



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 9TH DECEMBER 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chair
Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, R.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough, Ms J.G. Jones, M.J. Prew, A. Rees, Mrs E. Stenner

Cabinet Members:

K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services) and T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering).

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), R. Kyte (Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning), D. Phenis (Sport and Leisure Services Manager), J. Lougher (Sport and Leisure Development Manager), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Kent, Mrs P. Leonard and Mrs D. Price.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During the course of the meeting, a declaration of interest was received from Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth and is minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 28TH OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28th October 2014 (minute nos. 1 – 16) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee received reports from Cabinet Members K. James, T.J. Williams and D.V. Poole.

Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development, presented his report, and informed Members that HRH Prince Charles would be visiting the Newbridge Memorial Hall on Friday 12th February. An official concert would also be held in February 2015 to mark its reopening.

Members were advised of the recent launch of the “Choose the High Street @ Christmas” discount voucher booklet, which offered shoppers a range of discounts from businesses within the five managed town centres of Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Risca and Ystrad Mynach. These booklets were available from CCBC libraries and Customer First Centres and would also be distributed at various CCBC Christmas events.

Sophie Hawkrige, an apprentice with the Countryside Services Division, was congratulated on being awarded Apprentice of the Year at the recent Caerphilly Business Awards. There was also success for the Council’s Events and Marketing Team, who were recently awarded a £14,000 grant from Visit Wales through the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund. The grant will provide for the installation of new visitor and tourism panels in Blackwood, training on social media marketing, and promotion for tourism businesses.

In response to a Member’s query regarding the discount voucher booklets, it was explained that the Town Centre Management Groups approached a number of businesses across the Authority, with the outcome being that offers from businesses located outside the main town centres were also welcomed for inclusion within the booklet.

Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, presented his report, and advised Members that the Winter Maintenance Plan was well underway, with the Authority’s fleet of vehicles serviced and salt stocks replenished in preparation for the winter months.

Members were informed that Marcus Lloyd had been seconded to the WHQS Programme as Deputy Head of Programmes, with Graham Parry filling his former role of Highway Operations Group Manager in an interim capacity.

The Cabinet Member advised of a number of developments within the Engineer Projects Group, with the Crumlin rail bridge refurbishment completed, Phase 4 of Bargoed Regeneration and Phase 3 of Newbridge Town Centre Enhancement out to tender, and the A469 Trecenydd to Pwllypant road successfully resurfaced and reconstructed. Members were also informed that WG funding had been confirmed for the proposed highway improvements to the A467/A472 signalised junction in Crumlin. It was expected that works would commence on 5th January 2015 for a period of 34 weeks, with an article in the next issue of Newsline to inform local residents of the forthcoming works.

Members referenced the hard work undertaken by Engineering staff in relation to the A469 roadworks and asked for their appreciation to be placed on record.

Councillor D.V. Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services, outlined a series of events held in connection with the White Ribbon campaign, including the re-launch

of the Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Centre in Ystrad Mynach on White Ribbon Day itself. A series of further activities are proposed to raise awareness and to help victims of domestic abuse access support, including some planned to coincide with the 6 Nations rugby period.

Members were updated on the draft Business Case being developed in connection with the Gwent Trading Standards Project, with it anticipated that it would be presented to Members for consideration in February/March 2015.

The recent Pride in Your Place awards ceremony was held on Tuesday 25th November 2014 at Blackwood Miners' Institute, with a range of excellent entries received from community groups and schools across the borough, demonstrating their commitment to making the borough a cleaner, greener place. It was also advised that the Christmas waste collection arrangements had recently been released and publicised in Newslines and via local press and the CCBC website.

Members made reference to ongoing waste collection issues in their wards as the result of changes to bin collection days, and the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would make further enquiries with the Waste Strategy and Operations Manager in relation to this.

6. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FIRST REVIEW) UP TO 2031: DRAFT PREFERRED STRATEGY

During the course of the debate on this item, Councillor E.M. Aldworth declared an interest. In that it was personal (she has a family member who is an estate manager at Trecenydd Business Park) and not prejudicial, she remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.

Rhian Kyte, Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning, together with Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning, presented the report, which informed Members of the progress made to date in respect of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 and its influence on the Draft Preferred Strategy up to 2031, prior to its presentation to Cabinet and thereafter Council.

The report outlined the stakeholder engagement undertaken to date for the first review of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 and outlined how this work has influenced the Draft Preferred Strategy up to 2031. Members' views were sought on the Draft Preferred Strategy (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) as a basis for the first formal statutory six-week public consultation stage of the plan review process which is scheduled for early 2015, with details of this consultation process outlined by Officers.

The report also outlined the next stage of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review Process, together with an extract from the Review Report (attached at Appendix 2 to the report) which detailed the consideration given to undertaking a joint review of the LDP with Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Councils.

Detailed discussion of the report ensued and Members raised a number of queries regarding the contents of the Draft Preferred Strategy. Reference was made to the proposal to reduce

the over-allocation of employment land and reallocate some employment land within the county borough, and Officers explained that the Strategy had identified a need for all existing land allocations to be revisited to ensure they were still appropriate to the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan.

Members referenced the proposed development of strategic sites in Caerphilly and Maesycwmmmer to support planned growth, querying whether these sites could sufficiently accommodate new and improved infrastructure provision. It was explained that the way forward regarding the determination of strategic sites would be established with the preparation of the forthcoming Deposit LDP. Members also queried the inclusion of certain sites within the schedule of candidate sites for consideration for inclusion in the Deposit LDP with it explained that this was an initial list compiled from parties interested in developing these sites, and that the list indicated whether or not the sites hypothetically met the Sustainable Network Growth Strategy.

The report referenced a need for improvements to the strategic transportation infrastructure within the county borough, and Members' comments regarding these were noted by Officers. Members commented on the need for a new rail station at Nelson and suggested that a road-widening scheme between Nelson and Ystrad Mynach be included in the Strategy. A query was raised regarding details of a proposed new bypass for the Maesycwmmmer area, with Officers clarifying the proposed location and explaining this new road would be required to service the strategic site if established.

The Draft Preferred Strategy referred to the proposed cinema development in Bargoed, with Members citing a forthcoming Notice of Motion (to request a new business case and returned tenders for the cinema) and querying if this should be reflected in the Strategy. Officers explained that the final version of the Strategy would reflect future developments on this matter.

The impact of the Local Development Plan on town centre regeneration was discussed, and Members commented on the need to encourage more premium retailers into Caerphilly Town Centre. Members' attention was directed to 7.43 of the Draft Preferred Strategy, which referenced the Gallagher Retail Park and explained that the future designation of this area (including considering a change of use to a Retail Warehouse Park) would be reconsidered through the review process. Officers outlined the engagement process between Members and local town centre businesses regarding town centre regeneration and offered to arrange a training session with Members in order to identify issues that could be discussed with these local businesses.

Reference was made to the Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy and Members commented on the need to explore opportunities to improve the strategic rail network to facilitate the reopening of the Caerphilly-Machen-Newport disused rail line. Queries were also received regarding the Authority's forthcoming Local Transport Plan, and Members were redirected to the appropriate Officer for further information.

Discussion took place regarding land allocation processes and the use of greenfield and brownfield sites. It was reiterated that all existing land allocations would be revisited to ensure they were still appropriate to the Caerphilly County Borough LDP. Officers also responded to general discussion in relation to the impact of the LDP on planning application processes.

Members made reference to paragraph 3.17 of the Draft Preferred Strategy, which referred to average house prices in the county borough, and paragraph 3.27 which referred to overall concentrations of deprivation in the county borough and Officers confirmed that these details would be updated in line with the latest Annual Monitoring Report data.

Following consideration of the report, including the Draft Preferred Strategy and the position statements from each of the three local planning authorities as contained in the Review Report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be forwarded

to Cabinet and thereafter Council for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet, and thereafter Council, that for the reasons contained therein, the Authority's commitment to progress with a single review of the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan be reconfirmed.

8. ADOPTION OF SOUTH EAST WALES VALLEYS LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which sought Members' views on the draft South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (LTP) and reported the responses from statutory and public consultation, prior to its presentation to Cabinet and thereafter Council.

It was explained that the Welsh Government (WG) requires all local authorities in Wales to produce LTPs in accordance with guidance issued in May 2014, which will replace the 4 Regional Transport Plans (RTPs) currently in place across Wales. The LTP has to be submitted to WG by 31st January 2015 and as such there has been a very short timescale to produce the LTP.

On 29th October 2014, Cabinet gave approval for a joint South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan to be produced by Caerphilly, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil Councils, with RCT identified as the lead authority for the plan and to act as the main point of contact with the Welsh Government.

Members' attention was directed to the consultation draft of the LTP, which was attached as Appendix 3 to the report. It was explained that the WG requirements stated that the LTP cannot refer to rail/ trunk road schemes, and therefore a number of amendments would need to be made prior to the LTP being submitted to the WG. This included removal of Appendix 2 of the LTP Consultation Report which identified priority rail improvements for the SE Wales Valleys area.

Reference was made to the short-term programme of CCBC schemes identified within the draft LTP, with it explained that there had been accelerated developments in regards to the scheme to extend park and ride facilities at Ystrad Mynach Rail Station. Recent DDA and station improvement works had facilitated the opportunity to bring forward this plan to within the next 12-18 months, therefore increasing the Priority Rating against this scheme from 6 to 2.

The Committee were also advised of Member consultation feedback received regarding LTP scheme programmes, which were contained within Appendix 1 of the report. Officers suggested that a scheme could be added to the LTP to improve the signalised junction serving the Pengam Park and Ride Site.

Discussion of the report ensued and Members commented on the need for an improved road and public transport infrastructure around the county borough, with these comments noted by Officers. A query was also raised in regards to the short consultation timelines with it advised that despite the short WG deadline submission date for the LTP, sufficient notice was given to all consultees.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be forwarded to Cabinet and thereafter Council for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet, and thereafter Council, that for the reasons contained therein, and subject to the amendments to the LTP as detailed by Officers, the South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan be adopted.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW CINEMA IN BARGOED

Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, introduced the report, which detailed a Notice of Motion received from Councillor Roy Saralis and supported by Councillors Jan Jones, Colin Durham, Allan Rees, Jean Summers, Nigel Dix and Pat Cook.

The Members requested in their Notice of Motion that:-

- “This Council requires that a new business case and returned tenders for the proposed development of a new cinema in Bargoed is considered in detail by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee, prior to a decision being taken by Officers, Cabinet or full Council to commit any financial support to the project”.

Following consideration of the Notice of Motion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Notice of Motion be supported.

In response to a Member’s query, Officers confirmed that the Notice of Motion would be presented to Cabinet and the new business case presented to a future meeting of scrutiny once tenders had been returned and evaluated.

10. REVIEW OF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME

Following a Member’s request, this report was brought forward from the list of information items as an item for discussion.

David Phenis, Sport and Leisure Services Manager, and Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager, presented the report, which advised Members of progress with a review of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in CCBC.

The report outlined details of a review of the current provision of the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award scheme, and recommended areas for improvement which have been formulated by a cross-directorate task group. The review highlighted that Caerphilly had only reached 1.4% of the youth population (14-24 years), in comparison to the Wales average of 2.5% (Full Report in Appendix 1).

The cross-directorate task group reviewed the current provision of the scheme and evaluated how CCBC could improve on its current level of performance in comparison to other local authorities in Wales. A number of areas for improvement have been identified to increase engagement with organisations (other than schools) and young people in Caerphilly.

Following discussion of the report, Members noted the progress of the DofE award scheme to date and supported the areas identified for improvement.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. None of these items were brought forward for review.

- (1) 6 Month Update – Improvement Objective No. 4;
- (2) Bargoed Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 15th October 2014;
- (3) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 17th October 2014;
- (4) Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 4th November 2014;
- (5) Risca Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 18th November 2014;

- (6) Summary of Members' Attendance – Quarter 2 – 1st July 2014 to 30th September 2014.

The Chair extended his thanks to Members and Officers for their hard work over the past year, and wished those present a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 7.17 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR