



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2023 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property, Highways), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection) and C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces) and E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance)

Together with:

C. Harray (Chief Executive), D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive, R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services) and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director of Economy and Environment)

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), C. Adams (Highway Engineering Group Manager), S. Wilcox (Programme Development Manager), K. Watkins (Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), N. Taylor- Williams (Head of Housing) J. Roberts-Waite (Head of Strategy and Development), A. Bolter (Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), C. Boardman (Development Manager), R. Lloyd (Principal Waste Management Officer)

Also in Attendance:

Councillor J. Jones (Local Ward Member).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) and S. Harris (Head of Finance Services and Section 151 Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until 13th December 2023.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

5. REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER OAKDALE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SITE BY CAERPHILLY HOMES

Cabinet noted the report has been considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023 and further noted the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to enable the construction of the first Caerphilly Homes mixed tenure development to start in Autumn 2023, to seek approval of the inclusion of a later living scheme within the Oakdale development which is designed specifically to replace the Sheltered Housing Scheme (scheduled for decommissioning) at Ty Melin and the signing of a PCSA (Pre-Construction Delivery Agreement) to further progress the design and development of the newly proposed later living element of the scheme and to seek approval to sign a PCSA to undertake the investigatory site investigation works and design development of the Ty Melin site which will be brought forward for inclusion in the Caerphilly Homes development programme.

The Head of Strategy and Development addressed Cabinet providing an in-depth overview of the project. Cabinet was pleased to note that the new affordable housing products were being made within Caerphilly providing employment opportunities.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the exciting proposal presented.

Following queries raised the officer advised Cabinet that the current residents of Ty Melin were one of the first that were consulted on the development plans and were unanimously in support and excited about the plans. Assurances were made that the residents would continue to be involved in the development.

The Officer advised Cabinet that the Social Value Plan is being developed to provide construction related employment support that links with the Councils current offer in relation to employment support. Caerphilly Homes are currently working with the Councils Employment team to formulate the programme.

Attention was drawn to the huge investment the Council is making towards the Oakdale and Ty Darren sites and advised that the investment is not just about delivering homes, but also opportunities in terms of employment and training.

Cabinet sought clarification on what Caerphilly's commitments are to the welfare of Veterans.

The Officer explained that Caerphilly is committed to working with Veterans and is currently working with the Armed Forces Covenant Officer and a charity to develop this section of the Social Value Plan.

There have been examples of the charity's work within England, where they have taken Veterans through a programme of initial training and also pastoral care which has not only assisted in the Veteran's obtaining a job but also a home at the end.

Cabinet noted that internally Caerphilly Homes are currently reviewing the Common Allocation Policy and the Common Housing Register and are hoping that Caerphilly will be in a position to offer some of the homeless Veterans a home should they participate in the programme.

The Deputy Leader expressed his delight in the report in its entirety but was particularly pleased to note that that all homes will offer occupants the highest level of energy and efficiency and comfort, thereby lowering energy costs for occupants. Which would be pleasing to the Caerphilly Homes customers from a financial point of view but also from a climate change perspective.

Cabinet noted technology that was utilised at the IHP schemes at Trethomas and Trecenydd to create cost effective homes will be used within the schemes at Oakdale and Ty Darren. There was a grant requirement as part of the Innovative Housing Programme to install monitoring technology through the building, which has informed Caerphilly Homes that that customers are receiving energy bills of around £180.00 per annum. thereby demonstrating that the building is working as intended.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Inclusion of the later living element of the scheme which will result in the residents of Ty Melin, Croespenmaen relocating into the new accommodation on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site and the existing Ty Melin site being redeveloped post 2025 be approved.
2. The signing of the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon which will allow the development to start on site in October 2023 be approved.
3. The signing of a PCSA with Willmott Dixon to undertake the design work necessary to include the later living scheme into the wider site and also approve the signing of a separate PCSA to undertake the site investigatory and design work necessary to bring forward the Ty Melin site into the Caerphilly Homes development programme be approved.
4. The proposal to develop a Social Value Plan which will relate to all developments undertaken by Willmott Dixon in the county borough be endorsed. Under the SCAPE Framework arrangement 20% of the contract value will be attributed to the delivery of social value including an extensive construction related employment programme.

6. CAERPHILLY HOMES - TY DARRAN REDEVELOPMENT

Cabinet noted the report has been considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny

Committee on the 19th September 2023 and further noted the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to progress the scheme through to construction and completion by Autumn 2025, and to endorse the creation of a Social Value Plan which would encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes.

The Head of Strategy and Development addressed Cabinet providing an in-depth overview of the project. The Officer advised that this flag ship development has focused largely on having communal spaces which encourage interaction with the wider community and address issues that are all too common place around isolation and loneliness. There will also be the inclusion of flexible areas that can accommodate a range of needs, such as working from home or taking care of grandchildren. There are 45 apartments within the development all including balconies to facilitate easy access to fresh air.

Clarification was sought as to whether energy efficient homes are more expensive to build. The Officer clarified that currently everything is incredibly expensive to develop, particularly if you are creating energy efficient, low carbon homes. However, in the longer term these new properties will not require any further investment, as is the case with the current housing stock. This will deliver greater benefits for the tenants in terms of internal quality and lower energy costs.

In response to a query raised the Development Manager advised Cabinet that engagement sessions have been held with existing residents at Castle Court, Waunfawr House and St Marys Court residential homes and shown them both the internal and external plans. There has been feedback, both positive and negative and where there has been concerns, they have been taken on board and adjustments have been made.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained with the Officer report:

1. The content of the report was noted and the signing of the Delivery Agreement (DA) with Willmott Dixon to deliver a new, low energy, flagship later living scheme by Spring 2025 be agreed.
2. The formulation of a social value plan which will encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes with Wilmott Dixon be endorsed.

7. CWMCARN FOREST DRIVE COLLABORATION WITH NATURAL RESOURCES WALES – REVIEW OF AGREEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

Consideration was given to the report which proposed to review the collaborative arrangement with Natural Resources Wales for the Council to manage the operation of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest as a visitor attraction and to consider whether or not this agreement should be extended.

Cabinet were disappointed to note that the submission to UK Government for the Levelling-Up bid had been unsuccessful and sought clarification on how the Council plans to reduce the subsidy to the Drive.

The Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager explained that operational plans are to

minimise expenditure and maximise income, carry on a number of operations at the Forest Drive. The Council will now focus on the on-going operation.

Cabinet noted that the latest estimates show that the Council is on track to achieve the current subsidy reduction savings of £75,000 this year.

Concerns were raised with regards the price increase and whether there would be any provision in place for low-income families. Concerns were also raised with regards the limited car parking spaces provided at the Forest Drive. The Officer explained that over the past few years work has taken place to increase the number of car parking spaces available, which was carried out as part of the European Funding Project. The Forest Drive now offers 8 car parks at various locations throughout the Forest Drive. The Officer appreciated the concerns relating to the impact the price increases may have visitors. However, explained that although a rise of 25% seemed high in terms of percentages, it is only £2.00 for most visitors per car which will equate to an extra 50p person if there are four visitors in one car. Comparable costs of entry to other day vacation opportunities are far more per person.

The Leader acknowledged all the achievements at the Forest Drive over recent years, such as the children's play area which is fantastic and very well used, as are the walking and cycling routes and the installation of the glamping pod facilities. However, felt there is a still room for improvement, with regards to the catering facilities provided.

The Officer agreed with the Leaders comments and explained there had been some challenges over the recent years with regards to staffing. However, assured Cabinet that work is being undertaken to make improvements.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The existing agreement be extended for a period of one year be approved. This should ensure that both parties can fully ascertain the finances associated with the operation of the drive at the attraction. It was recognised that the last two years have been a honeymoon period and figures gained from 2023-24 should provide evidence on how the drive is performing financially post initial spike of interest.
2. An increase in the admission price from £8 to £10 per car, from £15 to £18.50 for minibuses and from £30 to £35 for coaches. These prices include parking fees on Council operated car parks at Cwmcarn as part of the admission fee. Season Ticket prices should also rise by a similar amount to £75 for a car, £37.50 for a motorbike and £125 for a minibus. These increases reflect inflation and are proposed to be implemented from the start of the 2024 season from 1st April 2024 be endorsed.

8. B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE SAFETY REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on additional proposed safety measures for Ynysddu to Wylie highway B4251 and also sought Cabinet approval to undertake the associated works.

Cabinet noted that following a tragic accident a road safety review was undertaken in March 2020. The review identified a number of recommendations which were actioned during the summer of 2020 which included areas of resurfacing, chevron signing, and speed limit reduction coupled with other minor maintenance issues. Following the completion of these safety measures a significant tree felling operation commenced in September 2020 to remove "Ash Dieback". The removal of these substantial trees opened-up the embankments and renewed

perceptions of danger and requests for a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) at certain points along the stretch of highway. While the independent safety reports did not recommend the installation of VRS or fencing, schemes were developed to see what could be accommodated should the authority wish to consider a non-compliant VRS scheme or alternate fencing along this route. In February 2022 Cabinet approved the installation of a chain-link boundary fence along the B4251.

Following completion of previous improvement measures, the installation of the chain-link fence and representations from the local ward members and members of the public, it was agreed that a further road safety review would be independently undertaken to evaluate the works and improvements undertaken to date.

This review was undertaken in an open and transparent way and resulted in a meeting on 15th June 2023 where all relevant parties met Council Officers, Gwent Police and the authors of the Independent Safety Report to review and analyse the outcomes.

A final meeting was then held with local residents and Councillors on the 16th August 2023 to agree the proposed actions.

Cabinet welcomed Councillor Jan Jones (Local Ward Member) who was invited to speak on the report. It was acknowledged that Councillor Jones had been working closely with the Family of Laurie Jones who tragically lost her life in an accident on this stretch of road.

Councillor Jones addressed Cabinet who passed on the Family's appreciation that throughout the consultation and during all the meetings, they were able to discuss and explain their concerns which were listened to and heard, the Council's time and patience was appreciated, and the extra safety measures that were listed within the report were welcomed. However, disappointment was expressed that crash barrier and the street lighting proposals had not been agreed. Councillor Jones explained that the Family felt that the chain-link fence that has been installed provided no additional safety and Councillor Jones also expressed the Family's feeling that the Council was more concerned with its carbon footprint rather than the safety of its roads. However, Councillor Jones did acknowledge that there had been very few accidents at night.

Councillor Jones and Councillor Reed as Local Ward Members, expressed their appreciation for the time taken by Officers to meet with the Family and the extra measures planned were appreciated by Councillor Jones and Councillor Reed (Local Ward Members). However, they too were disappointed with the lack of crash barriers and that street lighting had not been agreed.

Councillor Jones acknowledged that their comments had been included within the report and was pleased with the Officers approach and transparency throughout the process.

The Leader expressed his thanks to the Family for working closely with the Authority at a such a very difficult time and assurance was given that the Authority was committed to the continuing review and monitoring of this stretch of road.

Cabinet sought clarification as to why it was not deemed necessary to install crash barriers. The Head of Infrastructure explained that there are concerns that the barriers themselves would cause an additional hazard due to the radius of the bend and position of the barrier. The Officer advised Cabinet that a 40mph speed limit had been implemented on the road.

Cabinet noted that all consultees and their comments had been included within the report.

Cabinet also noted that further additional preventative measures, such as solid lines and bollards are proposed to be in place put in place. Although the bollards only needed to be 5 metres apart, following the concerns raised by the Family, the Council had made adjustments and spaced them 3 metres apart on bend radii.

Following a query raised by Cabinet the Officer gave assurances that the maintenance issues identified within the Independent Review would be picked up by the Councils internal inspection process as the road is a strategic route therefore inspections take place monthly.

Clarification was sought as to why the road is not considered to be an accident black spot. The Officer explained, that although there have been accidents, there had not been any accident clusters or common factors at a single location and have occurred at different points along the road which included the straight sections of highway.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report Cabinet considered the content of the report and approved the additional road safety review conclusion that the B4251 between Ynysddu and Wyllie does not have any major road safety issues and that the suggested minor improvements identified (which are generally maintenance or preventative related) be actioned as part of ongoing highway maintenance schedules or as described in Table 1 at paragraph 5.4 of the report. These improvements will also be monitored against any recorded accident data received over the coming years.

9. RECYCLING CONTAMINATION PROCESS

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approve a proposal to refine and enhance the Councils current approach to public engagement specifically targeted to recycling contamination at the kerbside.

An update was provided in regards the progress of the Waste Strategy which is scheduled to be ready for consultation in early 2024.

Cabinet noted the educational aspect of the exercise and acknowledged the information provided within the report which explains the process and number of visits prior to a fine being issued. The report highlights that the numbers dramatically fall through the various stages which identifies this is not a money-making exercise in any way. It was further noted that around 10 Enforcement Notices could have been issued following recent monitoring and engagement at approximately 75,000 properties.

Cabinet requested an update on the recruitment status for the new staff, who will be implementing the new process. The Principal Waste Management Officer confirmed that Caerphilly have currently recruited 9 Household Recycling Centre Attendants, 7 Collection Operatives, 3 Technical Officers, a Health and Safety Officer and 6 Recycling Advisors, who will be responsible for door knocking and advising residents how to recycle more effectively.

In response to a query raised The Head of Infrastructure confirmed that since the enhanced education process has been implemented there has been indications that the contamination levels have dropped by around 5%, which is very positive.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The implementation of an enhanced education and engagement process that incorporates the option to serve legal notices and in certain circumstances where deemed necessary the issue of fixed penalties to persistent offenders relating to recycling contamination be approved.

2. The proposal for the fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to be set at £70 reducing to £35 if paid within 14 days be approved.
3. That a specific communication campaign is undertaken in advance of implementing the enhanced process be approved.

10. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Members considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests in disclosing the information and it was: -

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. NESS TAR AND FORMER WERNDDU BRICKWORKS SITES, CAERPHILLY - DELIVERY OPTIONS REPORT

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the recommendations at 3.1 i) to vi) be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.22 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 15th November 2023.

CHAIR