

**Minutes of the Meeting of Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Committee held at the Council Chamber, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely
on Wednesday, 27 July 2022**

PRESENT: Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans (Chairman), Councillors Marc Davies (Vice-Chair), Gethin Davies, Meirion Davies, Rhodri Davies, Steve Davies, Rhodri Evans, Wyn Evans, Chris James, Sian Maehrlein & John Roberts.

Also in attendance: Councillors Euros Davies, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Evans & Gareth Lloyd.

Cabinet Members Present: Councillors Clive Davies, Keith Henson, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux & Alun Williams.

Officers in attendance: Rhodri Llwyd, Corporate Lead Officer, Highways and Environmental Services; Phil Jones, Corporate Manager, Highways Services; Chris Wilson, Traffic, Safety and Development Manager; Gerwyn Jones, Corporate Manager, Environmental Services; Beverley Hodgett, Service Manager; Russell Hughes Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer, Economy & Regeneration; Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager, Growth and Enterprise; Lisa Evans, Standards and Scrutiny Officer; Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Office; Nia Jones, Corporate Manager, Democratic Services; Carwyn Williams and Rhidian Jones, Translators.

(10.00am - 1.15pm)

1 Apologies

Councillor Carl Worrall apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations. Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Councillor Chris James declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to item 3 and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

3 Ceredigion Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy and Action Plan

Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member, explained that the recommendation by Ceredigion County Council Carbon Management and Climate Change Group (20/06/2022) was for the committee members to consider the draft Strategy and Action Plan prior to presentation to Cabinet for formal adoption. It was noted that the Strategy was in the process of being developed.

Phil Jones referred to the background and the current situation as outlined in the report.

Chris Wilson provided a presentation to the Committee focusing on the Current Situation & Locations (appendix 1). It was noted that the focus of the early stages of the programme was to install EV charge-points (EVCPs) in County Council-owned or managed public car parks and Council premises. It was also mentioned that due to potential trip hazards linked with EVCPs, it would be important to manage this. In respect of the 25% match-funding by the Welsh Government (WG), ministerial approval is required; once this is granted, phase one will commence. It was noted that identifying funding streams for phases 3 and 4 will prove challenging along with attracting private investment due to the county's rurality. The number of EVCPs throughout the county was possibly lower than in more urban areas due to population and demand. The aim was to provide an even distribution of EVCPs throughout the county. Despite uncertainty in terms of technology, it would be key to consider all options including hydrogen.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions which were answered by Phil Jones and Chris Wilson. The main points raised were as follows:

- In terms of funding, £420,000 was received from the Welsh Government's Ultra Low Emission Transformation Fund (ULEVTF) in the 2021/22 Financial Year. Grant funding of up to £300,000 has also been allocated to the Council by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). A sum of £273,171 from the UK Government has been awarded to enable a second phase during the 2022/23 financial year (£204,878.20 (75%) from the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) On-street Residential Charge-point Scheme (ORCS) with the remaining £68,293 (25%) to be provided as match-funding by the WG).
- Due to uncertainty around whether the match-funding (25%) would be given, WG were aware that there were no private investors in the county. Hopefully, written confirmation from WG of the funding would be sent in due course. Consideration of other sources of funding remained key.
- Silverstone Green Energy has assisted the Council following a tendering process to install and operate the public EVCPs at Penmorfa and Canolfan Rheidol. An agreement is in place to ensure both the company and the Council have a share of the profit, which was impacted by the slow take-up.
- The Strategy is key to the Council's 2030 net zero carbon ambition and delivery of the Council's Net Zero Action Plan. It would also provide access to people who wish to charge their vehicles.
- No consideration was given to installing EVCPs at schools including the new area school in Dyffryn Aeron; Officers confirmed there was currently a condition that EVCPs should be provided to the public.
- Subject to planning, members felt the Council should consider opportunities to create renewable energy within the county.
- Concerns that the installation of EVCPs would not reduce the number of vehicles on the road as per Llwybr Newydd transport strategy.
- Concerns were raised around the National Grid's capacity to provide electricity as this would limit where EVCPs can be installed. Concerns also around the security of the supply of energy, especially in the current climate and from where was the energy provided by the DNO sourced.

- Working together would be key in avoiding the installation of numerous EVCPs at the same location.
- Consideration to other sources of fuel (e.g. HGO) was raised; officers confirmed they were continually considering options.
- Lack of education around the benefits of Electric Vehicles (EVs) to the environment.
- As dealers register EVs centrally and not to their owner's addresses, a true account of the number of EVs in the county is not available.
- The different types and availability of specific EVCPs; an officer explained that there seemed to be a universal charger and also adapters for different vehicles. EVCPs apps have been developed that help drivers search for chargers. Communicating information to the public around EVCPs will need to be considered in moving forward and information will need to be included in the apps.
- In response to a query about the definition of on-street residential charging, the officers clarified it meant providing charging points off-street for on-street vehicles.
- From a safety perspective, it will be important to give the public enough warning of any upcoming installation work.
- Due to concerns around the location of the EVCPs in Aberaeron; officers agreed to discuss the matter with the elected member.
- Issues were raised with the EVCPs in Penmorfa appearing on the app; officers explained that they would raise this with Silverstone Green Energy.
- Concerns raised around the intensive mining related to lithium batteries.
- In terms of charging on the street, it was explained by officers that regulations were in place around what could/ could not be done therefore the focus was on ensuring people had the facilities to do so safely. A charging system would need to be set up in due course.

Following a lengthy discussion, Members agreed to the following recommendation:

- The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider the draft Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 1) and to approve its presentation to Cabinet for formal adoption by the Council.

4 Review of Waste Management Services- consultancy support

Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member noted that the purpose of the report was to seek support for a proposed way forward for the review of Ceredigion County Council's waste service.

Gerwyn Jones provided an overview of Waste Management Services and highlighted that the service itself had a high profile in terms of the public. The background to the previous strategy and the need for a new one to set out the future direction of the service was provided. Reference was made to the household waste sites, waste transfer stations, contracted out facilities and the kerbside collection model as outlined in the report. A brief explanation of the current co-mingled service implemented in 2019 was provided along with the WG's preferred method of kerbside sort, as published in WG's

Collections Blueprint in 2012. In moving forward, there will be significant pressures to save money- there were currently 9 large lorries (worth around £186,000) and 7 smaller lorries (worth around £136,000) in the fleet which will be due for replacement in 3-4 years. Due to the lead-in time for vehicles and the lengthy options appraisal process, it is vital to consider the strategic way forward for Ceredigion. Opportunities such as the recent offer of purchasing two 26-ton lorries for £155,000 each as opposed to £272,000 with the support of government grants need to be considered. The Officer gave an overview of the proposed scope of the consultancy work.

Members asked many questions relating to their area of interest which were answered in turn by Gerwyn Jones. The main points raised are as follows:

