

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at the Council Headquarters, The Pavilions, Clydach
Vale on Monday, 13th March 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor G. R. Davies – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs) J. Bonetto	P. Howe
S. A. Bradwick	L. Langford
S. Carter	M. Weaver
(Mrs) A. Davies	T. Williams
J. Elliott	R. Yeo
G. Holmes	

Officers

Mr N. Wheeler – Director Highways & Streetcare Services
Mr A. Wilkins – Head of Legal – Corporate & Democratic Services
J. Nicholls – Senior Democratic Services Officer

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs)
L. De. Vet and S. Pickering.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no personal declarations
of interests made, pertaining to the agenda.

54. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of
the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
held on the 13th February 2017 subject to it being noted that Minute No.51
should read that the national recycling target of 70% is set for 2024/25 and not
2014/15 as set out in the Minutes.

55. CONSULTATION ON DOG FOULING

The Director of Highways and Streetcare Services provided an overview of the Council's Dog Fouling Consultation which is seeking to clampdown on irresponsible dog owners in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It was reported that the proposal being considered is the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which, if adopted would enable the Council to tackle dog fouling and irresponsible dog ownership.

In addition, Scrutiny was advised that the consultation is also seeking residents' views on the following:-

- The prohibition of dog fouling in all public places,
- A requirement that dogs are kept on leads in play grounds & cemeteries owned/maintained by the Council,
- A requirement to carry bags, or other suitable means, for the disposal of dog faeces,
- A requirement allowing authorised officers to give a direction that a dog be put and kept on a lead if necessary and,
- A prohibition excluding dogs from all schools and marked sports pitches owned/maintained by the Council.

Scrutiny was informed that the consultation process would have direct input from members of the Public as well as South Wales Police and many other stakeholder groups such as the Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG). There has also been a wide range of local engagement events involving the Police, Council Officers and PCSO's to seek residents' views in respect of the consultation.

Following the presentation, the Director of Highways and Streetcare Services invited comments from members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee which would then form part of the response to the consultation process.

Members expressed concern in respect of the staffing levels which would be required to oversee the PSPO should it be implemented, particularly to patrol areas which have been designated as play areas and all marked sport pitches owned or maintained by the Council. The Director confirmed that more authorised officers would be required to enforce the PSPO and would be an area for further consideration following the consultation. He added that should the PSPO be implemented, each of the Council's parks would be given due consideration as to the areas covered by the PSPO as well as the number and location of signs in respect of the designated play areas and sports pitches. It was anticipated that this process would take some time.

A Member requested that signs are placed in clear, prominent places and that they should be clearly marked to indicate that dogs are 'kept on a lead' rather than 'kept under control'. It was explained that in areas not owned or maintained by the Council, further discussions would be undertaken in order to establish whether patrols are required.

Members asked for clarification in respect of disabled residents, particularly those in a wheelchair, who claim they are unable to take responsibility for collecting and disposing of their dog faeces. It was clarified by the Legal Officer present that each case would be considered on its merit and dealt with on a case by case basis. It was confirmed that the proposed PSPO would not apply to those residents who use an assistance dog or '*to a person who has some other disability such that he/she cannot reasonably be expected to remove faeces*'.

Scrutiny was informed that currently it is an offence not to clean up after your dog and failure to do so can result in a fixed penalty of £75 but the Council consultation process includes the proposal to increase the fixed penalty to £100, the maximum permitted under legislation. Some Members considered that the permitted maximum amount of £100 for a fixed penalty too lenient.

Scrutiny felt that the introduction of compulsory dog microchipping would prevent many of the problems faced due to irresponsible dog ownership and dog fouling.

Several Members emphasised that this is not an exercise against responsible dog owners, who are in the majority, but simply targeted at those irresponsible dog owners.

In response to a query, the Director confirmed that the revenue from the fixed penalties would contribute to the cost of additional dog bins and new signage and added that the sole intention of the consultation is to target dog fouling and dog control across the County Borough not to raise additional revenue.

Members suggested that additional complimentary dog bags are made available for members of the public should the PSPO be introduced (the Director of Highways & Streetcare Services confirmed this has been arranged). Scrutiny also commended the evident availability of dog bins throughout the County Borough and failed to understand why some residents still leave their dog bags in inappropriate places. The Director confirmed that he would inform Scrutiny of the cost for each dog bin following the meeting.

A Member suggested that schools should be involved with the consultation as many children are responsible for walking the family dog. Scrutiny was advised that people of all ages have been considered as part of the consultation process such as the Young Persons and 50+ forums.

In conclusion Scrutiny praised the proposal to introduce the Public Spaces Protection Order and **RESOLVED** that the comments made this day be incorporated in to the Council's formal consultation process.

The meeting closed at 5.40pm

Chairman
G. R. Davies