

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Date Written	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
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Service Area	Neighbourhood Services
Committee Date	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2019

*To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen*

### **Performance Report - Street Cleansing**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the scrutiny committee on the current situation in Street Cleansing and report on performance and complaints received.
- 1.2 To advise the Scrutiny Committee on the issues currently faced by the department.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION that**

- 2.1 The scrutiny committee notes the contents of this report.

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The quality of the local environment is important to the community. Local environmental quality includes how places look and are perceived, how safe and happy people feel about living in the area and how attractive areas are for residents, visitors, businesses and also attracting new business investors.
- 3.2 An environment blighted by fly tipping and litter impacts not only on our long term health and well-being, but also on our ability to grow our economy. It can affect both the tourism and inward investment potential of an area, as well as the value of its properties.
- 3.3 The Street Cleansing service has been subject to a number of efficiencies over recent years, which has resulted in a significant reduction in staff and a subsequent reduction in the frequency of litter picking. In 2014/15, 6 staff were released and in

2015/16 a further 5 staff were released plus 3 sweepers. Prior to the efficiencies being carried out all streets within the County Borough were litter picked weekly. It is now a case of once every 10 working days and potentially longer if needles or dog fouling reports are received as these clearances are prioritised.

## **4.0 WHERE WE WERE**

### **4.1 Street Cleansing Performance**

- All Wales data performance score for 2014-15 - 92.9% (Wales Average - 96.9%) - Rank 18<sup>th</sup>. Coincidentally this year waste collections changed to fortnightly.
- All Wales data performance score for 2015-16 - 98.1% (Wales Average - 96.5%) - Rank 6<sup>th</sup>
- All Wales data performance score for 2016-17 - 97% (Wales Average - 96.6%) - Rank 7<sup>th</sup>
- All Wales data performance score for 2017-18 – 97% (Wales Average 95.5%) – Rank 7<sup>th</sup>

### **4.2 Litter Complaints**

- Litter complaints received in 2014-15 - 523
- Litter complaints received in 2015-16 - 750
- Litter complaints received in 2016-17 - 321
- Litter complaints received in 2017-18 - 108

### **4.3 Needle Stick Complaints**

- Needle stick complaints received in 2014-15 - 134
- Needle stick complaints received in 2015-16 - 155
- Needle stick complaints received in 2016-17 - 61
- Needle stick complaints received in 2017-18 - 36

### **4.4 Dog Fouling Complaints**

- Dog fouling complaints received in 2014-15 - 136
- Dog fouling complaints received in 2015-16 - 164
- Dog fouling complaints received in 2016-17 - 131
- Dog fouling complaints received in 2017-18 - 50

### **4.5 Litter Enforcement**

There were minimal Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) served prior to February 2016. Any FPNs served for littering/dog fouling would have been completed by the Environmental Health Team.

In February 2016 the Council contracted an external company 3GS to issue FPNs on behalf of the authority.

The contract ended at the end of January 2017 as per the agreement. Following the termination of the contract with 3GS, Council agreed to trial an in-house enforcement team for littering and dog fouling.

## **5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW 2018-19**

### **5.1 Current Data**

- All Wales data performance score for 2018/19 - 97% (Wales Average - 94%) - Rank 8<sup>th</sup>
- Litter complaints received in 2018-19 - 113
- Needle stick complaints received in 2018-19 - 49
- Dog fouling complaints received in 2018-19 - 51

### **5.2 Litter Enforcement**

There are currently no litter and dog fouling Enforcement Officers in post.

### **5.3 Headline Results from Keep Wales Tidy report 2018-19**

- Dog fouling was recorded on 8.8% of streets, this is a slight increase to last year's figure.
- Confectionery was recorded on 52.9% of streets (sweet wrappers). Drink containers were recorded on 43% of streets and fast food litter on 19.6% of streets. These litter types are similar to last year's figures.
- The most common litter issue facing Merthyr Tydfil is the presence of smoking-related litter (predominantly cigarette ends). This litter was encountered on 79.6% of the streets surveyed.
- More litter comes from pedestrian's than anywhere else 88.6% of streets.
- Domestic litter was recorded on 64.9% of streets.

### **5.4 Current Issues**

- Town Centre bus stop cleansing and jet washing on Sundays no longer takes place as funds are no longer available from Regeneration.
- Staff are continuing to recycle all cans and plastics at source – approximately 2 tonnes is being litter picked per month.
- The total amount of bins for litter and dog fouling combined across the County Borough is currently 240 and increasing. The amount of Litter Bins across the County Borough is currently 117 and the amount of Dog Waste Bins is currently 123. We install approximately 10-20 extra bins per year due to requests from councillors and this is having a massive impact on cleansing resources, so much so we have taken a member of staff off a round and changed his role to solely emptying the bins throughout the County Borough daily.
- Constituents are depositing domestic household waste in litter bins throughout the County Borough hence the creation of the above post.

- Trunk road cleansing has now been taken over by the cleansing service and this is having a major impact on resources. Teams are being allocated to closures and being removed off their daily duties.
- Staff within the current cleansing structure also collect needle sticks, clear dog fouling, pick up dead animals and remove graffiti. Street Cleansing no longer remove weeds and clear alleys/paths etc since the Deep Cleansing Team were removed last March.
- There is no cover in cleansing for holidays and sickness as this was taken away as part of the efficiency savings in 2015.
- Leaf removal also has a major impact on the Cleansing Department during the autumn/winter period, this needs to be done to ensure drains are not blocked.
- Recently we have worked with our Human Resources Team and the employment mentor at communities to work to source volunteers. To date this process was working well but unfortunately we have hit some issues with non-attendance. This project is in its infancy and will therefore be monitored.

## **6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE**

- 6.1 Maintain current high standards and up-skilling staff.
- 6.2 Improve working relations with other sections within Neighbourhood Services and wider departments.

## **7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT**

- 7.1 100% cleanliness index is targeted. Realistically this is impossible to predict as the streets generated for scoring are randomly extracted from the street gazetteer and litter occurs frequently, however the worst littered areas throughout the County Borough have been prioritised and through the amounts of litter located have become hot spots which are visited on a more regular basis.
- 7.2 We will continue to support Caru Cymru and local community groups throughout the County Borough in removing litter, recycling at source, cutting back pathways and cutting grass, however due to a decrease in funding we only have 1.5 FTE operatives compared to 2 previously.
- 7.3 Source additional volunteers and work closely with Caru Cymru and local Councillors to introduce new community groups within the County Borough.
- 7.4 Monitor bins throughout the County Borough and remove from areas where household waste is continually being deposited and identify alternative sites.
- 7.5 Explore ways to improve service areas by looking at current structures and implementing revised schedules.

## 8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

8.1 The quality of the local environment is important to the community. Local environmental quality has several dimensions. These include:

- how places look and are perceived;
- how safe and happy people feel about living in an area; and
- how attractive areas are to workers, visitors and existing and new business investors.

A depleted natural environment blighted by fly tipping and litter impacts not only on our long-term health and well-being, but also on our ability to grow our economy. It can affect both the tourism and inward investment potential of an area, as well as the value of its homes. Therefore, the Street Cleansing department directly supports or contributes to the following corporate well-being objectives:

**Working Life:** People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination;

**Environmental Wellbeing:** Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside; and

**Living Well:** People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

**JUDITH JONES**  
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**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES)**

**COUNCILLOR DAVID HUGHES**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR**  
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		No