



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 3.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, Mrs. C. Forehead, G.G. Hibbert, S. Kent, M.H. Newman and M.J. Prew.

Cabinet Member for Regeneration: Councillor D.T. Davies

Together with:

P. Gomer (Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure), P. Mears (Chief Planning Officer), I. MacVicar (Business Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), D. Earey (Principal Manager) and D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer).

Also Present:

J. Stephens (CADW), A. Hitchen (Gwent Police), M.L. Evans (Town Clerk- Caerphilly Town Council), J. Couzens (Centre Manager – Castle Court) Mrs S. Cooper (Caerphilly Access Group), R. Gough (GAVO) and K. Rowbottom (CRDA).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Fussell, Inspector Nicholas (Gwent Police) and T, White and J. Elliott (CCBC).

1. CHAIRMAN

Councillor P. Bevan was appointed Chairman of the Management Group.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor J. Fussell was appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Management Group.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record.

Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group held on 13th April 2005.

MATTERS ARISING

4. Area Forum Budget (CT29)

It was reported that the balance remaining on the area forum budget allocation is approximately £5,000 and it was noted that any money not allocated prior to the end of the financial year may be carried over.

5. New Park and Ride Access Road (CT33)

It was noted that the scheme will shortly be going out to tender with an expected completion date of April 2006.

Councillor Mrs Forehead placed on record her concern that the Van Community Council was only consulted very recently and not at the start of the proposed scheme.

6. Installation of Litter Bins (CT34)

It was reported that the cost of a specialist cast iron litterbin was much higher than anticipated (approximately £1,000 each). It was suggested that two bins may suffice in the area identified and that money from the area forum budget could be considered for this by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. Mr Stephens (CADW) also indicated that there may still be a possibility of joint funding near the end of the financial year.

7. Rateable Revaluation of Commercial Properties (CT36)

It was reported that representatives from small businesses had met with Jeff Cuthbert AM who had given an assurance that he will investigate their concerns regarding the rateable revaluation of commercial properties.

8. CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE – REGENERATION OF CARDIFF ROAD, CLIVE STREET AND PENTREBANE STREET

Mr Mears, Chief Planning Officer, was attending the meeting to outline to members the progress on the proposed regeneration at Cardiff Road Caerphilly.

He explained that a developer had been preparing a scheme for this area and a planning application may be submitted by the end of the year. A booklet of the proposed development was circulated to the group.

If compulsory purchase is required for any of the premises to necessitate the development then the scheme may be delayed by approximately a year.

A member of the group asked if a new library would be included in the development and Mr. Mears responded that it may be an option to site it within the proposed development although other possibilities within the town centre are presently being considered.

Another member expressed concern at the possible traffic problems already in the area and Mr Mears responded the highways directorate would be consulted when the application is received and also confirmed that there are no proposals to make Cardiff Road a pedestrian area.

Mr Mears assured members that a full consultation will take place when an application is received.

9. Park Lane Development

Members noted the report presented to Council on 21st June 2005.

Mr Gomer, Head of Lifelong Learning, reported that there are still a number of relocation issues to be resolved to progress the development. It was noted that Caerphilly Town Council favour a move to the Twyn Community Centre and that the Twyn Community Centre Committee have agreed to this and also to possibly accommodate the users of Neuadd Park, a lift is currently being installed and a mezzanine floor will be constructed in the New Year.

Further meetings will be held with the all the remaining tenants to try to resolve the relocation issues. It was reported that the issues regarding the Senior Citizens Hall had necessitated advice from Counsel on what the area of land can be developed for if the building is demolished.

Mr Gomer reiterated that the council can demolish the building it is only the after use that needs a legal decision.

A member raised a question on proposed timescales and Mr Gomer indicated that all tenants will be given at least six months notice.

Mr Mears indicated that following the vacation of all premises there will be an invitation for submission of interests from developers to submit an application to include offices, restaurants, flats and possibly a library.

10. Big Cheese Update

The Chairman reported that the Big Cheese weekend had again been very successful and that he would contact the tourism department to request an officer from tourism to be at the next meeting to give a full report.

Mr Gomer reported that following concerns regarding the condition of the playing fields after the event, his department had been investigating the possibility of using grass crete to protect the grass in this area from the heavy machinery.

A member raised a concern regarding the positioning of the disabled toilets and charity stalls being positioned on an undulating surface and the Chairman indicated that he would forward these concerns to the officer concerned.

11. Provision of Taxi Ranks

Mr Earey reported that the Taxi Association are attempting to identify more areas for taxi ranks in the Town Centre and the proposal for a rank at a bus lay-by near the band stand at Castle Street was discussed again.

The Management Group reiterated their objections to this proposal and noted that the Regeneration and Living Environment Scrutiny Committees would be informed of this objection when the minutes are presented to the meetings.

Mr Couzens (Centre Manager – Castle Court) suggested that the possibility of identifying an additional rank in the Castle Court area and/or at the rear of Caerphilly Social Club could be considered and that he would investigate the matter further and if necessary meet an officer on site.

The Chairman indicated that he would request that any proposals for additional taxi ranks in the town centre be reported to this group.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM CAERPHILLY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (CRDA)

12. New Traffic Orders – Caerphilly Town Centre

Mr Earey reported that problems had occurred when introducing new signage and road markings for the new traffic orders in the town centre and that the Police had indicated that without the correct signs and road markings corresponding enforcement action would not be taken.

Members gave a number of examples where road markings were inconsistent.

It was noted however that officers would shortly be meeting with Caerphilly Police to discuss the situation and resolve these issues.

13. Park Lane Development

It was noted that this item had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

14. Caerphilly Indoor Skateboard Facility

Mr Gomer reported that his department were currently investigating suitable locations to relocate the indoor skateboarding equipment from the present indoor facility at Pentreban Street.

A condition on the funding for the equipment requires that the equipment be relocated in the Caerphilly Basin area and an area of land to the rear of Caerphilly Leisure Centre is presently being considered. The area has the advantage of being away from housing but near the leisure centre with security cameras and lights. There would also be the potential in this area for a barn roof type structure which would however require planning permission.

The Police representative indicated that an alternative site to suggest to skateboarders from the town would be welcomed when dealing with problems in the town centre.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM CAERPHILLY TOWN COUNCIL

15. Blue Tarpaulin on Top of Town Building

The concerns at the appearance of this building at the top of the town centre were discussed.

Mr Mears confirmed that although the building was visibly unsightly it was not considered dangerous and in view of the proposed development discussed earlier would not seem prudent to issue a Section 215 notice on the premises.

Mr Mears indicated however that he would contact the owner of the premises regarding the appearance and present a report to the next meeting.

16. Grass Bank Reinstatement at Castle Street

The Town Clerk reported concerns regarding the re-instatement of the grass bank at Castle Street. He reported that the general appearance of the bank was of weeds and ditches. An officer responded that the contractor (Capita Symons) would be meeting officers on site within the next week to inspect the area and appropriate action be taken if necessary.

A member raised a concern regarding cyclists at this area not having regard to the dismount signs and the Police representative indicated that she would look into this issue.

17. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in January 2005 when there may be more information to report regarding the Town Centre Regeneration proposals

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.