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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strong Communities Select Committee held
on Thursday, 21st March, 2019 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor J.Pratt (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: L.Dymock, A. Easson, R. Harris and V. Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Carl Touhig	Head of Waste and Street Scene
Laura Carter	Senior Technical And Business Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors L. Guppy, L.Jones and R.Roden

1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor R. Harris declared a personal interest in relation to item 4 as a trustee of Homemakers Community Recycling.

2. Public Open Forum

Councillor P. Sutherland of Llanbadoc Community Council raised two items:

1. That the barrier to Usk Island Car Park be brought forward, towards the road, therefore reducing nefarious activity.
2. It was thought that the last meeting of Strong Communities Select had suggested that a meeting on speeding in Woodside would be arranged, but had not yet taken place.

The Head of Operations explained that the position of the car park barrier allowed a few spaces for parking when the barrier is down. If there is a view that this should be changed it could be done, but would not be a high priority in terms of budget.

With regards to speeding traffic at Woodside a meeting with Mr. Vincent is due to take place, and a further meeting with Llanbadoc Community Council will be arranged.

Mr Sutherland added that the extra spaces outside the barrier are not being utilised other than at night, when behaviour may be considered suspicious. The owner of the burger van at the site is willing to open the barrier at 7am.

3. WASTE & STREET SERVICES POLICY REVIEW

Context:

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The Committee were presented with the report in order to review the draft policy documents and make recommendations to Cabinet for final decision.

Key Issues:

Waste & street services operates a highly visible front line service to the public. Many of the operational customs and practices have been in place for a number of years. There has not been a unified policy detailing these processes for both operations and the public.

The department receives a high volume of queries and enquiries in relation to waste collection policies and many of these involve the application of discretion and interpretation by individuals responding which can lead to inconsistency.

Member Scrutiny:

1. Garden Waste Policy

With regards to the costs of the garden waste system, the permits cost £18 at resident level. This brings an income of £270,000, covering the cost of collection based on the vehicles currently used.

In terms of churches and chapels, if there is a requirement for 5 permits it costs roughly £90 to deliver the service. Officers explained the problems faced with regards to the locations of churches. A consideration would be to provide Community Councils a number of permits to distribute, but officers require information on how much County Council is willing to give to Community Councils.

Members recognised the importance of communication with Town and Community Councils, and officers were happy to build this into the policy. It was agreed that Area Communities are an ideal forum to relay information.

Challenges were noted with regards to dealing with charitable organisations, and officers welcomed advice in this area. It was agreed there should be an element of flexibility, but not too broad a policy.

Members agreed that feedback from the current changes to the system should be brought back to Select Committee before finalising the policy. The Head of Waste Services agreed this would allow time to reflect on the new in-cab systems being implemented.

2. General Waste Collections

Comments were made around the lack of consultation with the service users. It was explained that consultation with residents takes place every 2 years, the results of which has helped formulate this policy. The intention is to consult with residents when the policy is in a suitable format.

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The removal of residual waste bags 4 years ago has created £120k saving, and consultation at that time had recognised this as a preferred option. It was recognised this may have now changed.

The Recycling Shop at Llanfoist is now in place and should be open next month. The Homemakers Group are in the process of signing the SLA.

We heard of a voluntary group called Red Tin Shed, operated 3 or 4 days a week. This group now have to spend £200 on a skip as they can no longer take the residual waste to the recycling centre. The Head of Waste agreed to speak to Cllr Smith following the meeting.

In terms of the in-cab system identifying other issues, eg. Pot holes, tipping etc. it was doubtful that the system could cope with this in terms of time restraints on crews.

With regards to contaminated bags, these remain the property of the residents until they are collected.

Concerns were raised regarding glass collection, and a suggestion was made to use plastic bags for glass, particularly if hessian style bags are to be introduced.

In response to a question about bags, it was confirmed that clear bags are available but are more expensive.

Problems surround the disposal of purple and red bags at the HWRC, in that they may contain contaminated waste. This is an area officers are looking to improve, and develop a better system.

Councillor Dymock praised officers on the management of the roll-out, and suggested that operations colleagues should be invited to a future meeting to share experiences.

It was confirmed that black bags are expected to be 60-80 litre sized, but there have been instances of 140 litre, wheeled bin sized bags. This raised concerns amongst Members with regards to staff welfare.

Challenges around collections at flats were recognised.

It was suggested that the policy build on crews and public expectations.

The Chair reflected on the resource implications of the policy, and expressed this is something we should keep an eye on moving forward. The Head of Waste assured Members that based on benefits outweighing costs, most cost should be negated.

3. Fly Tipping Policy

The Chair raised concerns around the follow up of reports of fly tipping. Historically this is dealt with by Environmental Health. Officers explained that there are times where access is a problem, but most cases are collected within 5 days. Where this is reported through My Monmouthshire, feedback will be provided.

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Action – Obtain information regarding costs around fly tipping.

Committee Conclusion:

Officers were thanked for the report and information. It was agreed that the policy be brought back to Committee for final approval. This should then be taken to Full Council to raise awareness.

Select Committee will review policy in 12 months.

Town and Community Councils should be included in terms of raising awareness.

4. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting

5. 31st January 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair. In doing so it was noted that Roger Hoggins, Head of Operations had been in attendance.

6. 13th February 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair. In doing so it was noted the County Councillor R. Harris had given apologies for the meeting.

7. Action list

During discussion the following points were raised to be followed up:

21st March 2019	Fly Tipping - How many instances of fly tipping have been identified, and the amount of costs retrieved
	Toilet Strategy - follow up requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assurance that the £17k WG funding is ring-fenced and Councillors have input into how the funding is used.• Monitoring and recording of syringe use - is the log now in place• Follow- up of the suggested blue light system• Previous strategy recommendations had included that planning applications for retail outlets should include toilet facilities.• Caldicot Countryside Park - issues still need to be addressed.

8. Strong Communities forward work programme

Noted.

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It was recommended that the following be added to the forward workplan:

- Slavery and Modern Day Trafficking
- Burials and Cremations – Costs and Strategy

9. Cabinet & Council forward work programme

Noted.

10. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 18th April 2019 at 10am

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

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