member for the Environment, Mr Gwyn Morris Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department) and Mr Steffan Jones (Senior Waste and Commissioning Manager)
- iv) In relation to item 9 on the agenda - Councillor Mair Rowlands - Cabinet Member for Leisure and Mr Ian Jones (Senior Development Manager - Economy and Community)

APOLOGIES:

An apology had been received from Councillor Llywarch Bowen Jones. Councillor Annwen Davies was welcomed to her first meeting of this committee.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Caerwyn Roberts as Vice-chair of this Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

4. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 2 December 2014, were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

6. ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Catherine Roberts (Delivery Manager – Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety) and Inspector Mark Armstrong (North Wales Police) were welcomed to the meeting.

- a.) An update was provided on the work of the Community Safety Partnership. It was explained that the Partnership was required to formally report to the Committee on an annual basis providing an overview of the Partnership's main strategic developments over the year. This ensured that the Partnership delivered its obligations in accordance with sections of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2006.
- b.) In response to observations that had been directed towards the Partnership following a preparatory meeting of the committee, an information sheet and specific details of the main crime areas in Gwynedd were distributed. It was noted that the police was concentrating on the locations where the most crimes occurred. In situations of re-offending, it was expressed that the Integrated Offending Management Scheme provided support for individuals to change their way of life.
- c.) In response to concern regarding the increase in sexual offences, it was noted that specific work was being undertaken to encourage people to report such crimes. In light of specific media attention to cases amongst famous people of the TV world, it appeared that this had encouraged others to come forward. It was highlighted that changes to the reporting method had been implemented over the last decade and in response to the increase it was reported that the Chief Inspector for North Wales was arranging a summit conference to consider specific investigations and the sharing of information.
- ch.) A request was made to report on criminal damage and arson offences as two separate matters. The observation was accepted.
- d.) In response to a question regarding charging for shopping bags, it was expressed that there was no evidence that this caused more theft in shops. The fact that close work was being undertaken with supermarkets was reiterated, and in light of the changes to benefits, it was noted that stealing food had not increased.
- dd.) It was accepted that the financial climate affected the police's work and the fact that the cuts had been difficult was acknowledged. However, it was reported that the situation had improved by now and that good collaboration was being developed with Partners. It was also reported that an increase in the use of information technology by the service ensured that the police were in the right place at the right time. It was highlighted that the police were collaborating with communities to aim to stop antisocial behaviour in villages and towns, and as a result of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the police were given more authority to deal with such matters in order to resolve them. It was suggested that it should be made more prominent to communities, and that there was a way to anonymously report crimes to the police, however acknowledging that this sometimes made taking a case to court more difficult.
- e.) In response to a question regarding Cyber Crime, it was noted that this crime fell into the category of harassment without violence. It appeared that this type of crime was increasing on a national level, but that there was currently no evidence of an increase in Gwynedd. However, it was a matter that the Police were planning for. Information on online safety was being distributed.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

7. LLYN BACH CAR PARK, PORTHMADOG - call-in request

- a.) It was reported that a request had been made by three Committee members to call-in a decision made by the Cabinet Member on Llyn Bach Car Park, Porthmadog. Committee members were reminded of the procedure and of their right to call in decisions made by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members which had not yet been implemented, to be reconsidered. It was expressed that the decision was being called in on the grounds that;
- Adequate consideration had not been given to the fact that the Railway Company could use Westminster statutes to use the land for purposes contrary to the Council's environmental and regeneration policies.
 - There had been insufficient local consultation.
- b.) A report was submitted by the Head of the Regulatory Department setting the context, by explaining that the decision had been to authorise the exchange of land through an agreement with Ffestiniog Railway Company to give grounds to agree upon a practical work programme to facilitate the effective management of the site. It was explained that discussions between the Council and the Railway Company had been going on for years, and that the Head of the Regulatory Department had reviewed the matter and had come to the conclusion that the matter had dragged on for too long. The Head of Department's main conclusion was that focus needed to be placed on the relevant matters and a solution sought before the matter reached the point of having to be referred to a land tribunal, as that would likely result in an unsatisfactory outcome and significant costs for the Council.
- c.) In terms of local consultation, it was reported that such land exchange matters were not the subject of broad consultation, and in the context of re-locating a recycling site that was on the car park, it was acknowledged that not enough notification and forewarning had been undertaken with the Local Member, the Town Council or the public.
- ch.) The Solicitor highlighted that the Cabinet Member had made a practical decision to solve land ownership.
- d.) The Local Member's Observations:
- That decisions outside the matter's context had clouded what had been noted.
 - Concern that the Railway Company intended to develop a depositary on the land and not only a car park. It needed to be ensured that conditions were imposed on the land to withstand applications for developments on the land in the future.
 - That the site was unsuitable as a thoroughfare for transporting heavy goods between the road and the railway, which was contrary to some principles noted in the Unitary Development Plan.
 - The land was near social housing which was a shelter for the elderly and vulnerable adults.
 - That insufficient consultation had been undertaken with Heol Madog residents and also the need to consider the effect of this on the Hen Felin development.
 - Concern that the decision had been made abruptly.
- dd.) In response to the above observations, it was noted that the Railway Company did not intend to make any developments on the site, but if an application was submitted, the planning procedure would have to be followed which as a result would adhere to appropriate policies and give consideration to the amenities of neighbouring residents. It was added that the Regulatory Department were keeping an eye on the site in terms of the operational elements. If an activity did not comply with the agreement, the department would have to investigate. It was noted that this message had been clearly highlighted to the Company.
- e.) Matters arising from the subsequent discussion:

- Establishing a depository would reflect an industrial site rather than what already existed on the land
 - Concerns needed to be re-directed and re-consultation was essential to identify what the risks and benefits were for local residents
 - Engagement and sharing information with the community and the local member before implementation in order to ensure that the community was happy with the decision
 - That every option was considered
 - Lessons needed to be learned by ensuring that improved engagement and consultation existed with local residents - the matter of a lack of engagement arose too often.
 - There was a need to consider legal conditions and considerations for the use of the land in future
 - The railway's powers needed to be considered.
- f.) In response to the observations, it was noted that any further consultation would have to add value, and given that legal opinion had already been noted it was clear that only a land ownership solution had been decided here.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the concerns of the local members and to request that the Cabinet Member delays implementation for the time being, so that the local member and the officers have an opportunity to engage with the community and consider any other options for the development.

8. WASTE STRATEGY: CHANGE TO RESIDUAL WASTE COLLECTION

- a.) Councillor John Wynn Jones highlighted that this was his first meeting as the Cabinet Member for the Environment, and the good work that his predecessor, Councillor Gareth Roberts had undertaken was acknowledged.
- b.) A report was submitted by the Head of Highways and Municipal Department reporting on the main findings (up to now) of implementing the residual waste collection procedure in the Dwyfor Area and whether there was any impact on the citizen in Dwyfor as a result of implementing these changes.
- c.) On 20 October 2014, the new procedure of waste collection every three weeks was commenced. It appeared that the change had been introduced fairly easily, and it was clear from the beginning that Dwyfor residents were ready for the change and understood the arrangements. It was reported that an Operational Team and an Engagement Team had been established to introduce the changes. A Recycling Officer was based in Galw Gwynedd, Penrhyndeudraeth to receive enquiries over the period.
- ch.) Following a review of the participation of Dwyfor residents to the change by WRAP, an increase of 6.4% of recycling waste and 6.3% of food waste was reported (a sample of 1131 houses). It also appeared that the initial figures in terms of the impact on recycling performance in the Dwyfor Area also reported on a significant increase in recycling food and residual waste. As a result, it was reported that this change in Dwyfor alone had significantly contributed to the increase in Gwynedd Council's recycling performance from 54% in March 2014 to 57% for the entire County at the end of November 2014. (It must reach 58% by the end of March 2016). As well as this, with a reduction of 22% in residual waste from 15000 houses in Dwyfor, this in itself would save over £100,000 for the Council in landfill costs over a year.

d.) Two short videos that had been broadcast through Youtube during the campaign were shown - one to share information about the changes and the second to thank the people of Dwyfor for their support.

dd.) The following improvements were suggested;

- Introduce the recycling cart before implementing the change to the collections if possible
- Review Christmas and Boxing Day arrangements
- Highlight a message of thanks through the calendar - sharing positive messages was effective (not only online).

e.) As well as this, it was noted that further attention was needed for;

- The process of introducing recycling bins in public places
- Improving training for employees to ensure further care - this was core to the process
- Pressurising companies who created waste - needed to push this on the Welsh Government to encourage fewer packaging materials
- Encouraging residents to recycle in flats
- Highlighting colours better on the calendar and reminding people through text was suggested.

RESOLVED

- a.) **To express the Committee's congratulations to the Department and the people of Dwyfor on the success that has been seen through introducing the new arrangements**
- b.) **To welcome the fields that the Department intended to improve - introduce a recycling cart sooner, if possible, adapt the Christmas and Boxing Day arrangements and highlight messages of thanks to the people of Dwyfor**
- c.) **To suggest further improvements through training the workforce to improve tidiness; encourage moving on to develop recycling in bins on the street as well as commercial waste; eager to see creative ideas being developed for situations in flats, community / rural points and the summer holidays.**
- ch.) **To ask the Cabinet Member to write to the Welsh Government regarding the Committee's viewpoint on packaging.**
- d.) **To invite the Cabinet Member back to report on implementing changes to residual waste collection in Meirionnydd and to report whether the improvements and savings have been realised**

9.) LEISURE CENTRES - UPDATE ON LEISURE REVIEW BY JUST SOLUTIONS.

Councillor Mair Rowlands was welcomed to her first Scrutiny Committee as the Cabinet Member for Leisure.

- a.) A report was submitted by the Head of the Economy and Community Department on the progress that had been made following the completion of a report on the profile of users of Leisure Centres as well as the recommendations of the strategic review of Gwynedd Leisure Centres by '*Just Solutions*'. The main purpose of the review was to recommend to the Council how suitable, effective and sustainable leisure centres could be developed for the future by establishing a logical and purposeful basis for them.
- b.) Following the results of the strategic report a series of efficiency savings proposals had been formed for the Leisure Service. By now, efficiency savings proposals worth £1.05 million had been incorporated as part of the Council's Financial Strategy for 2014/2015 - 2017/2018. It was reported that the work involving realising the saving of £1.05m was being promoted and reviewed by the Leisure Services Transformation Project Board and reported on the progress to the appropriate Delivery Panel.

- c.) In response to an observation regarding raising fees it was noted that Gwynedd's fees were amongst the lowest in Wales, and it appeared as though location and transportation to the centre were the main factors that prevented people from using them. In terms of visits, Gwynedd appeared to be 2nd through Wales. It was also noted that not one Leisure Centre was self-sufficient through Gwynedd with a range of between 41% and 80% on the scale of costs being re-claimed.
- ch.) It was reported that the Welsh Government were cutting the free swimming grant by 40% and therefore it would be essential to campaign to use this money in a more creative manner. It was reported that a new scheme was being introduced, but an observation was made that it was necessary to promote the resource and to give an opportunity to each child including the right for parents to swim for free if a child under 8 years old was present.
- d.) It was agreed that there was potential here to improve and develop centres. Good opportunities had been identified by the department along with a readiness to collaborate with communities. It was emphasised that there was no intention to transfer any centre to the Private Sector, and that the Treborth Track and the Arfon Centre in Bangor were being considered as possible transfers back to their owners.
- dd.) The Cabinet Member outlined that there was no intention to close any Leisure Centres but rather to offer improved models. It was noted that every Leisure Centre Manager was reviewing business plans to make the Centres more attractive and considering different types of activities, bearing in mind that every centre cannot offer everything. Within every area mature discussions would be held with the local members, Stakeholders and Community Councils regarding the development of the local centre - discussions in Barmouth had already begun. It was noted that if services were offered to the public, they must be open to the public and flexible opening hours must be set as there had been complexity in some centres regarding what was available and when.

