

Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Friday, 28 March 2025

Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

Public Services Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 7th April, 2025 at 10.00 am,
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with remote attendance

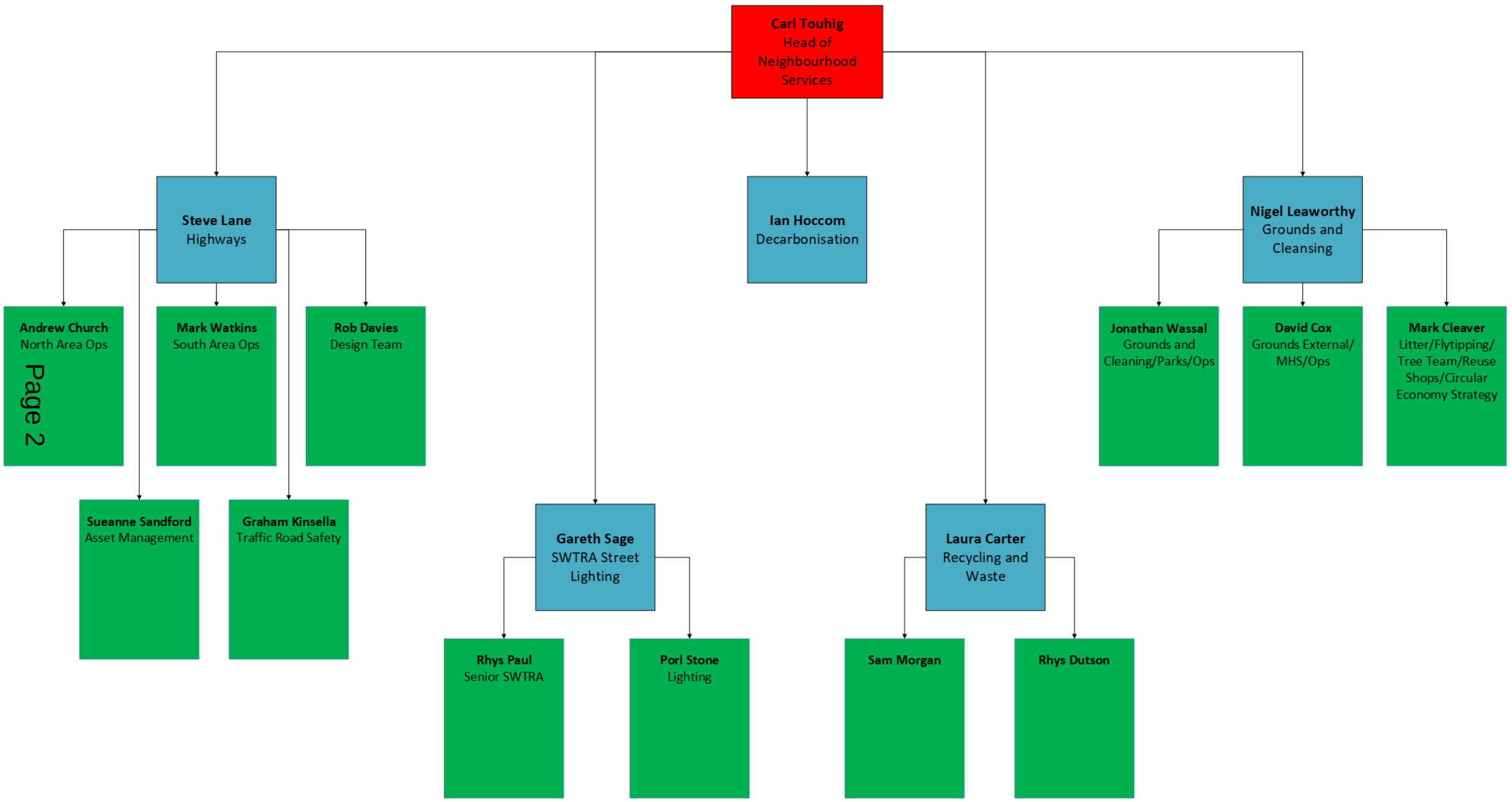
Attached are reports that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but were submitted to democratic services following publication of the agenda.

