



SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
MONDAY, 27TH MARCH 2017 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

Miss E. Forehead, Ms J.G. Jones, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, D. Rees, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds,
J. Taylor

Representing the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee: D.T. Davies (Chair),
M.A. Adams, P.A. Marsden

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Corporate Director - Communities), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and
Leisure Services), J. Jones (Corporate Information Governance Manager), B. Manners
(Principal Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair advised that Members of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend the meeting, as the proposed Occupational Road Risk Policy falls within the remit of the Communities Directorate.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker and Mrs G.D. Oliver, together with Cabinet Members Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services) and D.V. Poole (Housing).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

4. OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK POLICY

Mark S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services) presented the report, which provided details of the proposed Occupational Road Risk Policy for the Authority. The report sought the views of Members on the contents of the Policy, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for formal adoption.

It was explained that Officers have been working over the last 12-18 months to develop an Occupational Road Risk Policy to assist the Authority in recognising and reducing risks posed by occupational driving. It is intended for the Policy to provide guidance, information and advice for managers and employees of the Authority and assist them in recognising, reducing and responding to the risks posed by travelling on Council business. Commuting and the use of private cars for Council business is not covered by the Policy, although it covers those workers travelling direct to site from home when in a Council vehicle.

Members were referred to the 7 sections of the Policy as appended to the report (Introduction, Scope of Policy, Purpose of Policy, Legislative Requirements, Policy Detail, Key Organisational Responsibilities, and Appendices - Driver Handbook, Vehicle Management Information Systems Privacy Impact Assessment and Vehicle Management Information Authorisation form). The Policy Detail sets out how the Authority will discharge its duties to introduce and include safe systems of work for those undertaking driving, and outlines processes for inspecting driving licences, driving assessments, maintenance of a driver register, issue and update of the drivers handbook, maintenance of vehicles, accident and incident reporting, use of vehicle management information (VMI) systems and driver training.

It was explained that consultation meetings have been held with the relevant Trade Unions, with the most significant discussion point relating to the type of and use of Vehicle Management Information (VMI) Systems. An agreement has been reached with the Trade Unions to limit the use of VMI information systems at this stage to vehicle tracking, external 360° camera systems, digital tachographs (an existing legal requirement) and specific service technologies such as salt spread monitoring systems and gully emptying monitoring systems. However, it has been agreed with the Trade Unions that the use of any new or additional VMI systems will be the subject of a new consultation exercise before they are implemented.

The use of VMI systems is supported by a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) which has been developed by the Authority's Corporate Information Governance Unit. The PIA clearly sets out the purposes for which VMI systems will be used and discusses information flows, access to data controls and retention of data. The PIA has also been the subject of consultation with the Trade Unions.

The Scrutiny Committee were asked to note that whilst there are no financial impacts associated within the report, the Council is keen to adopt the Policy from a risk management perspective as it could be of benefit when assessing insurance claims and could allow for savings to be made on vehicle insurance premiums.

Discussion of the report ensued and Officers detailed the current VMI systems in place and provided an explanation of how they operate. Members discussed the use of camera systems and Officers explained that any new systems (such as the use of dashboard-mounted cameras) would be the subject of a new consultation exercise and further discussions with the Trade Unions if these were proposed in the future.

In response to Members' queries, Officers provided details of driving assessments/training for relevant staff and physical/medical assessments where required by legislation (such as for HGV drivers). Officers responded to queries involving the redeployment options for employees in the event of arising medical issues and outlined the range of health monitoring processes available to employees (such as corporate health screening clinics).

Discussion took place on a number of items within the Drivers Handbook appended to the Policy, which includes advice on matters such as planning for long-distance journeys. It was noted that this handbook will be regularly reviewed and kept updated with current driving guidance and legislation. In response to a query regarding the use of mobile telephones in Council vehicles, it was explained that any complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

A Member referred to the distinction between monitoring and surveillance and sought further information on how the Council uses data from these VMI systems. Officers explained that this information is often accessed to evidence vehicle insurance claims (such as resident claims against refuse collection trucks) but is not used for staff surveillance. The VMI systems also include vehicle tracking and specific service technologies (such as salt spread monitoring systems and gully emptying monitoring systems) which can be useful when responding to queries on whether a specific location has been attended.

The Scrutiny Committee were assured that there are robust mechanisms in place to ensure that the information is only accessed for a valid reason and that the release of this information requires the authorisation of several senior officers within the relevant service area. It was explained that surveillance concerns from the Trade Unions relate to the use of inward-facing cameras, which do not form part of the current VMI systems. Members were also advised that there is currently no employee surveillance being undertaken within the Authority but that in the event that this was required, it would need to be discussed and agreed in advance by the Audit Committee.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendation be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Operational Road Risk Policy as appended to the report be adopted.

The meeting closed at 6.09 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2017, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR