

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18TH MAY 2018

PRESENT: Councillor J.D. James (Chair)

Councillors:

J.A. Davies, P.M. Edwards, A.L. Fox, S.J.G. Gilasbey, A. James, A.D.T. Speake, T.A.J. Davies, A. Vaughan Owen, J.S. Phillips, and D. Thomas.

Also in attendance:

Councillor K. Lloyd – Substitute for Councillor T. Higgins;
Councillor D.E. Williams – Substitute for Councillor A. Davies;
Councillor G.H. John – Substitute for Councillor D. Phillips.

Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Executive Board Member for Environment
Councillor P.M. Hughes, Executive Board Member for Public Protection.

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Mullen, Director of Environment;
S. Pilliner, Head of Transportation & Highways;
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;
R. Carmichael, Rural Conservation Manager;
D. King, Highway Services Manager;
R. W. Waters, Highways and Transportation Manager;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen – 10:00am - 11:55am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Davies, T. Higgins and D. Phillips.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SITE VISIT PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Wynn Morgan, Managing Director and Sean Gallagher, Operations Director of Cwm Environmental.

The Committee received a presentation which provided an overview of the Committee's site visit that took place on 9th March 2018 to the waste recycling provision at Cwm Environmental and the winter maintenance fleet at Cillefwr Industrial Estate, Johnstown. The site visit afforded Committee Members with an opportunity to view the recycling plant in operation and the winter fleet and speak to operatives.

The Highways and Transportation Manager provided information in relation to the winter maintenance provision and fleet which included:

- Carmarthenshire's Primary Network and Routes
- Weather Forecasts
- Salt Stock
- Financial Implications
- Gritting Fleet and Gritting Controls

The Head of Waste and Environmental Services provided information in relation to the waste recycling provision at Cwm Environmental located at Nantycaws, Carmarthen. The Committee was provided with operational knowledge with regard to the reception and processing of blue bag recycling, residual waste (black bag waste) and composting facilities. In addition, an explanation of the amenities provided by the household waste recycling centre and other services that Cwm Environmental undertake was specified to the Committee.

The Operations Director, Cwm Environmental reported that the waste management market had changed considerably over recent years and whilst the market remained unpredictable, the company would continue to manage, monitor and review global situations and as appropriate seek alternative processing arrangements, dependant on the circumstances and the market at the time.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

- In response to a query regarding waste costs, the Cwm Operations Director, reported that the arrangements for landfill waste to be shipped an off-taker in Copenhagen was set for a limited period of time only and had now ceased. The company now utilised waste outlets located in both Sweden and Cardiff.
- Following the closure of Llangadog Recycling Centre and the removal of the glass recycling banks, clarification was sought with regard to the correct procedure of glass disposal. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services informed the Committee that the glass recycling banks had been removed from the site in Llangadog at the request of local residents, due to the noise emitted from the location when glass was being disposed and that work was currently ongoing to find an alternative solution for the site. It was further clarified that glass must not be placed in blue recycling bags and should be disposed of appropriately, in a glass recycling bank.

The Chair thanked the Directors from Cwm Environmental for their attendance at the meeting and officers for their presentations.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT 2017/18

The Committee considered the final report of the Task & Finish Group it had established on 17th November 2017, to research the maintenance provision of highway hedgerows and verges. The recommendations contained within the report had been formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between January 2018 and April 2018.

Members of the Task and Finish Group presented each of the recommendations to the Committee.

Officers had provided the Committee with an early draft of the leaflet 'Adjacent Landowners and the Public Highway' referenced within recommendation 2 of the report, which demonstrated how the roles and responsibilities of the highway authority and adjacent landowners would be presented.

The following queries were raised by the Committee in relation to the report:

- It was commented that the grass areas around the Industrial Estate at Crosshands were not cut often enough. Therefore, in relation to the report, clarification was sought regarding the difference between urban and rural areas. The Highways and Transportation Manager explained that urban and rural areas were normally delineated, from a highways perspective, by a change in speed limit with urban areas normally subject to a 30mph or occasionally 40mph limit, as opposed to rural roads which were often subject to the national speed limit and these limits reflect a change from urban to rural environments. Furthermore, that leaflet would contain clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the County Council and adjacent landowners for highway verges, hedges and roadside ditches. The Head of Highways and Transportation added that the Crosshands Industrial Estate contained a mix of roads and that a new section of road would soon be transferred under the Authority's responsibility becoming part of the grass cutting programme.
- It was commented that the report had not included the visual impact of gateways into towns which had been a significant item in previous years. The Highways and Transportation Manager agreed that gateways into towns were a key feature and that recommendations 5 of the report would enable the Council greater flexibility with regard to the maintenance of gateway features to work collaboratively with Town and Community Councils to maintain gateway features. The Director of Environment added that whilst amenity grass cutting had been acknowledged within the report, the provision of such was not within the realm of this task and finish group subject and could be considered as a separate matter in the future.

- Reference was made to the draft leaflet, which was commended. It was asked if the final leaflet could be provided to Town and Community Councils. The Head of Highways and Transportation informed the Committee that the leaflet would continue to be developed in consultation with the National Farmers Union (Cymru), Farmers Union of Wales and the Countryside Landowners Association and following endorsement would be distributed widely including Town and Community Councils.
- In response to a query regarding drainage, the Highways and Transportation Manager explained that it is normally presumed that roadside ditches were owned by and the responsibility of adjacent landowners. However, if a new highway drains were to be introduced which could have an adverse impact on adjacent land then appropriate consultation would be undertaken in advance of any works being carried out.
- A query was raised regarding contractor safety and how this was enforced. The Highways and Transportation Manager stated that all contractors hired by the Authority were obligated to comply with safety guidance set out by the Department for Transport and that anyone undertaking works on the public highway has a duty of care towards other road users. The Health & Safety Executive has an enforcement role in this respect. With regard to our grass cutting contractors continuous monitoring was undertaken by our team of Highway Inspectors. In addition, the Director of Environment emphasised that contractors would be inspected and should they be found not in compliance with the safety regulations steps would be taken through the contract to address the issue.
- It was suggested that in order to speed up the cutting operation when utilising the enhanced traffic management, a contractor could deploy 2 tractor units. The Highways and Transportation Manager stated the suggestion would be taken into consideration as part of the tender contract review.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and welcomed the recommendations made.

RESOLVED that the report be received and referred to the Executive Board for its consideration.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2018/19.

Members noted that the programme was a flexible document that could be amended to reflect additional meetings and agenda items during the course of the municipal year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Environmental and Public Protection Forward Work Programme for 2018/19 be endorsed.

8. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the non-submission of the WLGA Trading Standards Update and the Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 17/18 which had been deferred to be considered the next Committee meeting on 29th June 2018.

Resolved that the non-submission of scrutiny report be noted.

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 29th June 2018 and was afforded the opportunity to request for information to be placed in to the reports.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on Friday, 29th June, 2018 be noted.

CHAIR

DATE