

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 30th April 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

PRESENT: County Councillor S.G.M. Howarth (Chairman)

County Councillors: D.L.S. Dovey, A. Easson, S. Jones, V.E. Smith,
S. White and K. Williams

Councillors D.L. Edwards and S.B. Jones were also in attendance.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr R. Hoggins	- Head of Operations
Mr C. Touhig	- Recycling Strategy and Business Manager
Miss A. Bowen	- Senior Projects Officer Recycling and Waste
Mr M. Howcroft	- Assistant Head of Finance
Miss H. Ilett	- Scrutiny Manager
Mrs S. King	- Senior Democratic Services Officer

SCRUTINY OF CRIME AND DISORDER MATTERS

1. The Scrutiny Manager advised that scrutiny of the Safer Monmouthshire Plan was included within the Committee's work programme. Members were advised that the Safer Monmouthshire Plan is the strategic plan that coordinates all the activities of relevant partners in ensuring community safety and that it is the role of the committee to scrutinise the delivery of the plan's objectives, not to scrutinise the operational matters of the partners. It was suggested that the committee consider the Safer Monmouthshire Plan once published (anticipated June 2015) and then identify areas for future scrutiny whereby relevant partners can be invited to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S. Jones and S. White.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

There were no questions raised from members of the public present.

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5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

i) 18th November 2014 – Special

The minutes of the Special Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 18th November 2104 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

During discussion we requested that an update was provided regarding Community Hubs.

ii) 20th November 2014

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 20th November 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:

Page 2: Declarations of Interest

County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest, pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of minutes 7 and 8, due to association with Melin MHA (~~deleted...~~ 'as a member of Monmouthshire Housing Association Melin Housing').

iii) 29th January 2015

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 20th November 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

iv) 12th March 2015

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 12th March 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

6. MODERNISING TRADE WASTE – INTRODUCTION OF CHARGE FOR DRY RECYCLING & REALIGNMENT OF COMMERCIAL WASTE ACTIVITY WITHIN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Context:

The Committee were presented with the Modernising Trade Waste report, which proposed the following:

- i) The implementation of Budget Mandate no.37(b) which proposed introducing a charge for trade recycling
- ii) The proposed policy to support the introduction of the charge

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- iii) The proposed charging mechanism contained in the policy and the insertion in future years of price reviews within the Fees and Charges process of the Council
- iv) Changes to the Trade Refuse charging schedule due to legislative changes on what can and cannot be charged for
- v) Invest to Save funding to support the creation of a fit for purpose electronic, online system for the charging process
- vi) Delegation given to the Head of Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member to make amendments to the detail of the scheme/policy with the principle that the proposed pricing mechanism does not change

Key Issues:

The Authority has a duty to collect or arrange for commercial waste to be collected, if the occupier of a business has requested. A reasonable charge may then be recovered by the Authority.

A well-established trade waste service was currently in place, with over 400 customers registered. The Recycling Team had focussed attentions on domestic recycling and the trade waste service was primarily a collection and disposal service.

The Council have to respond fully to legislative changes and the report presented an appropriate opportunity to ensure that businesses were fully compliant with legal requirements and that commercial activity is not subsidised by the domestic tax payer.

It was proposed that dry recycling bags would be 50% cost of trade refuse sacks, therefore, 60p per bag (£1.20 purple and red bags) £15.60 per roll = £31.20 minimum purchase. Trade bags currently sold at £2.40, the charge only provided dry recycling. Unfortunately, trade waste service for food waste cannot be provided at this time.

Member Scrutiny:

- Members suggested that given that CMC² selected the management database options, they could have a role in investigating further options, such as products provided within the wider market.
- The committee debated marketing of the initiative and questioned how the significant number of businesses (particularly smaller ones) would be contacted. They were informed that businesses would be contacted in writing.
- Some Members expressed concern that some businesses may avoid the scheme, which may result in increased waste with residential collections.
- Concerns were discussed relating to charges being introduced and whether businesses would seek alternative methods of waste disposal. The committee were reassured that progress would be monitored.

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Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summing Up:

The Committee expressed concern that introducing charges may result in increased fly tipping. However, Members recognised there was the need for the Authority to meet legislative requirements.

Members recognised the commitment and work contributed from voluntary groups, such as Tidy Towns and hoped the work would continue.

Members acknowledged the need for income to be generated and for commercial recycling to be encouraged. There was a requirement for businesses to be educated to ensure cooperation with appropriate schemes.

The committee requested a future progress update on the policy in 6 months time.

Report Recommendation:

Members agreed the recommendations as follows:

- a) To approve the policy and charging scheme for Trade Waste Dry Recycling
- b) To approve the changes to the charging mechanism for Trade Waste Refuse
- c) To approve Invest to Save Funding of £20k for the creation of an electronic online chargeable scheme, which is proven and value for money.
- d) To approve the requested delegation (f above) for scheme implementation outlined above.

7. WORK PROGRAMMING

WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16

Members discussed the Work Programme for the Strong Communities Select Committee. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Meeting 11th June 2015:
 - Solar Farms Business Case (invitation to go out to members of Economy and Development Select Committee)
 - Whole Place deferred to December meeting
- Special meeting June/July 2015:
 - Housing Issues – including homelessness, bedroom tax, MHA link with community development and welfare reform
 - Invitation to Adults Select Committee
- Crime and Disorder
 - Scrutiny September 2015.

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- Public Protection
 - Performance report
 - Themed items e.g. Trading Standards,

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

Members considered the Cabinet Forward Work Planner – no issues were identified as requiring pre-decision scrutiny.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members agreed to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following item.

9. ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

Members discussed a business case report on the Anaerobic Digestion Project.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summing Up:

The Chair concluded that since the agenda was published, there had been some developments that would entirely alter the business case and it was therefore not possible to scrutinise this at this time. Members requested that the report return at an appropriate juncture and the Cabinet Member agreed that the report would be brought to the committee for pre-decision scrutiny as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 1.35pm.