
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 23.05.13

Present: Councillor Simon Glyn (Chairman);
Councillor Dyfrig Jones (Vice-chairman).

Councillors:- Lesley Day, Elwyn Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Aled Evans, Selwyn Griffiths, Jason Humphreys, Eryl Jones-Williams, June Marshall, Dafydd Meurig, Michael Sol Owen, Mair Rowlands, Gareth Thomas and Eirwyn Williams.

Officers present: Gwenan Parry (Head of Customer Care Department), Janet Roberts (Senior Manager – Delivery and Support), Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager), Brian Jones (Emergency Planning Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Gwynfor Edwards, Gweno Glyn and Charles Wyn Jones.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Simon Glyn as Chairman of this committee for 2013/14.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Dyfrig Jones as Vice-chairman of this committee for 2013/14.

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting, held on 7 March, 2013, as a true record.

4. EMERGENCY PLANNING

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ioan Thomas

Submitted -

- (a) The report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Care explaining the Council's responsibilities in relation to Emergency Planning and reporting on activity in the past two years.
- (b) The report of the Wales Audit Office on Civil Contingencies in Wales, dated 6 December, 2012.
- (c) The Customer Care Emergency Planning Risks Table.

The Head of Customer Care Department provided an outline of the contents of the above documents and noted that the words in brackets and italics in paragraph 2.2.1 of the Cabinet Member's report should be corrected to read '*Responding to the Threat of Climate Change Project*'. She also noted that the Customer Care Emergency Planning Risks Table was currently in draft form.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion the following main observations were highlighted:-

- It was noted that local members should receive a list of rest centres within their wards.
- It was suggested that community centres should also be identified as rest centres as the nature of an emergency could mean that secondary schools / leisure centres were unavailable, or they could be out of people's reach.
- Whilst acknowledging that the role of the Emergency Planning Service was to respond to emergencies, it was emphasised that there was a need for the Council as a whole to be more proactive in this field, particularly so with regard to flood prevention. For example, it was enquired whether or not more could have been done to prevent flooding in Llanberis last November, and it was suggested that perhaps there were lessons to be learnt from what had happened. Concern was also expressed that the Water Board insisted on keeping water levels high in Llyn Celyn throughout the year, as this increased the risk of flooding in the Bala area during periods of heavy rainfall. As a follow-up to the discussion in this meeting, it was suggested that flood prevention was a matter to be scrutinised separately by one of the scrutiny committees and the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager agreed to scope the work for this committee's Annual Meeting on 13 June.
- It was noted that no reference was made in the documents to the strain placed on shops and garages as a result of panic buying during an emergency, or when there was a threat of an emergency. In response, the Head of Customer Care Department explained that a National Fuel Scheme existed in order to try and prioritise supplies.
- It was enquired whether or not it would be possible to train Council staff using the expertise of the nuclear industry in the emergency planning field .
- Reference was made to the Navy's exercises in Cardigan Bay on the May Day Bank Holiday and officers were asked to contact the Ministry of Defence to state that this type of exercise should not take place on occasions such as Bank Holidays when tourism areas in Gwynedd were full of visitors and that the Council should receive a notice in advance of any exercises in future. Concern was also expressed regarding the impact of the incident on the wildlife of the area.
- Although the Council gritted the back roads, it was noted that this did not mean those roads were open to services such as buses, fire engines or ambulances as people who lived on higher land, such as parts of Dyffryn Ogwen, were moving their cars closer down to the highway when snow was forecasted, thus creating an obstacle for large vehicles. It was important that the Highways Department was aware of situations like these.
- It was noted that ice and snow during the previous winter had highlighted a number of additional places where it would have been beneficial to have salt boxes, but that the Highways and Municipal Department were not willing to increase the numbers.
- That the Emergency Response Group should bear in mind the possibility of making effective use of the local member during an emergency, and of his/her local knowledge, and using technology such as '*Facetime*' to ensure continuous dialogue between the Headquarters and the local member at grass roots level.
- Rather than looking at developing a local risk register for the whole of Gwynedd, collaboration was suggested, either with the community councils or area committees within Gwynedd, to develop a more local risk registers as different parts of the county faced different types of risk.

In response to a query from a member regarding the responsibilities of private caravan site owners in the areas of Dyffryn and Talybont, the Head of Customer Care Department agreed to look at the boundaries of the Local Floods Scheme for Barmouth, and report back directly to the member.

RESOLVED to ask the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager to summarise the main observations of this meeting and send them to the members before the next Preparatory Meeting.

5. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

Submitted – a draft brief for the above investigation.

The Chair and members of the investigation were thanked for their good work, but concern was expressed regarding the timescale.

RESOLVED to accept the draft brief for the Sustainable Procurement Scrutiny Investigation, whilst accepting that it could be required to extend the length of the investigation.

6. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – the latest version of the work programme. The following observations were noted:-

- It was suggested that the names of the different committees should be noted in bold.
- Disappointment was expressed that no response had been received as a result of submitting the recommendations of the Systems Thinking Scrutiny Investigation to the Cabinet Member. In response, the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager noted that the Annual Report (which would be submitted to the committee's annual meeting on 13 June) would note the recommendations of the investigation and the Cabinet Member's response to them.
- It was noted that a similarity could be seen between the Audit Committee's work programme and the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme and it was enquired whether or not there was duplication of work here. It was agreed to note this for consideration in the annual meeting.
- Referring to item 10 on the work programme, concern was expressed regarding the morale of workers and it was agreed that this was a matter to be raised in the annual meeting.

The Member Support and Scrutiny Manager emphasised that any member would be welcome to add items to the work programme during the year.

RESOLVED to accept the work programme.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at midday.