

Ref: RDB/PM/DD/14.04.15

13th May 2015

Councillor Dan De'Ath,
Cabinet Member for Safety, Engagement & Democracy,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor De'Ath,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 14th April 2015

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 14th April 2015. As you are aware the meeting considered items titled 'Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan' and the 'Improving Scrutiny Project'.

The comments and observations made by Members following these items are set out in this letter. It should be noted that the same comments relating to the 'Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan' have been sent to Councillor Derbyshire as you were both involved with the item. To save time and resources Members are happy to receive a joint reply to the 'Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan' section of the letter.

Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan

- Members would like to congratulate Emma Robson and all the other staff involved with delivering the Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan for the work that they have undertaken. They believe that the diverse range of projects that the partnership has delivered has been excellent and that these have made a very positive impact on Cardiff's main student areas.
- During the 2013/14 municipal year the Committee wrote to the Cardiff Partnership Board and Cardiff University to raise the idea of creating a Cardiff student travel card. Following the letter some of the Committee

Members met with representatives from Cardiff University to raise this matter and a number of other issues. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with an update on any developments that might have taken place around the creation of a Cardiff student travel card.

- The Committee were keen to discover the potential sanctions available under the Welsh Agent & Landlord Licensing Scheme against non compliant landlords. The Assistant Director for the Environment explained that these were details that the new scheme still had to establish, however, they would need to be in place by April 2016. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a summary of the new sanctions available to the Welsh Agent & Landlord Licensing Scheme when they become available.
- Members felt that the 'Cardiff Student Community Partnership 2015 – 2018 Action Plan' would benefit from a set of clearly defined targets which could be used as a progress benchmark. These could be reported as regular performance indicators which would provide Members and other relevant parties with a picture of progress on tackling a range of issues in student areas. These measures would need to be clearly thought out and linked to existing Council practice, for example, regular LEAMS surveys could be undertaken along with data on how long it takes to clear a fly tipping incident.
- The Committee supports the good educational and communication initiatives being delivered at the moment; however, they also acknowledge the need to apply enforcement action where necessary. They would ask that the Council isn't shy in issuing fixed penalty notices against any offenders in the student areas. A comment was made that a small minority of students only react to issues when it "hits them in the pocket".

Improving Scrutiny Project

The Committee welcomed the cover report and explanation of the 'Improving Scrutiny Project' delivered by yourself and the Operational Manager for

Scrutiny Services. They are happy for you to progress with your suggested timescale which is noted below:

- Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Inquiry initiated in May 2015;
- Desk Research completed in April;
- Project Workshop for Scrutiny Members to be arranged in early June;
- Scrutiny Conference (engagement with Cabinet and political groups) to be undertaken in late June 2015;
- Draft key findings circulated late July 2015;
- Task and Finish Inquiry report agreed and commended to Cabinet in September 2015.

They felt that the exercise should explore a wide range of options for delivering scrutiny in Cardiff; in particular the task group should consider:

- The comparative benefits of formal Committee meetings and task & finish groups. Members were of the view that Committee meetings were a good tool for reviewing and monitoring progress, while the task & finish groups were far better at looking in depth into a subject or problem. Deciding on how best to blend these different approaches into scrutiny work was seen as important.
- How best to achieve good agenda and time management, for example, should a time limit be placed on formal Committee meetings.
- That any scrutiny changes needed to reflect the changing political landscape, particularly as budgets are reducing and local authorities appear to be moving towards a commissioning model.
- That the Committee needs to improve how it monitors and reviews the implementation of recommendations.
- That the task & finish exercise needs to reflect and comment on the good work that has been delivered by the scrutiny team, i.e. that when

compared against scrutiny in other local authorities Cardiff is actually very good.

- That links into non scrutiny Committees needs to be improved; for example, the Audit Committee. A greater understanding of how these operate would provide large benefits for the scrutiny process and vice versa.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the requests made in this letter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. D. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Paul Mitchell
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc to:

Jane Forshaw, Director for the Environment
Tara King, Assistant Director for the Environment
Jane Cherrington, Operational Manager – Strategy & Enforcement
Will Lane, Operational Manager, Regulatory Domestic Services
Marie Rosenthal – County Clerk & Monitoring Officer
Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee