

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: County Councillor Mitchell(Chairperson)
County Councillors Clark, Davis, Hyde, Lomax, McKerlich, Merry
and Cook

45 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Article 16 of the Members' Code of Conduct to declare any interests in general terms and complete personal interest forms at the start of the meeting and then, prior to the commencement of the discussions of the item in question, specify whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest. If the interest is prejudicial, Members would be asked to leave the meeting, and if the interest is personal, Members would be invited to stay, speak and vote.

46 : MINUTES

AGREED – That approval of the minutes of the 9 December 2014 meeting be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on 10 March 2015.

47 : MEMBERSHIP

The Council on 29 January appointed Councillor Ralph Cook as a Member of the Committee. The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ralph Cook to the meeting.

AGREED – A letter be sent on behalf of the Committee thanking Councillor Monica Walsh for her contribution to the Committee whilst a Member.

48 : DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2015/16 - CORPORATE OVERVIEW

Appendix 8 was not available for public inspection with the Agenda for the meeting as it was not available at that time. They can only be considered today as late items. The Chairperson was of the opinion that there are special circumstances which make consideration of this item urgent. The Chairperson was of the opinion as the Committee require this information to ensure full scrutiny of the budget proposals 2015/16.

The Council's Constitution allows for Scrutiny Committees to consider the draft Cabinet budget proposals prior to consideration by the Cabinet and Full Council. The Scrutiny Committee's comments and/or recommendations are considered by the Cabinet prior to finalising the budget proposals.

Members were advised that the meeting would focus on those areas of the Council's budget that fall within this Committee's terms of reference together with the budget's alignment with those areas of the Draft Corporate Plan.

The Committee received a report and were asked to consider the Corporate Plan 2015-2017 and the draft Cabinet Budget Proposals 2015/16. In particular, Members were requested to give consider the aims, priorities and actions set out in the Corporate Plan; budget proposals in terms of their alignment with the Corporate Plan and submit any recommendations or comments to the Cabinet prior to its consideration of the final budget proposals.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance; Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer; and Marcia Sinfield, Operational Manager Service Accountancy to the meeting. Christine Salter was invited to deliver a presentation on the budget and answer any questions arising therefrom. Christine Salter provided a brief statement in which she predicted an absolute cash shortfall in the 2015/2016 budget.

The presentation provided the Committee with details of the following:

- Welsh Government's final settlement funding implications for local authorities in Wales;
- Welsh Governments' final settlement funding implications for Cardiff;
- A summary of the resources available to the authority;
- A summary of the resources needed;
- Details of budgetary realignments;
- A projected funding gap of £45.742 million;
- An analysis of Directorate Savings;
- Further Corporate Savings proposals;
- Details of the protected Schools Budget;
- Medium Term Forecast;
- Financial Standing/Financial Resilience;
- Details of the Capital Programme 2015/2016 and resources.

The Chairperson thanked Christine Salter for her presentation. The Committee were asked to raise questions or comment on the information received. The subsequent discussions and debate are summarised as follows:

- Officers advised that the demographic growth figure of £5.1 million was similar to that of the last two years. Cardiff has had the highest relative increase in population in Wales over the last year and the highest increase in pupil numbers. Members requested further information in relation to the demographic growth estimate for 2015/16, together with the demographic pressures figures for 2012/13 & 2013/14.
- Increases in employee costs are recorded as being £7.124 million, including the impact that the employee pay contribution of one hour per week will not continue. It was agreed for a 12 month period and will be reinstated from 1 April 2015.
- In relation to realignments and in particular the Month 9 position, Officers advised £7 million in savings were not expected to be achieved in 2014/15. However, they are expected to be achieved in 2015/16. It had been anticipated that there would be HWRC charges to other authorities however there was no policy to do this, also an additional income scrutiny grant from the Welsh Assembly

Government had not been forthcoming. These items were written back in the budget for 2015/16 as a consequence.

- Members were advised that £4.821 million has been made available to Cardiff by Welsh Government for capitalisation and that £2.5 million of it is being used to reduce the budget deficit. It was explained that without that there would have been more savings from employee costs. Agency placements and discretionary overtime have had to be reviewed.
- Members were informed that the revised Voluntary Severance agreement will change as approved by cabinet in January 2015. It will now be paid at the rate of 1.5 times the statutory rate where as previously it had been 3 times.
- Officers advised that the Medium Term Financial Plan has assumed a reduction in the revenue support grant from Welsh Government of 3.5% on the base case, with the reduction being 4% as a worst case scenario, but that there will be a detailed breakdown of those figures in the budget documentation.
- The Section 151 Officer stated that Members need to accept that the budget was affected by matters which were outside the control of the authority, for example the increase in Employer National Insurance Contributions was set to cost the authority an additional £7.5 million and the nationally set pay award for 2016/17 would cost in the region of £3.3 million. Additional social care demands of £5.1 million were also anticipated. The Chairperson stated that it would be useful for Members to have a clearer picture of the internal budgetary pressures facing the authority.
- The Committee asked the Section 151 Officer for her views on the WAO Corporate Assessment report. Members were advised that, in the officer's opinion, the shape of the authority would need to change significantly as the authority could no longer afford to provide the same level of service and facilities going forward.

Contained in the Budget Report 2015/16 was the following message "As set out in the July 2014 Budget Strategy Report it is important to reiterate the materiality of the service choices ahead of the Council. In particular, anything other than a radical reduction and reset of the Council's services will over the life of the MTFP term lead to financial resilience issues for the Council. Against this backdrop members will need to consider whether the choices made to date are commensurate with the scale of the financial challenge ahead." The Section 151 officer advised Members that the shape of the Council needs to change over the next three years, the Authority cannot afford to provide all the current community services. The Cabinet has started to take some steps towards this.

- Members were informed that the Trade Unions are now engaging with the Council around the various alternative model options.
- Members were advised that a partner organisation has been engaged with a view to delivering efficiency savings in terms of the placements of children with enhanced fostering needs by providing those children with 'in county' placements.

- Officers advised that Schools Inter Authority Recoupment often related to children with special education needs and complex behavioural needs who were being supported out of county, however, improved terms were being negotiated and also more was to be done within our local authority schools, Ty Gwyn being an example of that.
- Officers confirmed that all savings referenced assume a Council tax increase of 5%.
- Members queried the rationale behind the large percentage of savings in the Environmental budget – they were informed that the savings as result of Prosiect Gwyrdd will begin next year.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance to convey the following observations of the Committee:

- Members have requested details as to why the demographic growth figure of £5.1 million was so high and how it compared to previous years, together with the detail on the demographic growth estimate for 2015/16 to include a financial breakdown of the areas where the various financial pressures arise and in addition to include the demographic pressures figures applied to the 2012/13 and 2013/14 budget setting process.
- Members of the Committee welcomed the additional £4.821 million made available by the Welsh Government for capitalisation. It provided some relief from the huge financial pressures currently placed on the Council and offers some protection for a range of important services.
- The Committee have requested a detailed breakdown of the main inflationary pressures and internal financial pressures facing the Council.
- Members queried the Council's overall level of borrowing, the Corporate Director Resources explained that planned borrowing had increased in recent years and that this had placed additional pressures on revenue budgets going forward. Members requested figures for the overall level of borrowing for 2012/13, 2013/14 and the projected amount for 2015/16.
- The Committee noted the quote from the Corporate Director Resources '*As set out in the July 2014 Budget Strategy Report it is important to reiterate the materiality of the service choices ahead of the Council. In particular, anything other than a radical reduction and reset of the Council's services will over the life of the MTFP term lead to financial resilience issues for the Council. Against this backdrop members will need to consider whether the choices made to date are commensurate with the scale of the financial challenge ahead*'.
- Members felt that this was a very sobering comment which accurately summarised the financial challenges facing the Council.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORATE RELEVANT TO THE TRANSPORT, PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability and Andrew Gregory, Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport. Andrew Gregory was invited to deliver a presentation and answer any questions arising therefrom.

The presentation provided the Committee with details of the following:

- Creating a world-class Transport System;
- Developing outstanding new and existing settlements and neighbourhoods;
- Contributions to and Corporate Plan Priorities;
- Directorate Revenue controllable budget 2015/16; and
- Savings proposals for 2015/2016.

The Chairperson thanked Andrew Gregory for his presentation. The Committee were asked to raise questions or comment on the information received. The subsequent discussions and debate are summarised as follows:

- Members queried whether transport to faith schools was still being funded and were advised that a review of that was currently taking place. Members requested an update on the review progress.
- Members raised concerns regarding the Local Transport Plan and questioned how the Transport Prospectus would be delivered if funding was to be removed. Officers stated that the LTP was a high-level vision of transport projects which the authority wishes to undertake in the future. No additional funding would be required to deliver an LTP.
- Referring to the budget alignment for school crossing patrols, the Committee noted that all high risk sites are to remain supported by patrol officers. Members questioned what constitutes a high risk site; whether parking enforcement officers could be used at school sites; and whether the 'camera car' can be utilised.
- The Cabinet Member advised that there is now the ability to enforce moving traffic violations, and results from the 20 mph zone pilot in Roath and Cathays are currently being analysed before being rolled out across the city. Members were also advised that the aspiration is to deploy CPO's more efficiently.
- Reference was made to the increase in Development Fee income target and the anticipated Welsh Government-led increase in fees. Officers advised that the amount by which fees are set to increase is a decision for the Welsh Government. The increase due in September/October 2015 is likely to be in the region of 15%, which will equate to an additional £250,000 per year. Officers indicated that a £50k increase in planning income is achievable for the end of year period; however, Members felt that this target could be at least 50% higher.

- Members queried whether there was any scope to increase the level of fines issued through the enforcement of planning violations but were advised firstly that there are no fines issued as a result of enforcement action and secondly that there was no mechanism to increase the level of fines. Enforcement is only a very small part of the work undertaken.
- The Cabinet Member advised that surveys and trials had been carried out in relation the replacement of street lighting with LED and dimming technology and that the feedback has been positive. Officers also indicated that solar powered white lighting is something that is being considered.
- Members raised a query in relation to the information provided regarding the estimated net income of £450,000 from Moving Traffic Offences as part of the civil parking enforcement arrangements which began in December 2014. Members were advised that on the basis of information provided in a press release 12,000 notices had been issued, resulting in an income of approximately £45k per week. Officers advised that the estimate was a conservative figure bearing in mind it is a new scheme. Members felt that a figure of £750,000 better reflected a realistic income target. The press release had also provided details of penalty notices issues. Following a request from the Committee, officers agreed to provide Members with up to date information in relation to the number of notices issued to date and the income generated.
- Members queried a reference to other expenditure of £4,594,080 regarded against an entry for Civil Parking enforcement. Officers stated that this figure related to expenditure from the parking revenue account used to fund traffic management schemes and other projects. Members requested further information regarding this expenditure.
- Members were advised that there were currently 9 Civil Parking Enforcement Officer vacancies and that filling the posts was proving to be difficult. Members requested details as to why those vacancies existed and an explanation as to the difficulties faced in recruiting to those posts.
- The Committee noted that an extra £85,000 would be raised from parking charges. Members advised that fees in long stay car parks had been raised recently. Members considered that the fees in short stay car parks should also be reviewed as that increase would create further income.
- The Draft Capital Programme 2015/16 – 2019/20 refers to £14 million having been set aside for the development of the new bus station. Members queried whether it would be possible to use either Section 106 funding or the Community Infrastructure Levy for that purpose.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability to convey the following observations of the Committee:

SPH11 – Schools Crossing Patrols – Realign Budget

- When discussing the implications of cutting £45,000 from the ‘Schools Crossing Patrols Budget’ Members raised the practicality of investing monies into this area.

They were concerned that in the medium to long term there would be insufficient funding available to provide adequate school crossing patrols. The Committee felt that a complete change in approach was required and that the Council should consider implementing 20 mph zones around all schools and many other parts of the city. A Member explained that there was strong evidence to suggest that similar schemes work well in Germany and that they were very cost effective when compared with alternatives; they also managed to improve road safety. These schemes would only need to be implemented once and ongoing maintenance would be minimal. The new schemes would need to be publicised and actively enforced; particularly at the start. Once the 20 mph schemes were established they would provide a cost effective measure for improving road safety.

- Members acknowledged that the behaviour of drivers and pedestrians would need to be challenged and supported by educational initiatives to make a potential 20 mph zone effective.
- Members are aware of the ongoing trial in the Cathays and Roath areas and requested that any available results from the trial be forwarded to them for their consideration.
- Members were very keen for the Council to implement the 'car cam' system which they believed would improve road safety and parking standards around schools. The Committee felt that the new vehicles would be self funding and able to cover a far larger area than the Civil Parking Enforcement officers can manage on foot.

SPH15 – Planning – Increase in development fee income target

- The Committee believed that the £50,000 increase in planning income is small when compared to the overall potential income which could be generated. A combination of an upturn in the housing market, fees for large planning developments and a potential uplift in fee income during 2015 seemed to support that argument. Members have therefore asked that you review the planning fee income as they believe a target increase of £100,000 is achievable. Such an increase would provide the opportunity to relieve budgetary pressures in other areas.

SPH19 - Highways – Dimming of Street Lights.

- The Committee agreed that the introduction of new street lighting technology to achieve budget savings was a positive step as it could save the Council money and reduce its carbon footprint. They believe that modern lighting systems are able to provide good lighting without compromising personal safety.
- Members were keen that the Council investigates the option of introducing solar powered streetlights; these are capable of generating enough electricity to power good quality street lighting and would also help reduce the Council's electricity bill.

SPH25 – Moving Traffic Offences

- The Committee considered that the £450,000 target for Moving Traffic Offences was a low estimate. A press release in January was cited which was in fact a statement sent to the Echo which said that “3,544 penalty notices have been issued between December 1 and December 31st for bus lane contraventions. Offenders have a 21 day period to either pay £35 or appeal against the decision”. A simple calculation, assuming they are all paid within 21 days, suggests that a monthly income of £124,000 is possible but the Committee accepted that bus lane infringements would decline in the months to come. However, the scheme will expand and focus on key yellow box junctions on the main arterial routes in and out of Cardiff and illegal parking around schools which could exceed the December income although that too will decay over time. The Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport accepted that the estimate was conservative, however, he assured the Committee that it needed to be as the scheme was new and it was difficult to project the full year results with any accuracy. The item was discussed during the Way Forward and the Committee noted that all the income received was ring-fenced to pay for the scheme and other transport related initiatives but recommended that an income target be set for £750,000 which, if achieved, would help to indirectly relieve budgetary pressures elsewhere in the council.
- The Committee would like detail on the number of tickets issued to date along with an estimate of how much income those will generate.

Civil Parking Enforcement

- During the meeting Members were told that in December there were nine Civil Parking Enforcement officer vacancies and that recruitment into these posts had proved difficult. Could the Committee be informed as to why these vacancies exist, how many vacancies there are currently and comment as to why it is so difficult to recruit new staff into the role.
- The Committee has requested a summary of the number of fixed penalty notices issued year to date along with the total number issued during 2012/13 and 2013/14. The Committee are keen to establish if there are any obvious trends for the number of parking offences in Cardiff.
- When discussing the income generated by Moving Traffic Offences, parking charges and Civil Parking Offences the Committee looked at the structure of the Civil Parking Enforcement budget listed in Appendix 3a of the papers. A Member queried the ‘Other Expenditure’ of £4,594,080 listed against this line and asked what it was for; the explanation was that it was a payment for transport related items to other budget lines, i.e. contributions from the parking revenue account. Members have requested that they are provided with greater detail on the ‘Other Expenditure’ to include which cost codes the monies were being paid to and the type of work that it was being used to fund.

SPH26 – Parking Strategy – to increase parking charges in accordance with the Parking Policy

- SPH26 explained that an additional £85,000 of income would be raised from parking charges. A Member commented that the Council had recently raised the fees in long stay car parks and that after an initial dip in income the actual amount

of monies collected had increased. He felt that the Council should do the same with short stay car parking. A request has been made for an update on when these will be reviewed as they could bring in important additional income.

Line 34 – Draft Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 – Central Square – Bus Station

- Line 34 of the Draft Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 sets aside £14 million for the development of a new bus station. A Member was very keen to find out which funding sources would be used to fund this development and if it would be possible to use section 106 funding or the Community Infrastructure Levy to partially fund this development. Whilst it is understood that the public state of funds are complex, Members have requested that they be provided with the proposed funding details.

Review of Schools Transport Policy

- A Member explained that he was aware of an ongoing review into School's Transport Policy. This was reviewing, amongst other things, the provision of transport for children who attended schools outside of their designated catchment area. The Committee have requested an update on this review and an outline a timescale for the completion of this piece of work.

50 : DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2015/16 - BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE RELEVANT TO THE TRANSPORT, PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability and Jane Forshaw, Director for Environment. Jane Forshaw was invited to deliver a presentation on the budget and answer any questions arising therefrom.

The presentation provided the Committee with details of the following:

- Sustainability and Energy savings;
- Corporate Plan linkages;
- 2015/16 budget changes
- Environment Capital Schemes and Externally Funded Schemes

The Chairperson thanked Jane Forshaw for her presentation. The Committee were asked to raise questions or comment on the information received. The subsequent discussions and debate are summarised as follows:

- Members were surprised that the Renewal Energy Generation saving proposed was not higher than the £85,000 recorded. Members were advised that more income would be realised in the future e.g. when Radyr Weir becomes operational. The Council wide savings of £90,000 relates to overall energy savings. Those savings rely on staff awareness and involvement in saving energy in offices and buildings. Officers hoped that this figure could be exceeded.

- Members queried whether the Cyd Cymru grant was included in the totals. The Director advised that the position would be clarified and Members would be informed in due course.
- Of further interest to Members was whether Cyd Cymru was a better energy provider than those listed on comparison websites. The Cabinet Member advised that consumers expressing an interest in joining the Cyd Cymru scheme has no obligation to sign up. Tariffs were offered but the figures relied on bulk purchasing.
- In relation to renewable energy savings Members raised the idea of investing in solar panels on the various buildings within the Council estate. The Committee were advised that at the present time it is not clear what buildings will remain in the Council estate. However, Members felt that consideration should have been given to installation of solar panels previously, and whilst it was accepted that at the current time the future of some buildings is uncertain, panels can easily be moved from one building to another. Members were advised that a Salix grant would not be available for the erection of solar panels.
- Members asked whether consideration is being given to using vehicles which utilise alternative fuels, for example electricity. Officers advised that at the present time there are no Council vehicles which use alternative fuels, however, hydrogen vehicles are available for testing. Officers advised that greener driver techniques are also being considered. Members requested Officers to consider investing in vehicles with alternative fuel sources to reduce the costs and the carbon footprint.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance to convey the following observations of the Committee:

ENV14 – Renewable Energy Generation

- When discussing the potential income available from renewable energy the Members raised the idea of investing in solar panels. It was explained that it is difficult to take a renewable energy investment decision on Council buildings at the moment as it is not clear which buildings will remain within the Council estate in the medium term. The Committee strongly believed that the Council is missing out on an opportunity to generate solar energy on buildings like County Hall. They felt that the Council is failing to take a decisive decision on the matter. The failure to implement such schemes in good time is viewed as a missed opportunity. It was also noted that solar panels are easily removed and if required they could easily be installed on other buildings.
- The Committee believes that more could be done to introduce vehicles which use electricity or other alternative fuels into the Council's fleet. The Council does not at the moment have any vehicles which are powered on electricity or alternative fuels; however, there are opportunities for the Council to invest in vehicles which could reduce fuel costs and the Council's carbon footprint. Members have requested that consideration be given to those options.

ENV15 – Energy Savings (Council Wide)

- The Committee noted the £90,000 energy reduction savings from across the Council's estate through measures such as better house keeping. The Director for the Environment felt that with good corporate support greater savings could be achieved than those set out in the budget line. Members would support this and encourage all Council staff to engage in workplace energy saving measures where possible.

51 : DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2015/16 - BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE RELEVANT TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bob Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Environment and Jane Forshaw, Director for Environment. Jane Forshaw was invited to deliver a presentation on the budget and answer any questions arising therefrom.

The presentation provided the Committee with details of the following:

- Net Budget Figures;
- Corporate Plan Linkages in relation to the implementation of a new approach to the delivery of services including Waste, Cleansing, Parks, Highways, design, and Fleet and Facilities Management to reduce operation costs and to improve service delivery, and to implement changes to enable the Council to meet its statutory recycling targets by March 2016; and
- To ensure the private rented sector is fit for purpose and homes meet legal standards to protect the health of tenants through prioritised investigation of complaints and the proactive delivery of additional licensing schemes in the city.

The Chairperson thanked Jane Forshaw for her presentation. The Committee were asked to raise questions or comment on the information received. The subsequent discussions and debate are summarised as follows:

- Officers advised the Committee that it is expected that 70% of all food safety inspections would be completed by the end of the year. In addition, the Cabinet Member advised that inspections will be completed at 100% of the high risk premises in the City.
- Members queried the type of enforcement actions taken in the private rental sectors and were advised that actions were taken in respect of Health & Safety issues; Fire Safety issues; in relation to issues of damp & old; storage for waste; and issues relating to the external appearance of properties.
- Members believed that Waste Management Officers should be proactive in working with Planning Officers to ensure that sufficient waste storage is provided when planning applications are granted.
- Members were advised that the Neighbourhood Services Project has only recently started. It is hoped that combining waste management services with

other service areas will improve response times and ensure a more efficient service. There will be a single point of contact and more flexible teams will be able to deal with a number of issues, for example a call in relation to an overflowing bin could result in the litter being collected and any dog fouling also being cleansed at the same time.

- Members considered that the level of and number of fines issued could be increased. The Cabinet Member confirmed that are limits on the amount that can be charged by way of a fine, although accepted that the number of fines issued could be increased.
- The Committee questioned the achievability of ENV5 – the Revised Waste Strategy. The Cabinet Member accepted that it would be challenging but advised that recycling targets have to be reached. A strong message has to be sent out and recycling must be encouraged.
- Members expressed concern about the cost of purchasing smaller bins, should that strategy be adopted. The Cabinet Member advised that old bins will be recycled and that many of the larger bins were at the end of their life span and would need to be replaced in any event. Members did not accept that as being an accurate assertion. The Director advised that the additional £500,000 allocated to the Waste Strategy changes would help meet the costs of replacement recycling bins to support collection changes to drive forward recycling.
- Members raised the issue of the distribution of green bags. The Committee accepted that there had to be controls with the issuing of both the green bags and food liners. Members felt that different approaches to the distribution should be taken in different areas of the City and they should be more widely available in high density property areas. The Director advised that officers would work with Ward Members to address the issues in their wards.
- Members expressed concerns in relation to the proposed change in the charges for bulky item collections, believing that it would increase the occurrences of fly tipping. Members accepted that information contained in the Changes for Cardiff – Results & Feedback Report, namely that 51.7% agreed that the free entitlement to bulky items collections be withdrawn. Members requested that there be no changes to the bulky waste collection services be made at the present time, as it was commonplace for people to object to others receiving a free service, particularly when they weren't entitled to receive the same service. The Cabinet Member advised however that Cardiff is the only authority in Wales that provides a free service.
- The Cabinet Member advised the Committee that he believed that a saving of £3.572 million from the disposing of waste at Viridor was robust and achievable.
- Members were advised the cessation of the post-sort recycling will be closely monitored as it potentially affects the achievement of the 58% recycling target. If required post-sort recycling could be reintroduced at a later date.

