

**COUNCIL: 27 NOVEMBER 2014**

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**STATEMENT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

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I am pleased to be able to report some positive developments within the Parks and Waste Management service, following the Council meeting in October.

**Giving Nature A Home Project**

Earlier in the month I attended a Joint Project Board Meeting that is overseeing a partnership project bringing together Cardiff Council and the RSPB and under the societies, Giving Nature a Home project. The project is designed to reconnect with nature bringing it back into our city. The Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff Project is being funded until 2017 and is being supported by Tesco customers through the Welsh Governments carrier bag levy. Through research undertaken by the RSPB it was established that only 13% of children in Wales were found to have a realistic connection to nature, compared to 21% across the rest of the UK. I am sure that you will agree that this statistic is worrying, there are endless opportunities for connecting children to nature in Cardiff and one of the aims of the project is to encourage young people and their families to spend more time, more regularly, outdoors enjoying the wildlife in their gardens, school grounds and parks and green spaces through a wide range of activities and events. The project will also, over time serve to develop and increase volunteer networks linked to the outdoor environment and for the benefit of the Council and users of the service.

**National Tree Planting Week**

Saturday 29 November 2014 marks the commencement of National Tree Planting Week, which runs through to Sunday 7 December 2014. To celebrate this event the Council will be commencing it's own tree planting programme which will see 250 trees planted throughout Cardiff's parks and green spaces and streets. This year's programme is being generously supported by Cardiff Civic Society, who will be meeting the costs of the supply of specimen trees scheduled for planting throughout our parklands. I am sure that you will agree that Cardiff's tree stock plays a vital role in terms of shaping the character of our City as well as providing benefits including mitigating carbon emissions,

mitigating flooding and erosion, providing habitats for wildlife, increasing property values and improving mental health and well being.

### **APSE Awards**

I am also pleased to announce that the Association of Public Service Excellence has shortlisted Cardiff Council as finalists in the category of Most Improved Performer for Local Authority Parks and Grounds Maintenance Services and as a result of benchmarking undertaken throughout the UK parks and grounds maintenance group. Six finalists have been shortlisted from a benchmarking group of fifty two local authorities, an announcement on the most improved performer will be made next week.

### **House Frontages Initiative**

I am pleased to announce that Waste Management have joined with the housing team to provide a new city wide service for frontage and house clearances. This paid service can be accessed by home owners, landlords, tenants and management companies.

As well as city wide promotion of the new paid service, this commercial venture will be promoted to problem properties by waste enforcement officers, the HMO licensing team and our housing teams. This gives the householders, tenants and landlords an alternative, cost effective and easy solution to waste build up on their premises. Waste enforcement activities will continue to tackle waste presentation, but now individuals have no excuses for not disposing of their waste responsibly and will hopefully help reduce unsightly frontages that blight too many areas in the city.

### **Abandoned Shopping Trolleys**

Our initiative to remove another blot on the landscape ie: abandoned shopping trolleys is continuing to make an impact. We have already collected 680 trolleys this year compared to 675 in the previous year, with charges totalling £60,000, a cost-effective way of helping keep our streets and parks clean I am sure you will agree.

### **Food Waste Campaign**

We've also secured another £20,000 from Waste Awareness Wales to run a targeted literature promotion on food waste in addition to the £40,000 we received earlier this year. The importance of everyone doing their bit to recycle their waste cannot be overstated and according to Waste Awareness Wales, Welsh families waste £60 a month on their food, in these tough financial times, only underlines this further.

### **Housing (Wales) Bill**

Moving away from waste, I am happy to report we have restated our commitment to manage the registration and licencing regime for landlords,

lettings and management companies for all local authorities in Wales, which Welsh Government has accepted as the Wales Housing Bill heads towards Royal Assent and becoming Wales' first ever Housing Act. This builds on our work on the Welsh Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

A new IT system is required for this arrangement and Welsh Government has agreed £65,000 of funding to cover this project. Along with my colleagues in Welsh Government I am committed to making the implementation a success and believe a national approach will bring wider benefits in the long term.

**Councillor Bob Derbyshire**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**  
**27 November 2014**