



HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUPS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on a proposed revision to the format of Town Centre Management Groups, prior to consideration by Cabinet. The revised format is being proposed to encourage business and other stakeholder attendance and involvement in the future development of our towns.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The existing Town Centre Management Groups (TCMGs) have operated for a number of years and have developed from their original purpose to focus on practical issues that relate to the town centres (such as car parking, anti-social behaviour and the effect of Traffic Orders) to also consider how best to promote town centres.
- 2.2 The current Terms of Reference were approved by Cabinet in September 2012, whereby membership of the TCMGs was defined as:
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (the appropriate Cabinet Member and Local Ward Members);
 - Gwent Police;
 - Community/Town Council;
 - Chamber of Trade and representatives of other constituted retail groups;
 - Shopping Centre Managers (where they exist);
 - Civic Society/Conservation Group (where they exist);
 - Other constituted organisations recognised by the Council as being stakeholders in the relevant town centre.

All the above organisations (except for the Council and Town/Community Councils) have been required to nominate a representative to attend the TCMG meetings.

- 2.3 The number of active Chambers of Trade/retail groups has reduced since 2012 and it has been acknowledged that there has not been an appropriate level of business representation and engagement via the TCMGs. In order to address this, having regard for the available resources and the need to support post covid recovery, it is proposed to change the format and operation of the meetings to encourage increased business and other stakeholder attendance and engagement at the meetings.

- 2.4 Following successful business networking events held by the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team in 2018 & 2019, it is suggested that the meetings become breakfast/evening events that focus on information sharing and networking opportunities. By holding the events outside of the working day, business owners/representatives are more likely to be able to attend without impacting upon the operation of their business. It is also proposed that the meetings be held at a venue within each individual town centre to make attendance more convenient.
- 2.5 The Terms of Reference for the TCMGs will need to be amended in line with the proposals and a draft is included as an appendix (Appendix 1) to the report.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members consider the proposal to trial an alternative model and recommend to Cabinet a 12-month trial period with the revised format of the TCMGs.
- 3.2 That a further report outlining the results of the trial period be considered after the trial period ends allowing a decision to be taken at that stage on the preferred model of delivery.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A revision to the format of the TCMGs will encourage the attendance and engagement of businesses and other town centre stakeholders at the meetings, which it is anticipated will make the Groups more effective in line with their Primary Purpose (as defined within the TCMG Terms of Reference).

5. THE REPORT

Background

- 5.1 The existing Town Centre Management Groups have evolved historically from the practice of the former Rhymney Valley District Council, which operated Town Centre Management Committees for Caerphilly and Bargoed town centres. Following Local Government reorganisation in 1996, a report was presented to Caerphilly County Borough Council advocating that the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Committee model be continued in a revised format i.e. Town Centre Management Groups.
- 5.2 The 1996 report outlined that the Caerphilly TCMG would act as a consultative forum for proposals affecting the town centre, with a particular focus on practical issues such as:
- Traffic Orders & street lighting issues.
 - Car parking.
 - Collection of refuse.
 - Vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
 - Progress with the Caerphilly Development Strategy.
- 5.3 The group was to comprise representatives of:
- CCBC local Ward Members.
 - Police.
 - Chamber of Trade.

- Community Council.
- CCBC Officers.
- Castle Court Shopping Centre.
- Civic Society.

- 5.4 The Council subsequently resolved to establish a Caerphilly TCMG, and this was quickly followed by similar groups in Bargoed and Blackwood. The remit of all three groups was to serve as a sounding board for opinions and suggestions regarding the town centre, and where financial or policy decisions were to be made to refer these back to the Council.
- 5.5 Following a significant number of developments in the early 2000s such as the publication of the Community Strategy, The Smart Alternative Regeneration Strategy and the Communities First programme, along with the appointment of a Town Centre Development Manager, it was felt that the TCMGs needed to refocus their role to concentrate on wider development issues and the promotion of the respective town centres. As such, the primary purpose of the TCMGs was redefined as a consultative forum for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical, and social well-being of the town centres.
- 5.6 Revised Terms of Reference reflecting the changes outlined in paragraph 5.5 were presented to Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 13th December 2005.
- 5.7 Following the success of the TCMGs in Bargoed, Blackwood and Caerphilly, it was felt that the TCMGs should be utilised in the other principal town centres within the County Borough. An Assistant Town Centre Manager was appointed in 2011 and the Council's "Unique Places" model of town centre management was subsequently expanded to Risca town centre, followed by Ystrad Mynach town centre.
- 5.8 To coincide with the additional town centre management operational model, the TCMG Terms of Reference were revised to include the establishment of TCMGs in Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres. A provision was also included for Newbridge town centre as the sixth principal town centre in the County Borough.
- 5.9 The revised Terms of References were approved by Cabinet on 11th September 2012. The Terms of Reference have not been amended since.
- 5.10 When the TCMGs were first established, there was an underlying assumption of partnership operation. However, the engagement of retail businesses and other stakeholders within the TCMGs has been mixed. The operation of Chambers of Trade or other retail groups has dwindled in recent years, meaning that there has been little or no engagement with these key stakeholders via the TCMGs when the meetings were operating in their prior format (pre-Covid).
- 5.11 It should be noted that due to only constituted groups being able to attend TCMGs, the number of available business/retail representatives was limited.

Proposed new Business Engagement Model

- 5.12 During 2018 and 2019 the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team held a series of Business breakfast events. The events were hosted by local businesses with invites being sent to other local companies.
- 5.13 The breakfast events were short, sharp, and focused and they included presentations by Officers and/or partner organisations on matters that were of interest/benefit to local business. This gave entrepreneurs the opportunity for discussion and the ability to share experiences and best practice. Importantly businesses were also able to network with each other and partner organisation representatives and importantly learn how to become involved with the Caerphilly Business Club.
- 5.14 These events were very well attended by the business community and positive feedback was received via evaluation questionnaires. In particular, it was noted that a local event being held outside of the working day made attendance convenient and did not interfere with operational requirements. Businesses also noted that the information provided at the events was of use to them and the operation of their businesses. A summary of the findings is included at Appendix 2.
- 5.15 Given the success of these events as a suitable forum for information-sharing and consultation with business, it is considered that this format should be replicated for business partners in our town centres.
- 5.16 The TCMG model is extremely resource intensive and it is considered that it does not presently engender the required sense of town centre ownership with the business community that is needed if our towns are to continue to be successful. It is therefore proposed to trial a series of breakfast and/or evening meetings at venues within each town centre over the next 12 months to determine if this alternative approach is more convenient and effective for business.
- 5.17 Invites will be sent to existing members of the TCMGs as well as the wider town centre business community (within the relevant town centre boundary, as identified in the Local Development Plan). The meetings will consist of presentations on pertinent information with group discussions and will provide opportunities for businesses to engage and network with each other and with partner organisations.
- 5.18 It is proposed that the formal TCMG meetings be suspended whilst the new approach is piloted, initially for a 12-month period.
- 5.19 The meeting structure will be more informal and encourage participation from attendees in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. The networking opportunity will form part of the agenda to encourage participants to engage in this element of the meeting. Speakers and other organisations will be present to engage and answer questions or queries. Examples of subject matter that will be the focus of the breakfast/evening meetings are:
- Consultation on strategic documents that impact upon the town centre.
 - Partner organisation initiatives, such as those to reduce or combat retail crime.
 - Major developments, such as housing or employment sites.
 - Regeneration projects/initiatives.
 - Training/development opportunities.
 - Cyber security and technology support for businesses.
 - Presentations from organisations offering various support mechanisms for

businesses.

- 5.20 It is felt that this format will be more beneficial to all town centre stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including:
- The meetings will be held in a local venue at a time outside of business hours to enable business attendance.
 - Stakeholders can be represented even if they are not part of a formal organisation (such as a Chamber of Trade).
 - Expert speakers will be able to attend and offer advice and support on a wide range of aspects that are pertinent to town centres.
 - Attendees can network and facilitate business to business contact.
 - Workshop/training sessions can be delivered.
- 5.21 It should be noted that these meetings will be held physically wherever possible and virtually on occasion when Covid restrictions are operational.
- 5.22 It is recognised that the Terms of Reference will need to be amended to reflect the new format. A revised document is attached to this report at Appendix 1. Further to the 12-month pilot period a further report will be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet to report on the pilot and to determine which town centre engagement model to pursue thereafter having regard for the findings from this pilot.
- 5.23 Members are asked to note that the Town Centre Improvement Group (TCIG) meetings will not be affected by the proposals and will be reconvened to feed into the revised stakeholder model.

Conclusion

- 5.24 The business community is at the heart of our town centres and an engagement model that facilitates more business involvement is fundamental to making our town centres a success.
- 5.25 Due to low attendance by the business community at the TCMG meetings, it is felt that the revised format will encourage business and stakeholder involvement in the meetings and make them a more effective and dynamic consultative forum for business partners.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed based on evidence from other successful business events that the suggested format will increase business and stakeholder attendance and engagement.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The proposed changes to the format of the TCMG meetings will have a neutral impact on protected characteristics and people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
- 7.2 The proposals will contribute to the existing delivery of the well-being objectives of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Corporate Plan. The recommendations in this report will assist the Authority in its duties as a public body

under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to contribute to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and,
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

7.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the sustainable development principles against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. The principle is also known as the five ways of working and the following are relevant in relation to this report:

- Long Term – Developing long-term aspirations and improvements to our town centres requires effective engagement with the town centre community.
- Prevention – Business and community concerns with town centre problems or issues can be raised quickly and effectively to prevent escalation and long-term implications.
- Integration – Private and public sector partnership is more effective through active engagement, which can be achieved through effective forums such as the TCMGs.
- Collaboration – The TCMGs are inherently collaborative groups when operating effectively.
- Involvement – The TCMGs aim to involve all interested parties in consultation and engagement.

7.4 A full copy of the IIA can be accessed here:
[Link to IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The cost of hiring appropriate venues and any other requirements for the meetings will be met through the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's core Town Centre Management budget.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The organisation and running of the meetings will be incorporated into the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's work programme. Officers from other departments may be required to attend meetings, but this is an established commitment from the established and long-term operation of the TCMGs.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The draft report has been circulated to the consultees listed below and all comments incorporated into the report and/or the appendix.

10.2 Several consultees requested that meetings are held three times per year as opposed to two. As the new model is being trialled, two meetings will be held in each of the Principal Towns per year for the first twelve months, but the frequency of meetings

thereafter will be a consideration for the follow-up report.

10.3 Of those consultees that commented on the timing of meetings, an evening meeting was preferred.

10.4 One of the Blackwood members raised several specific queries on the report, which are addressed by way of officer responses in bold italics below:

10.4.1 It is essential to have more engagement and communication with traders outside of the formal meetings. ***This will resume as part of the Council's "Unique Places" model of town centre management, although it is important for members to recognise that during Covid the associated restrictions and necessary diversion of resources impacted upon this.***

10.4.2 That the Terms of Reference be amended to include representatives from taxi associations, Aldi, Asda, McDonald's, Blackwood Miners' Institute and the Local Health Board. ***Taxi Associations have not historically been invited to these groups, but the Terms of Reference have been amended to include them as an acknowledgement of them being stakeholders in the town centre. The Terms of Reference have also been amended to include local supermarkets, such as Aldi. It was also requested that membership be open to the landlord of The Marketplace Shopping Centre. The shopping centre will be invited and can nominate a representative who could be the centre manager or the landlord. The Local Health Board will be invited to specific meetings as and when required as guest speakers.***

10.4.3 That resources and engagement needs to be targeted, including an action plan with objectives and timescales, along with a definition of what resources the Council is putting in along with engagement procedures. ***The resources and engagement methods are outlined in paragraphs 5.12-5.23. The aim of the new model is to provide pertinent and appropriate information to businesses at the time of the meeting, as such it would be difficult to formulate an action plan for these groups.***

10.4.4 Can a summary of the feedback received at the breakfast meetings referred to in paragraph 5.14 be provided. ***This is included at Appendix 2.***

10.4.5 It was queried why TCMG Chairs were not invited to the breakfast events referenced in paragraph 5.14. ***For clarity, these were business networking events aimed at the private sector in a specific geographical area and were not town centre focused events.***

10.4.6 Why weren't the Community Safety, Argoed Town Council and Newbridge Members consulted on the report? ***The Council's Community Safety team will continue to be invited to meetings and will have the opportunity to engage where appropriate, as such they were not consulted on this report. Only Town/Community Councils whose boundary incorporates a principal town centre have been consulted on the report. Newbridge town centre does not currently operate under the Council's model of town centre management as it is not a Principal Town.***

10.4.7 It was requested that a business sector member sit on each Scrutiny Committee to provide input. ***This decision would be outside the remit of this report.***

10.4.8 Liaison with supermarket Community Champions on their engagement methods with community groups that operate within town centres was suggested. ***The TCSGs focus is on engagement with the business community, and as such the supermarket Community Champions would be able to attend the meetings as the supermarket's representative.***

10.4.9 The reporting mechanism for the TCMGs was also queried as they are not decision-making committees. ***As per the Terms of Reference, like any consultative committee, the minutes of the TCSGs are referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee where appropriate and any matter requiring a decision is referred to Cabinet.***

11. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Steve Wilcox, Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support,
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Consultees: Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy & Environment
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager
Paul Hudson, Business Enterprise & Renewal Team Leader
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer
Stephen Harris, Head of Business Improvement & S.151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Cllr. Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Towns and Property
Cllr. John Ridgewell, Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Cllr. Mike Adams, Vice Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Cllr. Alan Collis, Aberbargoed Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Bargoed TCMG)
Cllr. Alan Higgs, Aberbargoed Ward Member
Cllr. Carol Andrews, Bargoed Ward Member
Cllr. Tudor Davies, Bargoed Ward Member (and Chair of Bargoed TCMG)
Cllr. Diane Price, Bargoed Ward Member
Cllr. Lindsey Harding, Gilfach Ward Member
Cllr. Nigel Dix, Blackwood Ward Member
Cllr. Kevin Etheridge, Blackwood Ward Member
Cllr. Andrew Farina-Childs, Blackwood Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Blackwood TCMG)
Cllr. Graham Simmonds, Cefn Fforest Ward Member
Cllr. Tom Williams, Cefn Fforest Ward Member (and Chair of Blackwood TCMG)
Cllr. Phillip Bevan, Morgan Jones Ward Member
Cllr. Shayne Cook, Morgan Jones Ward Member
Cllr. James Pritchard, Morgan Jones Ward Member
Cllr. Christine Forehead, St. Martins Ward Member
Cllr. Elaine Forehead, St. Martins Ward Member

Cllr. Barbara Jones, St. Martins Ward Member
Cllr. Colin Elsbury, St. James Ward Member (and Chair of Caerphilly TCMG)
Cllr. James Fussell, St. James Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Caerphilly TCMG)
Cllr. Stephen Kent, St. James Ward Member
Cllr. Nigel George, Risca East Ward member (and Vice-Chair of Risca TCMG)
Cllr. Arianna Leonard, Risca East Ward Member
Cllr. Philippa Leonard, Risca East Ward Member
Cllr. Robert Owen, Risca West Ward Member
Cllr. Ross Whiting, Risca West Ward Member (and Chair of Risca TCMG)
Cllr. Donna Cushing, Hengoed Ward Member
Cllr. Teresa Parry, Hengoed Ward Member
Cllr. Alan Angel, Ystrad Mynach Ward Member (and Chair of Ystrad Mynach TCMG)
Cllr. Martyn James, Ystrad Mynach Ward member (and Vice-Chair of Ystrad Mynach TCMG)
Bargoed Town Council
Blackwood Town Council
Caerphilly Town Council
Gelligaer Community Council
Risca Town Council

Background Papers:

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 13th December 2005, Agenda Item No. 7(1)
Cabinet – 11th September 2012, Agenda Item No. 2(1)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Town Centre Stakeholder Groups Terms of Reference (2021)
Appendix 2 Breakfast event feedback summary

Town Centre Stakeholder Groups Terms of Reference

Primary Purpose

To pilot the new model of town centre business engagement to enhance the town centre management function for the Principal Town Centres for an initial 12 months prior to reporting the outcome of the pilot to Scrutiny and Cabinet for consideration.

Town Centre Stakeholder Groups will operate in Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Risca and Ystrad Mynach, as consultative and engagement forums for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical and social well-being of the Principal Town Centres. Each Town Centre Stakeholder Group will:

- Maintain a dialogue between Council representatives and key stakeholders in the Town Centre;
- Act as the link between the services provided by the Council and the Town Centre business community;
- Influence and monitor the future development and diversification of the Town Centre;
- Assist in the development of regeneration initiatives which may impact upon the Town Centre;
- Contribute to the preparation of Placemaking Plans and Masterplans for the Town Centre;
- Consider operational issues that may affect the day-to-day running of the Town Centre.

Meeting Structure

The meeting structure will be more informal and encourage participation from attendees in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. The networking opportunity will form part of the agenda to encourage participants to engage in this element of the meeting. Speakers and other organisations will be present to engage and answer questions or queries. Examples of subject matter that will be the focus of the breakfast/evening meetings are:

- Consultation on strategic documents that impact upon the town centre.
- Partner organisation initiatives, such as those to reduce or combat retail crime.
- Major developments, such as housing or employment sites.
- Regeneration projects/initiatives.
- Training/development opportunities.
- Cyber security and technology support for businesses.
- Presentations from organisations offering various support mechanisms for businesses.

This format will be more beneficial to all town centre stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including:

- The meetings will be held in a local venue at a time outside of business hours to enable business attendance.
- Stakeholders can be represented even if they are not part of a formal organisation (such as a Chamber of Trade).
- Expert speakers will be able to attend and offer advice and support on a wide range of aspects that are pertinent to town centres.
- Attendees can network and facilitate business to business contact.

- Workshop/training sessions can be delivered.

It should be noted that these meetings will be held physically wherever possible and virtually on occasion when Covid restrictions are operational.

Membership

- Chamber of trade;
- Representatives of town centre businesses;
- Local supermarket representatives;
- Community/Town Council;
- Shopping Centre Managers (where they exist);
- Civic Society/Conservation Group (where they exist);
- Taxi Association (where they exist);
- Youth Forum representative;
- Police;
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Enterprise and Local Ward Members).

Each organisation (with the exception of Town/Community Councils) will be able to send one representative. Town/Community Councils can nominate two representatives. The Clerk of relevant Town/Community Councils may also attend as a non-voting member.

Administrative Support

Business Enterprise & Renewal Team – Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Frequency

Stakeholder Meetings will take place as a minimum twice a year initially, and on any other occasion when the Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Enterprise deems appropriate.

Agendas

It will be the responsibility of the Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support to prepare the Agenda. Any member of the Town Centre Stakeholder Group wishing for an item to be placed on the agenda, should send the request by e-mail, or in writing to the Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support, no later than fourteen days before the date of the meeting.

**Town Centre Stakeholder Groups
Appendix**

Wards Eligible To Attend Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings

Bargoed TCSG - Aberbargoed, Bargoed, Gilfach

Blackwood TCSG - Blackwood, Cefn Fforest

Caerphilly TCSG - Morgan Jones, St. Martins, St. James

Risca TCSG - Risca East, Risca West

Ystrad Mynach TCSG - Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach

Caerphilly Business Breakfast Network Events 2018/19
Evaluation Summary

1. Was the duration of the event

Too Long	Too Short	Just Right
7%	5%	88%

2. Was the event beneficial for your business needs?

Yes	No
94%	6%

3. Did you make any new contacts that might lead to new business?

Yes	No
80%	20%

4. Which day would you prefer breakfast events to be held on?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10%	29%	27%	25%	9%

5. How would you rate your overall satisfaction of this event?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
73%	22%	4%	1%

6. Would you attend another breakfast network event?

Yes	No
96%	4%

Venue/Arrangements

Were you happy with:

7. The venue?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
71%	20%	8%	1%

8. The seating?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
70%	22%	6%	2%

9. The catering?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
65%	27%	7%	1%

10. The Speaker?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
83%	9%	8%	0%

11. The administration of the event?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
86%	11%	3%	0%