

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS, COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL - COUNTY HALL ON MONDAY, 24 JUNE 2019

PRESENT: County Councillor G Jones (Chair)
County Councillors K W Curry, D O Evans, L George, J Gibson-Watt, I McIntosh,
P C Pritchard, J Pugh, D Selby and M Barnes

In attendance: Mr Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys Police

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors A W Davies (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport) and J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection) Evans

Officers: Nina Davies (Head of Housing and Community Development), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Fay Smith (Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator), Clive Jones (Professional Lead - Trading Standards, Community Safety and Emergency Planning), Dafydd Evans (Service Manager Housing Solutions) and Mark Davies (Affordable Housing Team Leader)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from the County Councillor E M Jones, and from the Chair, County Councillor M Dorrance who was on jury duty.

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meetings on 25.03.2019 and 17.04.2019 as correct records.

3.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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There were no disclosures of prohibited party whips in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4.	COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE
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The Chair welcomed Fay Smith (Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator), Clive Jones (Professional Lead - Trading Standards, Community Safety and Emergency Planning), County Councillor Aled Davies (Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety) and Mr Dafydd Llywelyn (Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys Police) to the meeting.

Safer Communities Programme.

Welsh Government's Safer Communities Programme had been established in 2017, which included a new shared vision of community safety in Wales. The vision was underpinned by 6 key principles and a set of 11 commitments, and the programme would be taken forward by means of a multi agency programme board.

Serious Organised Crime

Powys was not exempt from the effects of County Lines. Police enforcement action last year had eradicated the largest drugs suppliers from Powys but had not eradicated the use of drugs in the county. Regional and Local Serious Organised Crime Board has been established. It was noted that County Lines was only one form of Serious Organised Crime, others included Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Illicit Tobacco. The Police are currently monitoring drugs issues in the county and a serious violence strategy is to be launched in July 2019.

Question / Comment: Domestic Homicide Reviews – why is this described separately from other forms of homicide?

Response: The statutory duty to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) sits with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Police will notify the CSP that a DHR has occurred. The CSP has to agree that the incident meets the required criteria for a DHR. The CSP will then advise the Home Office. The review will be undertaken by a Panel with an independent Chair, which will include relevant individuals who have been involved with the family.

Once completed the report comes to the CSP for approval, and then to the Home Office Quality Assessment Panel. Once agreed by the Home Office the report is published by the CSP.

Question / Comment: Vehicle Offences – how much impact does the theft of quad bikes have on vehicle statistics?

Response: The statistics produced by the Police are for the last 12 months. Rural Crime Teams were established and have been in place since September 2018. In relation to quad bike thefts there have been 33 thefts between September 2018 and April 2019. Two other areas of concern are sheep theft and animal worrying. It was noted that other agencies including the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Natural Resources Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority all have rural crime staff. Part of the strategy is also prevention including disseminating information to farmers regarding when gangs are operating in the area and what is being targeted. Police detection is also good in respect of rural crime.

Question / Comment: Welsh Government policies are going to open up the countryside to the public, which will lead to more crime. How are the strategies going to address this?

Response: Whilst there is nothing specifically in the strategies, this could be dealt with by means of awareness raising. Rural crime teams are making a difference, e.g. previously there was no data on sheep thefts, which does now exist. There is also a network of people undertaking this work. This risk can also be built into the intelligence requirement by agencies.

Question / Comment: With a greater use of footpaths and bridleways by the public, can better signage be provided to make people more aware of livestock and the need to keep dogs on leads?

Response: Signage is available but there is a balance required to ensure that there are not too many signs in the countryside. However if there are issues landowners should speak to area Rights of Way Officers.

Question / Comment: There are a number of Automatic Number Plate

Recognition (ANPR) cameras in Powys. Does this reduce crime? Will the number of cameras be increased? There is a problem with Google and Street Maps which can focus in detail on properties and if the information is up to date, provide information on vehicles which could be targeted by thieves.

Response: There is nothing that the Council can do about Google Maps. The issue is prevention and awareness raising about keeping properties safe.

The Commissioner commented that Powys has a very effective ANPR system of cameras which are reviewed on an annual basis. Attempts are also made to be sensitive about the location of these cameras. In addition a tactical desk has been established to monitor travelling criminals, by looking for particular vehicle registration numbers. These numbers are shared with rural crime teams. The analysis of ANPR information had also been useful in dealing with the issue of illegal tobacco in Powys. The Commissioner agreed to provide information regarding the number of ANPR cameras in Powys.

Question / Comment: Public Order Offences – how many are dealt with as cautions? Are young people being cautioned disproportionately? Being cautioned can mean that young people find difficulty in getting a job due to a caution. How does Powys compare to other areas?

Response: The Commissioner commented that he was concerned regarding the low level criminalisation of individuals. In future the process would be changing and simple cautions would no longer be possible. A Pathfinder project is to be established in November 2019 in Dyfed Powys which will mean that more people in the same way that young people up to 18 years old can be dealt with outside the court system by means of the Council's youth services, which should not therefore deter an individual from being able to get a job in future. Those where a caution was necessary would receive one, with others diverted away from the justice system.

Youth services will deal with those under 18. Anyone in school or college can be dealt with by the School Beat system i.e. restorative justice process, and dealt with as a 'pocket book exercise'.

Question / Comment: How long does a caution last as it could stop an individual becoming a school governor for example.

Response: The duration of a caution is not known. However with regard to school governing bodies this should be considered from the point of safeguarding. In addition a potential employer will need to undertake a judgement regarding the suitability of a particular individual for a role based on a risk assessment, dependent on what the caution was in relation to.

Question / Comment: Whilst it is right to trumpet the success of the County Lines operation last year, this has resulted in more people with chaotic drug use and also in unforeseen circumstances as a result of the Police Operation such as an increased demand on the services of Kaleidoscope. In addition there is concern that young people need something more interesting to do rather than take drugs which is a challenge when the Council is reducing its youth service provision.

Response: The Police operation did move individuals out of the County that were having a detrimental effect on the county. However there have

been increased demand for services such as Kaleidoscope. Multiple agencies had been prepared prior to the Police operation due to shared information. The Area Planning Board is also looking at the future funding of Kaleidoscope as well as the potential effect of any future Police operations. The Community Safety Partnership will be made aware of any future Police operations and the Area Planning Board is setting funding aside in case it is required to react to deal with the effects of a future operation. The consequences of the Police action will also be considered when support services are being recommissioned in 2020. However the increased numbers of clients will already have been known to Kaleidoscope rather than being brand new clients.

The Commissioner commented that trying to reduce the market for drugs is important. Welsh Government had provided additional funding to the Area Planning Board in 2019. Last year's Police operation was also not a one-off and it was a constant battle against drugs with some recent enforcement action. The funding of youth services was acknowledged to be an issue as was the funding of the Youth Justice Team which had received additional funding from the Commissioner's office.

Question / Comment: Residents had met in Newtown to discuss County Lines and there is enthusiasm amongst the public to eradicate County Lines. Are there ways to mobilise residents to assist with prevention? There are also no Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) in Powys – is there any work underway to initiate these?

Response: The Commissioner commented that it was good that such meetings are taking place and it would be beneficial for a representative from his office as well as the Police to be at such meetings. Communities however, needed to understand how to share any information they have with the authorities in a structured way. Part of this could be assisted by the current restructuring of the Community Policing Teams.

The Commissioner suggested that he would discuss the issue of BCRPs with the Police as an operational issue. CCTV cameras had been rolled out to the main towns in Powys which were being monitored from Police HQ.

Question / Comment: County Lines – could posters or leaflets be distributed to schools, parents and communities to raise awareness. In relation to BCRPs Brecon and Newtown were in the process of establishing business districts and it would be beneficial to encourage crime reduction in the business plans for these new districts.

Response: There is much engagement already about County Lines. However, there is a need to ensure that the message being given out to the public is consistent and that that wrong messages are not causing a fear of crime which may not exist as County Lines, although important, is not the most urgent concern in the county.

The Commissioner commented that the Home Office has provided additional funding for a Youth Worker employed by Crime Stoppers who is going around the Dyfed Powys area. Crime Stoppers can pass information onto the Police on behalf of the public. There is a need to reduce the impact of substance misuse and deter gangs from coming into Powys.

Question / Comment: What effect has the changes to overnight Police cover had on deterring crime gangs coming into Powys. The Commissioner

has undertaken to, and introduced, CCTV cameras with the Police and the Town Council in Welshpool agreeing the location of the cameras. The Town Council was then able to move its cameras to other locations which the public have welcomed.

Response: The Commissioner commented that the Police made changes to how resources were allocated overnight. There has been no reduction in the number of staff, the difference being that staff are out in cars rather than located at the Police Station in Welshpool. This matter is kept under review and if required can be changed.

5. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DYFED POWYS POLICE

County Councillors D O Evans and L George disclosed Personal Interests in regard to this matter as Council representatives on the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Panel.

The Commissioner indicated that he had a number of roles which included setting the direction for Dyfed Powys Police, preparing the Police and Crime Plan 2017-21, and holding the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. He was also responsible for the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Constable and for funding policing in Dyfed Powys. The level of funding could be vetoed by the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Panel. Funding for the Police was approximately 50% from the Home Office and 50% from Council Tax Payers.

The Commissioner acts as the bridge between communities and the Police Service. Dyfed Powys Police is well engaged with its communities and a review of how Community Policing Teams are deployed is currently being undertaken.

The Commissioner commissions and funds services e.g. grants for services to domestic violence victims as well as smaller grants such as for services for missing young people. Other funding by the Commissioner such as for drugs and alcohol services (£70,000 in Powys) are for commissioned services to reduce the demand on the Police Service. The Youth Offending Team in Powys has been given additional funding by the Commissioner (from £20k to £45K per annum) and an additional £25k has been made available to the Community Safety Partnership this year.

The Commissioner leads on data analysis and is seeking to establish a strategic process for the analysis and sharing of information across public bodies. The Commissioner is also heavily involved in the estate for Dyfed Powys Police, to ensure that the police has adequate and appropriate estate resources available.

Question / Comment: How much collaboration is there with the County Council, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the Health Board in relation to the joint use of buildings? Is the plan to rationalise, or replace police stations which will lead to more closures? Has the closure of the court in Brecon had an impact on the work of Dyfed Powys Police?

Response: Other than attendance of police officers at court the impact of court closures has been limited as evidence files can now be submitted electronically. However the Commissioner agreed that access to justice should be close to people. A commission was currently looking at justice in

Wales. The Commissioner believed that there were opportunities for the use of digital courts in rural Wales.

With regard to the police estate, discussions were ongoing about the joint use of facilities such as in Brecon with much of the discussion through the Public Service Board. Co-location of services was already happening. There was also a need for investment in the estate and a need to rebuild at some locations.

Question / Comment: How does the Needs Assessment link to the Police and Crime Plan and does finance rule it all (50% from the Government and 50% from Council tax payers) – Is the crime plan produced based on the available finances or is the plan driving the funding?

Response: The depth the plan can go into depends on the funding available. The strategic crime plan comes from the Home Office, but it only funds less than 50% of the total funding. The danger of this is that it could focus the plan on local issues rather than strategic issues. There are 50 measurable items in the plan which need to be prioritised. Focussing on serious crime initiatives could lose public support as they are not relevant to them. The plan is restricted by the funding available e.g. the provision of CCTV cameras.

Question / Comment: If the plan is to be achieved, the public have to pay twice – Council Tax and the precept from the Police?

Response: Agreed. The public willingness to pay more is at a tipping point. The Home Secretary allowed Police and Crime Commissioners the discretion to vary the police precept by £2 per month per property. However this is a 10.7% increase which was implemented generally across England and Wales. Not making this increase would have led to a reduction in the numbers of police officers in Dyfed Powys. However with the increase, the Dyfed Powys police precept is still the lowest in Wales for a Band D property.

Question / Comment: Is Brecon police station in a poor state of repair? If a new building is to be established how will the Commissioner ensure that the new building is built to last?

Response: The police station in Brecon is not one you would want to keep for the long term, probably no longer than 5 years. As there is a need for much repair to the building, the better option is to build a new building. However the building is not in a state of disrepair and the custody suite is at the standard required by the Home Office. Any new building needs to be value for money and most new buildings are expected to last at least 35 years.

Question / Comment: What is the general policy regarding Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)?

Response: A review is looking to restructure community policing. However the resources are not changing and there are 140 PCSOs in Dyfed Powys with some of the funding coming from Welsh Government. The current PCSOs are well thought of but need better support especially in terms of a line management structure.

Question / Comment: Is there a funding formula which determines how

much funding comes from Welsh Government and Government and can Members have access to the formula?

Response: Yes the formula can be made available. It has been under review for 10 years. The new funding formula if implemented could lead to a £7m reduction of funding to Dyfed Powys Police.

6. HRA NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

The Committee received the report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection.

The target set by Welsh Government is for 20,000 new homes in Wales. The Cabinet has set a target of 250 new homes in Powys by 2023. Welsh Government has created new funding streams to assist development.

