



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday, 12 September 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Committee Room 1, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Park, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Bradwick (Chair)

Councillor T Williams	Councillor M Weaver
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor A Chapman
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor W Treeby
Councillor D Grehan	Councillor E George
Councillor G Hughes	Councillor W Owen
Councillor M Diamond	

Cabinet Member

Councillor A Crimmings, Cabinet Member Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services

51 Apologies

An apology of absence was provided by County Borough Councillors A.S. Fox and S. Pickering.

52 Welcome

The Chair extended a welcome to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services who was in attendance to update scrutiny members with an update on progress made in advancing her portfolio responsibilities.

53 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

54 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 11th July 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

55 Cabinet & Scrutiny Engagement

The Group Director, Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services provided an

overview of the portfolio responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services to include key areas within Waste Services, Street Cleansing and grass cutting, facilities cleaning, leisure and play areas.

The Group Director reported that through awareness raising and media campaigns as well as working directly with communities and residents, the provisional recycling rate for the County Borough has reached over 68% for the first quarter, exceeding the 64% target for 2019/20 set by Welsh Government. The targeted engagement with communities and schools through various recycling competitions means that RCT is close to achieving its future target of 70%.

The Group Director indicated that the Eco Park development and new MRF, currently being installed in Bryn Pica would open up further opportunities for RCT in achieving its Welsh Government targets. Members were assured that further to the installation and development of the MRF facility in Bryn Pica, a site visit would be arranged for Scrutiny to see first-hand the efficiency and effectiveness of the new equipment which will improve the quantity and quality of recyclable materials.

The Group Director praised the street cleansing services as one of the most productive and effective service which can be evidenced by the decrease in the amount of dog fouling and graffiti on the streets of RCT, 97.6% of which were graded as B and above the 2017/18 all Wales figure of 95.8%. He also reported a decrease in the number of fly tipping incidents, despite the change to the waste collection allowance. Surveillance, patrols and a combination of enforcement action has impacted positively on this activity which can be a blight on the environment.

The Group Director was pleased to announce that a further three schools have opted to utilise the in house cleaning services of the Council which will generate additional income. The cleaners are trained to a high standard and the work is monitored on a regular basis with open communication between the Heads of the Schools and the Council to ensure a high standard of cleaning is maintained. The Group Director also referred to the investment made to the 18 public conveniences and 24 urinals across the County Borough to modernise the facilities, it was noted by Committee that no public conveniences have been closed.

With regards to the Council's fleet, the Group Director explained that the cyclical fleet replacement programme is looking at ways to reduce the Council's overall fleet size by undertaking service reviews to reduce the number of vehicles and the operational costs. He reported on a number of challenges facing the service such as vehicle purchase prices and the severe industry shortage of qualified motor mechanics. Members were informed that the fleet is striving to meet the latest design standards in Carbon/NOX gas emissions.

Other areas within the Cabinet Member's portfolio include the Civil Parking Enforcement Service which has successfully assumed the responsibility for back-office PCN processing function from Merthyr Tydfil and since has received a number of expressions of interest from other local authorities for this Council to conduct the work on their behalf.

In conclusion the Group Director, Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services provided an update on issues within the countryside and public rights of way

service areas such as its continued development of the biodiversity grassland management programme and the Council's significant investment in its leisure facilities and development of the 4G pitches across the county borough.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee posed a number of questions following the presentation. A query was raised in respect of the new MRF facility in Bryn Pica and whether it can identify black plastic through its new technological process. The Group Director confirmed that the new system is fully able to process all materials and in large quantities which will improve the recovery of recyclable materials.

With regards to tackling dog fouling and the introduction of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) from October 2017, additional staff resources have been identified to enforce the dog fouling which, together with awareness raising campaigns has reduced the percentage of dog fouling incidents. The Group Director assured Members that the enforcement teams target hotspots and undertake patrols as resources allow but it can be difficult to cover the whole of the County Borough. He confirmed that there were no plans in place to change the provision for dedicated dog bins in RCT.

Members praised the Council's recycling process as being effective and easy for residents to undertake. However, Members raised concerns that some residents are still unaware of what they can recycle and asked if there was value in the Council reducing the frequency of its residual waste collection to show that recycling is a key priority for the Council. The Group Director referred to the National Behavioural Change campaign which would be looking to educate the public as to what they are able to recycle as a more effective way of interacting with and informing residents of RCT.

Members agreed that the Street Cleansing Service has made excellent progress and is successfully maintaining a high standard of cleanliness of our streets and highways. In particular, the team at Dinas Depot was praised for being reactive and responsive.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services endorsed the good work of the staff within each of the service areas within her portfolio and praised the good working relationships between Councillors and Officers to produce effective and clear results in areas such as street cleansing and recycling. The Cabinet Member referred to the recent community recycling engagement day in Rhydfelin as a great example of Members and Officers working together to achieve the same goal. In this instance to support and advise residents on the Council's recycling process and to improve engagement where possible.

The Cabinet Member reported on the Council's significant investment in its leisure facilities such as the new upgrades at Rhondda Fach Leisure Centre which has prompted an increase in its membership. She referred to the town centre investments across the County Borough such as LLys Cadwyn in Pontypridd and to the heritage and visitor attractions across RCT which have gained recognition and received a number of accolades.

In response to a query as to how the play areas are prioritised for refurbishment, the Cabinet Member clarified that a full assessment is undertaken to identify the play areas that are in need and this remains a core commitment of the Council as this year as further funding has been allocated.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Acknowledge the information in the report and in the update of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services; and
2. Receive additional information in respect of:-
 - i) The number of baby changing facilities available across the county borough; and
 - ii) The number of home to school transport appeals in respect of bus passes received annually.

56 Recycling in Communal Areas

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presented the final report of the Scrutiny Working Group which was established to deal with 'Recycling in Communal Areas' and he asked members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider and endorse the recommendations to the Council's Cabinet.

Members were reminded that the Working Group was set up following a presentation to Committee by the Group Director, Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services at its meeting on the 27th September 2018 which highlighted the concerns around the increase in black bags, contaminated recycling and fly tipping at communal bin collection points (BCP's). Members resolved to set up a working group to address the concerns relating to issues at the BCP's and to consider the development of future policy.

At its inaugural meeting the working group established two sub groups to consider and progress two specific programmes of work and officers from the Council's Waste team and Democratic Services joined forces to arrange a public engagement day in Rhydfelin which had been identified as part of a trial to improve some of the concerns.

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications referred members to the 16 recommendations set out in the report which had been formulated by the working group to be considered by Cabinet.

The Chair wished to extend his gratitude to all the Council Officers involved in the work and gave particular thanks to the lead officer in Waste Services for her commitment to the project. He hoped that the children involved in the art competition would be invited to see their artwork being printed.

Whilst reviewing the recommendations, in particular recommendation 16 relating to the provision of two additional enforcement officers to be provided to the Waste Service department, concern was raised that should that particular recommendation be implemented at this time, it could have a potential detrimental impact on resources elsewhere within the service area. In view of this, a motion was put forward that a caveat be attached to recommendation 16 as follows:-

'that consideration of recommendation 16 is delayed until after the Council's Revenue Budget (Provisional Settlement) is known.'

A vote was taken on the matter, the motion fell and it was resolved to submit the recommendations in their entirety, as set out in the report, for the consideration of the Cabinet.

This meeting closed at 6.10 pm

**Cllr S Bradwick
Chairman**