

APPENDIX

1. The Importance of the Field
Findings - Street cleanliness is of the utmost importance for the economy, health and the sense of well-being in our communities and there is a definitive duty on the Council in the field that it must face. A survey amongst the Residents' Panel and community councils has shown very clearly that the people of Gwynedd have a desire for the Council to take stricter action in this field.
Recommendation to the Cabinet Member – It is recommended that the Cabinet Member accepts that definitive and new improvement steps must be taken and that they confirm their commitment to prioritising this field and commit to ensure priority for this field in discussions within the Gwynedd Council Cabinet.
Update The Cabinet Member continues to give priority to this field and has raised its importance in several Cabinet meetings.

2. The Nature of the Existing Service
Findings - The service provided by the Unit is exceptionally valuable; the team is committed and works very hard in a difficult and thankless field as it tackles one of the most important fields of work within the Council
Recommendation to the Cabinet Member – It is recommended that the Cabinet Member expresses the Investigation's appreciation of the team's work.
Update The team has been notified of the Investigation's appreciation in a specific meeting to discuss the implementation of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

<p>3. The Council's Savings Challenge</p>
<p>Findings - The Council has had to introduce some cuts in the service as part of the Gwynedd Challenge cuts package and this will certainly affect the team's capacity to take action.</p>
<p>Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –</p> <p>It is recommended that the Cabinet Member responds to the reduction in the Unit's capacity and accepts the challenge of revisiting the service and looks creatively at new solutions when re-prioritising the team's work.</p>
<p>Update</p> <p>The unit has been subject to re-structuring due to the reduction in budget following Gwynedd Challenge.</p> <p>The Team's work has been subject to a change in priority to reflect the reduced numbers of staff in the Unit.</p>

<p>4. Raising Awareness and Changing Behaviours</p>
<p>Findings - The team's emphasis on raising awareness and seeking to change behaviours is key and it is important that this work does not suffer as a result of the cuts.</p>
<p>Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –</p> <p>It is recommended to the Cabinet Member that the work on raising awareness has to continue when revisiting the Unit's duties as it copes with the cuts it is facing.</p> <p>It is also recommended, specifically, that there is a fresh, thorough and specific awareness raising campaign for a period of about 6 months before any new system is introduced which shows that the Council's attitude towards enforcement in this field will be getting stricter (see Finding 8 below).</p>
<p>Update</p> <p>Work on raising awareness has continued e.g. during 2016/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 14 community led groups were given support with litter campaigns ➤ Assisting communities in campaigns to prevent graffiti and fly tipping e.g. Dyffryn Cadnant, Maesgeirchen, Aberdyfi ➤ Holding 18 environmental roadshows in schools ➤ Conducting 5 dog fouling campaigns in schools. <p>Specific awareness raising campaigns for the new arrangement for issuing fixed penalty notices will be co-ordinated with its introduction.</p>

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Findings - The different enforcement responsibilities across the Council are very varied and there is room to look in the longer term at rationalising some of them in order to share enforcement powers across a larger number of staff and make better use of officers on the ground.

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member and the Head of Service hold discussions with their colleagues in order to extend enforcement powers and practices across more services in order to make better use of staff resources. In doing so, the Cabinet Member and the departments should give regard to the recent research by APSE on the possible advantages and risks.

Update

The recent research by APSE relates to amalgamating all of the Council's environmental enforcement activities into one service area or department. This would include Public Protection activities and possibly Planning and Licensing. The possible grouping has been considered at a regional level with the intention of collaborating and sharing resources between counties. This has not come to fruition since a number of North Wales authorities e.g. Denbigh, Conwy and Wrexham have chosen to use private companies to assist with enforcement of the main issues of concern to residents such as fly tipping, dog fouling and littering on the streets.

6. The Role of Volunteers

Findings - Whilst there is no role for volunteers in enforcement work, there is room to take advantage of the desire within our communities to take responsibility for street cleanliness by introducing voluntary champions ("Tidy Gwynedd / Clean Gwynedd Team") who are able to raise awareness and offer advice and assistance and identify problem hot-spots.

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member opens discussions with local groups and communities to see how a package of activities that such groups could act upon can be developed.

Update

Example of recent campaigns involving volunteers are:

Llanrug
Abergwyngregyn
Y Foryd, Caernarfon
Bethesda X2
Y Felinheli [with the Community Council]
Dolgellau
Dinas Dinlle [with Nebo School]
Caeathro
Pwllheli

The Team fully appreciates that raising awareness and marketing is very important and that it should continue in addition to looking at other new ways of adding to the effectiveness of campaigns.

7. A Contribution from Businesses

Findings - There is room to attract assistance and sponsorship from private businesses for this work by linking them with the voluntary development suggested in Finding 6.

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member collaborates with the Cabinet Member who is responsible for the Economy and Tourism to develop links with local businesses in an attempt to seek sponsorship towards voluntary and community initiatives.

Update

Discussions with specific businesses continue e.g. the team has been working with McDonalds and Tesco in Porthmadog recently with regards to litter pick campaigns and collecting old shopping trolleys in the Cut area of Porthmadog.

The Cabinet Member to date has not had the opportunity to discuss this matter in detail with the Cabinet Member for Economy, although it is expected soon.

8. Enforcement Work

Findings –

a) The Council should look towards externalising aspects of its enforcement work to work to add to the internal team. That work would focus on swift enforcement and penalties (FPNs) on a zero-cost basis to the Council (This should be trialled for an initial period of 12 months and subsequently reviewed).

b) Some aspects will need to be emphasised - e.g. all staff must be able to speak Welsh, local employment and the need to address different sorts of rubbish and dog fouling - as Wrexham Council has done.

c) There will be a need to ensure collaboration with the Council's Communications Unit to provide sufficient publicity to this change in good time before it becomes operational.

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member and the Head of Service:-

a) commence a competitive process to hold a trial at zero-cost for the Council of externalising aspects of enforcement for between 12 and 24 months with some specific conditions, including assurance about the use of the Welsh language within the service, local employment and a specific focus on dealing with dog fouling problems.

b) review the trial's success following the pilot period and then consider the options, be that to continue with the externalised service, or even, internalise the service.

c) undertake specific work to prepare the public for the new emphasis in the work by raising awareness and noting that the Council is doing this in response to the public's clear opinion.

Update

Initial contact has been made to determine if companies are interested and legal advice has been received regarding delegating authority, review of the payment of fines and procurement of the service.

The process of advertising for expressions of interest, and entering into contract can now proceed [11 weeks].

Subsequently there will need to be an establishment period for the company to ensure that resources are in place to commence [6 weeks].

In terms of timescale therefore it is possible for it to be in operation June, 2017 with a specific campaign to raise awareness being carried out to the same timescale. Unfortunately, a key member of the Unit's staff has been taken ill recently and therefore this timescale will slip.

9. Collaboration with the Police

Findings - North Wales Police, as well as local authorities, has legislative responsibilities. However, over the past years, North Wales Police has given higher priorities to different types of crimes.

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member –

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member holds discussions with the Police Commissioner soon in order to discuss whether or not there is room to collaborate more closely on environmental crimes and antisocial behaviour, including collaboration on the implementation of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Update

The Cabinet Member has had a brief and informal discussion with the Police Commissioner and it is intended to seek a formal meeting for the purpose in the near future.