

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 OCTOBER 2020

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

8 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Oliver Owen.

9 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

Councillor Derbyshire Item 8 Owner and landlord of property

10 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2020 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

11 : SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES - COVID UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity to consider the current position of Shared Regulatory Services and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had upon service delivery.

Members were advised that on 23 March 2020 the United Kingdom was placed into 'lockdown' to help prevent the rapid spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Action was taken to minimise social contact in order to reduce the number of new cases. The Council provides services that are reliant on social contact and therefore it was necessary to limit the number of interactions with the public. This had a major impact on the services provided by the Council.

Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) provides a broad range of services to residents across the local authority areas of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The report provided a summary of the core services provided by SRS.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities; Councillor Norma Mackie, Chairperson of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee and Dave Holland, Head of Shared Regulatory Services to the meeting. Members were asked to refer to the presentation circulated prior to the meeting.

Following a brief statement from the Cabinet Member, the Chairperson invited the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on the statutory requirements place on businesses such as cafes to collect TTP data. The Head of Shared Regulatory Services stated that the controls in place in Wales differ from those in England. TTP data is required to be collected in those businesses where there is perceived to be a higher risk. If there is an outbreak associated with a particular business then officers will visit the business and collect the data. The data is used to trace people who have been in and around that business to alert them that there has been an outbreak, to find out if they have symptoms and to ensure those symptoms do not spread any further.
- Members asked for further details in relation to how the controls are applied to gyms. The Head of SRS stated that gyms are the subject of a national inspection programme. Details of the improvement notices served can be found on the SRS website.
- A Member asked how Councillors and Members of the public could report their concerns to SRS. Members were advised that there are a number of way to report concerns either via the SRS website, via email or via C2C. A Member reported difficulty reporting concerns using the SRS website. The Head of SRS accepted the comments and gave an undertaking to make the reporting of concerns more prominent on the website. The Committee suggested that contact details could be provided to elected members on a confidential basis. The Head of SRS agreed to circulate contact details.
- A Member asked how SRS receives data from the TTP app. Members were advised that data received from the app complimented the data collected via other means and it was not relied upon entirely. Premises are advised to continue to collect TTP data. The data from the app is collected nationally. Members expressed concerns that some business were not collecting TTP data and are relying on the app. The Head of SRS agreed to investigate the matter further.
- Members asked whether Cardiff has experienced issues similar to other parts of the UK in relation to the 10.00pm closure of bars and pubs. Officers indicated that the requirements in Wales differ slightly from England in this regard. In Wales sale of alcohol stops at 10.00pm and the premises must close by 10.20pm. This was to allow a gradual dispersal of customers from premises. However, in practice this has not been the case. A city centre food business was asked to close and social distancing was not being observed and the Council has needed to bring marshalling arrangements in Caroline Street on the weekends. Generally, City Centre premises are well managed. The robust enforcement approach and working in partnership with licensees has worked well. Some concerns were expressed regarding the winter months when premises close their external areas.
- A Member asked whether the Covid-19 pandemic has had any implications for the enforcement of dog breeding. The Head of SRS stated that enforcement is continuing. Welsh Government has provided funding to establish a national taskforce.
- Officers were asked what plans were in place to manage major events in the City Centre, such as the forthcoming Autumn International rugby matches. The Head

of SRS stated that officers are consistently in touch with South Wales Police, retailers and transport providers. Members were advised that a practical, pragmatic approach would be adopted that would allow for people to come into the city to enjoy these events safely.

- The Head of SRS confirmed that enforcement for not wearing facemasks on buses is a police matter. The Welsh Government is considering a pilot in Cardiff that would allow the Council to act as an enforcement agency. Officers confirmed that the overwhelming majority of bus users are compliant and do wear facemasks.
- A Member asked whether public houses were aware of the restriction on people watching sport with people outside their 'bubble', and if pubs had any practical way of controlling the activity. Officers stated that pubs and clubs are aware of the requirements. Responding to a point from a Member, the Head of SRS stated that Welsh Government were going to have to revisit the requirements for social gatherings indoors as the winter approaches.
- A Member asked whether the authority is being proactive in enforcing rules in premises such as shops or is a reactive approach being adopted. The Head of SRS stated that some proactive inspection regimes are being operated. However, the service will still respond to intelligence.
- A Members asked whether hygiene inspections were still being undertaken. The Head of SRS stated that the focus is being made on high-risk premises. Many premises were closed during lockdown. However, the vast majority of food premises in the City will not be visited as there are insufficient resources to do so. A number of food premises remain closed.
- The Head of SRS confirmed that the covid lockdown has had a positive effect on air quality. However, it is anticipated that air quality levels will be going to climb again as things return to normal.

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

12 : WASTE MANAGEMENT - COVID UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity to consider the current position of the Waste Management Service and the impact the covid crisis has had upon service delivery and capital projects.

Members were advised that on 23 March 2020 the United Kingdom was placed into 'lockdown' to help prevent the rapid spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Action was taken to minimise social contact in order to reduce the number of new cases. The Council provides services that are reliant on social contact and therefore it was necessary to limit the number of interactions with the public. This had a major impact on the services provided by the Council.

The report provided a summary of the services provided to residents by the Waste Management service area.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene. The Assistant Director was invited to deliver a presentation. The Chairperson invited the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted that littering in parks had increased, and yet parks were not inspected. Members questioned whether Parks Services would consider inspecting parks, particularly as residents are not permitted to gather indoors so they will be using parks and open spaces more often. Officers confirmed that this had been considered, but it would be necessary to train officers to do visual inspections. Officers accepted the point made and confirmed that the amount of litter in parks has increased.
- Members asked whether officers from enforcement teams have been visible in parks and has proactive action taken. Officers stated that additional larger bins had been provided in some locations, and that a publicity campaign was launched to encourage people to take their litter home. Members welcomed the additional measures and suggested that enforcement officers could patrol in parks in order to reduce the incidence of littering.
- Members asked for specific details on the number of drivers and loaders employed in waste collection teams, and the number of those staff who have taken sick leave since March 2020. The officer advised that there are between 50 to 60 drivers and 100 to 120 loaders, depending on the number of vehicles operating that day. Non-Covid related sickness is approximately 8% but at the start of the pandemic around 25% were unable to come to work for a variety of reasons related to the national lockdown. Only one positive case of coronavirus was reported at the time. However, more recently a number of operatives have been isolating because they have come into contact with a person who has tested positive. Three members of staff in the Collections Team have also tested positive for coronavirus.
- Members asked whether officers anticipated a reduction in the number of waste collections as a result of positive tests for coronavirus or from staff having to isolate after coming into contact with a person who has tested positive. Members asked whether the additional £465k in staffing costs related to agency workers, even though there was a reduction in waste collection services during the period. The officer confirmed that the additional funding was in relation to agency provision. It was confirmed that this additional expenditure was supported with additional funding provided by Welsh Government.
- A Member asked why an additional £148k had been spent on recycling bags and food caddies during the lockdown period as the service was not collecting those items. The officer stated that the action was taken in order to continue to support people to have access to recycling materials and reinforce the messaging around recycling. The recycling service was subsequently suspended.
- Members sought clarification on the performance figures provided in respect of street cleanliness. The officer advised that streets in four wards were inspected

as a result of the impact of Covid. The target is 29 wards.

- The Committee was concerned to hear that a number of staff had tested positive for coronavirus. Members requested further information on the measures being taken to protect staff during the pandemic. The Assistant Director stated that he has met with Public Health Wales and track and trace as the three cases in Lamby Way depot are regarded as a 'hotspot'. An additional case had also been identified at the MRF facility. Whilst on duty staff are kept in bubbles and they are expected to wear masks at all times, vehicles are cleansed and staff are required to sanitise and social distance. Any staff who have come into contact with colleagues who have tested positive are required to isolate.
- Members noted that recycling performance for Q1 was 42.51%. The officer stated that 20% of that figure related to bottom ash from the energy from waste plant. The remaining portion of the figure was in relation to recycling materials that were being processed during the period.
- Officers indicated that the car booking system at HRWCs will stay in place for the time being. The booking system has help put controls in place at HWRCs. Formerly people presented recycling waste that was being contaminated with residual waste. However, less is being received as a result of the booking system. Also, there has been a 100% increase in income from commercial operators and small traders as a result of the controls in place.

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

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

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) Based on the Member's priorities identified at the meeting, and upcoming future Cabinet reports relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, the Chairperson and the Principal Scrutiny Officer will create a draft work programme for the period to March 2021. This will be circulated to the Committee for further discussion.
- (2) Members will agree the agenda for the November meeting via email.

14 : ONE PLANET CARDIFF - MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

15 : HOUSING RETROFIT - LOCAL AUTHORITY FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY FOR
ECO

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

16 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT
2019/20

RESOLVED – That the Environmental Scrutiny Committee annual Report for 2019/20 be updated to reflect Scrutiny impacts and approved for presentation to Council.

17 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

18 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 3 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 4.30PM

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 3 November 2020 at 4.30pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.30 pm