

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2015

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

Apologies: Councillor Ralph Cook

54 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Ralph Cook.

55 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

56 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 December 2014 and 3 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

57 : ENVIRONMENT & STRATEGIC PLANNING, HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT DIRECTORATES - PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 - 2014/15

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability, Andrew Gregory, Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport and Gary Brown Operational Manager Highway Maintenance to the Committee.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Patel to make a statement in which he thanked the committee for the opportunity to present the report.

Members were provided with a brief presentation based on Quarter 3 Performance for the Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic and Transport Directorate.

The Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members.

- Members discussed the interim arrangements that have been planned when the bus station closes; including what help would be available to visitors to the City during this period. Officers advised that Wood Street and the streets around it would have bus stops and there would be staff available to help and advise service users during this time; work was being done on communications with Cardiff Bus and Network Rail and there would be lots of communication in the Media.
- Members asked whether repairs to pot holes were taking longer and whether repairs were now short term repairs. Officers advised that there had been a slight change in policy with regard to the levels of repairs in millimetres and also with regard to response times; officers were trying to get a programme of

works in place where problem areas are targeted and improvement works put in place, trying to avoid potholes. Members then discussed road skimming and the need to prolong the life of the roads, whilst not fully resurfacing in many areas.

- With reference to HMO's, Members asked how optimistic officers were about delivering the target by June 2015 considering they had mentioned they were waiting information from Welsh Government. Officers explained that there had been significant measures made between Planning and Environment, but they were awaiting Welsh Government to move forward with C3 and C4 design; there was a Draft Action Plan drawn up. Members considered it would be useful for Members in affected wards to have sight of the draft action plan and have the ability to input into it.
- Members asked what had happened to the consultation that had taken place last year on the SPG's. Officers explained that they didn't have the powers to bring SPG's on HMO's/Student letting boards; another SPG relating to housing designs and extensions was due to go to the next planning committee and then to Cabinet in June. Members asked to receive copies of the presentation to Planning Committee.
- Members noted that household applications were now being done in half the time as previously and asked what was being differently. Officers explained that a restructure had given the team the opportunity to look at things differently; they were looking at UK best practice; there had been lots of management changes which had freshened the team up.
- Members referred to SP11/12 and the work with partners and asked for more information. Officers explained that they were working with Universities on assets around the City such as cycle sharing schemes; there had been less conversations with hospitals but University Hospital of Wales had fund to spend on assets and officers wanted to encourage them to spend them in the City. Members considered it would be useful to be able to engage in such meetings and have access to the meetings and minutes. Officers explained the work was still draft but they would keep Members up to date.
- Members noted that they had scrutinised the Planning Service in December and asked when they could expect a response. Officers stated that the draft was ready and Members would receive the response within the next 2 weeks.
- Members discussed the Moving Traffic Orders and the delay in the Camera Vehicle becoming operational. Officers explained that any revenue raised from moving traffic orders would be ring fenced within transportation; the delay in the camera vehicle becoming operational was due to the order not being signed by Welsh Government until December.
- Members asked whether officers were looking at 'zoning' in Cardiff. Officers replied that they weren't at the moment.
- Members noted the projected savings variance of £547k and that it was an improvement on quarter 2; and asked what innovative, proactive mitigation measures had been put in place. Officers explained that they were using

commuted sums; money comes into the department and it can be borrowed and mitigated in year; all budgets had been scrutinised and all unnecessary spend had been cut.

- Members noted the base budget of £30.018m in quarter 3 and that this had gone up since quarter 2; and asked how it had changed and if officers were confident it could be balanced. Officers explained that it was adjusted by the finance team and yes they were very confident they could balance the base budget.
- With regard to sickness, Members noted that the 10.34 days was still very high and asked why it wasn't changing and what was being done to bring the figure down. Officers stated that the figures will improve from November; resources had been put into the Sickness strategy; identifying hotspots in CPE and Highways, strategies had been put in place; looking at shift patterns etc. It was noted that moral was low and there was a task team looking at this issue.
- It was noted that overtime spend was higher than the Council average. Officers stated that this was on the operations side and was due to standby arrangements and emergency call outs.

The Chairperson welcomed Jane Forshaw Director for the Environment to the Committee.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Patel to make a statement on the performance of the Environment Directorate relevant to his areas of responsibility. Councillor Patel made a statement in which he noted the 15 capital and revenue projects and he provided more details on these, including costings, to Members.

Members were provided with a brief presentation based on Quarter 3 performance of the Environment Directorate relevant to the Transport, Planning & Sustainability portfolio.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed the residential land issues with Welsh Government regarding Radyr Weir and enquired whether it would be sorted out by the end of the year. Jane Forshaw explained that the situation had moved on; initially the land was a gift into the project, then it wasn't, Welsh Government were now rethinking the position.
- Members discussed and noted the success of the Cyd Cymru scheme.
- With reference to solar panels in schools, Members asked whether many schools had them installed. Officers explained that there were sometimes difficulties as schools manage their own budgets, meetings were arranged with schools finance; community groups were keen to be involved but it would be the individual schools decision.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bob Derbyshire Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability to the Committee.

Councillor Derbyshire was invited to make a statement in which he stated that Quarter 3 performance was more positive than previous years; the deficit had reduced down to £300k and he was confident that it would reduce further.

Members were provided with a brief presentation based on Quarter 3 performance for the Environment Directorate relevant to the Environment Portfolio.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed recycling figures and sought clarification on the 60% figure quoted in the presentation. Officers explained that 60% included the Christmas Period when figures were always higher; it was also noted that street sweepings for the whole year are included in the quarter 4 figures and that post sort has restarted in quarter 4 to ensure that targets are met. Members asked what costs are incurred to achieve these targets. Officers didn't have figures at the meeting but would supply to Members.

Members enquired further about street sweepings and it was clarified that the figures were not included in last years, therefore 2 years worth of street sweepings had been included in this figure.

It was noted that officers expected the quarter 3 figures to be below 50%.

- With regard to street sweeping, Members asked what percentage was recyclable. Officers stated that it was 79%, mostly sand and grit, which is then sold back to the building industry.
- Members enquired why the quarter 3 figures were not yet available. Officers explained that Welsh Government don't validate quarter 3 until 21 May 2015; quarter 4 indicative figures would be available in June/July and Total Outturn in September.
- Members discussed the figures for missed collections and asked how they compared to the previous years figures. Officers explained that this year the figures were a slight improvement on last year; there had been problems with the fleet vehicles breaking down, there was now a new fleet and 21% less missed collections.
- Members referred to complex procurement issues and asked whether they had been resolved. Jane Forshaw advised that she would like to obtain examples of good practice from other directorates and get together with legal and finance colleagues and establish a case study team to resolve the issues.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Members for Transport, Planning & Sustainability and for the Environment to thank them and their officers for attending Committee on 10 March 2015 and to convey the observations of the Committee.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bob Derbyshire Cabinet Member for the Environment, Tara King Assistant Director Environment and Jane Cherrington Operational Manager Strategy and Enforcement to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Derbyshire to make a statement in which he said this was a very important paper as it sets out plans for the next three years; there are huge Welsh Government challenges ahead with recycling targets and the paper sets out the plans to achieve these targets and to avoid very serious fines.

Members were provided with a brief presentation based on the 'Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme'.

The Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members.

- Members sought clarification on timescales for swapping bags and changing bins. Officers advised that it would take place between the end of July and the end of September, with a rollout in the student areas in September too.
- Members enquired how much the smaller wheeled bins would cost. Officers explained that they would get a final price when they go out to market but gave the approximate price of £23 including delivery and also including redelivery if the service user wasn't home at the time of collecting the old bin; caddies would be an extra cost; they were also looking at co-purchasing through a framework with other local authorities.
- Members asked how the new smaller wheeled bins could save money. Officers advised that savings would be achieved through changing collection routes, using bio bags and a change from residual to increased recycling.
- Members discussed the differing recycling rates across the city and whether smaller residual waste bins would increase the recycling rates. Members also discussed the cited examples of Trafford and Salford as benchmark cities and requested evidence and details of these schemes. The Cabinet Member stated that he had seen the scheme in practice in Salford and that it works well. He added that giving people the correct information initially increases recycling initially; evidence shows that Cardiff could have gone for 3 or 4 weekly collections but it was decided that smaller bins would be the better option. Members considered that maybe increased enforcement in areas with reduced recycling would have been more effective.
- A Member offered to provide a list of dialects in which to produce the information for the public.
- Members were concerned about the logistics of the numbers of people living in some households, it was noted that larger bins would be available for larger families and asked how this would be assessed. Officers explained that an assessment of the properties takes place each summer; if there were 6 bedsits in a dwelling there would be 6 small wheeled bins; officers would liaise with licensing and landlords to obtain the correct information. Also for larger

families bags would be allowed proportionately. Green bags would be distributed through the student union as well as other outlets.

- Members discussed stolen bins and whether the tenant or the landlord would be charged for the replacement. Officers didn't have information at the meeting but agreed to get the information to Members; it was noted that bins are barcoded and that less than 1% of bins were stolen in the previous year.
- Members asked how fly tipping would be monitored throughout the transition period. Officers explained that each incident would be reported, reports would be tracked and monitored for trends; patrols would be increased and preventative measures would be taken. The Cabinet Member added that there had not been an increase in fly tipping previously and that fly tipping wasn't generally household waste rather it was building waste; a peak was expected initially but education and enforcement would be increased for a 12 month period, which had been included in the budget for the scheme.
- Members discussed the incorrect placing of black bags and how these would be enforced. Officers explained that bag areas don't currently have a restriction but a restriction of 3 bags a fortnight would be implemented. If no evidence could be found within the bag to identify the property it came from then officers would make enquiries at the property or place where it is left; witness statements could be taken; if the problem persisted then surveillance was an option;
- Members discussed hygiene waste removal and noted that officers would be working with organisations that supply carers; work would be done with Adult Services, nurseries and nappy organisations.
- Members had reservations about Phase 3 of the scheme due to increased capital and revenue costs which may not result in an increase in recycling; targets of 70% were considered too high and it was also considered that kerb side sorting in Cardiff would not be suitable. Officers noted that all of these things were being considered which is why they are in phase 3 of the scheme; the scheme needs to be financially sound and in the public interest; decision was a long way off; officers were working with Welsh Government on determining a blue print. There were challenges ahead such as manufacturing and industry changing to lighter packaging, and encouraging re-use which would make it more difficult to achieve recycling targets.
- Members discussed re-use sites, officers advised that these would be sited at the super sites in phase 2. Members noted that reuse and recycle could be encouraged at hubs.
- Members discussed 'bring sites' and whether there would be more around the city. Officers advised that they would only be in locations where they can be controlled; supermarkets also provide and manage facilities.
- With regard to gate fees for vans, members asked if there would be reduced rates introduced. Officers advised that there would be a multiple approach, service users would be encouraged to not use 'man with a van' method of clearance. The penalty regime for fly tipping was being amended currently to

include fixed penalty and vehicle seizure; Fly Mapper would be used to track fly tipping.

AGREED – That, the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to Councillor Bob Derbyshire Cabinet Member for the Environment to thank him and officers for attending Committee on 10 March 2015 and to convey the observations of the Committee.

59 : CORRESPONDENCE UPDATE - INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee received copies of correspondence sent and received in relation to matters previously scrutinised by this Committee.

AGREED – That the correspondence report and attached documentation be noted.

60 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 14 April 2015.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____