
CLEAN STREETS, RECYCLING & ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT

AGENDA ITEM:

4-day Working Update

The new service delivery model has now been rolled out across Cardiff to deliver an efficient and effective service. The new service is not just about changing working hours, but also about delivering an improved service fit for a capital city. New fleet, digital management of collections and improvements in customer service are supporting the delivery of the new service model. Inevitably, there have been some teething problems associated with such a major change to service delivery and working arrangements, but the position in terms of missed collections is continuing to improve as the new model beds in.

Garden waste collections will recommence from Tuesday 23 March 2021 and will alternate with residual waste (black bin) collections and be collected every two weeks.

Fly-tipping Enforcement

The Administration is committed to tackling fly-tipping in the city and, in 2019/20, we maintained our good performance in clearing over 99% of reported fly-tipping incidents within five working days, with 80.35% of incidents leading to enforcement activity. All-Wales performance data for 2019/20, which was published last month by Welsh Government, also shows that Cardiff (473), Carmarthenshire (67) and Powys (57) Councils issued the highest numbers of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in Wales in 2019/20.

Unfortunately, over 70% of fly-tipping incidents contain domestic waste items, which is why I would like to remind householders to protect themselves by always checking with Natural Resources Wales that the person they use to remove any excess rubbish from their homes is a registered waste carrier. Otherwise, they risk a fine of up to £300 if their waste is found fly-tipped. Householders can also be fined up to £5,000 and end up with a criminal record if taken to court.

Fly-tipping is a serious crime. It causes considerable damage to the environment, the economy and local communities, with the consequences being up to a £50,000 fine or imprisonment for the offender. Since 2017, we have introduced both covert and overt CCTV surveillance at hotspots throughout the city in order to assist us with preventing and tackling fly-tipping. Funding from the Welsh Government's Circular Economy Fund will be used to support the operation of 8 covert cameras in Cardiff that will help identify offenders so that appropriate education or enforcement can be applied.

Partnership working with Natural Resources Wales, Fly-tipping Action Wales, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Local Authority networks/forums, neighbouring councils and community groups continues to be at the heart of our efforts to tackle this blight on the environment, undertake joint investigations and ensure that offenders are held to account. Gathering evidence is crucial in securing enforcement action against those who are accountable; however, this can be difficult and I would encourage residents to help play their part in reporting fly-tipping incidents and helping to identify any offenders, particularly any large scale incidents of waste being fly-tipped from vehicles used by unregistered waste carriers.

New Reuse Centre

The new reuse centre at Lamby Way is expected to open in the next few months. Work is continuing to fit-out the new reuse building, which will support our partner, Wastesavers, in finding a new home where items donated by the citizens of Cardiff can be reused. I will provide further details about the new facility over coming weeks.

Bereavement Services

Bereavement Services are still extremely busy dealing with the second and third waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that March 2021 will continue in a similar vein to the last three months. Staff have continued to work extremely hard to ensure that the excess deaths have been dealt with in a compassionate manner and that bereaved families have not had extended waiting times for funerals.

After the success of accepting electronic paperwork introduced at the start of the pandemic back in March 2020, Bereavement Services will be launching a Funeral Directors portal later this month where up-to-date information will be provided on a dedicated site for funeral professionals. In addition, it will allow for statutory paperwork for funerals to continue to be submitted electronically, thereby speeding up the funeral arrangement process, reducing visits to the offices and minimising physical contact.

Registration Services

The backlog of births from the first and the most recent lockdown periods have been, for the most part, cleared and the service is now registering births in February 2021. This is a great achievement as the backlog of registrations was 2,500 back in September 2020, with a further backlog of 800 in January 2021 following the lockdown restrictions that were implemented in Wales just before Christmas. The team has worked very hard to get back to a good position for registering births during the current pandemic.

The service has been able to offer 'drive thru' appointments at all times when staff were unable to do face-to-face appointments. The Registrar would take all the details over the phone, then print off the register page and go out to the parent's/parents' car to check and sign their registration, limiting contact and keeping both staff and customers safe. This method has meant priority birth registrations have been dealt with throughout the last year and was much appreciated by those needing to register their babies urgently.

Deaths continue to be registered by phone and this has been gratefully received by our customers. It means that our vulnerable citizens who may be shielding, have childcare difficulties, or live far away and are unable to travel, have been able to register from the comfort of their own home. One gentleman registered his mother's death from as far away as Canada, with some others also registering from European countries. It is hoped that legislation will allow the facility to register a death over the phone to remain as a permanent option going forward once the emergency pandemic legislation that allows this facility ends in March 2022.

Citizenship Ceremonies at the Mansion House had to cease in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown and social distancing restrictions that were put in place. The team has managed to deal with all those requiring Citizenship Ceremonies on a one-to-one basis or when restrictions allow, in groups of five in the St David's Room at City Hall. This has meant that there is no backlog of new citizens waiting to receive their full British Citizenship status unless there are reasons they are not able to attend such as being out of the country, or unable to travel due to 'stay local' lockdown restrictions.

Cardiff Dogs Home

Our charity group, The Rescue Hotel has been amazing at supporting ongoing vet treatment to dogs at Cardiff Dogs Home since March 2020 and throughout the pandemic. They have raised funds and applied for grants to support lots of our essential work at Cardiff Dogs Home.

Plans for refurbishing the current site and providing new kennels have been drafted for the existing and talks between the Charity, Cardiff Dogs Home and an external training company introduced to the group by former Wales and British Lions rugby team captain, Sam Warburton OBE, are underway which could lead to a significant benefit to the Dogs at the Home. Sam Warburton and The Rescue Hotel are keen to replace the existing internal kennels at Cardiff Dogs Home via a specialist company. Sam Warburton has raised almost £48,000 and, with gift aid, this amount will increase to £60,000. The Rescue Hotel has also raised an additional £40,000 so far.

A £5,000 grant has been secured from Petplan to subsidise neutering in an effort to replace a scheme that was ended by Dogs Trust in January 2021 due to them facing their own financial pressures. Staff have identified a funding opportunity through the National Lottery to pay for the extension of the Volunteer Co-ordinator & Marketing Officer post at Cardiff Dogs Home for another year after December 2021. The National Lottery has also indicated they will fund improvement in staff facilities so an application for that is also being prepared.

A qualified canine behaviourist now visits the Cardiff Dogs Home three days per week to provide training and de-sensitisation work with our more damaged and traumatised dogs. This is funded by The Rescue Hotel. She is also developing online training modules for our adopters and prospective owners.

An on-site vet practice is due to become operational by 6 April 2021. This will reduce the vet costs for Cardiff Dogs Home and provide affordable basic vet services to all citizens in Cardiff. This has been facilitated by Cardiff Dogs Home and funded by The Rescue Hotel.

A survey has been completed and plans are being drawn up to build a secure exercise on site which can be hired out for use by the public for safe off-lead play for their dogs. This is going to be in demand as people are aware of the issues of dog theft and the shocking increase of the crime. Lots of people re-home dogs that have behavioural issues due to their history and they need a safe place for free play. The money for this has been raised by The Rescue Hotel.

Clean Air Plan – Bus Retrofit Scheme

Following the closing of the application window the Council through the support of Welsh Government has awarded grant funding to two operators, Stagecoach and Cardiff Bus. The funding will enable equipment to be fitted to 49 buses operating in the city and will see nitrogen dioxide emissions of these buses improve by up to 95%. The full programme to retrofit these buses should be completed by the end of July 2021.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers

A further 10 charging locations have now been installed at five locations across the city. These are fast 7kw chargers, and will enable residents with no off street parking to charge their vehicles, once they are fully operational by the end of the month. The Council will continue to work on expanding our public network of chargers as we look to support and encourage residents on transitioning to cleaner vehicles as per our commitment in the draft One Planet Strategy. We are also continuing to roll out rapid EV chargers in key locations in the City Centre and the Bay with our partner on this pilot project, Osprey Charging. Installations at new locations on Park Place, Howard Place and King Edward VII Avenue are currently being progressed by our partner and will further enhance the EV network in Cardiff.

Flood Risk Management

The detailed design of the Cardiff Coastal Defence Scheme is continuing with the specialist consultants. A draft business case is scheduled to be completed by the summer with a view of submission of the full business case to Welsh Government by the end of the year. Following acceptance of the full business case, a tender and contract award process will be required to enable a site commencement date during 2022.

The Flood Risk Management Team has been successful in obtaining funding for outline business cases for areas of flood risk throughout the city. Consultants have been employed through a competitive tendering process to develop the outline business cases in view of submitting to Welsh Government to enable progression to the next stages. Investigations and improvements have also been completed to highway drainage systems to address highway flooding issues experienced during recent storms.

Councillor Michael Michael
Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment
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