

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 NOVEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor Patel(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Parkhill, Owen,
Sandrey and Wong

19 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jacqui Parry.

20 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

21 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

22 : TRANSFORMING COLLECTIONS IN RECYCLING SERVICES

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity for Members to consider proposals contained within the Cabinet report 'Transforming Collections in Recycling Service' prior to the report being considered by the Cabinet on 12 November 2020.

The two main proposals in the Cabinet report were:

- To inform Cabinet of the changes to the waste and recycling collection programme which will shift from a five-day, two-shift service, to a four-day, one-shift service from February 2021.
- To seek approval of the communication and media plan proposed to inform residents of the implications of the new four day collection service on residential collection timetables.

Members were advised that the Council currently operates a five-day, two-shift system for waste collections. This system was introduced in 2008 to accommodate food recycling collections and improve Cardiff's recycling performance. The approach was designed to enable collections without the need to introduce new fleet vehicles and to limit any increase in budgetary requirements. Cardiff is the only Welsh Local Authority to operate this model.

The drawbacks to operating the five-day, two-shift model were summarised in the report. The drawbacks included collections being left on the street for up to 16 hours, vehicle maintenance issues, low productivity, missed collections and backlogs on Bank Holidays.

It was proposed that a move to a four-day one shift model would provide a more efficient collection service, better vehicle utilisation and a consistent year-round

timetable. Collections would take place Tuesday to Friday between 0600 hours and 1545 hours. The key benefits were waste being removed from the street scene by 1515 hours each day, collections in Winter predominantly in daylight hours, improved productivity and the promotion of good work-life balance.

The Committee was advised that to complement the changes a restructure of the management and support team is also taking place. It is anticipated that this will provide a focus on the utilisation of real data to control service provision and help to reduce missed collections. The new approach will also require some changes to collection 'rounds' in order to address the growth in property numbers in wards across the city due to new housing developments.

Members were asked to note that the changes outlined in the Cabinet proposals were to be delivered at a cost neutral basis. There will be some costs relating to compensation payments, voluntary severance payments, correspondence with residents, etc which will be absorbed within the service area budget. The service currently operates with approximately 130 full time employees and it will aim to recruit and additional 20 employees. There will be no compulsory redundancies.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene to the meeting. The Cabinet Member made a brief statement. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the report and the presentation circulated prior to the meeting. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked whether vehicles would have GPS technology installed and how missed collections, particularly missed collections on Friday, would be addressed under the new system. Members also queried what arrangement would be in place for Bank Holiday Fridays at Easter and Bank Holidays on other days of the week at Christmas and New Year. The Assistant Director stated that every vehicle has GPS which is integrated with the Bartech collection management system used to manage rounds. Under the new arrangements a control room would be established that will provide real time information regarding the rounds, including video footage from cameras fitted on the vehicles. It would be the responsibility of the control room coordinators to ensure that rounds are completed. In terms of Bank Holidays that do not fall on Mondays, Members were advised that crews currently work Bank Holiday Fridays and those arrangements would continue. Christmas and New Year arrangements would be flexible, including potentially collecting on Mondays.
- Members asked how sickness levels would be addressed. The Assistant Director said that the new arrangements will provide 3 rest days and it was hoped that this would improve work-life balance and any sickness related to that. Sickness levels will continue to be monitored.
- Members asked how confident officers were that rounds would be finished on schedule and how would the service react if they were not. Members also questioned how the new rounds and longer working days would improve health and safety. The Assistant Director stated that having longer shifts would allow teams to balance their shift in terms of workload, driver hours and rest breaks.

Crews will be encouraged to take their breaks in the middle of their shifts. This will allow for more efficient use of the vehicles.

- Officer confirmed that the St Mellons and Pontprennau areas will have collections on different days in future.
- Responding to a question from the Committee, the Assistant Director stated that any missed collections reported will be collected the same day or the following day. Repeated missed collections would be addressed by officers in the Control Room in during the rounds. Missed collections on Fridays can be attended to by Street Cleansing Teams. Friday collections are concentrated in the north of the city which predominantly present waste in bins. This will help minimise any street cleansing issues. There will be a concerted effort to ensure that all collections are collect on the correct day and missed collections are minimised.
- The Committee asked whether residents in all wards will receive communication regarding the changes in collections. Officers confirmed that every household in the city will received communication regarding the changes.
- Members asked if collections teams would be allowed to apply some 'common sense' and collect waste that is not presented in Council supplied bags, instead of cleansing teams having to return a few days later. Officers stated that Cabinet is giving consideration to stopping the provision of white and red stripes bags and to allow residents to present their own black refuse bags. The Assistant Director confirmed that a degree of 'common sense' would be applied by collection teams.
- The Committee asked how the changes would affect compliance with Welsh Government recycling targets. The Assistant Director stated that it was not anticipated that the changes would affect recycling performance, although performance will be monitored. Officers confirmed that there will also be subsequent changes to how recyclable waste is presented in the future. This will improve recycling performance.
- Members welcomed the development of the control room. Members asked how many of the 20 new jobs created would be based in the control room. The Assistant Director stated that all the additional posts were in relation to front line staff working on collection rounds. Members asked how this would be achieved if the implementation of the new system was to be cost neutral. Officers stated that fewer agency staff will be required in the future. There would also be less overtime worked, and this, along with other savings, will provide the resources needed. The increase in the size of the fleet from 39 to 68 vehicles will be capitalised and the revenue will be paid back through Central Transport Services from existing budgets. Some capital funding has been used to improve parking facilities for the new vehicles and to invest in the Control Room.
- Members noted that Friday collections would increase from approximately 18,000 residences to 32,000 residences under the new system. Officers were asked how the service could ensure that missed collections would not occur given this large increase in numbers. The Assistant Director stated that rounds have been modelled. An undertaking was given to provide a more detailed response to the

Councillor's question.

- The Cabinet Member stated that there was no spare capacity under the current system. For example, if a vehicle broke down during a round there were no standby vehicles available to allow for the crews to continue with their round. Members were advised that it was difficult to deliver a quality service with fleet equipment that was no longer fit for purpose. A maintenance contract with an outside agency has also been brought back in house. The proposals represent the biggest change in collections in the city for 25 years and the citizens of the city will benefit.
- Members asked whether Welsh Government would assist with the funding of the new fleet and whether the new fleet would be environmentally friendly. The Assistant Director confirmed that Welsh Government will be providing support by providing an emissions free vehicle. Other new vehicles will be Euro 6 diesel vehicles which are an improvement on the existing fleet in terms of emissions. Welsh Government will only support difference in financial terms between a diesel vehicle and an electric vehicle. Officers will work in partnership with Welsh Government in terms of studying the fuel consumption savings and whether a business plan can be put together to move the fleet towards electric vehicles. The Cabinet Member stated that the authority is also working with Welsh Government on a programme looking at hydrogen powered vehicles. In future the fleet will be replaced one third at a time and any new technologies will be considered at the appropriate time.
- Members raised concerns that any yellow hygiene bags missed during a Friday collection could potentially be left out for 5 nights until they were collected the following Tuesday. The Assistant Director stated that the Control Room would help to ensure that missed hygiene collections are minimised. Hygiene bags can be collected by Cleansing Operatives. Hygiene collections currently go to the Viridor energy from waste plant but the authority is working in partnership with Welsh Government to develop recycling of hygiene products.
- Members asked for an update on trial for separating glass at source. Members were advised that the next issue to be considered by Cabinet would be the separation of glass from the waste stream. There was a significant differential between glass that is separated and resold and glass that then needs to be proceed in the waste stream. The service area will be looking to roll-out glass separation following the introduction of four-day week collections. Members were advised that separating glass improves the quality of the recyclable material collected and better income is received as a result. The pilot was successful with very few concerns. Letters have been sent to residents to explain how successful the pilot was.
- Members asked what the sickness level was prior to the covid pandemic and how that compares to the current sickness level. Members also asked what the target sickness level will be following the introduction of the new four day week collections. The Assistant Director stated that he would provide the sickness data in writing. Members were asked to note that when staff are required to self-isolate it is not classed as sickness absence. It was confirmed that sickness absence remains above the service area target of 14.8 days. Members asked whether a

lower level of sickness level would be targeted when four day collections are introduced. The Assistant Director stated that a lower level of sickness absence is always the target.

- Members asked if the move to a four-day working week may create demand for similar working patterns in other service areas. The Assistant Director stated that the model needed to go through robust business planning. Initially a four-day working week was not envisaged. However, a collective agreement was reached with Trade Union partners to change the terms of conditions of those employees affected on that basis.
- Officers stated that it is anticipated that the changes will be introduced on 22 February 2021. There will be some flexibility to allow for residents to adjust to their new collection days. The changes will be supported by a localised communication campaign advising residents of the changes.
- Members asked how Cleaning Operatives would support waste collection changes. The Assistant Director stated that if waste isn't collected on Mondays there will be an opportunity to assess the impact of the four-day collections on cleansing demand. Officers will also reflect on how collections will be supported in terms of the benefits to the service and the benefits to residents. Fundamentally, there would be less waste left on the streets for a shorter period under the new collections. Members considered that it was critical to have cleansing aligned with the new rounds. The Assistant Director agreed that it was critical to integrate both services.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments and observations.

23 : LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a Member Briefing Note on the 2020 Cardiff Council Annual Air Quality Progress Report in advance of it being received at Cabinet on 10 December 2020.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

24 : CARDIFF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FULL REVIEW

The Committee received a briefing paper on a Cabinet report entitled 'Cardiff Local Development Plan Full Review' in advance of it being presented at the Cabinet meeting on 12 November 2020.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

25 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING 2020/21

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

26 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

27 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 2 DECEMBER 2020

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 2 December 2020.

The meeting terminated at 6.20 pm