Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Regeneration

Environmental Action Team (TREAT)

held at the Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Tuesday, 4th December, 2018 at 4:00 pm

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PRESENT

Councillors: D. R. Sinnett (Chairman) L. J. Bridges

Miss K. Gray C. A. Sharp

County Councillor S. T. Hudson MBE

Mr. D. Betteley, Business Manager, Finance and Revenues, Pembrokeshire County Council

Ms. S. Henehan, Community Safety, Poverty and Regeneration Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council

Mr. N. McCarthy, Operations Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council

Mrs S. Oliver, Business Change Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council

Ms. C. Stowell, Director of Property and Tourism, Port of Milford Haven

154. CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS:

The Chairman of the Town Regeneration Environmental Action Team (TREAT), Councillor D. R. Sinnett, welcomed all present to the first Meeting of the combined Environmental Action Team and Town Regeneration Team since the latter Group was discontinued in July 2018.

Chaired by Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) at the time of its cessation, the Town Regeneration Team consisted of a large number of Town Councillors, resulting in many of the discussions being duplicated at Town Council Meetings.

Following this new structure of TREAT, the Chairman spoke of his hope that organisations local to Milford Haven, such as Milford Youth Matters, would participate

at future TREAT Meetings.

The Chairman suggested that TREAT works on their Terms of Reference, redefining the purpose of the Team.

Ms. S. Henehan, Community Safety, Poverty and Regeneration Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, provided background information on the Haverfordwest Town Team and said that she would forward literature from other equivalent groups in Pembrokeshire so TREAT can proceed in the most advantageous manner.

Mrs S. Oliver, Business Change Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, and Mr. D. Betteley, Business Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, joined the Meeting at this point.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT a Terms of Reference /

Town Regeneration framework be produced ready for

discussion at a future TREAT Meeting.

155. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from the Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor T. J. Davies, and Councillors W. D. Elliott BA QTS, E. R. Harries, M. P. Rickard, Mrs Y. G. Southwell, Mrs L. E. Turner, G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons), and the Youth Representatives, Miss A. Coaker and Miss B. Roberts. Apologies were also received from County Councillors M. and Mrs. V. Stoddart, Ms. S. Hooper (Grants Manager, Port of Milford Haven), Mr. D. Gibby (Project Coordinator, Milford Youth Matters) and Ms. M. Williams from Keep Wales Tidy Pembrokeshire.

156. TO RECEIVE MRS S. OLIVER, BUSINESS CHANGE MANAGER, AND MR. D. BETTELEY, BUSINESS MANAGER, PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, TO DISCUSS ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Oliver and Mr. Betteley to the Meeting.

The Pembrokeshire County Council introduced an Environmental Enforcement Policy which was implemented from 10th September 2018. Uniformed Officers operate throughout the county on the streets, car parks, and other open land to which the public has access. Individuals seen to be littering, not clearing up after their dog/s or engaging in anti-social behaviour are issued with an FPN – a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Mrs Oliver advised that she wished to enlighten all present about the work of the Enforcement Team, touching upon the successes and challenges the Team has been facing, and providing an idea as to what can be done in the town of Milford Haven to support this work.

County Councillors had raised concerns over various waste related matters around Pembrokeshire, ranging from bin bags being left outside properties on the incorrect day for collection, to the contamination of residual waste streams.

These concerns prompted a recognition that there was a requirement for Enforcement. Whilst there is both legislation and a provision to carry out Enforcement the Pembrokeshire County Council would default to the clear up policy such as bin bags being left outside on the wrong day and fly tipping, which had previously worked very well. Austerity has also been a contributing factor in the introduction of the Environmental Enforcement Policy as there has been a significant strain on County Council cleaning resources.

Mrs Oliver stated that, as the Pembrokeshire County Council is a Local Authority, procurement procedures were necessary. This was a lengthy process and in the summer of 2018 a tender was put in place. There was a company that presented an exceptionally good tender and provided references from a number of local authorities that they were working with, predominantly in England.