Question / Comment: What is meant by affordable? Can the terminology be changed or clarified?

Response: This means social housing i.e. housing coming into Powys stock for rent. A low cost housing strategy is to be produced which will clarify the terminology.

The Committee noted the sums allocated in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Affordable Housing Grant for Council house building. An Innovative Housing Project Grant would provide £30m across Wales. Other initiatives were also being introduced such as Self Build and Rent to Own, with Self Build being launched in Autumn 2019. The HRA business plan was in the process of being completed, and the Housing Register was being updated. Work was also being undertaken to attempt to identify hidden need for properties. Events were being undertaken with local businesses / developers to encourage businesses to work together.

Question / Comment: One bedroom properties have been identified as the greatest need for single young people and single bedroom properties for elderly people. If the new properties being built were single bedroom properties this could release a number of houses for other occupation. How many of the 250 properties will be one bedroom properties?

Response: One bedroom properties are currently the highest need in Powys. The intention is to build 21 single bedroom properties in Newtown. Figures can be provided to Members as to the numbers of types of properties which are being planned.

Question / Comment: Over what period is the commitment by Welsh Government to build 20,000 properties and why is Powys only committing to 250 new homes.

Response: This is the current Welsh Government term which ends in 2021. The target of 250 new homes is the County Council's commitment. However housing associations will also be building new properties in Powys. Only 11 of the stock retaining Councils in Wales are building new properties with some not building at all. Other Councils are also building larger numbers of new properties due to local demand. Whilst Powys may be a quarter of the land mass of Wales it is very rural. The Council is hopeful that the target it has set can be achieved.

Question / Comment: It is estimated that by 2023, £35m will have been spent on new properties which is around £140k per property?

Response: This figure per property will also include the cost of purchasing land as not all of the land will be in public ownership. The Cabinet has also decided that the properties developed will be of mixed tenure rather than just social housing.

Question / Comment: Is this a change from what was stated earlier in the meeting about the types of property?

Response: No, to clarify, there will be social housing built and there will be opportunities on some estates for mixed tenure properties.

Question / Comment: The Council needs to be careful about mixing development as some do not work well together e.g. single young persons and single elderly persons properties together.

Response: The type of tenure is being considered on its merits for each site. Housing Management are involved in these discussions.

Question / Comment: In view of recent issues with large building companies should there be a different process for delivering houses where the Council brings different people together to build properties? What can the Cabinet do about this to encourage economic development?

Response: It would be for the contracts manager to look at this as it is they who manage the contract.

Members question whether this was a role HOWPS should be undertaking on behalf of the Council. It was suggested that what was required was someone to oversee the building of properties to ensure value for money and to provide accountability. Apprenticeships were not working in Powys and there is a need for a strategy where schools guide young people into apprenticeships.

Question / Comment: With the timescale for building the new properties this feels like a slow process – will the timescale slip and can this be completed at a reasonable cost?

Response: Building properties can be a slow process with Housing Associations estimating it can take 3 to 4 years for a development to be completed. The Affordable Housing Team has assessed over 180 sites for their suitability. In addition the Council needs to be careful about building too many single bedroom properties for the elderly as there could be support need if a person falls ill. The other consideration is that the cost of building 2 bedroom properties is not much more than building single bedroom properties.

The Head of Housing and Community Development was asked to comment on the recent press speculation regarding Jiscourt going into administration, who had been appointed to develop properties for the Council in Newtown. The Committee was advised that the Council had not received formal notification that Jiscourt had gone into administration. However options were being considered so that in the event that formal notification was received the Council could move quickly following notification. Members would receive an update once further information was available.

7.	SCRUTINY OBSERVER - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP
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The Committee was requested to appoint a Scrutiny Observer on the Local Development Plan Working Group.

RESOLVED that County Councillor P Pritchard be appointed as the scrutiny observer on the Local Development Plan Working Group.

8.	REPORT OF WORKING GROUPS
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The Committee received the observation report of the Joint Scrutiny Working Group regarding the Vision 2025 Annual Report and Update which met on 11 June 2019.

9.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee received a copy of the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

Other Business.

The Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services apologised to the Committee that the appointment of the Vice-Chair had not been included on the agenda. However, the Committee were in agreement that the matter should be considered as an additional item.

RESOLVED that County Councillor G Jones be elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

**County Councillor G Jones
Chair**