



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 13TH MARCH 2019 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Ridgewell - Chair
Community Councillor J. Rao - Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Gair, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, B. Zaplatynski

Community/Town Council Representatives

Argoed	- J. Moore
Bargoed	- H. Llewellyn, Mrs. H. Williams (Clerk)
Blackwood	- D. Davies
Darran Valley	- R. Chapman
Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry	- B. Hancock (Clerk)
Gelligaer	- J. Pritchard, Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Llanbradach	- Mrs. A. Reed, Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	- Ms. J. Rao (Vice Chair)
Nelson	- Mrs. G. Davies
New Tredegar	- Mrs B. Gingell
Risca Town	- B. Hancock, B. Campbell (Clerk)
Van	- T. Graham (Acting Clerk)

Together with:-

D. Powell (Lead Commissioner, Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales), S. Williams (Chief Executive, Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales), M. Redmond (Deputy Chief Executive (Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, C. Andrews, C. Cuss, A. Farina-Childs, A.G Higgs, L. Jeremiah, P. Leonard, T. Parry, M. James, V. James, M.E. Sargent and C. Thomas.

Community Councillors A. Deblasi (Aber Valley), H. Llewellyn (Bargoed), J. Winslade (Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen), J. Hibbert (Caerphilly), J. Garland (Draethen, Waterloo &

Rudry), B. Allen (Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn), D.T. Williams (Rhymney), J. Blackburn (Risca East) and J. Leek (Van)

and Clerks S. Hughes (Aber Valley), G. James (Argoed), P. Davy (Caerphilly), G. Williams (Darran Valley), R. Kedward (Maesycwmmer), T. White (Nelson), D. Gronow (New Tredegar), H. Treherne (Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn), G. Williams (Rhymney) and G. James (Risca East).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2018 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

In relation to Minute No. 13, Caerphilly County Borough – Waste Strategy, clarification was sought in relation to the progress of the working group. The Senior Committee Services Officer confirmed that a copy of the Waste Strategy had been circulated to all clerks in February and agreed to send a paper copy to the Community Councillor.

In relation to Minute No. 9, Budget 2019/20 – Members acknowledged the deferred savings in relation to the final budget as a result of consultation responses but were of the opinion that more needed to be done with communities prior to the budget setting process and the compilation of draft proposals to avoid causing unnecessary anxiety to the groups and services identified.

4. CAERPHILLY ELECTORAL REVIEW – PRESENTATION FROM THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

Mr David Powell, Leader Commissioner for the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales introduced the presentation which outlined the role and responsibilities of the organisation and the scope of the review.

The review will propose the pattern of electoral wards for the entire council area and not just where there are levels of electoral inequality. It will propose the total number of councillors, the number and boundaries of electoral wards, the number of councillors for each ward and the names of electoral wards. The statutory criterion to be used was confirmed along with how the Council size would be defined, it was noted that Caerphilly would be placed in Category 2. As such Councillor to population ratio in Caerphilly should be 1:3,000, which would equate to an overall Council size aim of 60 Members. However the Commission has set certain constraints in relation to Council size and when applied to Caerphilly would give an aim of 66 Councillors a ratio of one Councillor to 1,971 electors.

The building blocks for electoral wards were detailed and what the Commission would consider when reviewing. Members were referred to the colour map handout and the areas of concern illustrated therein were explained, it was noted that there were 7 wards with a variance of greater than 25%.

In terms of effective representation it was confirmed that these would be judged on the quality of the evidence presented. This should take into account the statutory requirements and

Commission policies, suggest an alternative as well as setting out an objection and consider the consequences across the widest possible area.

In conclusion Members were advised of the 5 stages for the review and the timetable for each stage was detailed. It was confirmed that the new wards would come into force for the May 2022 local government elections.

The Chair thanked Mr Powell and his colleagues for attending and for their informative presentation and Members questions were welcomed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the accuracy of the data used for the review and it was confirmed that the latest data possible was being utilised.

A Member referred to a new building development and an anomaly with regard to its position in Hengoed/Ystrad Mynach Ward. It was noted that this type of disparity could be considered by the review and the Commission would welcome views on this as part of the initial consultation process.

Members queried whether the level of deprivation was taken into account when setting the ratio of Councillors to population, it was felt that due to the unique nature of the issues related to poverty and deprivation, wards with higher levels often generated a greater workload. Confirmation was given that this element was taken into consideration by the review.

Further clarification was sought in relation to parliamentary boundary reviews and whether it would be possible for them to be more aligned the local boundaries. The way in which the rolling review programmes were managed was explained and it was noted that local boundaries would be used to inform parliamentary boundaries. Members agreed that it might be better for the electorate to have the same democratic options for all elections.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the following items raised by the Town and Community Council Liaison Committee: -

5. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY – UPDATE

The Officer provided an update on the position of the draft Local Toilet Strategy and confirmed that the consultation exercise closed on Friday 8th March 2019 with responses currently being analysed, the outcome of the consultation and the final proposed Local Toilet Strategy will be reported to Cabinet for approval on the 15th May 2019. The Officer emphasised that the duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly and confirmed that the draft strategy does acknowledge the MTFP proposal to close the Council's public toilets.

The Liaison Committee expressed serious concern in relation to the fact that the MTFP decision to close public conveniences was made while the strategy was still going through the consultation process. They were of the opinion that these two processes were in direct conflict and as a result of the two elements being under consultation at the same time, many members of the public and Community Councils had been left with the false impression that the strategy would provide more time for the future of public conveniences to be considered.

The Liaison Committee expressed concern at the high level of public impact the closures would have on families, older people, businesses, drivers etc. who regularly utilise the facilities and the possible impact that this could have on footfall. The level of complaints that

this decision would generate was emphasised and further concerns were expressed in relation to the impact on public health and hygiene.

The Officer confirmed that there were statutory deadlines attached to the production of the toilet strategy over which the Council had no authority and reiterated that there was no duty under the legislation for Local Authorities to provide and manage public conveniences only to produce a strategy. The Officer confirmed that she would feedback all the concerns raised to the Head of Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager.

The Liaison Committee expressed their frustration on behalf of residents over the consultation process and the money and time that had been spent in this regard, which seemed to them to have been pointless given the decision to close public conveniences being made ahead of the strategy's completion.

Reference was made to the fact the on-line consultation questionnaire had closed early preventing many residents from responding. The Officer apologised for the error and confirmed that it had been quickly reopened once the mistake had been reported.

The Liaison Committee also expressed their frustration that no Officers from the Communities Directorate had been able to be present at this evenings meeting and a Member advised that he would be writing to the Chief Executive about this lack of representation. Community Councillors also expressed their concern at the lack of Officer attendance and confirmed that they would also write to the Chief Executive and express their disappointment in the lack of formal representation.

6. CAERPHILLY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS REPRESENTATION ON THE CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) – UPDATE

The Officer referred the Committee to the update from the Public Services Board (PSB) tabled at the meeting and highlighted sections therein, in particular 'PSB is really keen to maintain its dialogue with Town and Community Councils and, at its March the 5th 2019, meeting decided that they would be keen to have a presentation from one of two representatives of Town and Community Councils on how they can work more closely with the PSB on improving the well-being of communities. While none of the Town and Community Councils in the county borough are directly caught by the Act, not having the necessary turnover, they are still important partners and the PSB is very keen to know what the sector can delivery in their areas that compliments the well-being objectives of the PSB. A slot can be cleared at the September 3rd PSB should this offer be accepted.' 'The PSB also noted that there are requests for PSB members to attend Liaison Committee. As the Wellbeing Plan is so wide, and covers so may partners, it may be better for the Committee to decide what area of delivery they would engagement on. The PSB can then consider who would be the best person, or persons, to attend Committee.'

The Liaison Committee welcomed the opportunity to present to the PSB and to have representatives attend future meetings. Thanks were expressed to Mr Bob Campbell for his efforts in this regard.

7. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET 2019/20 – UPDATE

The Community Council Liaison Officers referred the Committee to the report to Council on the 21st February 2019, circulated to all Clerks prior to the meeting which outlined the final Budget for 2019/20 and detailed the rationale behind the deferred savings as detailed in section 4.3.2 of the report.

The Committee welcomed the deferred savings but felt that the final budget needed to be more widely communicated in terms of the services to be cut and final savings to be made. It was also felt that Newsline and the Webpages needed to be more reflective of one another in

terms of content and for the benefit of those not online, the Newsline publication should be used to its fullest extent to communicate where services would be lost as well as saved. Members reiterated their opinion that the final budget decisions needed to be as widely communicated as the proposals.

The meeting closed at 7:15pm