

**Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny
Committee**

**(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft
Teams)**

Members Present:

14 July 2023

Chairperson: Councillor S.Pursey

Vice Chairperson: Councillor T.Bowen

Councillors: R.Davies, N.Goldup-John, C.James,
S.Grimshaw, K.Morris, S.M.Penry and
L.Williams

**Officers In
Attendance** D.Griffiths, C.Morris, C.Plowman, A.Thomas,
J.Stevens, S.Brennan, A. Collins, Harvey,
H.Hasan, S. Owen, A.Phillips and T.Rees

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors W.F.Griffiths, J.Hurley, S.Jones and
C.Phillips

1. Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

The Chair noted that agenda item 14 of the Cabinet agenda pack, which is the private report relating to the Proposed Mynydd Fforch Dwm Wind Farm Development, has been deferred from this meeting due to the need for further consideration of the report.

The Chair noted that the Members of the Scrutiny Committee had agreed to scrutinise the following items from the Cabinet Board agenda:

- Item 9: Streetscene Capital Funding 2022/23
- Item 11a: Addition to Streetcare Fees and Charges 2023/24

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Goldup-John - Personal interest for Item 9 on the Scrutiny agenda as he works for Transport for Wales. He has dispensation to speak.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd of June 2023 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. **Active Travel**

Members received an update on Active Travel as presented within the report circulated. Officers also explained that there have been some organisational changes in the Environment directorate from April 1st 2023 and Active travel has been consolidated under the Head of Engineering and Transport service portfolio area.

The Active travel network map and policy driven areas were under planning previously. These functions are now integrated under the engineering consultancy area. Officers advised that the report is a transition report and covers last year and taking things forward from now.

Members commented that in the corporate plan it was set out for the need of a 5-year plan on active travel within Neath Port Talbot. Members wanted to know when this plan would be available to view.

Officers explained that there are short, medium, and long-term plans and officers have been trying to establish how to prioritise the program. There are 400 Active travel routes in the active travel network maps with 100 given a high priority. Transport for Wales are developing a system to help authorities prioritise these further, once this is available officers will be able to start to develop the plan.

Members expressed the importance of promotion of active travel. Members also pointed out that on the Active travel map, the link takes you to a map with no Key or details. Members suggested that this could be changed to a different page that provides a key and additional information as well as a link that takes you to the NPT page.

Officers agreed that they would get this link updated. Officers also highlighted that they are working on different ways to promote active travel and are intending to go out to events to promote it. Officers

also advised that they are open to ideas and suggestion on promotion.

Officers further explained that embedded in the road safety teams and primary education teams is the promotion of walking and cycling. Over 12 months these teams get to nearly all the primary schools and work is also done in secondary schools. This aids in the promotion of walking and cycling.

Members also suggested that officers pass on the information to community councils so they can promote it in the local community. Officers agreed that this was a good idea and that they would send it out to the town councils when the link had been updated so they too could add it to their websites or share the link.

Members asked for an update on the 2 new posts that the budget had allocated for active travel. Officers explained that in June the Active travel manager position was filled by someone from another team. A position as Active Travel officer is being job evaluated and has taken longer than expected.

Officers also added that with the Active travel roles they, want to respond to the plan and implement mores schemes on the ground. If they are successful in securing grants, then the consultancy service area has several engineers who will help support the active travel role and be able to manage the resource and help deliver that work.

Officers advised that after 2 years, the financing is intended to be self-sufficient. Officers advised that they have expressed concerns to central finance around this. Officers explained that it will generate income, but it has been highlighted that there are uncertainties that it would be 100% recoverable. This could result in a financial pressure and will need to be monitored over the next 2 years.

Members expressed gratitude for this update as they weren't able to recall the time limit on the funding of the roles when members went through the budget setting process and had thought they were placed in as investor save initiative and in the base budget, but now see that it is not in the base budget.

Officers confirmed that while not in the base budget there is a commitment by central finance that if they couldn't fully recover the costs, it would be dealt with as a pressure going forward so the

permanent posts would be dealt with like any other pressure within the Environment department.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Streetscene Capital Funding 2023/23

Members received information on Streetscene Capital Funding 2023/23 as presented within the report circulated.

Members pointed out that it isn't great that half the budget is going to the highways and engineering works programme even though it is essential work. Members advised that anyone looking at it would not expect to see this money being spent on repairing roads etc. Members suggested that this should be changed in relation to presentation in the budget, either subsuming it all into the highways and engineering works programme or making a more realistic allocation between the two.

Officers advised that they take that on board about the public perception of it being spent on highways while being necessary and priority work. Officers will see how this can be presented in the future and advised that things may change in Autumn following assessments. Streetcare officers are coming up with a prioritised programme which is challenging.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Addition to Streetcare Fees and Charges 2023/24

Members received information on the Addition to Streetcare Fees and Charges 2023/24 as presented within the report circulated.

Members wished to clarify if this was a new service?

Members were advised that it was a new charge for any commercial operation, such as landscapers, horticulturalists etc who may wish to use the facility at the Burry Port site. Now they can use this for a fee.

Members wanted to know where these businesses have been taking this type of waste until now. Officers clarified that any waste that goes

to the recycling centres, goes to any one of numerous composting facilities across South Wales.

Officers weren't able to comment on where these companies take this waste to currently.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

6. **Urgent Items**

There was none.

7. **Forward Work Programme & Committee Action Log**

The Members of the Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

8. **Access to Meetings**

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

9. **Neath Integrated Transport Hub**

Members received information on the Neath Integrated Transport Hub as presented within the report circulated.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

10. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

Members did not scrutinise the private items on the Cabinet Agenda.

CHAIRPERSON

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