



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee meeting held virtually on Thursday, 15 July 2021 at 5.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Bradwick (Chair)

Councillor T Williams Councillor A Chapman
Councillor A Fox Councillor E George
Councillor D Grehan Councillor J James
Councillor W Jones Councillor W Treeby

Officers in attendance:-

Mr Steve Owen Service Director Streetcare
Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services
Sarah Daniel, Senior Democratic Services Officer

1 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

2 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 18 March 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3 Draft Work Programme 21/22

The Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer presented the report to members to seek their comment and approval on the draft Work Programme.

The Chairperson asked if it was possible to have a future item on litter picking throughout RCTCBC and how the Community Groups are communicated with and managed. The Service Director Streetcare agreed he could bring an item to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: To agree the draft Work Programme

4 Update on Recovery from the impact of the Pandemic

The Service Director Streetcare presented the report to members to update them the impact of the Council's Recycling performance during Covid 19 period.

He advised Members that the Council year on year has improved its recycling figure. This year has seen us contend with the impact of Covid 19 which had the potential to greatly affect the services performance. This is due to a number of factors such as closure of the Community Recycling Centres (CRC's) due to social distancing restrictions, the ceasing of enforcement on contamination of recycling, availability of distribution points for recycling bags and the social distancing rules for collection staff.

Another factor, which affected the service, was the closing of numerous distribution points for recycling bags which could have made it difficult for residents to be able to get recycling bags, but to counter that, we opened a bag request system online and redirected the enforcement team to deliver to our residents.

He referred members to the table in the report that showed the Councils performance during the full year 2020/21 as 66.7%. These figures are subject to ratification by Waste date flow and any change will be minimal. Figures are consistent with what we are achieving. Increase in residual waste, but still on track for the 70% target in 2024/25

The Chair asked how nappy waste was disposed of/ recycled?

The Service Director Streetcare advised that they were dried, shredded and turned into cork/ pin boards through an external company. He added that they could also be used in sound installation boards.

A Member recalled that signs in parks to state the rules regarding where dogs were allowed were promised in the last meeting.

The Service Director replied that the signs already in situ were quite clear. He added that some parks with wide-open spaces had been identified where floor stencils could be added to state no dogs on the pitches, no dog fouling etc. He further added that signs had to be a certain size and have only limited information to comply with regulations. He reassured members that the Authority were linking with Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) in the autumn to work on a dog fouling campaign. KWT will have campaign information and will work with RCT.

A Member asked what the plans are to distribute recycling bags in the future and looking at the big green bags, will there be an issue with these? Will there be a lot of green waste that wont be going into them?

The Service Director Streetcare advised that the distribution centres are stocked and if people are sensible, the stocks they will last a while. However some take many rolls of bags which is difficult to keep pace with. He added that the Authority did consider the merits of a mass delivery of bags to every resident but considered this to be hugely wasteful as not everyone chooses to recycle and therefore would not be cost effective.

A Member asked about the new green waste bags that will start in the Autumn and if the collection of the plastic bags stopped and only waste placed in the new bags would be collected?

The Service Director Streetcare responded that residents will be provided with two free bags for green waste. The bags are open top with two handles. They

will hold two and a half of the current green waste bags, which will equate to 5 bags per week. He added that residents can purchase another bag for £3 per bag or take additional waste to the distribution centres. He further advised that there will be a lot of communication going forward and a campaign to introduce this and make residents aware of the changes with plenty of time before the new scheme is launched

A Member stated that residents were grateful to all the staff on street collections and at the recycling centres.

A Member asked how residents who litter pick should be disposing of the litter picked as there have been a few instances where members of the community have collected rubbish and placed the rubbish bags near bins but the bags have not been collected as it is not in a green bag.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that this is a difficult one to manage as often rubbish is flytipped in the same way. He urged Members to ask that residents who would like to do community litter picks that they get in touch with local Community groups so that they can be organised and given advice and equipment to undertake the litter picks safely.

A Member asked why the Authority were changing to the new model for green waste collections

The Service Director Streetcare advised that currently, the bag that holds the green waste is shredded with the contents which leaves fragments of the plastic bag in the green waste. If this is removed, it will give the Authority a higher quality compost.

A Member referred to some of the dog fouling bins that were on lampposts near homes and where children play. They asked if a complaint is received if they could be moved to a more suitable location.

The Service Director Streetcare responded that the Authority are amenable to residents and to let him know if any complaints are received and it could be looked in to but added that the bins need to be accessible for them to serve a purpose

The Chairperson wished to place on record his thanks to everyone in Streetcare for their continued hard work throughout the pandemic. This included the mechanics in the workshops who have also been working throughout to keep the vehicles on the road during the pandemic.

The Chairperson referred to a recent story he had read where over there were over 350,000 metal cans that could be recycled in Cardiff every year that weren't because of the lack of recycling bins in the communities. He asked if it was possible that RCT could provide more recycling facilities throughout the Borough.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that the Authority had previously trialled recycling bins but have found that general waste was also being put in there so defeated the object. He reassured members however that when the litter bins are emptied they are sorted and items are recycled. He advised that around 60% of litter collected in the bins was recycled.

A Member stated that he was involved in a Food sharing project whereby supermarkets donated food that couldn't be sold so they could donate this on to those in need. He added that where they couldn't get rid of all the food members of the group had to take this home to dispose of in their food waste bin but as the quantities were often large, this wasn't sufficient. He asked what alternatives were available for the group.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that they are encouraging businesses to participate in food waste, and they can consider requesting a 240 litre food waste bin to dispose of surplus food waste

A Member asked when collection days are changed if this could be communicated to the local member in advance so they can also ensure that this is communicated to their residents. The Service Director Streetcare agreed with the request.

The Chairperson asked if it was possible to arrange a site visit, once restrictions allowed to the MERF site so members can understand and see the process of the recycling centre. The Service Director agreed that he would explore this opportunity. The Service Director Streetcare presented the report to members to update them the impact of the Council's Recycling performance during Covid 19 period.

He advised Members that the Council year on year has improved its recycling figure. This year has seen us contend with the impact of Covid 19 which had the potential to greatly affect the services performance. This is due to a number of factors such as closure of the Community Recycling Centres (CRC's) due to social distancing restrictions, the ceasing of enforcement on contamination of recycling, availability of distribution points for recycling bags and the social distancing rules for collection staff.

Another factor, which affected the service, was the closing of numerous distribution points for recycling bags which could have made it difficult for residents to be able to get recycling bags, but to counter that, we opened a bag request system online and redirected the enforcement team to deliver to our residents.

He referred members to the table in the report that showed the Councils performance during the full year 2020/21 as 66.7%. These figures are subject to ratification by Waste date flow and any change will be minimal. Figures are consistent with what we are achieving. Increase in residual waste, but still on track for the 70% target in 2024/25.

The Chair asked how nappy waste was disposed of/ recycled?

The Service Director Streetcare advised that they were dried, shredded and turned into cork/ pin boards through an external company. He added that they could also be used in sound installation boards.

A Member recalled that signs in parks to state the rules regarding where dogs were allowed were promised in the last meeting.

The Service Director replied that the signs already in situ were quite clear. He added that some parks with wide-open spaces had been identified where floor stencils could be added to state no dogs on the pitches, no dog fouling etc. He

further added that signs had to be a certain size and have only limited information to comply with regulations. He reassured members that the Authority were linking with Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) in the autumn to work on a dog fouling campaign. KWT will have campaign information and will work with RCT.

A Member asked what the plans are to distribute recycling bags in the future and looking at the big green bags, will there be an issue with these? Will there be a lot of green waste that won't be going into them?

The Service Director Streetcare advised that the distribution centres were stocked and if people are sensible, the stocks they will last a while. However some take many rolls of bags which is difficult to keep pace with. He added that the Authority did consider the merits of a mass delivery of bags to every resident but considered this to be hugely wasteful as not everyone chooses to recycle and therefore would not be cost effective.

A Member asked about the new green waste bags that will start in the Autumn and if the collection of the plastic bags stopped and only waste placed in the new bags would be collected?

The Service Director Streetcare responded that residents will be provided with two free bags for green waste. The bags are open top with two handles. They will hold two and a half of the current green waste bags, which will equate to 5 bags per week. He added that residents can purchase another bag for £3 per bag or take additional waste to the distribution centres. He further advised that there will be a lot of communication going forward and a campaign to introduce this and make residents aware of the changes with plenty of time before the new scheme is launched

A Member stated that residents were grateful to all the staff on street collections and at the recycling centres.

A Member asked how residents who litter pick should be disposing of the litter picked as there have been a few instances where members of the community have collected rubbish and placed the rubbish bags near bins but the bags have not been collected as it is not in a green bag.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that this is a difficult one to manage as often rubbish is flytipped in the same way. He urged Members to ask that residents who would like to do community litter picks that they get in touch with local Community groups so that they can be organised and given advice and equipment to undertake the litter picks safely.

A Member asked why the Authority were changing to the new model for green waste collections

The Service Director Streetcare advised that currently, the bag that holds the green waste is shredded with the contents which leaves fragments of the plastic bag in the green waste. If this is removed, it will give the Authority a higher quality compost.

A Member referred to some of the dog fouling bins that were on lampposts near homes and where children play. They asked if a complaint is received if they could be moved to a more suitable location.

The Service Director Streetcare responded that the Authority are amenable to residents and to let him know if any complaints are received and it could be looked in to but added that the bins need to be accessible for them to serve a purpose

The Chairperson wished to place on record his thanks to everyone in Streetcare for their continued hard work throughout the pandemic. This included the mechanics in the workshops who have also been working throughout to keep the vehicles on the road during the pandemic.

The Chairperson referred to a recent story he had read where over there were over 350,000 metal cans that could be recycled in Cardiff every year that weren't because of the lack of recycling bins in the communities. He asked if it was possible that RCT could provide more recycling facilities throughout the Borough.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that the Authority had previously trialled recycling bins but have found that general waste was also being put in there so defeated the object. He reassured members however that when the litter bins are emptied they are sorted and items are recycled. He advised that around 60% of litter collected in the bins was recycled.

A Member stated that he was involved in a Food sharing project whereby supermarkets donated food that couldn't be sold so they could donate this on to those in need. He added that where they couldn't get rid of all the food members of the group had to take this home to dispose of in their food waste bin but as the quantities were often large, this wasn't sufficient. He asked what alternatives were available for the group.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that they are encouraging businesses to participate in food waste, and they can consider requesting a 240 litre food waste bin to dispose of surplus food waste

A Member asked when collection days are changed if this could be communicated to the local member in advance so they can also ensure that this is communicated to their residents. The Service Director Streetcare agreed with the request.

The Chairperson asked if it was possible to arrange a site visit, once restrictions allowed to the MERF site so members can understand and see the process of the recycling centre. The Service Director agreed that he would explore this opportunity.

5 Chair's Review

The Chairperson thanked all officers and members for their attendance and contributions.

- For Officers to have early engagement with the public on the changes to the green waste collections to ensure a smooth transition

When changes to any collections are made such as the collection days that the changes are communicated in advance with the local member so they are able to pass on the changes to their residents

6 Consultation Links

Members were reminded that information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis.

7 Urgent Business

The Chairman asked that a letter be written to former Group Director Mr Nigel Wheeler to thank him for his hard work and commitment to the service during his time with RCTCBC and also that the Committee wishes him well in his retirement.

This meeting closed at 6.05 pm

**CLLR S. BRADWICK
CHAIR.**