Mrs Oliver stressed that this is a pilot policy. She indicated that there had been a public demand for such a policy but the reception had not been overwhelmingly positive. There are aspirations for the scheme to eventually reach a second phase which features bin bags being left on the wrong day for collection and low-level fly tipping.

Mrs Oliver advised that, as of the day of this Meeting (4th December), 1172 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued, which is a significant number in a reasonably short period of time.

945 Notices were issued between 10th September to 9th November 2018.

On the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22nd November there were 1172 Fixed Penalty Notices.

Out of those tickets issued, 940 were for littering, of which 917 concerned cigarette butts or smoking related litter. 23 were generated for general littering (sweet wrappers / soft drink containers) and 4 for dog fouling. By the time of the Meeting there were 8 fixed penalty notices for dog fouling. Additional time has been apportioned to dog fouling so that the officers are now moving to about 25% of their patrolling hours specifically on dog fouling and dog fouling hotspots within the County. They have issued one notice for flyposting.

Mrs Oliver stated that there is an opportunity for the Notices to be paid at a reduced fee of £75 within the first 7 days, with the fee increasing to £150 after this time. Pembrokeshire County Council adopted these values because of the environmental pressures and because they wanted these values to act as a significant deterrent regarding littering and dog fouling offences. The Pembrokeshire County Council intends to embark upon Court proceedings for 10 cases of non-payment. The Pembrokeshire County Council is also working with the Magistrates Court to develop a Single Justice Procedure within Pembrokeshire which will streamline and facilitate the Court process, obviating unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

Enforcement Patrols have been extensively undertaken across the County. The location of the Patrols is usually predicated on intelligence received by a range of sources. Mrs Oliver indicated that Town Councillors at this afternoon’s Meeting may wish to act upon any particular areas of concern that they may have and the Pembrokeshire County Council would look to incorporate such areas into their ongoing programme of inspections.

Mrs Oliver acknowledged that the some of the Notices issued regarding smoking related litter had been contentious. Mrs Oliver then advised that Keep Wales Tidy had issued a report in 2018 relating to the frequency of the litter from smoking related products and cigarette butts in particular. The Keep Wales Tidy report states that smoking related litter is the most widespread litter found on the streets of Wales and this has been the case ever since Keep Wales Tidy commenced their street cleanliness surveys on a nationwide basis in 2007 / 2008. It is estimated that cleaning up smoking related litter in Wales costs £18.7 million per year (c. 2012). The impact of cigarette litter is vast, impacting upon our communities and coastal marine areas.

Mr. N. McCarthy, Operations Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, advised that he works with the Enforcement team on a daily basis and that the scheme is making a real and positive difference.

The working hours of the Enforcement teams were queried. The contracted hours are generally from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm, but could be scheduled up until 10:00 pm. Mrs Oliver advised there is flexibility – as the season shifts into spring the Officers will visit identified areas which cannot be monitored during the scheduled hours.

The Officers can visit any area of land unless they are denied permission by the landowner. Safeguarding procedures are respected and adhered to. GDPR legislation has posed difficulties as a complete mailshot to all businesses was not possible, resulting in face to face negotiations which have taken longer.

This Policy is not actually costing the Local Authority anything. It is a model which is based on fixed penalties, introduced on a budget of zero. There should be a surplus coming in to the Local Authority. This surplus, however, will not be going into the general fund – it must be spent on environment related initiatives.

It was asked if any signage had been erected advising that the area was patrolled. There is some signage on display and the Officers also wear uniforms and carry clear identification. The Pembrokeshire County Council advertised the Policy in the local press and social media before it was implemented.

