

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Stephen Churchman, Glyn Daniels, Peter Garlick, Simon Glyn, Annwen Hughes, Aled W Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Mike Stevens, Catrin Wager, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams

OFFICERS: Gareth James (Members' Manager - Support and Scrutiny) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- a) In relation to item 5 on the agenda – Mair Rowlands (Cabinet Member - Corporate Support) and Catherine Roberts (Delivery Manager Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Partnership)
- b) In relation to item 6 on the agenda - Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment), Dafydd Gibbard (Senior Manager Corporate Property) and Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Environment Manager)
- c) In relation to item 6 on the agenda - Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of the Environment Department) Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Environment Manager) and Alun Lewis Evans (Public Protection Manager (Welfare)
- ch) In relation to item 7 on the agenda - Councillor Gareth Griffith (Cabinet Member - Highways and Municipal) and Gwyn Morris Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Elwyn Edwards, Berwyn Parry Jones, Linda Morgan, Gethin Glyn Williams and Councillor Dafydd Meurig - Cabinet Member, Environment

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, that took place on 21.6.2017, were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

- a) A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member updating the Committee on the Partnership's work. It was explained that the Partnership was required to formally report annually to the Committee giving an overview of the Partnership's main strategic developments over the year, together with the commissioning work that sets the framework for the priorities. It was added that this ensured that the Partnership delivered its obligations in accordance with sections of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2006, by working with the Police, Health Service, Probation Service and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Attention was drawn to the following main messages that stemmed from the 2016/17 activities together with the year's main achievements. Specific attention was given to the North Wales e-newsletter for the substance misuse field that was developed by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Team. The Team had received praise from the Welsh Government and the newsletter was further developed to be an interactive website with the Team leading regionally on this.

The main milestones for 2017-2018 were highlighted and the Scrutiny Committee was asked to support the priorities listed in the report together with the future direction of the work. It was added that any schemes / projects that appeared yellow was because they had not been completed, were transferred to the plan for 2017-2018 or were included in regional projects.

- b) In response to a question regarding how the Partnership was complying with the plan, it was noted that the establishment of the Safe Communities Board had ensured that a strategic assessment was developed via use of current data and that the service responded locally.

In response to a question regarding a 'call block', it was noted that it was possible to get equipment from the Council's Trading Standards Unit and in response to cybercrime it was noted that a project had not been identified within the Partnership, however, the Police and the Trading Standards Unit were working together on this issue.

In response to a question regarding the lessons learnt in a situation of Domestic Homicide, it was noted that the Partnership had a statutory duty to conduct a review of every domestic homicide. It was highlighted that a report of the lessons learnt together with the recommendations and the work programme would be presented to the Home Office. Once the Home Office received the report it would then be shared with other Partnerships.

In response to a question regarding seasonal crime, it was noted that the Police were aware of the situation and planned for the busiest seasons. It was highlighted that the Police used a special formula to find out where priority is required. It was added that no more resources were available and therefore it was necessary to make the best out of every situation.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the report and support the Partnership's priorities and future work direction.**

6. PEST CONTROL SERVICE - INCOME

- a) A report was presented by the Head of Environment giving Members an update on the progress of the Council's Pest Control Service to generate more income. Members were reminded that as part of the Environment Department's programme of efficiency savings that consideration had been given to abolish the service. Following the resolution of the Communities Scrutiny Committee in January 2016, to make the service financially self-sufficient, a framework and plan was formulated to generate additional income. The plan was submitted to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in June 2016, where the recommendations were accepted. Further, the Cabinet resolved to increase the Service's income target rather than abolishing it.

Attention was drawn to the nature of the service proposed and also to the detailed work made to consider the options available to ensure a self-sufficient service. New fees were presented for all aspects of the work in September 2016, together with a marketing campaign with the support of the Communications Unit. Work arrangements and the costs attached to them were reviewed. Although it was not possible to fully report on the impact of the adaptations, it was reported that an increase of approximately £10 had already been made over half the 2016/2017 financial year. It was added that the Department was confident of reaching the target of £40k by the end of this financial year.

It was highlighted that the Service would keep an eye on demand that was dependent on several factors beyond their control. It was reported that there was a back-up plan to increase income if the work flow was insufficient.

- b) During the discussion the following observations were noted:
- That it was necessary to improve the marketing element and to consider a dynamic logo/brand/motto
 - That it was necessary to consider a service that would add value for the future - one that would make a profit rather than merely being self-sufficient.
 - It was necessary to challenge national companies in the context of commercial contracts
- c) In response to a question regarding any observations by the public regarding their discontent about the service, it was reported that the feedback collected thus far was very heartening and was the best within the Property Department.

In response to a question regarding street pest control, it was reported that this work did not attract income, however, if pests were a threat to public health the matter would be prioritised and the Service would work jointly with the Public Protection Service to deal with the problem.

- ch) The report was welcomed and the service was praised. It was added that the service was going in the right direction.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

7. WALES FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY AUDIT

- a) Submitted – the report of the Head of Environment updating Members on the progress made by the Public Protection Service in addressing the recommendations of the Food Standards Agency's audit that took place in February 2016.

It was reported that the Service had provided a detailed action plan to address the 34 recommendations. It was highlighted that 21 of the recommendations had been

addressed thus far with the work to meet the other 13 continuing. It was added that some of the recommendations that had not been addressed were dependent on referring more resources to the Service. It was reported that the Service had seen a substantial reduction in staff as a result of the cuts system, however, it continued to try and prioritise work. Despite this, it was noted that low risk establishments did not receive inspections within the time-schedule recommended by the Food Standards Agency. It was also reported that the qualifications of the Food Standards Agency, which was an independent body inspecting an ideal situation, was high, but the service now offered training to address this.

It was noted that there were over 2000 food establishments within the rural area of Gwynedd and 1500 of these were inspected annually. In terms of performance, it was reported that 98% of the food establishments across the County scored between 3 and 5 which was very good. It was added that the service also looked to ensure that it was possible for officers to work more effectively by being out in the field rather than to duplicate administrative/additional work in the office. It was noted that food establishments appreciated the Service and offered positive feedback on the work. It was added that the Service supported the local economy by undertaking these inspections.

- b) During the discussion the following observations were noted:
- Concern that the Service did not have sufficient resources to fully achieve the requirements of the Food Standards Agency.
 - There was a need to improve staff qualifications
 - It was necessary to frequently monitor the situation
 - That priority should be given to high risk establishments
 - Consideration should be given to charging a fee for visits or a penalty for non-compliance
- a) In response to a comment regarding improving qualifications, it was noted that a series of training sessions had been conducted and the service was likely to attain the expected level.

In response to a comment regarding charging a fee for visits, it was noted that this had been discussed nationally, however, as the work was statutory, it was not possible to generate income. It was added that there was not much scope to charge a fee for work in this field but there was a right to provide advice and it may be possible to consider this.

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee was content that the majority of the recommendations had been achieved, however, there was concern regarding the lack of resources to achieve the statutory work within the time-schedule which created a risk to the Council and the the County's residents.**
- **That the service achieved good work under challenging circumstances.**
- **To propose that the Department presents more information and facts in order to challenge the need for more resources to address the statutory requirements.**

8. WASTE ENFORCEMENT

- a) Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal Services requesting the Committee's support to establish a Task team of Committee Members to investigate Waste Enforcement issues in order to advise the Committee on the way forward.

Attention was drawn to the background of the proposal where a Member's proposal had been adopted by the Full Council in March 2017, for the Cabinet Member to consider introducing effective sanctions as a matter of priority for residents who dispose of their litter on the wrong day or in the wrong way.

It was suggested that four members of the Panel were needed to join the relevant officers on the Task Team.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the principle**
- **To programme and prioritise the Committee's workload in the Informal Meeting as three investigations / work groups now needed to be undertaken.**
- **To nominate Councillors Stephen Churchman, Keith Jones, Mike Stevens and Catrin Wager as members for the Street Enforcement Task Team.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12pm