

ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

14 April 2016

Chairperson: Councillor I.D.Williams

Councillors: M.Crowley, D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies and Mrs.A.Wingrave

Officers In Attendance M.Roberts, D.Griffiths, and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and A.N.Woolcock

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

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

Cllr. M Crowley – report of the Head of Engineering and Transport on Proposed Traffic Orders – Dalton Road, Sandfields as he is the local Member.

Cllr. R Davies – report of the Head of Engineering and Transport on proposed Traffic Orders – Graig Newydd, Godre'r Graig as she is the local Member.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 MARCH 2017**

The Committee noted the minutes.

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

- i. **Parking Enforcement at Gnoll Country Park**

Members considered a report that asked elected Members to consider extending the Council's off-street parking order to cover the Gnoll Country Park car park.

Officers advised Members that a survey had been undertaken within the park and this had identified circa 25% of car drivers not purchasing tickets and this was thought to be caused by the fact that the public knew that there was limited enforcement within the park.

Members asked whether this would result in more staff being placed at the park to undertake the enforcement. It was confirmed that this would not be the case and the enforcement would be done on an ad hoc unscheduled basis.

Clarity was sought on whether a ticket could be used more than once if a dog walker visited the park in the morning could they reuse the ticket and take the dog for a walk in the afternoon or evening. It was confirmed that this is possible.

Members asked if the number of parking enforcement officers had been cut. Officers stated that this was not the case although there have been some issues such as sickness absence and there was a vacant post that cannot be filled internally.

Members noted that on each committee agenda there were many traffic orders that were agreed but were concerned that there was little enforcement of the orders. It was confirmed that this may be the case but by publicising the order is in place this does allow the public to understand that enforcement could take place at any time.

Officers further confirmed that when hot spots or illegal activity is identified then enforcement officers will target this area. There is also a business case being developed to increase the number of enforcement officers.

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

ii. Waste Enforcement Update

Members were advised that this report had been requested by the Committee at a previous meeting and this was an update on the waste enforcement activity of the Council.

Members noted that the figures were good for fly tipping but felt that there is a need to improve enforcement around litter and dog fouling.

Members asked how many enforcement officers the department currently has and they were informed that it was six with one being lost as part of the forward financial plan.

A suggestion was made that the teams could concentrate at different weeks on town centres for example to focus on littering and this potentially could generate income as some other Councils are doing. Officers stated that the Department could look at doing something different but they currently do whole team exercises on the area of dog fouling. Officers continued that those Councils who seemed to be good at the enforcement of litter and dog fouling have sometimes engaged a private company under contract to target town centre car parks and for example individuals who drop cigarette ends. The private company will identify the individual with their car and then has an easy way of getting their address if they do not pay the on the spot fine.

A question was asked whether the Council can take action if evidence of littering or dog fouling is presented to them sometimes in the form of photographic evidence, it was confirmed that this would be difficult due to the legalities taking photos without someone else's consent. However, the Council could potentially follow up any evidence provided.

Following scrutiny the report was noted

iii. Recycling Trial

Members considered a report that gave Members an update on the containers to be used for the Council's Recycle+ kerb sort recycling service.

Officers reminded Members that this was part of the Council's waste strategy and 2nd phase of Recycle+ is being rolled out during April 2016.

Members asked whether the Council had sufficient vehicles to deal with the roll out. Officers stated that the vehicles were in the yard and some were operational with a further six being ordered for the 3rd and final phase roll out, with delivery expected in September (2 vehicles) and November (4 vehicles).

Officers continued that the Council had borrowed a smaller kert-sort vehicle from Anglesey to trial in areas of more difficult areas, and it was now hoped a uniform recycling service could be provided right across the County Borough. Officers were making a bid to Welsh Government to buy two of the small vehicles.

Concern was raised by Members that people could not order the new smaller reusable collection bags online. Officers stated that this was because they wanted to roll the phase out in the first instance so that they could be satisfied they had sufficient kit before opening up any further stock.

Members asked would plastic items be collected on a weekly basis and it was confirmed that this was the case and was welcomed by Members.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

iv. List of Approved Contractors

Members asked whether a further report could be brought back that listed the categories of work and the contractors who are on the list for the respective categories. Officers confirmed that the list is available online.

Members asked whether the small business section of the Council works with local businesses to get on the approved contractor list. It was confirmed that this was the case with support provided via the Business Support team in Property & Regeneration and Corporate Health & Safety.

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

4. **URGENT ITEM FROM THE HEAD OF ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORT - PORT TALBOT INTEGRATED HUB - BUSINESS ASSET PROTECTION AGREEMENT**

Members considered a report that sought to obtain authority for the Director of Environment or the Head of Engineering and Transport to enter into a Deed with Network Rail to warrant the design of works to be undertaken adjacent to and on Network Rail land.

Officers confirmed that Network Rail had protocols and procedures in place that does not allow them to change the station status locally, with a Business Asset Protection process requiring sign off before submission to the DfT (Department of Transport).

Members asked whether there was any sort of risk associated with signing such a deed. Officers confirmed that the risk is limited but would be covered by the maximum professional indemnity insurance to the value of £5M.

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

CHAIRPERSON