

Ref: RDB/PM/BD/15.11.16

28 November 2016

Councillor Bob Derbyshire,  
Cabinet Member for the Environment,  
County Hall,  
Atlantic Wharf,  
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Derbyshire,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 15 November 2016**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers from the City Operations Directorate and Commercial Services for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 15 November 2016. As you are aware the meeting considered items titled 'Managing Litter in Cardiff', 'Neighbourhood Services – Member Update' and 'Performance Reporting – Quarter 2'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

**Managing Litter in Cardiff**

- The Committee notes the scale of the task facing Cardiff's Street Cleansing Service in keeping the city clean. They would like to thank all of the staff involved in this huge task and congratulate them for the improvements delivered in the last 12 months. In particular they feel that the improvement in the scores of the two 'Local Government Data Unit Wales Report – 2015/16' indicators has been a great success:
  - Percentage of land of a high or acceptable level of cleanliness – 86.8% in 2014/15 to 90.64% in 2015/16;
  - Percentage of reported fly tipping incidents cleared within 5 working days – 82.61% in 2014/15 to 97.91% in 2015/16.
- During the meeting a Member once again stressed the importance of the newly formed Neighbourhood Services working closely with the Waste

Collection Service to maximise cleansing performance. He felt that it was vitally important to ensure that this type of collaborative working approach is maintained, particularly now that Street Cleansing sits in Neighbourhood Services and Waste Collections is in Commercial Services.

- Members agree with the proactive educational messages being delivered in Cathays and in particular welcome the approach of directing these messages at university students. In addition they agree with the idea of issuing house based fixed penalty notices against shared houses as it stops the problem of specifically identifying who is responsible for any littering and instead places the onus on the landlord to manage the issue.
- The Committee notes that 35 days is a long time to have to wait to deal with litter problems on private property frontages. They support any legal approach that the Council might apply to speed up this process, for example, by using Section 4 of the 'Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 (Harbourage)' which can result in removal action being taken within seven days if the evidence supports the presence of vermin.
- Members note and support the concept of the ward based blitzes which have recently taken place as a part of the 'Love Where You Live' campaign. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with an update on this campaign in early 2017 when sufficient evidence should have been collected to indicate the progress made as a result of this campaign.
- As stated above the Committee acknowledges the significant improvement achieved in increasing the percentage of reported fly tipping incidents cleared within 5 working days from 82% in 2014/15 to 97.91% in 2015/16. This moved Cardiff from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> best performing local authority in Wales. While this is seen as a huge improvement the Committee would like to understand what the three authorities ranked higher than Cardiff are doing to produce an even better result. Understanding this could help Cardiff achieve even better progress.
- During the meeting I asked if enforcement officers had the power to issue fines for littering and then accept an on the spot cash payment. It was

explained that enforcement officers are not able to collect cash payments for fines. I would be grateful if the Council could do something to reiterate this fact and to ensure that the public understands that the Council does not accept such on the spot cash payments for littering fines.

- At the meeting you explained that enforcement officers can only use body cameras as a safety feature and that they cannot be used to record the actual littering offence. I note that you were slightly frustrated at this position, particularly as some private sector litter enforcement companies in England are able to use body cameras as a personal safety and evidence gathering tool at the same time. The Committee supports your view and asks that you continue to push for cameras to be used as an evidence gathering tool.
- It was noted that Neighbourhood Services is in the process of implementing a new AMX infrastructure asset management tool and that a 'reporter app' is being developed to make it easier for the public to report things like potholes and fly tipping incidents. The Committee looks forward to receiving a progress update on both of these new initiatives when it again scrutinises Neighbourhood Services in March 2017.

### **Neighbourhood Services – Member Update**

- As per our comment within the Managing Litter in Cardiff section of this letter we will continue to advocate the use of body cameras for both evidence gathering and supporting personal safety.
- The Committee welcomes the implementation of the balanced scorecard approach for future performance management within Neighbourhood Services. They look forward to reviewing the new balanced scorecard and the initial results for Neighbourhood Services in March 2017.
- It should be noted that the requests within this letter about Neighbourhood Services will also be included in the letter to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability as parts of the service fall within the

Transport, Planning & Sustainability portfolio. I am happy to receive a joint reply on the requests made regarding Neighbourhood Services.

## **Performance Reporting – Quarter 2**

- During the meeting I asked a question about the level of staff expenditure across City Operations and Commercial Services; in particular I asked why agency spend was so high compared to the actual agency budget for both services. I would be grateful if you could provide a detailed response to this question in your reply to this letter. The same point has been raised with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability.
- When talking about reuse facilities you explained that such a scheme would work against the Council in terms of achieving its recycling target. You continued by saying that when an item is reused instead of being recycled it does not contribute to Cardiff's recycling total. You felt that this was slightly unfair as reuse should probably be at the top of the recycling hierarchy. The Committee agrees with your position on this and asks that you lobby the Welsh Government to provide 'recycling credits' for any reused items.
- Members welcomed the news that the new Kelda anaerobic digestion plant will be officially opened in 2017. I would appreciate it if you could arrange for the Committee to have a tour of this new facility along with an overdue visit to the Viridor energy from waste facility in Splott.
- A Member explained that recent changes to the commercial food waste collection scheme had caused some difficulties for companies who placed green plant waste into the food waste stream. He had been informed that the changes had been put through to ensure lower contamination levels (i.e. less garden waste and more food waste) - this meant that some commercial customers now had to find an alternative commercial provider to deal with their green plant waste. I would be grateful if you could ensure that Cardiff's Commercial Waste Service makes sure that the new

commercial food waste standards are clearly communicated to all food waste customers.

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:

Andrew Gregory – Director for City Operations

Tara King – Assistant Director for Commercial & Collaboration Services

Jane Cherrington – Operational Manager, Strategy & Enforcement

Pat McGrath – Operational Manager, Projects

Matt Wakelam – Operational Manager, Infrastructure & Operations

Paul Keeping – Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services

Davina Fiore – Director for Governance & Legal Services

Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee