

STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

8 September 2017

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Jones

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, N.J.E.Davies, R.Davies, C.James, H.Jones, A.McGrath, R.Thomas and R.W.Wood

Officers In Attendance M.Roberts, A.Lewis, Miss.C.Davies and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and D.W.Davies

1. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JULY 2017**

The Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Scrutiny Committee noted the work programme.

3. **PRE- SCRUTINY**

The Committee selected the following items for Scrutiny:

3.1 Household Waste Recycling Centre Opening Hours

Members considered a report that was a review of the changes to the opening hours of the Council's Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

Members stated that they understood that there is a clear priority for the Council to meet recycling targets and the centres are a key part of the process. Members suggested that the revised opening hours are

not meeting the need and demand to recycle. Officers stated that the revisions had been introduced to assist the Department in making savings as part of the Council's Forward Financial Plan.

A question was asked on how many Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued in relation to fly tipping. Officers stated that notices are generally issued to small scale fly tipping and confirmed that during 2016/2017 43 cases were successfully pursued through the courts.

Information was requested as to who FCC Environmental were and what it cost the Council to have them manage the waste sites. Officers confirmed they were a private sector company that was paid approximately £1.2m which also covered the landfill tax payments.

Members suggested that there has been an increase in the cases of flytipping officers responded by stating that initially there had been an increase but this had now subsided.

Members requested that the officers review the opening hours and report back at a later date The Committee agreed that the review should consider three revised options that should include full costings:

- a. Open all sites between 10am and 6pm
- b. Open all sites between 8am and 6.30pm during the summer months
- c. One centre opens until 8pm on a rolling rota

Officers stated that there would be a full review of the waste strategy undertake in due course and all Member Seminars would be held in November 2017 and March 2018 that would highlight to Members the changes and would include a wide range of information including costings.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

3.2 Review of Pest Control Fees and Charges

Members considered a report that sought agreement to increase the fees and charges in relation to the delivery of Pest Control to assist in the achievement of savings.

Officers advised that this was in relation to reducing subsidies rather than cutting services and Members should be aware that some Councils in Wales have ceased to offer this service.

Members stated that the 50% proposed rise in fees would result in more problems as residents would fail to report incidents because of the prohibitive cost.

An alternative recommendation was proposed for consideration by Members. It was suggested that the increase in price should be £8 (£15 for out of hours) for domestic requests and the outcomes would be reviewed after a 12 month period. It was agreed that the original price increase proposed for commercial organisations remains.

Following scrutiny the Committee agreed that the alternative recommendations be taken forward to Cabinet Board for consideration.

3.3 Streetscene and Engineering Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 of 2017/2018

Members considered the quarterly performance management data for the first quarter of 2017/2018.

Members raised concern in relation to the figures in relation to clearing a reported fly tipping incident within 5 working days. Officers stated that this issue was subject to ongoing discussions with Welsh Government because if an incident is reported and a notice is issued then this automatically results in a 10 day waiting period. Officers further confirmed however, that incidents are not left for months before being removed.

A question was asked on how many agency drivers/workers are used across the department. Officers stated that this information would need to be collated and would be reported back to the committee. Further information was requested on how many drivers the Council has trained as Class 2 drivers.

Further information was requested in relation to staffing costs and the Committee asked for information to be reported back specifically on:

- Staffing costs for weekend collections which would need to distinguish between those as a result of bank holidays;
- Costs to the department to revisit areas where collections have been missed.

Members requested an updated list of responsibilities for the Directorate by Head of Service so that they can understand the issues facing each section.

Members questioned the information contained within the report in relation to reduction in staff and officers confirmed that the only section with a net reduction of staff last year was within the Engineering and Transport Department.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

CHAIRPERSON