RESOLVED to accept the report and look forward to collaborating locally with the Leisure Centres' business plans

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 1.20pm

COMMITTEE	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	21 May, 2015
TITLE	Efficiency Savings 2015/16 – 2017/18
PURPOSE	To report on the scheme relevant to the Highways and Municipal Department which has been referred to the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.
CABINET MEMBER	Coun. John Wyn Jones

1. Background

- 1.1 The Cabinet in its meeting of 16 December, 2014 recommended that a Highways and Municipal Department efficiency saving scheme was to receive further consideration by the Scrutiny Committee i.e.

PB24 New Procedure for Replacing Lamps: 'the Communities Scrutiny Committee is to compare the proposal with current arrangements (bulk change) to ensure we are making the right decision. Bulk Change arrangements were put in place to save money'.

- 1.2 This Report is for that purpose. This Committee's recommendations on the scheme being considered will be referred to the Cabinet and in order for it to make a final decision on the schemes.

2. PB24. New Procedure for Replacing Lamps £97k (2015/16)

- 2.1 Currently, the Council replaces lamps in its street lighting every 3 years. This arrangement is known as 'bulk lamp changing' and involves the replacement of all lamps in a street or particular area in one visit. This is despite some lamps not appearing in need of replacement.

- 2.2 Bulk Lamp Changing was introduced in order to:

- avoid having a reduction in lighting standards after 3 years (since these lamps were designed with an operational life of 3 years).
- have a more efficient and effective maintenance programme where there is no need to re-visit a street or area.
- have consistent levels of lighting upon renewal.

- 2.3 There have been significant developments in lighting technology recently and whereby the effective and operational life of lamps has increased by several years. This has negated the need for bulk lamp changing.

- 2.4 The operational life of LED lanterns is between 7 and 10 years and this can be further extended with the introduction of control switchgear e.g. that allows for dimming. With this type of technology it is neither effective nor practical to operate a bulk lamp changing regime.
- 2.5 These are technological developments that enable a change to maintenance requirements:
- LED technology
 - better standard of lanterns are now available with extended operational life span
 - latest switchgear equipment can extend the operational life of the lantern
 - the lantern's lighting levels now remain constant throughout its operational life
 - better lighting standards are now achieved with the latest lanterns.
- 2.6 This Council intends to implement an extensive programme to change its street lighting system to LED to include switchgear to enable dimming (and part night operation where appropriate). This will help in extending the lifespan of the lantern, reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.
- 2.7 As a consequence, it is expected that there is no further need for a bulk lamp change regime at 3 yearly cycles. It is anticipated that adopting a different maintenance regime will ensure annual savings of £97000 to the Council in street lighting maintenance costs.
- 2.8 This is the basis for the PB24. 'New Procedure for Replacing Lamps' Savings Scheme.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked for its comments regarding this efficiency savings scheme and in order to enable the Cabinet to make a more informed and final decision on the schemes.

Agenda Item 8

COMMITTEE	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	21 May, 2015
TITLE	Street enforcement
PURPOSE	Preliminary Report on the intention to carry out a Scrutiny Enquiry on Street Enforcement arrangements
CABINET MEMBER	Coun. John Wyn Jones

1. Background

1.1 Gwynedd Council's Streetscene Service has a net annual budget of £300,150 and has the following staff resource:

Streetscene Manager
2 Enforcement Officers
3 Enforcement Wardens
Administrative Officer
Tidy Towns Officer (Welsh Government grant funding).

1.2 The responsibilities of the Service extends to Awareness Raising and Public Education on Environmental issues, implementing Graffiti, Needle and Lanterns policies; monitoring street cleansing performance and contributing to and leading on relevant initiatives .

1.3 The Streetscene Service is responsible for Street and Waste Enforcement which includes:

- Dog Control, litter, graffiti and fly-posting
- Fly-tipping, waste presentation, trade waste, waste transfer and duty of care.

1.4 Officers of the service are able to issue penalties for environmental crime. These are some recent statistics:

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued during 2014-15	
Total number of FPNs issued	101
Number of FPNs issued by the Street Enforcement Team	100
Number of FPNs issued by other Council Officers/PCSOs	1
Number of warning letters issued	1,480
Number of successful prosecutions	2
Percentage of FPNs paid without further action	81%
Income received	£5,500

2. Scrutiny Enquiry

2.1 The Scrutiny Committee intends to hold a Scrutiny Enquiry on Street Enforcement during 2015/16, and the following are initial suggestions as to what the enquiry will investigate:

- performance in terms of enforcement, outcomes
- level of resources for the task of enforcement
- possibility for others to assist in enforcement e.g. police
- possibility as to the use of specialist companies to issue FPN's (ac currently used by both Conwy and Denbigh Councils).

3. Next Step

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is to establish the team of Committee Members to hold the enquiry in addition to establishing the timescale for carrying out the enquiry.

Agenda Item 9

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	COMMUNITES
DATE OF MEETING	21st MAY 2015
TITLE	Food Standards Agency Focused Audit of Gwynedd Council's arrangements for the enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990: 6th and 7th of March 2014-2nd Update Report.
AUTHOR	Dafydd Williams, Head of Regulatory Department [Interim]
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dafydd Meurig
PURPOSE	To update the Committee on progress made by the Public Protection Service in addressing the findings of the Food Standards Agency focussed audit

1. Background

- 1.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) undertook a focused audit of Gwynedd Council's arrangements for the enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990 on the 6th and 7th of March 2014.
- 1.2 The audit focused on two areas;
 - a) How the Council had implemented the recommendations of the Public Enquiry into the September 2005 outbreak of E. Coli 0157 in South Wales and,
 - b) The management of interventions at new food businesses.
- 1.3 A report was subsequently received from the FSA which included severe criticism of the Council in respect of identified non-conformances with the Public Enquiry recommendations and the Council's arrangements for managing interventions in new food businesses.
- 1.4 Subsequently an Action Plan was prepared detailing how the Service was to correct the non-conformances. The plan was accepted by the FSA and during the autumn of 2014 a Task and Finish Group proceeded to complete the majority of the work required.
- 1.5 A report was submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on the 1st of October 2014 which detailed the progress made up to that time in meeting the Action Plan objectives.

1.6 During the meeting the Committee requested a further update during 2015.

2. Corrective Actions

2.1 The Action Plan detailed 13 areas for improvement. These improvements can be grouped into 6 categories.

- a) A fundamental review of all food procedure notes bar approved premises which have their own specific arrangements.
- b) A fundamental review of the format and content of food inspection forms used by officers inspecting food businesses.
- c) A review of all internal monitoring procedures and determine adequate levels of monitoring.
- d) Provision of training and detailed guidance to the food Unit staff in relation to any changes made to the food procedure notes and inspection forms following completion of the work listed in categories a) and b) above.
- e) Refresher training to officers on the recording of identified breaches in legislation and the provisions detailed in annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice.
- f) Review (adequacy) of training received by all staff delivering official food hygiene controls.

2.2 In the previous report to the Scrutiny Committee (1/10/14) it was explained that the work listed in categories a), b) and c) above would be completed by the 26th of September 2014 and category d) by the end of October.

2.3 Category e) had been completed in July 2014. Reference category f), at the time of the original report to committee it was recognised that the food unit staff had received training which complied with the Food Law Code of Practice requirements.

3. Progress since 2014.

3.1 The Task and Finish Group's work ended in November 2014. The responsibility for continuous performance monitoring and review reverted back to the Public Protection Manager (Food Hygiene).

3.2 At the end of December 2014 the manager who had overseen the work of the Task and Finish Group took responsibility for the Public Protection Service's Food Unit on a permanent basis.

3.3 Since October 2014 the following progress, as detailed under the 6 improvement categories listed above, have been made.

- a) The food procedure notes have been substantially revised and are in use. Staff have been involved in this process with a number of their suggested revisions incorporated in the documents. The FSA offered to scrutinize the notes and provide feedback. We have as yet not received any comments. The service has also invested in document management software called RIAMS. The procedure notes have been transferred to the programme but some review / amendment work remains.
- b) The revised inspection forms are in use and have been amended several times following feedback from staff. The forms will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and changes made as required.
- c) The internal monitoring arrangements have been revised with new performance monitoring programmes introduced and an amended monitoring timetable adopted for both new and established reports.
- d) All members of the food unit have received training in relation to the revised food procedure notes. The training was prioritized in terms of the use of notes which incorporated the most changes to former working practices. Members of the Service support team are to receive training on the new business procedure. This will have been done by the end of May.
- e) Refresher training in relation to recording breaches in legislation and annex 5 requirements has been undertaken. In addition, a peer review exercise whereby officers of the service shadow others whilst undertaking inspections and provide feedback has been implemented as is nearing completion.
- f) The training which the food unit staff had received was found to be adequate in October 2014. All members of staff have since received and continue to receive specialist training.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is considered that the Food Unit have now addressed the non-conformances identified by the FSA during their targeted audit in March 2014.
- 4.2 There is a duty on the Council to meet the requirements in relation to the Public Enquiry recommendations and the enforcement of food legislation in new businesses and our recent efforts in this respect should continue. The FSA have reported their intention to undertake a full audit of the Council's Food Unit in the near future.

Agenda Item 10

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21.05.15

PLANNING SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION – DRAFT BRIEF

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is very important that the planning system corresponds with the needs of the County's communities and there is a perception that not enough consideration is given to matters such as the economy when determining planning applications. Consequently, it was decided to undertake a scrutiny investigation on the planning system, considering the Council's planning procedures and their suitability to correspond with the economic needs of the County's communities, in addition to other factors.
- 1.2 It must be noted that this investigation is specifically relevant to the Gwynedd Council Planning Authority Area only, as the Snowdonia National Park Authority is the Planning Authority for the Park area.
- 1.3 The planning system works within a statutory framework and it is believed that there is a need to understand:-
- i) what the relevant statutory requirements are
 - ii) the national and local planning policy framework
 - iii) other material planning considerations and the weight given to those material planning considerations.
- 1.4 Subsequently, it will be possible to look in more detail at how Gwynedd Council operates in terms of determining planning applications and how pre-application advice is given to prospective developers.

2. PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 2.1 The investigation will seek in the first place to establish an understanding of:-
- What are the statutory requirements that are relevant to the planning system?
 - What are the requirements in terms of national and local planning policies?
 - What are the material planning considerations when dealing with planning applications and how much weight is given to the various planning considerations?
 - How much freedom the planning system has within those frameworks
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Investigation will then seek to answer the following main questions:
- How does Gwynedd Council deal with planning applications in terms of order, performance, numbers etc.?

- Is there any firm evidence which suggests that the Council does not give adequate consideration to the economy when preparing planning policies and in determining planning applications?
- Are the arrangements that the Council has in place for offering advice to prospective developers as they work through the planning system smooth and convenient, conveying an image of a system that promotes and develops rather than regulating ?

3. IMPACT

3.1 The Scrutiny Investigation will:

- Form clear recommendations based on evidence to be considered by the Cabinet Member
- Give appropriate consideration to any obstacles and how to resolve them

DRAFT

Agenda Item 11

COMMITTEE	COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE OF THE MEETING	21 MAY, 2015
TITLE	THE NORTH WALES FIRE AUTHORITY
PURPOSE	Scrutinising the Council's arrangements to challenge the effectiveness and accountability of the Fire Authority
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen, Head of Corporate Support

Background and Context

1. The Fire Authority has the right to set a precept on the councils of North Wales in order to pay for the service. This precept counts against the Council's expenditure. This is different to the Police Authority that raises a separate precept.
2. This difference is fundamentally important since any increase in the Fire Authority's precept is part of the Council's deliberations in terms of spending and raising the rates, compared to any increase in the Police expenditure that is passed on directly to the ratepayers through a precept raised on them. In practical terms, that means that every £10,000 increase in the precept from the Fire Authority on Gwynedd Council is £10,000 that the Council must find either by cutting its own services or increasing the rates.
3. Over recent years, this has been the position with the Fire Authority precept as compared to the settlement received by Gwynedd Council in Welsh Government grant:-

Year	Gwynedd Council Grant	Fire Authority Precept
2009/10	168,503,870	31,311,563
2010/11	169,919,000 (+0.84%)	32,093,400 (+2.50%)
2011/12	168,026,300 (-1.44%)	31,932,654 (-0.50%)
2012/13	168,066,700 (+0.05%)	31,772,011 (-0.51%)
2013/14	181,633,250 (+1.22%)	31,772,011 (0.00%)
2014/15	174,970,570 (-4.56%)	31,772,011 (0.00%)
2015/16	168,311,989 (-3.97%)	31,885,843 (+0.27%)
Total	-7.75%	+1.74%

NB The Fire Service precept on Gwynedd Council in 2015/16 is £5,603,000. Therefore, any increase of 1% would mean a further £56,030 that the Council would have to meet either through cuts or raising the rates.

4. Therefore, over the six years since 2009/10, the Fire Authority precept has increased by approximately 1.74% whilst the Gwynedd Council grant has reduced by 7.75%. This gap developed in the past two years as the Council grant reduced substantially.

5. The Fire Authority does have a working party looking at their Improvement Plan and it considered the funding deficit it has over the next 5 years. The Authority has been working on a plan to limit that increase to a sum similar to £1 per head of population but that this be extended to 2019/20.
6. The Authority decided at its meeting on 16th June, 2014 to consult with authorities on this. There was a presentation to cabinet members by the Chief Fire Officer and, at that meeting, he expressed his view that the Authority was as efficient as it could be and that if we did not agree to what was being proposed that there would be a substantial impact.
7. Clearly, it is difficult to come to a decision on efficiencies when considering a service that deals with life and death. The concern therefore is that the Fire Service budget could be protected without asking important questions about that expenditure and that that would be at the expense of the Council's other services for the reasons noted above
8. It is clear that the Fire Service is a key service and vital when individuals' lives are concerned but that does not equate to not expecting it to be as efficient as possible. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that Fire Authorities cannot be exempt from being challenged to look for savings to be more efficient.

The Council's Arrangements for Challenging the Efficiency of the Service

9. This brings us to the core of the problem. With every other service within the Council, it is possible for the Council to see clearly whether there are opportunities to be more efficient but, as a Council, we do not have this opportunity for the Fire Service; we must entrust that to our representatives on the Authority to ensure that this happens.
10. The Council's representatives on the Authority have been invited to this meeting in order to make an initial assessment of what information they have about whether the Service is as efficient as possible and what evidence they have to support that.
11. An initial assessment shows that the Fire Service in North Wales spends less per head than the rest of Wales' fire authorities but it is also true that other rural authorities in England spend less. This does not necessarily mean that they are performing but there are questions that need to be asked about how they are doing so. See the table attached.
12. Naturally, if the service is as efficient as it could be, it needs to be protected but, in the current financial climate (and its effect on the Council's other services), efficiency questions must be asked. Maybe lessons could be learnt from other similar areas where expenditure is less and there may be scope to ask questions about the Authority's Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan, for example about the location of small stations across the area. No doubt there are other examples that could be considered.

13. In December, the Authority received a report noting that they had service pressures equivalent to £750,000 in 2015/16 but that implementing some savings could reduce this to £337,000. It is also understood that elements of reserves were used with this year's increase being only £113,832. However, as for the Council, the use of reserves is not sustainable and it is a concern that the report setting the budget for 2015/16 notes the need for an increase of 3.9% in 16/17 and 1.4% in 17/18.
14. Although the matter can be difficult and emotional, the price of not addressing the issue of course would be a further reduction in the Council's vital services, beyond the reductions we will have to make anyway; members will see this all too clearly at the workshops during June on potential cuts in the Council's services. This is not simply a matter of adding another £1 to the Council Rates, as claimed by the Fire Authority – we have already maximised the sum that can be placed on the rates and the only answer would be cutting more of the Council's own services.
15. The intention is to question the Council's representatives on the Fire Authority on:-
- The Authority's plans to seek a further increase in the precept in the coming years and the implications of that for the Council's own services
 - The Fire Authority's own arrangements for challenging the efficiency of the Service and the evidence that it is as efficient as it can be
 - The Authority's willingness to look at other similar areas spending less to assess whether there are lessons to be learnt from them
 - The extent to which further efficiency ideas are being considered
 - The role of individual members from the Council in scrutinising and ensuring accountability for the Authority's arrangements and the extent to which they are able to fulfil those roles