- The Cabinet Member advised that a final decision was still awaited in relation to the number of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) and that the decision is not expected until the end of this calendar year.
- The proposal is that the remaining facilities operate 5 days a week with reduced opening times and be closed on different days. Both will remain open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Members expressed concern that the public would become confused as to when the facilities were open, which would in turn lead to an increase in fly tipping. Further, they were concerned that members of the public would dump rubbish at the access points to HWRC s when those facilities were closed. This had occurred in the past when Wedel Road was closed for redevelopment. Furthermore, Members were advised that no comprehensive traffic surveys had been done for either facility. The Committee was concerned that there would be an increase in traffic. Members did not support the proposed saving of £42,000.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance to convey the following observations of the Committee:

ENV4 – Redesign of cleansing as part of Neighbourhood Services (Environment only).

- The Committee were concerned at the scale of the £1.607 million saving required from in house modification and developing the Neighbourhood Services project. While they acknowledge that the idea behind this proposal is sound they question how quickly it can be achieved, particularly as the trial for the Neighbourhood Services project has only just started. Members hope that this new approach delivers quick efficiencies and they will monitor the progress of this work closely.
- Members would be grateful if you could arrange a visit for them to look at the work of the Neighbourhood Services pilot in the near future. This would provide the Committee with a greater understanding of the work of the proposed Neighbourhood Services teams.
- The group felt that the Council should continue to push to increase income from fines for offences such as littering and dog fouling. They would encourage you to use existing resources from within the enforcement team and other Council staff who are in a practical position to issue fines on a regular basis.

ENV5 – Revised Waste Strategy

- The Committee recognises the need for the Council to increase recycling rates and in particular reduce the amount of residual waste produced per household in Cardiff. They look forward to reviewing the Draft Waste Management Strategy proposals at their meeting on the 10th March.

ENV6 – Waste Disposal interim contract & Prosiect Gwyrdd

- The Committee were satisfied that the £3.572 million saving produced from disposing of waste at the Viridor energy from waste facility was achievable. They were reassured that legal, technical and financial due diligence had been

undertaken by the Council (and indeed other neighbouring authorities) and that you and officers were confident that the proposal was robust. The Committee will monitor this savings proposal with interest.

ENV7 – Increasing control of the green bag and food liner provision and distribution

- The Committee were broadly supportive of this proposal and acknowledge that greater control of how green bags in Cardiff are distributed needs to be achieved. Allowing waste collection rounds to distribute the green bags and then recording where they have been allocated would seem a sensible way forward; it would in effect be returning to a system which worked well several years ago.
- Members ask that consideration be given to taking a slightly different approach to the distribution of bags in high density property areas. It was highlighted that the more affluent areas of the city already achieve 70% plus recycling rates while some of the high density property areas in the inner city struggle to reach 20%. They believe that the Council should make it as easy as possible for people in the high density property areas in the inner city to access green bags and, therefore, they should be available from both the waste collection rounds and other suitable locations, for example, shops, religious centres and other community facilities. Restricting the access to bags in these areas could make the problem worse.

ENV9 – Domestic Collections Efficiencies

- When discussing how domestic collection efficiencies could be achieved a Member explained that in Germany waste collection vehicles operate using a mechanical arm to pick up the wheelie bins during the round. This dramatically reduces the number of staff needed to operate a collection round and appears to be very cost effective. The Committee would like you and the Environment Directorate to investigate this option and provide appropriate feedback on the matter.

ENV10 – Waste Disposal – Stop Post Sort

- Members understand why the Council has to stop the post sort of materials at Household Waste Recycling Centres and accept the argument that the approach presents a risk in terms of achieving the 58% recycling targets. They agree with your view that this change needs to be monitored against the performance of recycling targets and that if required at a later date post sort could need to be reintroduced. The Committee will closely monitor this proposal during 2015/16.

ENV11 – Remaining two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) with reduced operating days and hours

- The Committee are unable to support the proposed £42,000 saving for reducing the opening times for the two Household Waste Recycling Centres. The main reasons for this are:
 - They believe that the disruption caused by varying the hours of the two 'part time' sites would cause uncertainty; this would result in an increase in activities like fly tipping which would create additional cost for the Council. In particular there was some concern that waste could be dumped outside

the entrance of the Household Waste Recycling Centres creating a removal cost and making access to the site difficult.

- At a time when we need to achieve a 58% recycling target we should avoid confusing the public as to where and when materials can be recycled. Every little helps and ultimately small measures will help the Council achieve the tough recycling target and avoid potential Welsh Government fines.
- As no comprehensive traffic surveys have been completed for the sites. Members question how the Council has managed to put forward a proposal which would drive increased traffic into one site during the opening and closing overlap period between the sites. They urge you to complete a detailed traffic survey on both sites before finalising any decision.
- The Committee note that a final decision for a long term operating model for Household Waste Recycling Centres will be taken before the end of this calendar year. Members of the Committee look forward to this announcement and would like to undertake pre decision scrutiny on the subject.
- The Committee recommended that re-use repair and recycle initiatives with third sector and other groups be investigated with redundant sites being considered or promoted to provide communities with this service.

Line 58 – New Capital Schemes – Restricting Residual Waste – Changing the current 240 litre bins to 140 litre bins

- Members agree that swapping 240 litre bins for 140 litre bins could be an effective way of getting some people to increase their recycling. The capital programme allocates £2.4 million for the purchase of the new bins; it is assumed that the old bins would be recycled. The Committee ask you to carefully consider how and where new bins need to be allocated to maximise results. There would be little point in providing someone who takes over a month to fill their 240 litre bin with a 140 litre bin as the recycling gain would probably be negligible. In addition there are many cases like this where the 240 litre bins are in good condition and so do not need replacing – incurring an unnecessary cost at this financially challenging time would seem to be inadvisable. Please note that the assertion that all of these bins were at the end of their working life was not accepted or supported by evidence.

Financial Pressures – Line 5 – Waste Strategy & Collection Changes

- The Committee welcome the additional £500,000 allocated to supporting the Waste Strategy changes during 2015/16. It is clear that significant changes will need to take place to help the Council reach the 58% recycling targets set for 2015/16. These significant changes will only work if supported by an extensive education campaign and the additional funds will add valuable support to this effort.
- In terms of the Waste Strategy changes the Committee are clear that additional targeted systems and support should be directed at the low recycling performance areas, i.e. the high density property areas in the inner city. This would in effect

mean treating the low performing areas differently to those meeting or exceeding target. Members feel that such an approach represents the best opportunity to make additional recycling gains and reach the 58% recycling target for 2015/16.

Public Consultation Feedback

- The 'Changes for Cardiff – Results & Feedback Report' identified that the respondents to the consultation concluded that:
 - *Do you agree to withdraw the free entitlement to bulky item collections? – 51.7% said yes; 36.6% said no and 11.8% were not sure.*
 - *Do you agree to an increase in existing charges for bulky item collections? – 50.1% said yes; 35.2% said no and 14.8% were not sure.*

The Committee believe that a change to the charging structure for the collection of bulky waste would lead to an increase in the amount of fly tipping in Cardiff at a time when the Council appears to be doing a good job in managing the problem. Members ask if you could avoid making any changes to the charging structure for the collection of bulky items in the short to medium term.

53 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 10 March 2015