Item No	Item	Pages
4.	Highways Responsibilities and Funding - To provide an overview on the funding for highways, the responsibilities of the Council, the South Wales Trunk Road Agency and others. Discussion on issues raised by Members in relation to the M48, A466 and the two Severn Bridge Crossings.	1 - 8

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

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Scrutiny SWTRA and Highways overview



Trunk Road Agency and Welsh Government

- SWTRA and NMWTRA have responsibility for maintaining the trunk road network across Wales on behalf of Welsh Government
- Both trunk road agents manage, maintain and improve the strategic road network helping make journeys in Wales safer, smoother and more reliable.
- Traffic Wales is the public link to the Welsh Government's Traffic Management Centres in Conwy and Cardiff. Traffic Management Centre operations, have a significant positive impact on the effective management of the road network. Operations include monitoring traffic conditions, posting messages to roadside information signs and running the Welsh Government's Traffic Officer Service.
- The service is delivered by the Trunk Road Agents in Wales. Cooperation between the Agents enables the service to operate effectively around the clock, every day of the year.

SWTRA

- SWTRA covers South Wales and is a partnership between Welsh Government and the Local Authority delivery agencies
- The three main agents are Neath Port Talbot (lead authority) Carmarthen and Monmouthshire.
- In turn Carmarthen and Monmouthshire engage Pembrokeshire and Cardiff Councils in delivering elements of maintenance on the network.
- Monmouthshire SWTRA are MCC employees delivering maintenance under contract to SWTRA and WG. Their main depots are Wilcrick and Malpas and shared depots at Llanfoist and Coryton.
- Their workload and schedules are dictated by SWTRA

SWTRA Responsibilities

- Maintaining the network
- Gulley sucking
- Drainage works
- VRS and barrier maintenance
- Emergency response to incidents
- Winter maintenance
- Verge mowing
- Local Authorities are responsible for litter on the trunk roads except motorways and a section of A55 in North Wales

Risk vs budget

Page 6

- There are many associated risks with a with an under funded highway network - safety, financial, reputational
- Funding of highways has been in steady decline since austerity, this is a UK wide issue
- Scale of the maintenance issue - SWTRA ops have a similar size workforce and budget to County ops, SWTRA is directly funded by WG and have 160km to maintain, County is MCC funded and have 1600km to maintain
- Scale of the capital issue – estimated £80m worth of work needed to bring the network asset up to good standard – 25 years at current investment levels and average life expectancy of resurfacing of 10-15 years.
- Positive budget management is often perceived as negative expectation management

The BRAG list

Page 7

- The funding challenges are well understood, prioritising the funding is more complex
- There is no perfect system for prioritisation. Every road and structure is unique to the individual, the community, the wider county, regionally, nationally, politically.
- GAIST surveys combined with inspections, engineers assessments, accident data, road usage, facilities served, complaints etc help determine where spend is prioritised. Roads and structures do not deteriorate at same speeds, storms do not take account of spreadsheets, snow does not care about budgets, the public are ever more demanding.
- New GAIST surveys are underway including footways.
- Black, Red, Amber, Green – **Network prioritised for repairs over next financial year, Network in need of works but hopefully can last until budget availability, Roads beginning to show some levels of deterioration, Last 5 years black list**

Local Government Borrowing Initiative

Knowns and unknowns

- LGBI £120m across Wales
- The public will expect new tar on every road MCC should receive
- Awaiting confirmation of this additional budget allocation from WG
- Not all schemes will progress at same rate, potential for dormice at Leys Bend added at least 6 months to National Highways programme
- Ensure spend of WG funding is prioritised and carry our own capital forward where necessary
- The construction market is fragile, nervousness around tenders with substantial rises in labour, plant and materials impacting existing programmes.
- Every council has additional cash to spend in 25/26 on roads and structures
- A large proportion of costs are design, tendering, ecology management, traffic management, expectation management – the public will expect every ££ to be new tar