- The appointment of independent consultants to undertake the work would follow the usual processes.
- A new fleet of vehicles will need to be in place by 2027-28- due to the complex technology required and the need to consider different options, the work needs to begin imminently.
- Staffing pressures were highlighted- although the team is near capacity, the service runs at 70% staffing levels due to annual leave, training and illness. In addition, the Council are not immune to the lack of HGV drivers and technicians- there are training programmes to attract staff. As the waste service is a priority for the department, staff in other roles with HGV licences are shared and agency staff are used occasionally.
- Concerns that the same routes are impacted on Bank Holidays as most are on Mondays. As staff were not contracted to work bank holidays, revising staff contracts was suggested and also a retained scheme similar to the fire service. Further suggestions were welcomed by the officer.
- Members reported that they increasingly receive calls from the public around waste collections. The officer suggested directing the public to Clic or the Council's website, where efforts were made to share information around changes to services including performance indicators.
- In response to a member's question about electric lorries, the officer explained that the staff had trialled a lorry and it had gone well but at present, the lorries were worth around £450,000 each. Consideration should be given if the lorries become more affordable.
- Concerns around where waste was sent to following collections; the officer felt that many issues should be considered internationally but the county had a role to influence change. The level of waste in Ceredigion is not enough to warrant an investment in technology to deal with it.
- As more LAs adopt the WG Blueprint, there were risks that fewer grants would be made available for LAs who decide against adopting it.
- In terms of whether officers would be able to undertake the work proposed for consultants and to contact LAs who have already adopted the kerbside sort, the officer advised that there was no capacity in the team given the workload and managerial responsibilities on staff.
- The officer clarified that some machinery was leased. It was important to be dynamic and consider the best opportunities available at the time with the support of the Finance and Procurement department.
- Inspection of the vehicles was done internally every 6 weeks and if required, any further work was done locally. The only vehicles that were

returned to the dealers for work were those under warranty or if expertise was needed. The longer the lorries were off the road, the greater the impact on services.

- It was highlighted that a change in services would raise problems and so consulting with members who represent Ceredigion's residents was vital throughout the process before decisions were made. 1500 responses were received following the last public consultation.
- The effectiveness of kerbside sort in different areas (e.g urban vs rural) and type of properties (HMO vs detached house) within the county would vary.

Members expressed their gratitude to the staff, who worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and for their continued efforts.

Following a lengthy discussion, members agreed to the following:

- Note the current situation, identified risks and need for a service review
- Note the appointment of independent consultancy service to undertake the service review, in close liaison with the waste service
- Note that the service review will be limited, in broad terms, to the scope set out in this report
- Agree that the Committee takes an active role in the project and a leading role in the political engagement and approvals process

5 Overview of Highways and Environmental Services

Rhodri Llwyd gave a presentation to the Committee on the services and functions provided, outlining the following:

- Core Services
- Key Functions
- Service Priorities
- Front Line Workforce
- Performance Indicators
- Service Requests
- Budgets- Historic
- Staff and Budget Reductions
- Challenges and Priorities

The Officer clarified there were a team of 4 staff members and a manager who routinely inspected the 2260km of public roads which the Council were responsible for, by following The Highway Inspection Code of Inspection. Due to the lack of funding, there was currently a £34 million highway maintenance backlog and as it increases, as the condition of the roads would obviously deteriorate.

Following a question from a member, the Officer stated that the introduction of pavement parking legislation proposed previously by WG may be implemented following the introduction of 20mph speed limits in due course.

The Chair noted there had been communication between officers and members around identifying potential roads where 20mph speed limits

should be reduced in each ward under the Welsh Government's proposal. There would be an opportunity to revisit this next year.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans acknowledged that the service had been under significant financial pressure for several years. She added that consultation between officers and members around the introduction of 20mph had been beneficial and appreciated.

The Officer clarified that the late grants awarded by the WG at the end of the financial year may account for the reported £250,000 underspend from waste disposal.

Following questions by the Members of the Committee, members agreed to note the services and functions provided by Highways and Environmental Services.

6 Progress on delivering the Economic Strategy

Members agreed to defer the item to a meeting in the future.

7 To confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2022.

Matters arising: In response to the Chair's query related to whether National Resources Wales had responded to a letter following the committee held on 11 March 2022, Lisa Evans clarified that no response had been received despite following up on this several times.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that another letter from the current Chair would be sent to National Resources Wales highlighting the members' disappointment and the need for an urgent response.

8 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

It was agreed to note the contents of the Forward Work Programme presented subject to the following:

- Update on the Ash Dieback- Autumn 2022
- Economic Strategy (deferred from today's meeting)
- Budget Workshop before the 23-24 Budget Preparation- Autumn 2022

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 October 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____