

Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

20 November 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.W.Wood

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, C.Galsworthy, J.Hurley, D.Keogh, C.J.Jones, W.F.Griffiths, R.Davies and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance: M.Roberts, C.Plowman and A.Lewis

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and A.Wingrave

1. **Streetcare - Update on Services highlighted on the Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was presented with a report covering the topics Members requested an update on following their recent Streetscene and Engineering Forward Work Programme Workshop; those topics included waste and recycling, review of potential to extend the use of public space protection orders (PSPOs) and cemeteries.

Waste and Recycling

It was queried whether the bulk collection service could reinstate the second vehicle that was temporarily added to the service as there was currently a demand for bulk collection and the additional vehicle assisting could potentially decrease the issue of fly tipping. Officers stated that one vehicle had been adequate previously however due to the temporary suspension of the service between the months of March and May, there was a backlog of demand on the service that needed to be dealt with; the pressures on the service including dealing with Covid 19 related absences and the backlog of demand, meant that the service temporarily had extra crew assisting in the bulk collection. It was highlighted that before taking on more staff, vehicles and a permanent budget liability, the service needed to be

certain of factors such as the income and covering services; this particular demand was identified as a short demand, therefore providing two vehicles wouldn't currently be needed throughout the year.

Detailed within the circulated report it stated that there had been an increase in demand of the recycling kit during the pandemic; Members asked if the Council had seen an increase in the figures for recycling because of this. It was noted that the kerbside collection was growing, for example last year the food waste grew by 600 tonnes; however there was a number of different materials that made up the Councils performance, and there were issues surrounding the recycling of these other materials, such as wood waste, which impacted on the performance levels. Officers added that the figures showed a mixture of both new kit being ordered and replacement kit being ordered.

In relation to Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP), it was asked whether there was any links or systems in place with the Social Services Directorate and the Health Board. It was noted that the Council had a hygiene service in place for people with medical conditions who needed certain waste collected that wasn't covered by the NHS collections; the service was prioritised and continued throughout the pandemic and further details of this could be found online. Officers confirmed that if there was a need to link with other services areas around this matter, they would be happy to do so.

The report mentioned that PACE interviews were taking place in the Civic Centres; Officers were asked to explain these in more detail. It was clarified that Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) interviews were used to gather criminal evidence for cases where people were suspected of committing environmental crimes; there were facilities set up for these interviews, however due to the outbreak of Covid 19 these facilities were no longer safe to use. It was stated that this issue had now been resolved and there were rooms available in Neath Civic Centre which Officers could book to conduct socially distanced and risk assessed interviews.

Review of potential to extend the use of PSPOs

Members were informed that it was possible to extend the scope of PSPOs; the report set out the details including what they were and what they could cover, including what would need to be done in terms of identifying priorities and resources to take them forward. It was stated that Members would need to determine how they would like to

progress PSPOs, for example where they felt there was an opportunity to extend the scope or if there was a particular issue that needed resolving which was currently being dealt with; however the points detailed within the report would need to be taken into consideration before they were taken forward.

A discussion took place in relation to potential PSPOs for the Council owned car parks, in particular the car parks near the beach, as Members had received multiple complaints from residents regarding anti-social behaviour in these car parks; it was asked whether it would be beneficial to put in place a blanket PSPO for all Council owned car parks at the same time. It was confirmed that orders could be put in place across the County Borough for public spaces, including those which were not on Council land. Officers stated that the requests would need to be considered in detail and a consultation would be legally required to take place as the issues that Members were looking to address would need to be justified, and the possible restrictions would need to be reasonable and proportionate; research would need to be undertaken in relation to what was possible and not possible. It was mentioned that the Head of Engineering and Transport (Dave Griffiths) had responsibility of all car parks, so would need to be heavily involved in the process.

Concerns were raised in relation to the potential issues that could occur if PSPOs were to be introduced across all Council car parks, for example the safety of Council staff who currently monitored the PSPO in place at Aberavon Seafront; anti-social behaviour was a police matter whether there was a PSPO in place or not. It was suggested that Officers, on behalf of the Committee, ask the corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Team to raise the issue of anti-social behaviour in car parks across the County Borough in a future meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Group; it was mentioned that the Police attend the meetings, therefore their feedback on what they thought would be necessary and justified could be obtained.

Officers were asked whether information in regards to the current PSPOs would be displayed on the Council's website, explaining to the public why they were in place along with the advice from the Home Office. It was noted that the PSPOs currently in existence around Aberavon Seafront had recently been renewed and a full consultation process had taken place involving the public; Cabinet had agreed for them to be extended for a further three years and the details for this could be found on the Council's website.

Detailed within the circulated report it stated that the restrictions did not apply to disabled persons as defined by the Equality Act 2010 where the person suffers from a disability which would prevent them from collecting their dog's faeces; Members highlighted that there were a lot of vulnerable, elderly people who were not registered as disabled but struggled to collect their dog faeces, and asked if this issue was included within the Act. It was noted that the wording included in the report was taken as an example from Bridgend Council and the wording applied to their restriction they had in place; if Members decided to look into new PSPOs, this issue could be considered going forward.

It was suggested that Members could raise any issues or make any requests in regards to PSPOs in the upcoming Streetcare surgeries.

Cemeteries

The burial demand chart included in the report displayed a large decrease (-20) when comparing July 2019 to July 2020; Members asked if there was any particular reason for this. Officers confirmed that historically looking back, the levels of burials go up and down throughout the years and could be that more people families were choosing cremation instead.

2. **Forward Work Programme 2020/21**

Members noted the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for 2020/21, which was populated by the Committee at their recent Forward Work Programme Workshop.

Members mentioned that some services such as enforcement and waste, would be much more effective if they were joined as this could encourage more linking within the community. It was confirmed that the Director of Environment And Regeneration (Nicola Pearce) had asked the Head of Streetcare (Mike Roberts) and the Head of Planning and Public Protection (Ceri Morris) to look at the interface between pest control and environmental health and decide whether those two elements should be brought together; these discussions were currently ongoing.

3. **Cabinet Forward Work Programme**

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was provided to Members information purposes; the Forward Work Programme was noted.

CHAIRPERSON