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03 December 2018

Councillors Peter Bradbury & Michael Michael,
Cabinet Members for Culture & Leisure and Clean Streets,
Recycling & Environment,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillors Bradbury & Michael,

**Joint Scrutiny: Economy & Culture and Environmental Scrutiny
Committees – 19 November 2018**

On behalf of the Economy & Culture and Environmental Scrutiny Committees I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Monday 19 November 2018. As you are aware the joint scrutiny meeting was specially arranged to scrutinise an item on 'Public Space Protection Orders – Control of Dogs'. The comments and observations made by Members on the areas relevant to your portfolios of responsibility are set out in this letter.

Public Space Protection Orders – Control of Dogs

- During his opening statement Councillor Bradbury offered to make the draft proposals for the new Public Space Protection Order on Control of Dogs available for pre decision scrutiny. Members welcome this offer and ask that you arrange for Scrutiny Services to be kept up to date on the development of the new Public Space Protection Order so that they can make arrangements for future Pre Decision Scrutiny.
- At the meeting a councillor explained that he had recently been told by a member of the public that he was no longer allowed to walk his dog in a local park. As you will understand this is clearly incorrect, however, it does illustrate that while the consultation has raised awareness around dog control it has also created some confusion around what is actually

permitted. In order to reduce confusion and to prevent unnecessary disagreements between dog walkers and other park users the Committee believe that it would be sensible to release and promote an interim statement setting out the current position prior to a new Public Space Protection Order being issued.

- Members were very impressed by the organisation and effectiveness of Cardiff Dog Action. It was felt that they had run a sensible, decent and very well organised campaign that had significantly increased participation in the consultation exercise. The Committee commended their work with one Member describing the group as the 'best asset' of the consultation exercise. With this in mind Members feel that the Council should find a way to include Cardiff Dog Action as a key consultee in the remaining stages of the development of the new Public Space Protection Order for Control of Dogs.
- During the meeting a representative from Guide Dogs Cymru stated that the Council should have produced an Equality Impact Assessment on the Public Space Protection Order – Control of Dogs proposals prior to starting the consultation exercise. This he felt might have helped to identify some of the concerns that were later raised by the public and other stakeholders. The Committee agree with this and recommend that an Equality Impact Assessment be completed before any draft Public Space Protection Order proposals are brought forward.
- It would be appreciated if you could confirm how hard copies of the consultation survey were distributed across Cardiff. This should include details of public buildings where hard copies of the survey were held, for example, Hubs and Leisure Centres; how copies were made available in wards without Hubs; the number of survey hard copies received and the number of online survey completions.
- During the way forward a Member asked if any pre testing of the consultation survey questions took place in advance of launching the consultation. I would be grateful if you could confirm if any pre testing took

place, and if it did please provide details of the work undertaken. If pre testing did not take place then the Committee would like assurance that suitable vetting happens before the launch of all future consultation exercises. Taking time to check the wording and context of all questions should produce a smoother consultation exercise and identify how the process might impact upon a wider range of stakeholders.

- A Member commented that lots of very useful information on dog control had been provided during the consultation exercise and that much of it had been in the public domain for some time. He felt that some of the useful ideas provided, for example, the green dog scheme, would have strengthened the consultation. Failure to include these ideas was a missed opportunity for the Council.
- An important part of the scope of the scrutiny was to identify ‘potential options that the Council might take to address any concerns about dog control’. In response to this, the Committee suggests that the Council should explore the following ideas:
 - The introduction of the Green Dog Walkers Scheme to Cardiff – one Member suggested that this could potentially be introduced alongside the ‘Love Where You Live Campaign’.
 - The roll out of community poo bag dispenser schemes that could be paid for by sponsorship from local companies, for example, veterinary practices.
 - Increased and improved communication on dog fouling and control – this communication should be targeted at key stakeholders including veterinary practices, dog owners groups and social media.
 - Educational campaigns based on dog fouling and control aimed at schools – it is easier to teach lifelong habits at a young age. Councillors who act as governors have an important role to play in encouraging schools to teach about responsible dog ownership.
 - South Wales Police is one of the responsible bodies that holds powers to enforce against dog fouling and other dog control matters. They

should be encouraged by the Council to take more action in enforcing against these anti-social problems.

- Effective enforcement against dog fouling was described as an almost impossible problem due to the small number of Council staff authorised to deal with the contravention. The Committee recommend that the Council undertake some research to identify local authority best practice in managing dog fouling. Once this is done the information gathered should be used to help improve the Council's approach to managing dog fouling.
- A Member suggested that the Council should undertake further collaborative work with Keep Wales Tidy to help manage and address the problem of dog fouling.
- In response to comments made about the lack of enforcement resources in parks, the Chair of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee would like to remind Cabinet Members of Recommendation 11 from the Economy & Culture 'Funding of Parks' report which is set out below:

Recommendation 11 - There are no further cuts to the park keeping budget (which covers the park ranger services) and that the Cabinet identifies mechanisms to increase the budget available to park rangers, as their services are vital to ensure Cardiff's parks are safe, secure, well managed, inclusive and of a high quality for the residents and visitors to Cardiff. Members are particularly mindful that park rangers enable Friends Groups to contribute thousands of hours of volunteer time and expertise, which is critical to sustaining the excellence of Cardiff's Parks and Green Spaces.

Recommendation 11 was rejected in the Cabinet response that explained:

The important role played by the Park Ranger Service is both understood and valued, any growth and / or financial pressures that the service faces will be managed through normal budget processes.

Cabinet cannot allow budget decisions to be tied into specific Scrutiny recommendations.

The Committee supports Recommendation 11 and would like to stress the important role that park rangers play in managing dog fouling.

Reducing the number of park rangers would only contribute to making the dog fouling problem worse.

- When concluding discussion about the success of the consultation exercise in the way forward, Member opinion was divided. Some explained that the purpose of the exercise had been to bring a wide range of consultees to the table to broaden thinking on the subject, therefore, felt that it had been a success. Other Members stated that the consultation exercise had been a missed opportunity because it promoted the idea of a Public Space Protection Order without clearly defining a range of tried and tested options that could be implemented to improve dog control.

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

Regards,



Councillor Ramesh Patel
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of City Operations
- Matt Wakelam - Operational Manager, Infrastructure & Operations
- Jon Maidment – Operational Manager, Parks, Sport & Harbour Authority
- Davina Fiore - Director of Governance & Legal Services

- Members of Cardiff's Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee