



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, 23 September 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 Fox
Councillor E George	Councillor D Grehan
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor J James
Councillor W Jones	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor M Weaver	Councillor P Jarman

Officers in attendance:-

Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services
Mr D Batten, Head of Leisure
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Mr S Owen, Service Director – Streetcare
Mr Nick Kelland – Principal Officer, Libraries
Mrs Sarah Daniel – Senior Democratic Services Officer

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor P Jarman
Councillor A Crimmings

Apologies

Cllr A Chapman
Cllr A Pickering

8 Declaration of Interest

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

9 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 15 July 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting, subject to the inclusion of the apologies received from Cllr Weaver and Cllr Holmes

10 Consultation Links

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed members of the recent consultations that may be of interest to them

11 Scrutiny Research

The Senior Democratic Officer informed Members of the Scrutiny Research facility that was available to members to utilise within the Council Business Unit and members can request to use the facility by emailing the Scrutiny mailbox.

12 Cultural and Heritage Services

The Service Director Community Services and the Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside presented the report to members to provide an overview of cultural and heritage services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members were given a comprehensive overview of the Arts Service, Adult Education Service, Heritage Service and Library Service and included a management structure for each service so members were familiar with who they needed to contact for each service area

The Chairman thanked the officers for the comprehensive report and opened up to members for questions

A member asked if the Aberdare Coliseum theatre was closing as there had been some rumours circulating that this may be the case.

The Service Director responded that this was not true and that the Service area was actually investing in the property, as they were old buildings. She added that a cautious approach to reopening since the pandemic had been taken but it was definitely not closing. Reopening cinema screens would take place from October half term onwards and professional performances would take place from the new year.

A Member asked what happened to the blue plaques if a building is knocked down. He referred to the old cinema in Pontypridd that had a blue plaque on it that was unveiled by a former Councillor.

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside responded that he would look into the Members query and come back to him with an answer.

A Member asked for more information on the Councils review of statues following the Black Lives Matter movement

The officer responded that a recent audit found there to be nothing of issue within the RCT area. He added one query was received in relation to a Kier Hardie statue and around inflammatory comments made, which were responded to and the resident was satisfied with the response provided to them.

A Member asked if the Authority holds any data as to where the people come from that use the theatres in RCT.

The Strategic Arts Manager responded that the Authority uses mosaic software and box data to breakdown the age demographic and advised that most people normally live within a 20 minute journey from the theatres. She added that a lot of information is collected at the point of sale as it was important to know who we

are targeting. She further added that they also promote the activities through their web pages, social media and brochures delivered to other visitor attractions in neighbouring Authority areas.

A member asked for more information on the Eisteddfod that was coming to RCT and asked how they were engaging with communities and who they were targeting for the event.

The Service Director responded that the Authority were co-working with the National Eisteddfod and as part of engagement programme they were considering targeting people who are difficult to reach such as residents that maybe aren't so ready to try something through the medium of Welsh. She added that they have been working with the national Eisteddfod to see what their current engagement programme is with communities.

The Arts Service was also trying to reach out to those that would not normally have an interest in arts to try and encourage them see how enjoyable it can be. Eisteddfod officers will work together to try and ensure that people can see it is for all to enjoy and not just for people who speak Welsh. A Member suggested that there could be a day for those hard to reach residents where they could attend the Eisteddfod without charge. Officers agreed to explore the option.

A Member referred to a discussion at the Welsh Language Steering Group where members discussed ways the Council would look to promote Welsh history and culture and asked if some more information could be provided to members

The Service Director responded that they were looking at 4 days of promoting Welsh history, however the current pandemic had an impact on the plans but this would be revisited in partnership with the heritage teams to get the focus back on a range of heritage links.

The Chair asked for clarification on the ownership on Aberdare and Ynysangharad parks.

The Head of Parks and Leisure advised that Ynysangharad park was donated to the people of Pontypridd back in the 1920's and is held in trust by the Council and there is an Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Cabinet Committee to carry out the role of the trustees. Aberdare Park, predates Ynysangharad Park by 50-60 years and is a grade II plus listed, he added however that Aberdare, does not have same status with the charity commission though

The Chair also asked if leaflets for ZIP World could be placed in Dare Valley Park as on a recent visit there he could not find any there. The Head of Parks and Leisure stated he would feed this back to his team and have leaflets distributed there. The Cabinet Member Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services added that tourism are undertaking a big piece of work to promote the facilities offered by the Council, she advised there will be a hub where all information will be collated so this should resolve the leaflet issues also.

The Chairman wished to put on record the Committees thanks to all staff in the parks departments and the library service for all the digital work for the residents as he considered this to be a very good initiative.

The Service Director Streetcare provided members with an update on how Communities were able to get involved in Litter picking initiatives throughout the Borough and how RCT works in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy.

He advised that Cerw Cymru, is an all wales initiative that has partnered with all authorities in Wales. RCTCBC are currently working with them on a project to coordinate and encourage residents to link up with their local litter champions.

He advised of some of the challenges for example, a lot of the areas are not part of the Council remit and therefore the focus was on streets, parks and Council owned facilities. He added that the project sources local people to take ownership of the areas with the collaboration working closely with them to assist and support in the delivery of the project. The project also looks at behavioural change projects such as the use of different colour bins and the relocation of bins etc

The Service Director Streetcare advised that there were currently 38 litter champions in RCT with the recruitment through the discretion of the Keep Wales Tidy Officer. Once Litter champions are recruited KWT meet with them to supply them with equipment and insure them which is free of charge for a period of time. In addition to local litter champions there were dozens of community groups affiliated to KWT, whilst others did not want a formal arrangement. He advised that in addition to this, there were also a number of litter hubs who work with RCT where equipment can be booked out for litter picks. He added that this was in place to encourage people who wanted to undertake one off litter picks, to utilise their equipment and coloured bags as they did not want them to use black bags as this could be mistaken for flytipping.

A Member was concerned that some of the areas where he has seen litter pickers are very dangerous, such as the mountain roads. He was concerned at the speed of the traffic, and with no pavements people were putting their lives at risk.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that the Authority and KWT do not condone or encourage any groups to undertake litter picking anywhere near roads that are above 30mph. This is undertaken safely with RCT staff utilising the correct safety equipment and warning signs to slow traffic down. He added that he would speak with KWT ensure this doesn't happen.

The Leader of the Plaid Cymru group was invited to ask a question. She stated that she had great admiration for all those involved in the litter picking groups and thought it to be one of the best systems in RCT for undertaking the collections the way we do. She advised the officer that she remained concerned about residents undertaking litter picking on routes that are hidden away, quiet and countryside routes where drug paraphernalia was often irresponsibly disposed of. She asked if the Authority has any advice or factsheets for the casual litter pickers who may come across the of the drug paraphernalia due to the risk to their health and safety.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that KWT do give advice sheets to groups but this was also something the Authority could look into.

The Service Director Streetcare gave members an update on the rollout to the changes on the Green Waste Collections. He advised members of the following updates to the service:

- Scheme was launched on the 13.09.2021 online via social media with a 7-week campaign leading up to the 1st November. The first day saw 7000 residents sign up and now just short of 16,000
- As part of the campaign, leaflets to be dropped to “green” areas.
- Crews will specifically leaflet properties
- 95% of those registered done so online.
- Campaign will now target those who do not use online services
- For residents who have not registered, bags will continue to be collected and officers will engage with them to register them.
- Collection frequencies will remain the same.
- Bag deliveries will commence next week, and continue throughout October.

A Member referred to Community gardens where there are people who volunteer to look after them. He asked how they would be managed going forward.

The Service Director Streetcare advised if residents tend to the gardens and take the waste to their house then this will be collected. If, however residents have registered for two bags, then only two will be taken away, this will also serve as a deterrent from stealing bags too. He added that a hard approach was not intended, particularly in the early days. We want to encourage and engage residents in the process.

A Member asked about residents that don't leave their bags out near their houses, for example sometimes they are grouped at the end of a communal driveway. Street and how those collections will be managed.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that that the same collection points will continue and as long as residents register for the new green waste collections then their waste will be collected..

A Member asked if local churches have to register for the green waste collections as they have their grass cut on a regular basis.

The Service Director Streetcare replied they do not have to register and they were working closely with local churches on any changes to the scheme.

A Member asked if compost was able to go in the green waste bags. The Service Director Streetcare advised that this could not be included in the bags but this could be taken to one of the six distribution sites. He added the cleaner the waste, the higher the chance it can be turned into something else. He added that the weight of the bags is also a consideration and that the website had been updated with all the relevant information.

A Member was concerned that when the bags were put out for collection, as they were light they could be blown around and lost or not returned to the correct household.

The Service Director Streetcare advised that a trial had been undertaken and the crews are aware of these issues and will do what is reasonably practical to return the bags to the rightful owners. He added that other options had been

explored but as an Authority with so many terraced properties, wheelie bins were not an option and it was not possible to remain with single use plastic. He added that this is a tried and tested scheme across other Local Authority areas.

A Member asked about residents with restricted mobility and how these are supported for collections.

The Service Director informed members that residents are advised not to put too much in the bags so they were not too heavy. He added that the Authority also undertakes assisted waste collections if required.

The Chairman invited the Leader of the Plaid Cymru group to ask a question of officers.

She referred to the 16,000 people that had registered for the scheme already but was concerned that there were 120,000 households in RCT so there was quite some way to go before this is a sustainable option. The Service Director Streetcare wished to clarify that due to the very nature of the households in RCT, residents presenting green waste is less than 50,000 households as many residents had no gardens or very little outdoor space.

She asked when collections were undertaken would the bags be returned to the kerbside? She was concerned that there are already many obstructions on the kerbside, which was to the detriment of blind and disabled people, and worried about further hazards to them.

The Service Director Streetcare replied that crews have been made aware of these issues and have been encouraged to return the bags as reasonably as possible to prevent further obstructions.

A Member asked about the weight of the bags and if the bags drain if we had heavy rainfall. The Service Director responded that the weight of the bags had not been raised as an issue and the bags will drain during heavy rain. He advised that residents should continue to put their bags out on the evening before collection.

15 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked all members and officers for their attendance and contributions at the meeting.

He asked officers to keep members informed of the progress with the green waste collections so they can understand first hand any of the issues that may be encountered.

The Chairman also advised members that as soon as the Council were able to organise a safe trip to Bryn Pica, members of the Committee would be invited to attend and extended the invite to the Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group also.

16 Urgent Business

None

CHAIR.