



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 18TH MAY 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chair
Councillor A. Hussey - Vice Chair

Councillors:

M.A. Adams, A. Collis, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, A. Gair, J. Gale, S. Kent, B. Owen, D.W.R. Preece, J.E. Roberts

Cabinet Members:

N. George (Waste, Public Protection & Street Scene), E. Stenner (Customer, Performance and Property Services) A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning & Fleet), R. Whiting (Learning & Leisure)

Together with:

Officers: M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), R. Betty (Customer Services Hub Manager), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Office), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also present: Cllr K. Etheridge (Blackwood Ward)

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The Chair placed on record the Committee's thanks to Councillor A. Whitcombe for his service following his appointment to Cabinet. The Chair also welcomed Councillor J. Simmonds to the Committee (who had tendered apologies for this meeting).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would take place via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Leonard, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds and T.J. Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 23RD MARCH 2021

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2021 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd March 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 8) be approved as a correct record.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) presented the report, which outlined details of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period May 2021 to March 2022.

The Committee noted the details of the reports scheduled for forthcoming meetings and a Member asked if an update report on fly-tipping incidents during lockdown could be prepared. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment offered to compile this data in place of a report for circulation to the Committee following the meeting, and the Member agreed this would be acceptable.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 12 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, approval was also sought to add an additional report (Public Space Protection Order) to the Forward Work Programme for 22nd June 2021 and this was agreed by the Committee.

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION – POTENTIAL BOOKING SYSTEM FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES (HWRCs)

Prior to consideration of the Notice of Motion, the Scrutiny Officer provided clarification on the procedural rules regarding a Notice of Motion as set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

The Chair expressed concerns that the Scrutiny Committee would not have an opportunity to scrutinise the forthcoming report on a proposed Booking System for HWRCs that was indicated in the Notice of Motion.

It was therefore moved and seconded that any future report on a proposed Booking System for HWRCs be added to the forward work programme for the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that its Members have an opportunity to scrutinise the outcome of the consultation process and any proposed booking system prior to its consideration by Cabinet. By way of roll call (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed. It was therefore

RESOLVED that any future report on the Potential Booking System for HWRCs be added to the Forward Work Programme for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Councillor K. Etheridge then summarised his Notice of Motion which requested that following the consultation and engagement exercise concerning a potential booking system for the HWRCs, the matter is brought before Full Council for a discussion, debate and vote on the merits of such a scheme with the relevant evidence from other authorities in a detailed report.

Councillor Etheridge summarised the reasons for his Notice of Motion, explaining that he was concerned that any decision on a proposed booking system for HWRCs would be made by Cabinet or under delegated powers. He was therefore pleased the Committee would now have an opportunity to scrutinise the outcome of the consultation process on the proposed booking system before its referral to Cabinet. However, he felt that it was still important for any decision on the proposed booking system to be considered and made by all Members at Full Council.

A Member asked when the outcome of the consultation process on the booking system would be brought back for consideration. The Director for Economy and Environment explained that the timescale is unknown at this stage, but that Officers have been examining practices across HWRCs with a view to improving ongoing queuing problems (hence the reason for the proposed booking system) and highlighted that the Notice of Motion slightly pre-empts the work already being carried out in relation to the booking system which will follow the normal reporting route.

Following discussion on its contents, it was moved and seconded that the Notice of Motion be supported and recommended to Council for consideration. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 9 for, 1 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present. It was therefore

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Notice of Motion be supported.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

7. CAERPHILLY CONTACT TRACING SERVICE

Rob Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services) presented the report, which provided an update on the establishment, development, operation, and performance of Caerphilly's Contact Tracing Service

It was explained that the Caerphilly Contact Tracing Team operates as part of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service, which was initiated in May 2020 in response to WG's *Test, Trace, Protect Strategy* arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, and went live in June 2020. Members noted the partnership model in place for the Service reflected in the Delivery Framework at Appendix A of the report.

Mr Hartshorn provided a detailed overview of the Council's organisational-wide response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the setting-up of the Contact Tracing Service, the processes and procedures adopted and established by the service, and the collaborative work undertaken with other Council departments and partnership agencies. Members were advised that the Service has been led by Ruth Betty from Customer Services and that at the peak of the pandemic, Caerphilly's Contact Tracing Service employed over 170 staff, with many of them redeployed from other service areas. Members were referred to staff feedback at Appendix 2 to of the report and Mr Hartshorn paid tribute to the exceptional way in which staff have worked to support each other and deliver a comprehensive Contact Tracing service during the height of the pandemic.

Mr Hartshorn referred to performance fluctuations across the Service and highlighted the much more positive position in Wales compared to England, which has been reflected in a recent Audit Wales report. Moving forward, the Service is working hard to support schools in relation to the pandemic and has also recently put arrangements in place to enable Officers to knock on doors as part of their contact tracing processes for positive Covid-19 cases. However, it was emphasised that this arrangement is not an enforcement role, as ensuring compliance around self-isolation/quarantine remains the responsibility of the police.

Ruth Betty (Customer Tracing Team Manager) then gave an overview of the work of her Team, outlining the extensive partnership working and the sheer commitment and flexibility of staff, and emphasised the passion and diligence of the Team in carrying out their duties despite the daily challenges thrown their way.

Members thanked Mr Hartshorn and Mrs Betty for the update and expressed their thanks to everyone involved in the Contact Tracing Service. One Member referred to Environmental Health involvement in the Service and asked if there had been an impact on that service as a result. Mr Hartshorn explained that details of enforcement activities for 2020/21 will be included in the Public Protection Annual Report being presented to the June meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. However there has been a need for some enforcement areas of work to be de-prioritised so that EHO staff can provide support to essential areas such as schools and care homes when Covid-19 cases arise. A Member also sought clarification on the level of funding for the service from Welsh Government and it was explained that this only covers recruitment of external staff and not the redeployment of existing staff.

Having considered the report, the Scrutiny Committee noted its contents, and placed on record their thanks and appreciation to Mr Hartshorn, Mrs Betty and the Contact Tracing Team whilst acknowledging the contribution and efforts of all staff involved in the Service.

The meeting closed at 6.17 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 22nd June 2021.

CHAIR