
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 MARCH 2017

PRESENT: Dilwyn Morgan (Vice-chair)

COUNCILLORS: Stephen Churchman, Annwen Daniels, Annwen Hughes, Eric M. Jones, Linda Morgan, Edgar Wyn Owen, Angela Russell, Glyn Thomas and Gruffydd Williams

OFFICERS: Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Corporate Support Manager) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- a) In relation to item 5 on the agenda - Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member), Gareth Jones (Senior Manager Planning and Environmental), Wyn Williams (Environment Manager)
- b) In relation to item 6 on the agenda - Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member) and Gareth Jones (Senior Manager Planning and Environmental)
- c) In relation to item 7 on the agenda - Councillor John Wynn Jones (Cabinet Member) and Gwyn Morris Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department)

Chairman's Announcements:

Everyone was thanked for their contribution to the Communities Scrutiny Committee over the last five years and Arwel Ellis Jones was thanked for supporting the Committee - and was wished a happy retirement. Councillor Tudor Owen was welcomed back after undergoing surgery.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Craig ab Iago, Louise Hughes, Tudor Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Caerwyn Roberts and Mike Stevens

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, held on 24 January 2017, were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. REVIEW OF RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- a) Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member updating the Committee on the actions taken since the Cabinet Member had submitted his report in September,

2016 asking the Committee to support the intention to review and prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Gwynedd. It was highlighted that Welsh Government had published guidelines for Local Authorities which explained the procedure and steps that provided guidance on statutory and ancillary requirements.

Attention was drawn to the draft questionnaire that had been attached to the report. The purpose of the questionnaire, which had been created with the support of the Communications and Engagement Team, was to gather the opinion of the public and specific cohorts on Rights of Way.

It was also emphasised that the Plan would be prepared jointly with the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the principles of this joint working was highlighted to the committee. With the need to assess 3500km of network, it was acknowledged that the task was a difficult one and was therefore reliant on the support of others.

- b) In response to the questionnaire, it was suggested that there was a need to include a box for 'children' in the answers to question C5, 'Which of the following would you be likely to take with you?'
- c) During the discussion the following observations were noted:
 - There was a lack of signs on paths
 - There was a need to be aware of the problems that arose with landowners. It was suggested that powers were needed to ensure that not one person was affected.
 - There was a need to ensure that the AONB and the Countryside Unit contributed to the Plan.
 - More investment in mountain and coastal paths
 - Must consider adopting a policy to protect land between the coastal path and the sea and ensure that people and landowners understood the situation
 - Lack of resources was likely to be a cause for concerns regarding path maintenance
 - Grants were key to the maintenance work
 - Suggestion to coordinate volunteers and the youth services - must nurture respect towards local assets within the community
 - Suggestion to promote the pathwatch app among staff - effective for sharing information

In response to the observation regarding grants, it was accepted there were different grants available for undertaking improvements, however the financial timetable would force a programme of priorities. It was highlighted that categories 1 - 5 had been formed to manage the resources and it was suggested that there was a need to review these categories. It was also highlighted that Welsh Government intended to review rights of way legislation and a consultation with practical proposals was likely to be introduced in the coming months.

RESOLVED:

- a) **To support the Department to continue with the fields of work to be implemented in the next six months, namely**
 - Continue to gather information regarding the condition of the network and commence the work of analysing this information.
 - Work with SNPA to identify the resources needs
 - Collaborate with the Communication / Engagement Unit to identify the best methods of engagement to reach the widest possible audience.

Complete the questionnaire and conduct a public consultation during May and June.

- Continue to evaluate the previous RoWIP.
 - Look at how the RoWIP overlaps with legislation, plans and other policies.
 - Towards the end of the period (approximately September) to begin the task of reaching conclusions based on information to hand and to formulate a direction for the new RoWIP.
- b) More resources should be sought, within existing limitations, welcome creative ideas/use of technology
- c) Need to consider increasing Gwynedd Council's powers
- ch) To request that the Cabinet Member submit a progress report within six months.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION - PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The report of the Planning Scrutiny Investigation was submitted to the Cabinet Member. All members were reminded of the background of the brief and Councillor Eric M Jones, Chairman of the investigation, provided a summary of the work undertaken.
- b) The Cabinet Member thanked the Members for the good work undertaken within a brief period of time. The recommendations were discussed one at a time and the following observations were noted by the Cabinet Member:
- The suggestion about the need for members along with community council members to receive training to raise awareness and understanding of the contents of the Local Development Plan (once approved) was welcomed.
 - That a Ffordd Gwynedd review of the service would be implemented as permitted by the timetable
 - Accept the need to include / draw specific attention to economic matters within Planning Committee reports
- c) During the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made:-
- A suggestion that meeting timetables, sharing good practice and appropriate planning observations should be included in community council training
 - A suggestion that positive observations and the number of complaints should be included
 - Welcome the recommendation to collaborate with and facilitate discussions with the Council's building control unit.

RESOLVED to accept the report, which was completed in a relatively short period of time, to approve the recommendations and seek a report from the Cabinet Member within 6 months on what has been achieved following the recommendations.

7. STREET ENFORCEMENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION - UPDATE

- a) Submitted - a report by the Cabinet Member providing an update on the work which had been implemented on the recommendations submitted in September 2016. It was highlighted that the unit had been restructured and the work of the team had been reprioritised to reflect the reduction in the number of staff in the Unit. It was noted that the cuts had been difficult, but that the staff had responded well. An update was

provided on all the recommendations and the Members were asked to consider conducting a new scrutiny investigation to seek to resolve the best methods of simplifying the procedure in terms of sharing information about refuse collections.

During the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made:-

- that all the 'Community Gangs' had been disbanded as a result of Gwynedd Challenge
 - A reduction in services and therefore accept that there was a need to introduce different methods of dealing with street enforcement.
 - That people who litter the streets should pay a penalty to maintain services
 - The Notice of Motion that had been submitted to the Council about those who caused problems when disposing of household rubbish on the wrong day or in the wrong way and the need to look further into the matter.
 - We must educate people and consider vulnerable people if the intention was to introduce new arrangements
 - Support from Keep Wales Tidy and Council Officers had been very successful e.g. community litter picking campaigns.
 - Need to consider A level students who taking BAC to volunteer along with Youth Clubs (Guides, Brownies and Rainbows) who worked for volunteering badges. Suggestion also to use the Probation Service.
 - Health and Safety issues must be mitigated to facilitate arrangements for volunteers
 - Welcome the work being carried out at the schools
 - Important to raise awareness and share information at the right time if changes were to be introduced
- b) The Cabinet Member asked the Members to encourage people to take advantage of Keep Wales Tidy campaigns.

Gratitude was expressed for the information and best wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to Peter Simpson, Street Enforcement Manager.

RESOLVED:

- The Committee is happy with the actions taken thus far
- The department is preparing to communicate with Members and the public before the trial period with the external company commences
- There is a need to share good news and continue with the work of raising awareness
- To include the request for a scrutiny investigation on enforcement when people act in breach of the collection arrangement to be added to the list of possible investigations for the consideration of the new Council