



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES** **AND PUBLIC PROTECTION** **MEETING**

MONDAY, 11TH APRIL, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor D Roberts (In the Chair)

Councillors J McCarthy, S Slater and W R Smith

Cooptees:

Robert Holdaway

Officers:

Gareth Chapman (Chief Executive), Ellis Cooper (Corporate Director (Place and Transformation) - Deputy Chief Executive), Cheryllee Evans (Chief Officer (Neighbourhood Services)), Carys Kennedy (Head of Legal and Governance Services - Monitoring Officer), Steve Peters (Head of Public Protection and Housing), Justin Waite (Planning Policy Officer), Simon Jones (Senior Solicitor), Rolf Brown (Countryside Officer), Paul Davies (Waste Management), Jemma Rough (Environmental Health Officer), Cheryl Jones (Rights of Way Project Officer), Paul Jones (Memorial Inspection Supervisor), Rhian Prosser (Town Centre Manager), Stephen Thomas (Waste Management) and Val Steel (Waste Strategy Manager)

Outside Bodies:

3GS, Big Heart Merthyr Tydfil, Keep Wales Tidy, Merthyr Tydfil Angling Association, MTHA, MVH, South Wales Fire & Rescue, Wales & West Housing Association, Wildlife Trust, Youth

Offending Team Cwm Taf, Gellideg Foundation.

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Jayne Overbury (PA to the Mayor and Leader)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
1283	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H Barrett, Councillor Ray Thomas and Nicola Mahoney.
1284	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	None were received.
1285	Overcoming the Blight of Fly-tipping and Litter in the County Borough	<p>The Chair welcomed invited partners, outside organisation representatives, Gareth Chapman the Chief Executive and the Leader Councillor Brendan Toomey to the meeting and emphasised the important issues to be discussed. He then outlined the procedures and format of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair referred the committee to the purpose of the report and outlined the lines of enquiry that are to be discussed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the local problem – why do people fly-tip and why is there a prevalence of litter and rubbish about our streets, estates and the countryside; • What legal responsibility does the Council have for dealing with fly tipping and litter/rubbish clearance; • What legal responsibilities do landowners have and how does the Council ensure that they clear fly-tipping and litter/rubbish from their land; • Who does what within the Council; • What effect have the 3GS litter enforcement officers had in the short time they have been operational; and what is their exact remit within the County Borough; • What are the current systems for reporting litter and fly-tipping; how many reports and complaints is the Council receiving (are they increasing?), and what are the clearance response times; • What is the Council doing to deter fly-tippers (including what penalties are imposed); • Are there any problems or issues with existing practices within the Council that exacerbate the problem; • Which other partners/agencies/organisations are involved, and what are their responsibilities and what actions do they take; • What are Public, Councillor and Officer views on how to tackle the issues in a sustainable way. <p>The Chair then handed over to the Leader, Councillor Brendan Toomey. The Leader thanked the chair and panel for the invitation to this meeting and also thanked the partners for attending.</p>

He outlined in detail the importance of tackling the Blight of Fly-tipping and Litter in the County Borough and emphasised that this problem is a national one. Funding has been identified to provide around 15 covert cameras to be placed in known hotspots these are to be set up in the next couple of weeks.

Councillor David Jones then referred to six main categories to be discussed:-

- Enforcement
- Education
- General Fly-tipping
- Commercial Waste
- Residential Waste
- Street littering.

Councillor D Jones announced that a new Enforcement Team has now been set up which compiles of:

- Craig Arnold, Operations Director 3GS
- Martin Gowdy, Enforcement Officer 3GS
- Jemma Rough, Environmental Officer MTCBC
- Val Steele, Waste Strategy Manager MTCBC
- Stephen Thomas, Waste Manager Supervisor MTCBC
- Paul Davies, Waste Management Operations, Environmental Services MTCBC
- Paul Jones, Street Cleansing MTCBC.

a) Enforcement

The Chair then opened up the meeting for debate and the following questions on enforcement issues were raised.

- To date how many enforcement notices have we given out and will 3GS be patrolling out of the town centre?
- Are we going to be working with partner agencies and Probation Service?
- Are 3GS looking to increase Enforcement Officers patrolling the County Borough?
- Regarding Fixed Penalty Notices what age group does this cover, it is over 18's or 16 to 18's?
- If you have on perpetrator that is continuously receiving warnings is there another procedure after that, through the college possibly?
- How many fixed penalties have been given out throughout the County Borough?
- Does the Council also issue penalty notices to private landlords?
- Do you persecute the perpetrator on private land and not the landlord?
- Should all area be enforced and cleared and not just council land?
- How can we work in partnership to the resolve the issue of council and private land being fly-tipped on?

