

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 11th October, 2018.

Present: Councillor V.J. Bailey (Chairman); Councillors Mrs. P. Drake, S.T. Edwards, G. John, N. Moore, A.R. Robertson, Ms. S. Sivagnanam and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: Councillor L.O. Rowlands.

412 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors V.P. Driscoll and M. Lloyd.

413 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

414 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

415 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE –

The Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Services (Operations) provided an update on waste management. This would include a reflection on the implementation of restricted residual waste, an update on performance and grant funding, an update on the collections blue print, progress around the waste transfer station, recap on current waste treatment and recycling processes and an update on recycling targets, future policy changes and national aims and performance.

The Operational Manager began by stating that the restriction on residual waste was implemented on 3rd September, 2018. He highlighted that September had been a challenging month but the process of change had gone relatively well, thanks to the efforts of Vale residents who had complied with the revised arrangements. He also highlighted that there was a four week period consisting of two fortnightly collection schedules during the month. He highlighted that an educational approach had been taken and no action in the first fortnight but stickers had been applied to excess waste during the second period of the month. No enforcement action had being taken as yet. The Operational Manager also outlined that Waste Wardens would now be going out on black bag vehicles from October to monitor that the two black bag rule was being adhered to. It was considered that the two bag limit had been a success in the first month.

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The Operational Manager also provided an update around performance and referred to kerbside collections which had resulted in a 35% reduction in waste collected during the implementation month compared to the average tonnage of each month for this financial year. This equated to a 36% increase in food waste recycling and a 2% increase in dry recycling. He outlined that residents recently coming into offices collecting recycling boxes and bags advised that they were now recycling for the first time and so the demand for recycling had been a challenge for the service during September with a significant increase in recycling participation. In addition, to the kerbside services there has been a significant increase at Household Waste Recycling Centres. It was noted that this was marketed well in advance of the changes with 5,000 leaflets handed out. The changes also included that all residents would be met on entry and would be required to undergo identification checks. In addition, new sorting stations had been installed and guidance around this had been provided. It was reported that there had been a 61% reduction in residual waste.

With regard to grant funding, the Operational Manager advised that the service had secured £6m from Welsh Government to spend on capital projects. Of this, £3.5m had been secured for 2018/19 with further funding prioritised for 2019/20. This money would be allocated to purchase new vehicles, designing and building a new waste transfer station and to purchase new receptacles.

The service also advised that the revised recycling collection service would be introduced from the summer 2019 in the Vale with the changes being first implemented in Barry and then Penarth at a later date. An important element of this included a use of a waste transfer station for which an interim site had been secured in Cowbridge. For this, design and remedial works were required in order to accommodate sorting facilities with this site being used until the permanent site had been completed.

To ensure members were aware of the current recycling and treatment facilities used for our existing waste the Operational Manager gave an overview of the current processes. In terms of food waste, a new anaerobic digestion facility had been built in Cardiff as part of joint organics procurement exercise.. This had the capacity to handle 35,000 tonnes of waste per year which would result in methane rich biogas being produced and separate digestate for agricultural use. The facility would also produce enough energy to power 4,000 homes and would reduce the release of harmful landfill gases into the atmosphere and result in zero waste being sent to landfill.

Members were advised that a new green waste composting service had been created which would result in the collection, shredding and storage of green waste. This waste would be treated which would result in compost being produced at a facility at Cardiff Council's Lamby Way Depot.

In terms of dry recycling, the Operational Manager stated that a contact with Casepak Ltd had been agreed which would result in the process and sorting of materials. This contract is due to expire on 31st March, 2019 but it has options to enable it to be extended for two further annual extensions up to 2021. Currently, dry

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recycling was sent to the Cowbridge Waste Treatment Station until it is collected by the Councils processors based in Leicestershire. Paper and cardboard was currently sent to China, but it was hoped that a local market for this could be created in the future.

With regard to waste disposal, the Operational Manager advised that this included all domestic and commercial black bag waste, street cleansing, household waste and recycling and bulky waste. This was treated at Viridor's Energy Recovery Facility and was part of Prosiect Gwyredd. A 25 year contract had commenced on 1st April, 2016 in partnership with Cardiff, Newport, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and the Vale. At present over 350,000 tonnes per annum were handled by the facility which was the largest energy recovery facility in Wales. This facility generated enough energy to power over 50,000 homes. Members noted that it was expected for this facility to increase output to over 420,000 tonnes per annum. The Committee noted the process around the energy recovery facility which involved the heating of boilers to produce steam which in turn powered turbines which generated electricity. A significant by-product from this process was bottom ash, which accounted for 20 % of the waste burned as well as residual metals. From this, the bottom ash is recycled and used in construction materials an example would be building new roads.

In outlining current performance, the Operational Manager stated that the recycling rate for 2017/18 had been 63% which had seen a slight dip due to Natural Resources Wales requiring changes to the amount of wood recycling that we are able to claim. Performance for the first quarter 2018/19 suggested a recycling rate of 65%. This compared favourably to the Welsh Government target of 58%. For 2019/20, this target would increase to 64% and if Councils did not achieve this, then they could incur significant fines. By 2025 this target would increase to 70% which, the Operational Manager stated, would be extremely challenging. In terms of Wales' performance as a country, the Operational Manager stated that Wales had the third best rate of recycling in the world with only Germany and Singapore performing better.

Finally, the Operational Manager referred to future policy changes and again referred to the 70% recycling rate which may be brought forward to 2020 but not as a mandatory target. It is likely that this would increase to 80% at some point. Welsh Government were maintaining fines for failing to achieve targets at a minimum cost of £200 per tonne. In addition, a review of the collection blue print was scheduled for spring 2019 which may include recommendations to include nappies, film, batteries and textiles.

A Committee Member stated that this was a very good news story but he referred to the number of people who had reported issues to local Councillors regarding outstanding collections. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that this year had been very challenging because the service had to find efficiency savings and there were demands on resources as a result of the changes to the two black bag limit. This had resulted in an increase in recycling. At present, the service was reporting a budget overspend which had been impacted by an extra three vehicles being on the road. This however would be alleviated through Welsh Government funding to pay

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for new vehicles and demands on collections would be considered as part of the new blue print. The Operational Manager also advised that he wanted to congratulate Vale residents as the recycling rate had increased and the changes to the black bag policy had been successful. He recognised that there was a need to undertake a promotional campaign in order to front up people's concerns and to highlight the service's successes.

The Chairman queried whether there was a system in place to monitor complaints received and he queried whether these could be highlighted to the Cabinet Member in order for them to be mindful of the change in trends and service demand. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that the service had been unable to assess the complaints received due to workload pressures. This would be undertaken at some point as it was important for the service to understand trends and areas of concern. The Operational Manager outlined that waste collections were continually changing as each area would undergo demographic changes which meant that in reality all routes required constant revision. He added that the service did not want to receive complaints as this was a poor reflection on the service, but this was related to the resources available. Issues would be easy to resolve if there were more resources, but it was important to put the rate of complaints into context as the service undertook over 180,000 collections a week.

A Committee Member then asked a series of questions. The first was whether residents could still continue to use the old receptacles and recycling bags. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that residents could still carry on using the old bags and receptacles but the only issue was that the Vale of Glamorgan had stopped purchasing them. The Member's second question related to comments he had received around residents taking black bags to the waste recycling centres and being asked to sort through their bags. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that a member of staff would ask residents what the bag contained and if it was general waste, and then this could be disposed of in the skip. The Member's third question was around the recycling of black plastic to which the Operational Manager stated that black plastic could be recycled but there was an issue as there was no current market which meant the manufacturers were now moving away from the use of black plastic. He confirmed that black plastic was not recycled and would be sent to the energy recovery facility. The Member's final query related to the use of purple bags and whether residents would have to collect replacement bags each time. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that a year's supply had been given out to residents and they will be replaced on demand thereafter.

A Committee Member queried what percentage of plastic was sent for energy recovery. The Member referred to issues reported with recycling in China and the need to discourage the use of packaging. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that only waste from black bags would be sent to energy recovery, which would include some plastics. He stated that it was ironic that plastic was a good fuel to burn as it contained a high oil content. He also referred to the 10% of dry recycling that was contaminated from the collection process and this was also sent for energy recovery. He agreed with the Member's comments regarding issues being experienced with China and he stated that the attitude by the UK authorities had in the past ignored these issues. He went on to state that discussions were ongoing

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around the need to change the way that products were packaged and that the Council may undertake an awareness campaign around bottles. Welsh Government were at present considering the impact of this which may result in policy change that, he inferred, could impact on the amount of waste recycled. He went on to advise that if this change in policy took place, then Welsh Government would need to realign its targets as recycling rates became more difficult to achieve.