Mrs Oliver advised that, as of 21st November 2018, 230 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued within the Milford Haven vicinity. The Pembrokeshire County Council Policy is that only those aged 18 and above are issued with penalties. It was emphasised that this is not about criminalising people but changing their behaviour. The Pembrokeshire County Council received 40 appeals against Fixed Penalty Notices in September 2018. 33 of those appeals were declined but 7 were upheld – 4 from those under the age of 18. 36 appeals were lodged in October and 5 were upheld; 12 appeals in November and 3 were upheld.

The Enforcement Officers have all been through a vigorous training programme. They are fitted with body cam software, which can be inspected by the Pembrokeshire County Council. There is a data system in place which verifies addresses, negating the actions of those who may give false information.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Oliver and Mr. D. Betteley, Business Manager, Finance and Revenues, Pembrokeshire County Council, for their presentation.

157. PLASTIC FREE INITIATIVES:

The Chairman advised that the Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, is very supportive of this initiative and has been in contact with the Milford Haven Soroptimists regarding this project.

Ms. C. Stowell, Director of Property and Tourism, Port of Milford Haven, said that she was more than happy to promote a plastic free initiative on the Marina.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT:

(i) Mrs J. Walters from the Milford Haven Soroptimists

be invited to the next Meeting of TREAT.

158. ENHANCING PEMBROKESHIRE GRANT:

On 1st April 2017 the Pembrokeshire County Council agreed to charge second home owners an extra 50% of Council Tax. For the first year – 2017 / 2018 – that money went into a general “second homes” account.

The Chairman explained that 50% of this money is allocated to housing development with the other 50% set aside for working with those communities most impacted in relation to second homes.

Ms. Henehan provided information on the grant process and advised that it is vital to understand that holiday lets pay business rates and are not part of the scheme.

Ms. Henehan explained that applicants have to keep in mind how they are going to project the negative impact of second homes in their community.

Milford Haven has 6,900 total dwellings in the community, 127 second homes and an available funding allocation of £21,603.

Ms. Henehan said that she would be pleased to walk through the application process at a workshop in the New Year.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT a workshop is

to be arranged in the New Year with Ms.

Henehan advising on the grant process.

159. 2019 FLOWER REQUIREMENTS IN MILFORD HAVEN:

The Group discussed the quotation from the Pembrokeshire County Council for the provision of flowers for 2019 in the sum of £4,925.32 to include planting, maintenance and watering. As the plants needed to be ordered as quickly as possible, it was necessary to decide without delay whether the quotation would be accepted.

The Chairman read out an extract from a report which stated that at the Full Council meeting held on 27th November, 2017, it was agreed to ask the Pembrokeshire County Council whether it would be possible for the expenditure allocated for funding the two towers in Charles Street to be diverted to increase the number of hanging baskets in Charles Street.

An officer from the Pembrokeshire County Council had explained that, although not impossible, this would be more complicated and more costly, as the walls need to be tested to be weight bearing to take the weight of the brackets. At that time the brackets costed £90 each. A lot of places are not suitable for the brackets. If a bracket is fixed to a shop, the shop owner would have to insure for liability.

It had been agreed to refer this issue to TREAT for further discussion.

The Group agreed to keep the two towers in Charles Street and discussed whether it would be possible to utilise the funds received from the Town Regeneration Team to assist businesses in the Town who wished to have hanging baskets outside their premises. The Group would look at how the funds would be distributed when there was an indication of interest.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT:

(i) TREAT recommends that the flower quotation

from Pembrokeshire County Council be

accepted;

(ii) in view of the timescale, the Chairman is to

ask for Full Council’s approval at the Meeting

to be held on 6th December;

(iii) the two towers be kept in Charles Street;

(iv) shopkeepers in Charles Street be contacted to

gauge the level of interest in having hanging

baskets outside their premises.

160. JUDGING OF DOG WASTE STICKERS COMPETITION:

The Group selected 3 winners of the Dog Waste Sticker Competition.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT the Clerk contacts

the Printing Department of the Pembrokeshire

County Council to obtain costings for the

production of the stickers.

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