- On weekends in town centre there is an issue with litter from Public Houses and takeaways, is there a plan in place to cover evenings?
- Is it possible to provide litter bins in the problem areas?
- What is being done on fly-tipping along the river banks?

b) Education

The Chair then opened up the meeting for debate and the following questions on education issues were raised.

- The post that liaises directly with schools has been lost, have you got any future engagement plans in place with schools?
- All the work we are doing, consultation, education, is this working?
- What can we do as a group of individuals do to instil and stop fly-tipping and litter?
- How much work do we do with probation and youth offender teams?

c) General Fly-tipping

Councillor David Jones wanted to highlight the procedures of reporting fly-tipping and asked the relevant officer to respond.

The Chair then opened up the meeting for debate and the following questions on general fly-tipping issues were raised.

- How many prosecutions are you dealing with at the moment and how many do we have in on a weekly basis and how many can you process in a particular time – are we managing with the resources we have?
- Why is the timescale to long a process, is there enough staff to cover?
- How strong does the evidence have to be for a successful prosecution?
- What do you see as realistic evidence?
- How are the covert cameras going to work and what locations will they be placed at?
- What do you categorise as fly-tipping – such as supermarket trolleys?

d) Commercial Waste

Councillor David Jones outlined the issues to be discussed and informed that an audit in the town centre had been carried out with businesses to ensure that they have the correct procedures in place.

The Chair then opened up the meeting for debate and the following questions on commercial waste issues were raised.

- Duty of care for businesses in the town centre, have all the businesses throughout the county borough been notified and can the authority ask for evidence that the duty of care certificates are in place with those businesses? Would they have to give evidence of this?
- Where are we on enforcement cases with commercial businesses and with regard to the duty of care certificates what sort of response are we having when the officer is approaching them?
- If all the businesses were canvassed how many did not have a current licence?
- Are there any prosecutions in place for illegal traders?

e) Residential Waste

Councillor David Jones outlined the issues to be discussed and informed that there is a positive message from recycling in the county borough currently at 70%-73% with residents participating, which is a massive step forward to where we were a couple of years ago. The relevant office then responded on these statistics.

The Chair then opened up the meeting for debate and the following questions on residential waste issues were raised.

- How are we dealing with private landlords?
- With regard to side and red-tag waste are you then picking this up in other areas where it has been dumped or is the person that had the re-tag learning from this?
- Is it correct that there is a Private Landlord's Bill coming into force so they all have to be registered with the Local Authority?
- Can some of the recycling bins be looked at as the paper ones are not suitable for some weather conditions?
- The blue bags which have been recommended for light-weight recycling, are they fit for purpose for Merthyr Tydfil?
- Could the recycling centres look at a different method of checking the contents of black bags?
- What is the time scale that you leave the red-tag bags on the street?
- What are we doing to target those residents that are not engaging with recycling process?
- Do you have red-tag hotspots and can they be targeted for educating?

The Chair introduced the Chief Executive, Gareth Chapman to say a few words.

Gareth Chapman then commented on his observations of the meeting outlining some concerns that affected everyone. Financial cuts backs and dwindling resources are affecting everyone within the private, public and voluntary sectors and volunteers are relied upon more and

		<p>more. Today's session has been really valuable and hopefully the task team that was mentions will be set up to take some of the suggestion that we have heard today forward. The message needs to be consistent across all areas that need to be looked at and good ambassadors would be the young people and they need to be encouraged. Recycling targets for this authority needs to be met as in previous years there was a possible fine which we did not have to pay but in future if targets are not met then fines will be imposed. We will go to the supermarkets to bring to their attention the problem of bags being dumped. People should be reporting more litter incidents to the local authority so that the perpetrators can be prosecuted. Food waste bags are now free and the percentage has increased, maybe bulky waste can be looked at as a cost effective exercise. We need to work together to deliver and make a difference to the people of Merthyr Tydfil.</p> <p>The Chair closed this item and summed up by making the following comments. He informed that a task and finish group had been set up and met a few weeks ago and they would reconvened to discuss the evidence presented and how to progress this forward. A task force is also being set up within the authority and a monthly meeting is to be convened and all the organisations and partners will be invited to attend to work together and move forward.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all the organisations, the Chief Executive, Leader, Cabinet Member and officers for attending.</p>
1286	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised the task and finish group are to meet, date to be agreed, also that a report to council with recommendations should be submitted.