

Ref: RDB/RP/MM/15.05.2018

17 May 2018

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



Dear Councillor Michael,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 15 May 2018**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 15 May 2018. As you are aware the meeting received an item titled 'Pre Decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Paper titled 'Recycling & Waste Management Strategy – 2018 to 2021''. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

**Pre Decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Paper titled 'Recycling & Waste Management Strategy – 2018 to 2021'**

- During the meeting I asked for details of the wards that would be included in the wheeled bin expansion. You explained that it was not possible at that time to provide the information as you first needed to consult with the local ward Members who would be directly affected. As stated at the meeting I agree with the position of first consulting with the affected local ward Members, and ask that once this has been done that you provide the Committee with the details. If required Members are content to receive this information on a confidential basis.
- An officer explained at the meeting that the Welsh Government is in the process of introducing the new Environment Act for Wales and that this will have a direct impact on how we deliver services. It is felt that the Commercial Waste Service in particular will be affected by the new

legislation which could provide new opportunities for the Council. The officer explained that the Council was interested in working with the Welsh Government to help pilot some of the new changes that would affect the commercial waste industry in Wales. Members thought that this was an excellent idea that could benefit the Commercial Waste Service and help increase recycling rates in this area, therefore, the Committee supports this idea.

- At the meeting the idea of developing local processing plants to deal with the recyclate produced in the South East Wales region was discussed, for example, creating a local plastic processing plant. This it was felt would help improve 'closed loop recycling' and help mitigate the impacts of the constantly fluctuating recyclate market. Members thought that this was good forward thinking in terms improving sustainability in Wales and was an idea worth exploring. The Committee would encourage you to work with Welsh Government to properly explore the feasibility of this opportunity.
- A Member suggested that the new glass pilot might confuse some residents and that it was important to clearly communicate the proposal and how it will affect households. He suggested that some residents who don't necessarily use modern communications methods (for example, apps or social media) might benefit from a calendar which explains when and how glass needs to be placed at the kerbside. I would be grateful if you could look into the feasibility and benefits of providing such a calendar.
- During the municipal year it has been noted that a third Household Waste Recycling Centre has been proposed for the north of Cardiff and that £3 million has been allocated to the capital budget to support the delivery of the scheme in the next three years. Members would like assurance that this proposal stands, confirmation of the current anticipated timescale and details of any potential sites that you are able to share with us at this time.
- Several of the Committee agreed that while increasing recycling rates across Wales was important, it was also important to reflect on the other

changes taking place in the wider waste market. Achieving real sustainability in Wales was seen as the priority and to quote an officer it is important not “hit the target but miss the point”. Members felt that the Welsh Government now has the required legislative power to direct companies to increase recycling rates and reduce the quantity / type of packaging used for various products. With this in mind the Committee would encourage you to lobby the Welsh Government to introduce changes in such areas.

- During the meeting an officer explained that the newly appointed Chief Digital Officer was considering the introduction of a ‘digital bot’ to help deal with customer queries on a range of topics including waste management. One of the features of this system was that it would be capable of immediately identifying the language of the request and then responding in the same language. It was hoped that this would improve the Council’s communication approach and ultimately (through better information) help increase recycling rates. I would be grateful if you could provide the Council with details of the proposed ‘digital bot’; this should include how it might work and the benefits that it would produce.
- Members welcome the consultation exercise that you are planning to run to support the development of the ‘Recycling & Waste Management Strategy – 2018 to 2021’. They ask that you provide the Committee with regular updates in terms of the development of the strategy and the key points identified so that they can contribute to the exercise where they feel appropriate. In addition to this they would like to undertake pre decision scrutiny of the final draft strategy before it is submitted to Cabinet for approval.

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

Regards,

Handwritten signature of Ramesh Patel in black ink.

Councillor Ramesh Patel  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of City Operations
- Tara King – Assistant Director, Commercial Services
- Jane Cherrington – Operational Manager, Strategy & Enforcement
- Davina Fiore - Director of Governance & Legal Services
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee