

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 5

*1<sup>st</sup> December 2014*

*Medium Term Service Planning  
Progress Report*

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR;  
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES AND CORPORATE &  
FRONTLINE SERVICES**

**Author(s): Paul Mee, Service Director, Public Health & Protection**  
Tel. No. 01443 425513  
**Nigel Wheeler, Director of Highways & Streetcare Services**  
Tel: No. 01443 827707

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide Members with an update on service change proposals approved under the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that Members:-

- Note the content of this report.
- Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 As part of the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements a number of services delivered within the remit of the former Environmental Services Group have been subject to review to identify service change proposals. This has been undertaken in the context of the need to reduce spend and enable the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibility and set a balanced budget from 2015/16.

3.2 The service areas/service change proposals that have been considered to date are:

- Arts & Cultural Services
- Leisure Services
- Parks & Countryside
- Public Health & Protection
- CCTV
- Charging for New/Replacement Wheelie Bins
- Street Cleansing
- Street Lighting
- Passenger Transport

3.3 The service areas/services listed below are the next areas which are being reviewed, this is currently work in progress and a further report will be delivered to ESG Scrutiny once the detailed work has been completed.

- Waste Services
- Transportation
- ESG Business Support
- Highways Maintenance
- Highways Technical Services
- Strategic Projects

#### **4 SUMMARY OF SERVICE CHANGE PROPOSALS**

##### **Arts & Cultural Services**

4.1 The service change proposals for Arts & Cultural Services were considered and approved by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014. It was determined that there be a reduction in the number of theatres from three to two with the Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd confirmed for closure.

4.2 The remaining service will continue to lead on and be part of the “Arts Connect” initiative with a revised management structure comprising appropriate levels of technical resources and arts development outreach resources, delivering a balanced but reduced programme centred on the two remaining theatres (Coliseum, Aberdare and Park & Dare, Treorchy) supplemented with greater outreach activity.

##### **Leisure Services**

4.3 The service change proposals for Leisure Services were considered and approved by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014. It was determined by Members that Llantrisant Leisure centre, Rhondda Sports Centre and Michael Sobell Sports Centre all be retained as core centres. In addition Abercynon, Hawthorn, Rhondda Fach and Tonyrefail Leisure centres be retained as satellite centres with reduced opening hours.

4.4 A number of other decisions were made concerning enhanced marketing of the facilities through the use of social media; the removal of Jacuzzis in Abercynon and Hawthorn centres and the operation of bars at both facilities on a full cost recovery basis. In addition, the management structure across the service was to be reviewed to establish a leaner, more efficient structure.

4.5 Officers were instructed to work with existing trusts, community groups or third sector organisations, who may wish to create a trust to maintain the future for Bronwydd Pool and Llantwit Fardre Leisure centre. Members requested a further report in relation to Bronwydd Pool and Llantwit Fardre Leisure centre before the end of this financial year in order to consider the longer term future of the centres.

4.6 Officers have been requested to undertake a broader piece of work to establish the viability of a trust model for leisure services in Rhondda Cynon Taf for future consideration by the Cabinet.

##### **Parks & Countryside**

4.7 The service change proposals for the Parks & Countryside were considered and approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014. It was agreed to reconfigure the service, specifically to:

- Remove permanent attendants from all parks other than Darren Park and Aberdare Park;
  - Transfer static Groundsmen from Rhondda Parks to a mobile service;
  - Reduce the cleansing/maintenance of parks;
  - Reduce the quality of appearance of green spaces outside park borders due to a reduced capacity for design and reduced frequency of grass cutting;
  - Reduce Council establishment grounds maintenance, e.g. day centre offices;
  - Optimise the management arrangements across the service and other staffing efficiencies.
- 4.8 In addition it was determined that a consultation exercise be undertaken with users of the sports facilities on the introduction and level of charges proposed and that the results of this consultation be reported back to Cabinet in order for it to be determined whether and if so how it wishes to proceed with the proposal.
- 4.9 In relation to the Countryside service it was agreed that there would be a reduction in the capacity to support environmental and education projects.
- 4.10 It is proposed to retain Dare Valley Country Park but to seek to identify another provider to run the catering function, to cease to operate the hotel facility and to continue to provide camping facilities.

#### **Public Health & Protection**

- 4.11 The service change proposals for Public Health & Protection were considered and approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The following service changes were agreed;
- To introduce a charge for all Pest Control treatments. This will be £25 for rats, mice and bed bugs and £45 for all other pests;
  - To explore collaborative service delivery on the use of kennels and standby services in relation to Animal Control;
  - To reconfigure Bereavement Services and review Registration Services;
  - To reconfigure Environmental Health Services, including a reduction in service standards;
  - To reconfigure Trading Standards Services, including a reduction in service standards;
  - To reconfigure Licensing Services, including a reduction in service standards.

#### **CCTV**

- 4.12 The service change proposals for CCTV were considered and approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The following service changes were agreed;
- To reconfigure the control room to reduce the number of CCTV Operators required for staffed surveillance from three to two Operators.
  - That staffed surveillance is targeted to the times of greatest incident profiles.

#### **Street Lighting**

- 4.13 The service change proposals for Street Lighting were considered and approved by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The following service changes were agreed;
- To maintain all streetlighting during times of peak road usage and switch off lighting between the hours of midnight and 5am in accordance with the following rationale;  
a) Part night lighting of all streetlights in non residential areas; PLUS

- b) Part night lighting of alternate streetlights in residential areas; PLUS
- c) Maintain lighting in potentially sensitive areas but to review the level of provision and implement alternate options between midnight and 5am where feasible.

### **Passenger Transport**

- 4.14 The service change proposals for Street Lighting were considered and approved by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The following service changes were agreed;
- To reduced the Council budget to support bus services by £0.4M to £0.441M per year.

### **Charging for New/Replacement Wheelie Bins**

- 4.15 A proposal to introduce a charge of £25 per bin to cover the cost of the Council acquiring and delivering a new or replacement wheelie bin was considered and approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

### **Street Cleansing**

- 4.16 A proposal to reconfigure the provision of Street cleansing was considered and approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The proposal will maintain the daily cleansing of all Zone 1 areas with Zone 2 & 3 areas being targeted in response to the service inspection regime (plus customer feedback); zone 2 & 3 “hotspots” will be cleansed on a fortnightly basis.

## **5 PROGRESS WITH SERVICE CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 The programme of events at the Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd concluded on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and the centre was closed to the public for the remainder of October. Discussions are ongoing with the Muni Working Group on a potential community asset transfer of the facility.
- 5.2 The associated organisational and staffing changes associated with the reduction in service have been undertaken and are nearing completion. The remainder of 2014/15 is considered a transitional period for the service as it moves from the current events and arts participation programme to a reduced balanced programme in 2015/16 delivered from the two retained theatres.
- 5.3 The impact of the service change on local amateur arts groups that regularly hire the theatres is being addressed, as is the relationship with the Arts Council of Wales which revenue funds the theatre programme and the service's co-production work with professional artists.
- 5.4 The Head of Leisure, Parks & Countryside gave members of this committee a verbal update on the implementation of the service changes at the committee meeting held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014.
- 5.5 In summary, the savings in Leisure Services will be achieved through a reduction in the programme and opening hours across the service amounting to approximately 7,000 hours. Despite this reduction in service every effort has been made to accommodate popular usage times and to meet the needs of the various sports clubs that utilise the centres on a regular basis. The new operating hours will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The management and staffing structure of the service has been reconfigured and reorganised and enhanced marketing campaigns have been put in place utilising social media.
- 5.6 Work is underway by Officers in relation to the future of Bronwydd Pool and Llantwit Fardre Leisure Centre and this will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet. In addition work is being undertaken on the viability of moving Leisure Services into a Trust model and this will also be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.
- 5.7 The service changes proposed for Parks & Countryside, Public Health & Protection, CCTV and Street Cleansing are currently subject to staff and trade union consultation which is due to end this month, after which any representations received will be carefully considered by the service management prior to implementation.
- 5.8 The service change to charge for wheelie bin replacement is currently being worked through with a proposed implementation date of the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015.
- 5.9 The service change proposals for street lighting are currently being implemented with almost 3,000 lighting units now operating as part night units. Significant progress has been made on conversions across industrial estates and some main traffic routes with most residential areas in the Rhondda Fach and the top of the Rhondda Fawr now converted. The asset inventory which informs the energy charges is currently being updated to reflect ongoing reductions in energy demand and incremental savings in energy costs will accrue on a monthly basis until the project is complete at the end of this financial year.
- 5.10 The service changes for the reduction in financial support for public transport services has been implemented in full with the changes coming into effect on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014 following expiry of contract termination notice periods and appropriate notice of

service changes to the Traffic Commissioner. The changes will yield in-year savings of £167,000.

## **6 SAVINGS ACHIEVED FROM SERVICE CHANGE PROPOSALS**

- 6.1 The savings to be delivered by the implementation of the approved service change proposals are summarised in Table I. (based on a full year projection)

<b>Service Area/Proposal</b>	<b>Saving (mil)</b>
Arts & Cultural Services	£0.400
Leisure Services	£1.200
Parks & Countryside	£0.930
Public Health & Protection	£0.855
CCTV	£0.181
Charging for Wheelie Bins	£0.094
Street Cleansing	£0.664
Street Lighting	£0.301
Passenger Transport	£0.400
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£5,025</b>

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Following detailed service reviews a range of service change proposals have been considered and approved by Cabinet in relation to services falling within the remit of the former Environmental Services Group and this Scrutiny Committee. These service changes are in varying stages of implementation but will make a significant contribution towards setting a balance budget for the Council in 2015/16.