

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at The Council Headquarters, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Monday 11th November 2013, at 5.00 p.m.

Present

County Borough Councillor G R Davies – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

J Bonetto	S Bradwick	G Holmes	(Mrs) L De Vet	J Elliott
G Holmes	(Mrs) S Pickering	S Powderhill	(Mrs) A Roberts	R K Turner
J Watts	T Williams			

Officers

Mr G Jones – Group Director, Environmental Services
Mr N Brinn – Service Director, Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects
Mr H Thomas - Highways Technical Services Manager
Mr S Owen – Head of Streetcare
Mr A Wilkins – Corporate & Democratic Services Solicitor

26. MINUTES SILENCE

To commemorate Armistice Day the Committee observed a minute's silence.

27. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Committee's condolences were offered to both Cllr G Thomas and Mr N Wheeler, following their recent family bereavements.

28. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P Howe, L Langford, S Rees-Owen, G Smith and (Mrs) M Tegg.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct there were no personal interests pertaining to the agenda, declared at the meeting.

30. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 7th October, 2013 as an accurate record.

REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

31 'COLLECTION OF INCONTINENCE PADS' WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF.

The Head of StreetCare referred Members to the report before them which identified the recent changes for the collection of incontinence pads and nappies, in line with the nappy recycling scheme and also provided information in relation to disposal of clinical waste.

The Committee were provided with details of the previous method of collection of incontinence pads, which, up until the recent changes in the service was undertaken through weekly black bag/bin collection service in line with current legislation. Following the introduction of the fortnightly collections of black bag / bin's the Council introduced a weekly 'opt in' nappy recycling scheme whereby a resident can register to be part of the free scheme and have nappies collected in a weekly basis. The Committee were advised of the success of the scheme with in excess of 5000 requests, with a number of these requests being related to the collection of incontinence pads.

The Committee were advised that of the 5000 requests for bins, around 3000 had been delivered with the remainder on hold until resourcing issues in relation to collection had been established. It was added that the number of request for the service had far outweighed what was expected and as a result the service currently did not have the resources to meet the demand. The Head of Streetcare proceeded to advise of the issues identified with the collection of incontinence pads for some residents partaking in the service, with the main issue being in relation to the size of bins needed and therefore the handling issues for both the user of the service and collection operatives due to the sheer weight.

Members provided insight into the feedback that they were receiving for the service and commented upon the excellent take up, further improving recycling and landfill rates.

One Member queried whether there were any patterns of request across the County Borough and the Head of Streetcare confirmed that there were no patterns, providing further complexities for efficient collections across the County Borough. Members of the Committee proceeded to question on the communication strategies in place, identifying when a service user no longer requires the service. The Head of StreetCare commented that the service collectors analyse and review the collections and service users would be contacted if they withdrew from the service.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

32 ROADS AND STREETWORKS

Through his report and with the aid of a Powerpoint presentation the Service Director, Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects advised Members of

the responsibilities of the section in the co-ordination and control of all road openings within the County Borough, and summarised the performance of the Statutory Undertakers to date.

The Committee were advised that the introduction of the NRASW Act 1991, was to ensure that all road works within the highway (undertaken by statutory undertakers and other organisations) were properly co-ordinated and completed to an acceptable national standard. This included signing and guarding at work sites and the quality of reinstatements to the highway. In addition to the Act, there are agreed Codes of Practice which cover an inspection regime, co-ordination of street works, reinstatement specification, safety at street works and apparatus which are affected by street works

The Committee were provided further information relating to the random inspections and investigatory inspections undertaken following complaints and Members were advised that in 2012/13 783 defective openings were identified. The Service Director proceeded to advise of the Coring program undertaken and the charges levied for each failed core, including a charge for the defective inspection. The Committee were further informed of the active role the department undertake in encouraging performance of the statutory undertakers and the ways in which this is conducted through 100% category C inspections and coring programme.

The Officer proceeded to advise of Overstays on the Highway, Fixed Penalty Notices, Private Openings and Defective Apparatus, with the Committee being advised that the Council has no ability to charge a fee associated with defective apparatus. Details regarding skips, scaffolding, temporary traffic lights and road closures were also provided to the Committee through the PowerPoint presentation, with road closure fees charged on actual costs. The Service Director, Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects reiterated to Members the importance for local intelligence and requested Members to contact the department with any reports.

Members queried the Director on the problematic placement of skips within residential parking zones and whether trailers fell under the same category. The Service Director confirmed that unfortunately trailers are not covered by the regulations and that a balance needs to be drawn between allowing residents close access to their properties with skips for building works and not inconveniencing neighbouring properties. Time limiting skip placements is one method of controlling the matter.

Members commented on the local intelligence they could provide the service and it was mooted that a briefing document raising awareness of potential issues would greatly assist Members and the Service Director agreed to provide one for circulation via member services.

The Committee **RESOLVED:-**

- a) To note the information within the report.

- b) That a briefing note raising awareness of potential issues within the subject area be provided to Committee Members.

Cllr G Davies
Chairman

The meeting closed at 5:55pm.