The Committee queried whether there had been an increase in instances of fly tipping. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that there had not been an increase although this was dependent upon the time of year. He stated that an initiative had been started with Natural Resources Wales who had loaned the Vale of Glamorgan a number of cameras and warning signs to be placed at known tipping sites. If this initiative was successful then it was planned for a business case to be put together for the purchase of cameras by the Vale of Glamorgan. The Committee agreed that an update on this initiative would be provided in six months' time.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the update on waste management be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee receives an update on the initiative involving the loan of cameras from Natural Resources Wales in six months' time.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the update on waste management.
- (2) In order for the Committee to assess the initiative undertaken to monitor probable fly tipping sites.

416 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2018 (DEH) –

In presenting the report, the Departmental Accountant advised that the service was currently projecting to outturn on budget. However, there were some areas of concern and reserves would be utilised this year.

For Neighbourhood Services and Transport, it was reported that this service would outturn on budget after the use of £315k reserves had been approved.

Within the Waste Collection Service, there was still pressure on employee and transport budgets due to down time involved in travelling to Cardiff to dispose of waste. There had recently been a change to the use of the site within Cowbridge for some elements of waste which was anticipated to decrease the level of downtime currently experienced. £200k had been set aside for 2018/19 within the Neighbourhood Services reserve with an aim to offset this budget pressure. Due to

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an increase in treatment charges within the recycling market, primarily as a result of China's decision to reject elements of mixed recycling, there was also a pressure within the recycling treatment budget. Again, funding had been set aside in reserves for this year to cover this pressure, however this was only a one off funding stream and there would be a cost pressure on the budget in 2019/20 of approximately £430k.

The Reshaping Services savings target for Neighbourhood Services and Transport for 2018/19 was £951k. £375k of this saving related to the remaining balance to be found from the recent restructure within Neighbourhood Services. The restructure had been effective from 1st April, 2018 however, due to the timescales and notice periods required, some staff had remained in post longer than anticipated. This may have had some effect on the level of savings achievable. It was envisaged that the full £951k saving would not be made in this financial year and a shortfall of £315k was being reported. Plans for the remainder of the savings were currently being developed and would be reported to Cabinet in due course, however the Neighbourhood Services Reserve would be required to meet any remaining shortfall in savings at year end.

Regeneration – This budget covered the Countryside, Economic Development and Tourism and Events functions. Although the forecast was again shown as a balanced budget, there remained concern over the income targets for car parking charges and commercial opportunities within the Countryside Division, where historic savings targets were unlikely to be achieved this year. Efforts would however be made to maintain a balanced budget by year-end. The initial savings target for the year relating to the Reshaping Tranche 3 Establishment Review had been re-apportioned across the Managing Director and Resources Directorate and the savings target for Regeneration had been reduced by £20k and £16k had been transferred to Development Management and £4k to Private Housing.

Development Management – Planning application fee income had fallen behind target as at 31st August so, as in previous years, the position would be monitored closely. To mitigate any potential shortfall, the Section would continue to pursue the use of Planning Performance Agreements and other income generation such as pre-planning application advice to help support this regulatory process.

As part of the Final Revenue Budget Proposals for 2018/19, a savings target of £6.298m was set for the Authority. Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a statement detailing all savings targets relating to this Committee.

Neighbourhood Services and Transport – There was a savings target this year of £951k however it was currently anticipated that £636k would be achieved leaving a shortfall of £315k to be identified. Work was continuing to identify schemes to close this gap however any shortfall at year end would need to be funded from the Neighbourhood Services reserve.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed financial progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August, 2018.

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Vehicle Replacement Programme – The majority of this budget had been allocated for the purchase of new waste vehicles. It was now planned that the vehicles would be purchased this year from grant and any further vehicles would be purchased in 2019/20 with the further roll out of the new waste collection service. It had been requested that £2m be carried forward to 2019/20.

Waste Grant – Welsh Government had now approved grant funding of £3.5m to allow the Vale of Glamorgan Council to transition to a blueprint municipal waste collection service. It had been requested that the grant be included in the Capital Programme.

Neighbourhood Services Asset Renewal – A delegated authority was approved on 3rd July, 2018 to allocate £440k of the budget to the following schemes:

Scheme	£000
Replacement of Jenner Park Roof	50
Community Centres Works	25
South Road Sully	60
Cross Common Bridge	20
Dinas Powys to Penarth via Cosmeston	40
Highways Structures Asset Renewal	50
Green Flag Parks	75
Parks Asset Renewal	120
TOTAL	440

St. Athan Sustainable Transport Improvement – The Council had been successful in applying for Active Travel grant from Welsh Government of £12k. The grant would be used this financial year to carry out scheme design. Works were anticipated to start on site in the next financial year and therefore it had been requested that £143k be carried forward into 2019/20.

Rhose Sustainable Transport – Section 106 funding had been approved to provide walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure improvements within the village of Rhose. At present, it had been requested that £60k be included in the Capital Programme for 2018/19 to allow for design with further funding being available in future years to undertake the works.

Active Travel Mapping – It had been requested that this scheme be renamed Biglis Roundabout to Dinas Powys Active Travel Route to better describe the scheme.

WelTAG Stage 2 Transport Network Appraisal for Dinas Powys – It had been requested that this scheme be renamed WelTAG Studies as it would also cover the M4 to Cardiff Airport studies.

Coastal Asset Renewal – A budget of £25k had been allocated to this scheme and it had now been proposed that this funding be added to the Barry Island Shelter Scheme to carry out remedial works to the structure.

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In referring to the current financial position, the Chairman queried what proposals were on the table should this situation continue. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that for her service area, there was a projected overspend of £500k. The service was looking at ways to claw this back, but if this continued then there was a potential for a the change in the services delivered, which would ultimately be a decision for Cabinet. The Head of Service advised that the service would put forward its case to fund the cost pressures, but if this was unsuccessful, then the Council would have to look at what services it provided, some of which were non-statutory. Such areas could be green waste, the collection of Christmas trees and the collection of bulky items. The Head of Service did stress that no decisions had been made.

A Committee Member asked for an update around the Reshaping Services programme. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that during Phase 1 the service had achieved £900k in savings. Phase 2 was currently underway and a number of projects were being considered. This included car parking and school transport, which would be decisions for Elected Members. Further to this, the Chairman referred to comments made around the charging for staff car parking. The Head of Service stated that at this stage it would be premature to comment as the Car Parking Strategy would be considered at a Joint Scrutiny Workshop but this had been put forward as an option through the consultation process. She added that recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Workshop would be put before Cabinet and maybe Full Council, if required.

The Committee queried progress around installation of LED street lights. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport advised that new lights had been rolled out to residential areas although there had been issues with the LED roll out for ornamental lights such as those used in conservation areas.

Following consideration of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the 2018/19 revenue and capital monitoring be noted.

Reason for recommendation

That Members are aware of the position with the 2018/19 revenue and capital monitoring relevant to the Scrutiny Committee.

417 SUPERFAST BROADBAND PROVISION (MD) –

For this item, the Committee welcomed the Senior Rural Regeneration Officer and the Team Leader Economic Development. Also in attendance was Mr. Michael Groves, Programme Director ICT Infrastructure for Welsh Government who tabled an information leaflet put together for businesses in order for them to consider their superfast broadband needs. Mr. Groves had been invited to provide an update on the Welsh Government's Superfast Broadband rollout.

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Mr. Groves began by outlining that so far over 740,000 premises had been connected, which equated to 96%. This left 4% of premises without access to superfast broadband of 30 megabytes per second download speed. The 4% had been affected by difficulties in upgrading the green cabinets that people saw at the side of roads which contained all the connection wires. This was complicated as access rights were required for leading wires which crossed private land. The other issue was to do with people not understanding their broadband options, as a lot of people were under the misconception that a household box with wires was required.

In order to improve the broadband for the 4%, Mr. Groves advised that all the premises and households had been logged and the work required had been identified. He added that the contract for the works had yet to be awarded as there had been some delay, so it would still take a few months for all premises to be fully connected. He went on to advise that his specific role related to businesses for which 214 in Wales had received advice and support. It was reported that the estimated total sales attributed to broadband adoption was £229m. Mr. Groves therefore wanted Councillors to spread the word to businesses asking them to get in contact in order to receive free advice for their broadband requirements.

The Chairman queried the delay in awarding the contract for the works to improve the connectivity for the 4%. Mr. Groves advised that when the contract with BT ended, they had advised Welsh Government of improvements to what they termed as “stranded assets”, these being the green cabinets which required upgrading. Therefore, it was agreed for BT to complete the upgrade work before the contract was tendered as it would be fairer for bidders to have all information about connectivity and the most up to date picture available before they sent in their submissions. This would also allow companies time to review the contract documents over the summer months.

A Committee Member queried whether all businesses had been contacted. In reply, Mr. Grove stated that his team had worked tirelessly on this and information had been sent out to all businesses. He wanted Local Authorities and Elected Members to assist Welsh Government in this process and for them to pass on details to businesses in their local areas.

With regard to the rural parts of the Vale, the Senior Rural Regeneration Officer stated that the Council was part of a consortium of six Local Authorities and South Wales Fire and Rescue that had submitted a joint bid to upgrade the fibre optic network in their areas. The key element of this is to extend the reach of the fibre optic network to small and medium sized businesses and the Council was still waiting to hear whether the bid had been successful. In addition, Welsh Government also offered a voucher scheme for community groups which could be used to help businesses and local communities improve their connectivity. There was also a separate Voucher scheme offered by the U.K. Government. The Senior Rural Regeneration Officer also referred to an unsuccessful bid around 5g technology, which had been refused as the fibre optic network in the Vale could not match that of larger urban centres such as Bristol. The Senior Rural Regeneration Officer added that the Council was working with a number of partners to look at connectivity and

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the fibre optic network. B.T. were noted as working with a number of communities across the Vale to look at alternative fibre solutions. The Council provided advice to residents, so information would be developed for the Council's website.

With regard to the Rural Community Development Fund, the Committee was advised that the previous fund was in the region of £59m but this had been reduced to £29m. Representations had been made to Welsh Government around the impact of this reduction.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the report with regard to the Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru project be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To allow Members of the Committee to consider progress in delivery of superfast broadband projects.

418 QUARTER 1 (2018-19) PERFORMANCE REPORT: AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE AND PROSPEROUS VALE (MD) –

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport presented the performance results for Quarter 1, 1st April to 30th June, 2018, for the Corporate Plan Well-being Outcome 2, "An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale".

It was reported that an overall Green RAG status had been attributed to the Well-being Outcome 2, "An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale". This reflected the good progress made towards achieving improved outcomes for residents and customers during the quarter.

At Quarter 1, 100% of the 66 Corporate Plan actions where a RAG status could be attributed to this Well-being Outcome, were on track to be delivered giving an overall Green performance status for actions.

Of the 46 performance measures aligned to this Well-being Outcome, only seven measures could be allocated a RAG status. The remainder were annual measures to be reported at Quarter 4. For the measures where a RAG status was applicable, two had met or exceeded target (Green status), two measures missed target by 10% (Amber status), and three measures missed target by more than 10% (Red status).

In relation to the objective "promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment", 100% of actions were on track for delivery giving an overall Green performance status. Similarly 96% of actions aligned to the objective "promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment" were attributed a Green performance status. However, it was highlighted that there was a need to progress actions relating to the Council's Refit Energy Improvement Programme (FIT/A006, Amber status) and the Local Transport Plan (NS/A009, Red status).

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A RAG status was not applicable to all 16 measures aligned to the objective “promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment”, as these were annual measures which would be reported at Quarter 4. In relation to promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment, a RAG status was possible for seven out of 30 measure aligned to the objective. Two measures were attributed a Green performance status, and a further two an Amber status and the remaining three a Red status. The percentage of Council street lights converted to LED missed its 70% target by more than 10%. This performance had been the result of previous delays that were encountered during 2017/18 and the programme was not on track by the end of the year.

A detailed report outlining the progress this quarter towards achieving Well-being Outcome 2 was provided at Appendix A.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving key outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan Well-being Outcome 2 – “The Vale of Glamorgan has a strong and sustainable economy and the local environment is safeguarded for present and future generations” be noted.

(2) T H A T the performance results and remedial actions to be taken to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Following consideration of the Quarter 1 Performance Report – An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale.