

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - MONDAY, 23 JULY 2018

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON MONDAY, 23 JULY 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	N Clarke	DG Howells
A Hussain	DRW Lewis	JC Radcliffe	RMI Shaw
RME Stirman	G Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables
MC Voisey	DBF White		

Apologies for Absence

P Davies

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Greg Lane	Head of Democratic Services

Invitees:

Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Paul Thomas	Principal Surveyor – Property and Facilities Management.
Councillor Richard Young	Cabinet Member Communities

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

48. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 dated 19th April 2018 and 12th June 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

49. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the feedback from previous meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 and the list of responses including those still outstanding.

A Member explained that he had submitted a question for Council regarding Waste Services, but he had missed the deadline. He asked if when this item was next considered the report could cover the contract and what sanctions were in place for non- delivery in the first period. He wanted to know what actions had been taken for not hitting the key deadlines, the additional costs relating to issues at the start of the contract and the number of member referrals. The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that as previously explained, the financial aspects of the contract could be considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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A Member asked for the report to include an update on enforcement and the outcome of the review particularly in relation to the Wildmill area.

The Scrutiny Officer asked the Committee if they wanted further information on any items or if they wanted to prioritise any items.

A Member referred to ALN Reform and private members legislation regarding autism and asked for more detail on what information was being fed into the process.

Members requested that Parks and Fields, the revised CAT process and Empty Properties be prioritised.

RESOLVED: That the report and the comments made, be noted.

50. PLASTIC FREE BRIDGEND COUNTY

The Head of Neighbourhood Services presented a report advising the Committee on the topic of plastic waste pollution and the proposal for a "Plastic Free Bridgend County".

A Member expressed his disappointment because the report presented a negative view giving reasons why actions could not be taken rather than proposals for what could be done. The Chairperson agreed that the general feeling of the Committee was that this was a light report. The Head of Neighbourhood Services replied that this was a complex topic and he had not intended to be negative. He was keen to ensure that due consideration was given to the issues and actions taken for the right reasons. He explained that originally the motion was presented to Council but then it was withdrawn for a Scrutiny Committee to consider. The report was intended to inform debate and discussion with regards to single use plastics rather than assume that the authority would move forwards with discontinuing their use. The Head of Neighbourhood Services gave an example comparing a currently authority wide purchased disposable plastic pen and a refillable parker pen. One was significantly more expensive than the other, but did not need to be thrown away. He highlighted how just for this one small area of regular purchase, a relatively complex business case weighing cost versus environmental benefit would need to be carefully considered for the Authority to make the best decision as to which to purchase. The report was designed to highlight these complexities to avoid a knee jerk decision to implement policy change without understanding the consequence.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services referred to the "Blue Planet" BBC television series and how you could not fail to be moved by the way plastics were irresponsibly used and disposed of. He explained that there had been significant activity in plastic recycling at the kerbside and in the collection of absorbent waste products. Whilst positive action had already been taken, the impact and definition of a "Plastic Free Bridgend" was complex and the benefits were not clear. There was still room for more changes largely in offices where single use plastics could be replaced. The changes could be far reaching and affect every part of the Authority including business support and procurement. He added that to truly understand the full impact then a further study would be required to look at what it would cost to discontinue use and the impact it would have and what the long term savings would be. The Authority had to be aware of the business case and all the issues involved. He explained that it would be possible to change from biodegradable food waste sacks to single use plastic bags which could then be pulled out of the process. It took too long for biodegradable bags to break down in the current process. He added that this was a complex topic and that reuse should be encouraged wherever possible.

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Members discussed the need for a market for plastic to create demand for it to be recycled, the need for bags to be made from recycled plastic, the collection of hard plastics at sites and the introduction of the collection of polystyrene. Members discussed the provision of water fountains in Council buildings.

A Member referred to the Green Peace campaign, "9 Ways to reduce your Plastic Use" and suggested that the Council could adopt them. He also suggested that the Council engage with "Surfers against Sewage" and to promote the scheme via an Environmental Champion in the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that the original motion to Council would have mandated the authority to take action in a certain way even though the proposals had not been funded or discussed. By working with Scrutiny they could look at what existed, what could be done and find a strategic way forward. He was disappointed with the negative comments about the report and stressed that it was important to understand what was being done, what could be done and to plan a strategic way forward. There was currently no budget for this work and it had not been a priority until now.

Members discussed the recycling of black plastic at community recycling centres and were advised that even though this was not offered at the kerbside, residents were able to recycle their black plastics at the CRC's.

Members also questioned if the blue sacks used at the kerbside for residents to dispose of their general waste were made from recycled plastic and if so, it should be advertised on the bags. The Head of Street scene confirmed he would look into it and report back to Members.

A Member asked if sanitary products could be collected rather than going to landfill or being incinerated. He was advised that this could have significant implications on all collections and there could be a significant cost which might not be justified by the reduction in tonnes. He added that there was also a need to balance the budget as well as look at the environmental impacts of providing additional recycling methods. He suggested if members wished for this option to be explored that a costing exercise would need to be undertaken.

Members asked why there had been a delay with procurement of an external company to undertake enforcement against littering in Bridgend County. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the intention was for it to be in place earlier but it had taken considerable time to arrange and update documents with constraints on officers' time. He added that this was being implemented imminently.

Members discussed bags for life, eco warriors for schools, the use of social media to promote BCBC's waste and recycling methods and what could be recycled at the kerbside and at the CRC's.

Members also suggested that the Authority explore the option of reverse vending machines where you put plastic in and a points based reward system was in place.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that one of the issues with town centre recycling bins was the level of contamination. He added that he would like to see trials conducted in carefully selected areas. Members were in agreement with this.

A Member raised the issue of single use disposables and catering. He believed that food outlets should all be encouraged to help reduce the waste left in car parks etc. He also

said that supermarkets should be encouraged to reduce the amount of packaging on goods.

Members discussed arrangements for recycling in council buildings and the National Assembly where there were recycling bins in each room. They agreed that in addition to encouraging residents to recycle, officers should also be leading by example and recycling as much as possible.

Recommendations

- Members recommended that the authority should take the lead on reducing single use plastic items and encourage local businesses and the community to follow suit. Members recommended that the Authority start with steps suggested by Friends of the Earth such as encouraging the use of refillable water bottles, paper straws, and purchasing of fruit and vegetables that are not packaged.
- Members recommended that Officers explore the options of installing water fountains at key locations throughout the Borough to encourage the use of reusing water bottles rather than purchasing plastic bottled water. Members encouraged officers to explore this as part of the developments of the Bridgend Market.
- Members recommended that officers explore the option of trialling recycling bins in the Borough and if successful to have them installed in all Towns in the Borough to encourage members of the public to recycle when they are out as well as at home.
- Members recommended that Council adopt an Environmental Champion to encourage Members and the Community on issues surrounding waste and recycling in the Borough
- Members recommended the Authority better utilise their Facebook and Twitter pages to communicate regularly with residents about what can be recycled at the kerbside and also at the Community Recycling Centres. Members stated that they were not aware that black plastics could be taken to the CRCs to be recycled as advised by officers in the meeting. Members asked that as part of the communications, officers could encourage residents to dispose of single use items such as wet wipes and cotton buds to be disposed of correctly.
- Members recommended that officers contact the WLGA to find out what approach other Local Authorities are adopting with regards to reducing their plastic consumption.
- Members recommended that the options for a plastic bottle deposit return scheme be explored in the Borough and recommended that the relevant Cabinet Member write to Welsh Government to advise that BCBC supports this scheme

Further Information

- Members asked for clarification on the single use bags currently used by the Authority to collect residual waste from residents and if they were used from recyclable material and if so this should be printed on the bags to promote to the community.
- Members asked if there is an obligation for retailers to make a charitable donation for the charges for reusable carrier bags.
- Members needed to better understand the environmental and budgetary impacts of using single use plastic bags over bio-degradable bags for the disposal of food waste.
- Members asked for the recycling of sanitary products be explored and balanced between environmental and budgetary impacts
- Members would like to be provided with a definitive timeline for the procurement of an external contractor to undertake enforcement action on littering in the Borough. Members heard that this would shortly be going through the tendering

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process but members wanted reassurance as to when this was likely to happen and when a contractor would be appointed.

- Members asked for clarification on the class of vehicles allowed at CRCs and what was classed as a commercial vehicle and therefore not allowed at the centres.

Further information for Waste report

- Update on the polystyrene baler that was due to be installed at Community Recycling Centre's. Is this going to be installed? When?

51. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 11:50