

ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

28 January 2016

Chairperson: Councillor I.D.Williams

Councillors: D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies, S.K.Hunt,
E.E.Jones, S.Rahaman, C.Morgan and
Mrs.A.Wingrave

Officers In Attendance Mrs.N.Pearce, M.Roberts, D.Griffiths,
Ms.J.Smith, J. Davies, M. Key and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and Mrs.S.Miller

1. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr. I D Williams – Report of the Head of Planning – Consultation on applications for Harbour Revision Orders for the Port of Neath and the Port of Swansea as he is a Member of Monkstone Cruising and Sailing Club.

Cllr. A Wingrave – Report of the Head of Engineering and Transport – Proposed Traffic Orders for Jersey Marine Village – as she is a Member of Coedffranc Community Council for the West Ward of Coedffranc.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2015.**

Noted by the Committee.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2015.**

Noted by the Committee.

4. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15.**

Members asked whether they could receive information on the number of dog fouling fines, fly tipping fines and any other general enforcement activity that had been undertaken by the unit

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **TO SCRUTINISE INFORMATION AND MONITORING ISSUES BEING REPORTED BY CHAIR OF ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

6. **SIDE WASTE POLICY**

The Committee received a report that sought approval to introduce a no side waste policy for the Council. Members were advised that the work had been undertaken by a smaller group of Members from the Committee over a number meetings.

Members asked whether the funding had been confirmed for Phase 3 of the Recycle + scheme. Officers advised it was part of the ongoing budget process.

Members asked whether the reference in the report about post-Christmas refuse collection could be included within the recommendations. Officers confirmed that the following would be included within the recommendations – “that the first refuse collection for households following Christmas be exempted from restriction as included in the report”.

Members asked for the exemption application form to be simplified in relation to the question on whether they throw away recyclables. This was raised because there are may be a number of people who may have pets and need to throw out contaminated paper in their normal refuse. Officers advised that the application forms had been in use by Swansea Council for two years or so now without problem and rather than change something that was proven elsewhere at this stage it

would be better if the issue was monitored by the committee as part of its monitoring role.

There was a further Member suggestion that whilst the recommendations were agreeable, another option should be considered partly due to the reason that the Council had received a more favourable budget settlement than anticipated. It was suggested that those individuals who apply for an exemption could be provided with a 240 litre bin as opposed to the use of additional sacks. It was stated that the current proposal would be consistent across the County Borough (as some areas are unable to have wheeled bins) and that again the Council should monitor the outcome of the scheme as part of its monitoring role.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the recommendations made by the Member Inquiry Group to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

7. BUILDING SERVICES REPORT CARD

Members considered the service report card of Building Services and were advised that the service was in house and responsible for all maintenance of schools and civic centres for example.

Members asked for more information in relation to the sickness absence figures and were advised that whilst sickness in Building Services was much lower than the Council average the sickness level was mainly due to two cases of long term sickness absence that has since been rectified.

A query was raised in relation to the customer satisfaction survey and how long would it take for this to be completed. Officers confirmed that this had been introduced to the action plans in line with the new corporate requirement and a survey was currently in development for use with clients.

Members asked whether the service used contractors to deliver aspects of its service. Officers confirmed that there are some services that require specialist contractors including flooring and suspended ceilings. However, it was further noted that during the summer months due to the amount of work required in schools more contractors are used because the service was not in a position to staff up to the short term peak in resource level required to meet demand in the summer holidays.

Members wished to record their compliments that the service was extremely responsive and addressed emergency calls quickly and efficiently.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

8. **LIGHTING SERVICES REPORT CARD**

Members considered the service report card for Lighting Services and asked whether the Council was on target and on budget to deliver Phase 3. It was confirmed that this was the case.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

9. **PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

i. Savings in Public Lighting

Members considered the report that highlighted potential amendments to the street light energy savings for 2016/2017.

Officers stated that instead of turning lights off between certain times that had been previously agreed the new proposals suggested that the same level of budget savings could be identified by just dimming the lights and that savings proposals be changed accordingly.

Following Scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

ii. Consultation on applications for Harbour Revision Orders for the Port of Neath and Port of Swansea

Members considered a report that informed them of a request from the Marine Management Organisation (MRO) for a consultation response on two applications for Harbour Revision Orders for the Port of Neath and the Port of Swansea in order to assist with the progression of the Tidal Lagoon Swansea bay Scheme.

Members asked whether the revisions would have any adverse financial impact on the Council and it was confirmed that generally there would not be an adverse impact however, the Council is not getting income from planning decisions in relation to the lagoon.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

iii. Draft Road Strategy 2015-2020

Members considered the Draft Road Strategy for 2015 – 2020 which is a key document for the Council that requires Council sign off. Members were advised that the report was now being presented following the public consultation exercise that had been undertaken.

Members noted that the most recent figures contained within the report were for 2014 and asked whether these were the most up to date figures. Officers confirmed that due to the reporting mechanisms these were the most up to date figures available.

Confirmation was sought on the information in relation to pedal cyclists and it was confirmed that this indicator had been selected by the Council particularly as cycling is on the increase. The communications with cyclists has also improved.

Members noted that the road safety strategy will be further impacted by the Active Travel Bill and consideration must be given to the fact that a large amount of expenditure as part of Active Travel will have a knock on effect by increasing maintenance.

Following Scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

iv. Transport Tenders

Members considered a report that highlighted transport contracts that will be retendered in the near future. Members were advised the Council does not receive any subsidies to run any routes but administers some routes on behalf of Welsh Government and these were to be included within the re-tenders. Officers further stated that the funding from Welsh Government would be in place for the forthcoming financial year.

Members raised their concerns in relation to the size of some vehicles and the number of passengers on the vehicles. It was confirmed that the Council was aware of both issues but there was very little they could do about it, the Council can suggest to the operator that the size of vehicle is inappropriate but it is ultimately the operator who would make the final decision.

Members noted that some of the routes that would be retendered are out of county and asked why this was the case. Officers confirmed this is because some residents have complex requirements that are not catered for within Neath Port Talbot.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

v. Proposed Traffic Orders – Jersey marine Village

Members considered a report that included objections received following the advertisement of proposed traffic orders for Jersey Marine Village.

Members were advised that the proposal had been amended and no objections had been received in relation to the speed limit. Members noted that safety was paramount and that the responsibility lay with the Police on occasions and they will enforce it.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet board.

CHAIRPERSON