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13 September 2017

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



Dear Councillor Michael,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 5 September 2017**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers from the City Operations Directorate and Commercial & Collaborative Services for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 5 September 2017. As you are aware the meeting considered items titled 'Managing Street Cleanliness & Total Street Scene in Cardiff' and 'Managing Recycling in Cardiff'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

**Managing Street Cleanliness & Total Street Scene in Cardiff**

**Ward Action Plans** – All of the Members agreed that creation of the ward based action plans to help improve cleanliness and street scene was a good idea; several of the newly elected Members were a little concerned as to why this approach didn't already exist ! They agreed that trialling the new plans across a few wards was a good idea and that the trial sample should include wards with differing characteristics. The Committee liked the initial 'Ward Action Plan' template produced at the meeting and felt that it included the correct information, for example, the inclusion of a detailed 'Ward Action Plan Map' that illustrated the type and location of activities that needed to take place. They believe that local councillors have to be key stakeholders in the development of the plans as they are best placed to provide the required local knowledge. In addition to this local residents and community groups should be consulted on the structure and content of the plans. Members suggested

that the views of local residents could be collected alongside the 'Ask Cardiff Survey'.

**Waste Enforcement Fines** – The topic of issuing fines for littering and other waste enforcement matters was discussed extensively during the meeting. Members were concerned that some areas received a disproportionately high number of fines (Cathays accounted for just over 45% of fines issued during 2016/17), while other areas received none (Caerau, St Mellons and Ely only received one fine between them in 2016/17). This resulted in the Committee questioning the equity of resource allocation and wider approach taken to waste enforcement. As a consequence Members would like you to answer or provide information on the following:

- Why 815 fines were issued in Cathays during 2016/17 when eighteen wards received a zero or single figure number of waste enforcement fines;
- Provide information on the total number of waste enforcement actions, fines issued and fines actually paid on a ward by ward basis for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to date. This should include the financial value of fines issued and paid;
- A ward by ward summary of the complaint data for waste enforcement issues for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to date;
- An explanation as to why 922 fines were issued for waste enforcement in the Cathays ward compared to 135 for the same period (2016/17 & 2017/18) in the Plasnewydd ward. Members were a little puzzled at this since they feel that both areas are similar in terms of population and housing stock characteristics.

**Waste Enforcement – Landlord v Tenant Responsibility** – At the meeting I asked a question about what our options were in terms of targeting landlords or tenants for dealing with waste enforcement issues at rental properties. You explained that it would be difficult to hold landlords accountable for waste issues created by the tenants; my view was that landlords are in fact running a commercial operation and so should at least in part be held accountable for the actions of their tenants. I understand that some local authorities have had success in dealing with waste enforcement issues at rental properties by

involving landlords at the earliest possible opportunity. I would be grateful if you could arrange for the matter to be investigated so that the Council is able to identify best practice by other local authorities. Feedback on the results of this work would be appreciated by the Committee.

**Cathays** – As has already been mentioned the topic of waste enforcement activity in Cathays was discussed during the meeting. Members were concerned that over 45% of the fines issued were within that ward which seemed disproportionately high when compared to all other wards. A Member asked if in fact too much waste enforcement was being carried out in Cathays to the annoyance of permanent residents. They she felt were being targeted in the same way as temporary residents, for example, students. She felt that a review of the current waste enforcement approach was required and that this should include detailed consultation with permanent local residents. I would be grateful if you could look into this and provide the committee with feedback.

**Fly Tipping** – The item highlighted that fly tipping had increased by 28% between 2015/16 and 2016/17; the Committee was concerned by this large rise in a relatively short period of time. You explained that managing fly tipping levels was a challenge, and that the increase was partly due to changing definitions and reporting standards. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with the following:

- The fly tipping definition that the Council is currently working against;
- A summary of the way that fly tipping incidents are currently reported and logged;
- Information on the changing fly tipping definitions and reporting approaches for the last five years;
- A breakdown of the fly tipping incidents by type on a ward by ward basis for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 to date.

**Sickness Rates** - During the meeting I asked about how the recent increases in sickness rates had affected work being delivered by Neighbourhood Services. The Director for City Operations explained that there had been a

recent increase in sickness rates in City Operations and across the Council as a whole; he also explained that work was ongoing across the City Operations Directorate to reduce sickness rates. Members feel that it is important to monitor sickness levels going forward and have asked for a breakdown of City Operations sickness rates for 2016/17 and 2017/18; this should include analysis of long and short term sickness absence.

**Funding from the Financial Resilience Mechanism** – A Member asked why the Financial Resilience Mechanism had been used to allocate a one off payment of £150,000 to Neighbourhood Services to assist with enforcement activities. As you will be aware the financial contribution is being used to support seven FTE posts within enforcement to enable city centre / city wide waste enforcement teams to work three afternoons and weekends to deliver a high quality 'Total Street Scene' service to the residents of Cardiff. He and other Members were concerned that the funding was only for one year and wanted to know how this important additional enforcement work would be delivered once the current financial year ends. I'd be grateful if you could provide an explanation on why this funding will only last for one year and assurance around how this additional enforcement work will be delivered in future years.

**Vodafone Partnership** – An officer explained that the Council will be entering into a public / private partnership with Vodafone so that it can access the Vodafone Smart Camera System. It is hoped that using this system will improve the Council's ability to target fly tipping in Cardiff. Members would like more information on the system, how it will work, anticipated benefits and a timeline for implementation.

**LEAMS Performance** – Towards the end of the meeting I asked a question as to why LEAMS performance fell sharply during the period September 2016 to March 2017 and then rapidly improved in the period March 2017 to May 2017. An officer suggested some reasons for this sudden rise and fall, however, was unable pinpoint the exact reasons for the deviation. I'd be grateful if you could investigate the reason(s) for the sudden fall and rise in LEAMS performance and report your findings back to the Committee.

## **Improving Litter Management & Street Cleanliness – Task & Finish**

**Exercise** – The Environmental Scrutiny Committee approved its work programme for 2017/18 at the meeting on the 5 September. Members of the Committee identified improving litter management and street cleanliness as their top priority and so have agreed to run a task & finish exercise on this subject in early 2018. I will ensure that you and officers from City Operations are kept up to speed on the work being undertaken to scope and develop this piece of work.

## **Managing Recycling in Cardiff**

**Waste Facilities Visit** – I would like to thank Pat McGrath, Andrew Williamson and the other staff from Commercial & Collaborative Services for arranging the Waste Facilities Visit for the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> August. The Members who took part in the visit found it very worthwhile as it substantially increased their understanding of the vast waste processing infrastructure required to deal with the waste collected in Cardiff. They feel that the visits to Lamby Way, the Materials Reclamation Facility, Cardiff's composting facility, the Kelda Organic Waste Treatment Facility and Viridor Energy from Waste Facility will put them in a much better position to scrutinise waste management items in the next 12 months.

**Recycling Facilities Trips for Schools** – As explained above the Members felt that they benefited educationally from the waste facilities visit on the 24 August. Following on from the visit they feel that local schools could benefit from similar trips which could help reinforce the Council's recycling message to future generations. Therefore, I'd be grateful if you could pass on contact details for each of the facilities so that Committee members are able to share the information with school's in their wards. I would also appreciate it if you could provide details on the number of schools that have undertaken such visits (to include the name of the schools).

**Recycling App** – Members were pleased to hear that a Council wide app is currently being developed to include functions capable of reporting on a range

of waste management issues. The Committee feel that the creation such an app is very worthwhile, particularly if it functionally easy to use. They would appreciate it if you could provide the Committee of an example of how it will work.

**Household Waste Recycling Centre** – The current use of and future development of Household Waste Recycling Centres was discussed in some detail at the meeting. Following on from this discussion I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with the following information:

- Members would like to know when the Wedal Road Household Waste Recycling Centre will be closing and have confirmation as to whether the site will be redeveloped into reuse facility;
- During the earlier item titled 'Managing Street Cleanliness & Total Street Scene in Cardiff', the Committee noted that there had been a 28% increase in fly tipping between 2015/16 and 2016/17. I would be grateful if you could provide an analysis of fly tipping in the east of the city for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18.

**Bespoke Approach to Recycling** – Members acknowledge that the Council has done exceptionally well in the last decade to push recycling rates up to the current Welsh Government statutory recycling target of 58%, however, increasing performance to 64% by 2019/20 and 70% by 2024/25 presents a major challenge to the Council. The Committee are aware that recycling rates vary significantly between wards and that more support is required by some communities to maximise their recycling potential. Concentrations of blocks of flats, houses of multiple occupation, cultural differences and other factors can present recycling challenges to the Council so it is clear that taking a 'one size fits all' approach isn't going to be practical in helping meet the outstanding 6% and 12% statutory target increases. With this in mind Members encourage you to look to develop niche or bespoke approaches to recycling in certain wards or even streets. This might include taking a slightly different approach to communicating with and listening to certain groups, delivering more education in particular areas or even taking a different approach to localised waste containerisation. The Committee feels that the

best way to identify such improvement measures is to pilot trials in small areas to find out what works well and then to replicate successful practice.

**Co-mingling v Kerbside Sort Approach** – It is fair to say that Member opinion on whether to stick rigidly to the current co-mingling approach or to start phasing in new elements of kerbside sort were mixed. Some of the Committee were firmly against making the current co-mingling approach any more complicated, whilst others felt that introducing new elements of the kerbside sort approach should be considered as long as implementation is evidence based. With this in mind, should you propose implementing any such future changes to the waste collection system then we would be keen to scrutinise the proposals and continue our co-mingling verses kerbside sort debate.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramesh Patel', with a stylized, cursive script.

Councillor Ramesh Patel  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

Andrew Gregory – Director for City Operations  
Matt Wakelam – Operational Manager, Infrastructure & Operations  
Tara King – Assistant Director for Commercial & Collaborative Services  
Jane Cherrington – Operational Manager, Strategy & Enforcement  
Pat McGrath – Operational Manager, Infrastructure Projects  
Davina Fiore – Director of Governance & Legal Services  
Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee