



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TREDOMEN BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH JULY 2004 AT 3.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

D.G. Carter, D.T. Davies, A.G. Higgs, Mrs D. Price

Together with:

Mr. P. Collins & Mr. I. Hill (Bargoed Chamber of Trade); Community Councillors I. Hughes & L. Harding (Bargoed Town Council).

R. Tanner (Strategic Planning & Urban Renewal Manager), B. Morgan (Senior Planner – Urban Renewal), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), A. Crabb (Facilities Officer), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor D.T. Davies was appointed Chairman of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor D.G. Carter was appointed Vice Chairman of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors H.A. Andrews, E.K. Griffiths and K.V. Reynolds.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in agenda item 11 – Hospital Site. He is Chairman of the Gwent Community Health Council.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2004 were approved as a correct record.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

It was agreed that a representative of Heddlu Gwent Police should be invited to attend future meetings of the Town Centre Management Group.

7. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENTS – PHASE 2

The group was reminded of the moratorium on approvals of WDA funding for urban renewal schemes. Schemes affected by this action included Bargoed Town Centre Phase 2 – footway widening and street lighting - and the revised Town Centre study and concept study for Bargoed.

Works totalling £51,000, including new street lighting, had been undertaken in 2003/04 funded solely from the Council's urban renewal budget. However, since that time the Phase 2 scheme had been reviewed to take into account concerns raised about the affect on traffic congestion of widening the pavement in Hanbury Road. It had also become apparent that some of the proposed works could be inconsistent with the eventual treatment of Hanbury Road/High Street following construction of the by-pass.

An amended scheme costing approximately £80,000 had therefore been drawn up to improve pedestrian safety in the town centre by providing a number of crossing points. The scheme also included a lay-by at "Spar Square" in Hanbury Road, which would help to reduce traffic congestion caused by buses and delivery vehicles blocking Hanbury Road.

Bob Campbell, Assistant Engineer, updated the group on the Road Traffic Order for the High Street and Hanbury Road, which had progressed through the legal procedure.

8. BARGOED DESIGN STUDY

Tenders had been invited and consultants had subsequently been chosen to undertake the study at a cost of £37,340. Officers would be seeking Cabinet approval to fund this amount from the urban renewal budget as this was one of the schemes that had been affected by the WDA's moratorium. It was anticipated that the study would be completed by 1st November 2004.

In response to questions raised about the number of studies that had been commissioned of the town, Mr Tanner confirmed that this was the second, although various "Action Plans" had also been compiled. Significant changes to the Bargoed by-pass design and the firming up of the timetable for the by-pass had dictated that a new study was required if the town was to take advantage of the post by-pass situation.

A Member of the Management Group suggested that the study should address all the issues raised in the recommendations of the "Smart Alternative" study.

Discussion ensued on ways of making the town centre more attractive from an environmental point of view i.e. by providing hanging baskets and ensuring that the highway, pavements, car parks and shop frontages were kept free of litter, weeds etc. It was suggested that Members of the Management Group meet officers within Environmental Services to discuss ways of keeping the area clean.

9. RETAIL PLATEAU

The Town Centre Management Group had agreed to support the long-term larger store scheme at a previous meeting and the Bargoed Chamber of Trade had subsequently confirmed their preference for the long-term scheme by letter. However, strong concerns had been expressed about the impact of the landfill proposals, in particular, the affect on Aberbargoed of abstracting material from the Aberbargoed plateau.

Following consultation, a report had been presented to Cabinet on 8th June 2004 recommending that proposals for the development of a discount foodstore on a smaller plateau at the Bargoed Southern Car Park site be rejected and the necessary steps be taken to secure a private sector partner to develop the larger Bargoed retail plateau. In addition, the report recommended that a consultation exercise be undertaken at the appropriate time regarding options for obtaining and delivering to the site, the fill material for the retail plateau. The Cabinet had endorsed these proposals.

Officers would report back if any positive responses from private sector partners were forthcoming.

10. TOWN CENTRE MANAGER POST

It was reported that the holiday season had delayed the appointment of the Town Centre Manager. Interviews for the post would be held early in September.

Members of the Management Group sought clarification on the role of the Town Centre Manager and asked for consideration to be given to Bargoed having its own Manager.

It was explained that it had been agreed that the post, which was funded by the Council, would cover three towns within the county borough.

11. HOSPITAL SITE

Councillor D.T. Davies left the meeting during consideration of this item, having declared an interest as Chairman of the Gwent CHC. Councillor D.G. Carter took the chair.

Discussion took place on the consolidation and provision of hospital services within the county borough and the suggestion that had been made that the proposed new hospital be sited on the Aberbargoed plateau once the by-pass was in place.

It was agreed that Mr Tanner would write to the Health Authority on behalf of the Management Group drawing the Health Authority's attention to the potential of the Aberbargoed plateau for the new hospital site.

12. 45 HANBURY ROAD

The Management Group was updated on this issue. It was reported that the site had been incorporated into the design study and would be set in context for proposals for the remainder of the area.

It was reported that new Compulsory Purchase powers which were coming into force in September would enable Local Authorities to acquire properties for regeneration purposes.

It was agreed to await the outcome of the consultants' report before taking any further action in respect of this issue.

13. COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT UPTAKE

The Management Group was advised of the availability of Commercial Improvement Grants and of work that was currently being undertaken in the Bargoed area in this connection.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14. BARGOED MARKET

It was reported that despite all the efforts of the Market Operator, the market was not proving to be successful.

The Management Group discussed various measures that might attract more visitors to the market, including the feasibility of relocating it to another part of the town. It was, however, acknowledged that markets in general were struggling to survive.

It was agreed to review the situation at the end of the summer period.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that future meetings of the Town Centre Management Group would be held on a six weekly basis, on dates and times to be agreed.

The meeting closed at 4.40 p.m.