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07 January 2019

Councillor Michael Michael,
Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Michael,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 4 December 2018

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 4 December 2018. As you are aware the meeting received an item titled 'Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate – Quarter 1 & 2 Performance Reports 2018/19'. The comments and observations made by Members on the areas relevant to your portfolio of responsibility are set out in this letter.

Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate – Quarter 1 & 2 Performance Reports 2018/19'

- **Sickness** – Members are very concerned at the ongoing high sickness rates within key services in the Directorate. In recent years they have repeatedly been told that managers are dealing with high sickness rates by closely following the Council's Sickness & Absence Policy, however, the problem persists and is actually getting worse. The Committee would like to know what is actually happening when the Council's Sickness Absence Policy is being correctly applied and why this action is not delivering the necessary improvements to sickness rates. The Committee would also like you to provide details of additional actions that the Council is able to apply, over and above the existing Council Sickness Absence Policy that might help the Directorate reduce sickness rates.

- **Recycling & Waste Management Services** – During the meeting the ongoing concerns of Recycling & Waste Management Services were once again raised. The Director of the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate explained that they are in the process of delivering a new restructure across the whole service and that this should result in improvements. It was hoped that the restructure would be complete by the end of the 2018/19 financial year. Given the apparent lack of control in some parts of the service caused by reductions in management, the Committee feels that the new restructures should include details to drive improvements around governance and control. With this in mind, the Committee would like to receive a paving report in April 2019 that sets out the full details of the restructure and the benefits that it will deliver.
- **Recycling** – Members were told that the Council would need to identify an additional 20,000 tonnes of recycling to achieve the statutory Welsh Government recycling target of 64% by 2019/20. I would be grateful if you could provide a summary of where you anticipate that the additional recycling will come from (by stream and material type), and in particular set out how much of this might come from Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- **Fly Tipping** – A Member who had recently spent time job shadowing the Fly Tipping Removal Team explained that staff were currently not able to remove asbestos from fly tipped locations. They found this very frustrating as it slowed work down and the cost of bringing in specialist contractors was a very expensive. They felt that if specialist training was provided then they would be able to deal with any fly tipped asbestos quickly and remove the cost of employing external contractors. The Committee would be grateful if you could confirm if the option of training Council staff to deal with asbestos removal has been costed against using external contractors. If such a costing exercise has taken place then could you please provide details.
- **Agency Staff v Full Time Staff** – During the meeting a Member asked how many agency staff have continuously worked for services delivered by

the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate for more than four years. I would be grateful if you could confirm how many agency staff have been continuously for this period, and assurance that when possible long term agency staff are offered permanent positions with the Council.

- **Glass Bottle Trial Feedback** – On the whole Members were pleased with the roll out of the glass bottle trial. The trial has been delivered smoothly, very few complaints have been received and the increase in income per tonne of glass collected was very encouraging. The only issue identified by Members about the scheme was that the order process for additional blue glass caddies was complicated. The Committee asks that you revisit the order process to see if it can be simplified.
- **Technology Roll Out** – At the meeting there was some conversation around the roll out of technology to drive efficiencies and how this might contribute to future savings. The Director for Planning, Transport & Environment agreed to provide the Committee with an update of the various pieces of technology currently being rolled out by the Directorate to help improve front line services, for example, Bartec and Civica Tranman. It would be appreciated if this update is made available with the reply to this letter.

There are sections of this letter that are common to the Committee letters written for both the Strategic Planning & Transport and Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment portfolios. Where this is the case the Committee is happy to receive a joint reply. I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,



Councillor Ramesh Patel
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of City Operations
- Matt Wakelam – Assistant Director, Street Scene
- Jane Cherrington – Operational Manager, Waste Strategy & Enforcement
- Davina Fiore - Director of Governance & Legal Services
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee