

## CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY 2004 AT 7.00 P.M.

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PRESENT:

Community Councillor J. Criddle - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, P.J. Bevan, D. Bolter, M.H. Newman, D.J. Potter, Mrs. J.A. Pritchard,  
K.R. Snell

Representing Community/Town Councils:

Aber Valley	-	Mrs. E. Prendergast, Mr. J.S. Humphreys (Clerk)
Argoed	-	A.S. Williams
Bargoed	-	H.M. Farrant
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	-	apologies
Blackwood	-	J.B. Criddle, Mr. I. Palmer (Clerk)
Caerphilly	-	Mr. M. Evans (Clerk)
Darran Valley	-	C.R. Roberts, Mrs. P. Cooper (Clerk)
Gelligaer	-	Mrs. A. Davies (Clerk)
Llanbradach	-	Mr. W. Thompson (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	-	Mrs. J.H. Rao, Mr. D. Cooper (Clerk)
Nelson	-	apologies
New Tredegar	-	
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	-	Mrs. A. Nash, Mr. R.B. Williams (Clerk)
Rhymney	-	Mrs. M. Betts
Rudry	-	Mr. J.L. Matthews (Clerk)
Van	-	J. O'Brien (Clerk)

Together with:

C. Burns (Head of Policy and Central Services), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Collins, Mrs. C. Forehead, Mrs. M.E. Hughes, C.P. Mann and H. Price, Community Councillors Mrs. G. Howell, Mrs. M.J. Hallam, Mrs. M.R. Richards, Mrs. A. Reed, Mrs. M.A. Derrett, H. Williams and Mrs. E. Macey and Mr. D.R. Parry, Mr. J. Dilworth, Mr. D. Allinson and Mr. A. Hoskins (Clerks of Argoed, Bargoed, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen and Nelson Community/Town Councils respectively).

## **WELSH ASSEMBLY RESEARCH REPORT INTO THE FUTURE POTENTIAL OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

The meeting was convened to discuss the content of the report and details contained within the summary report (which had been circulated to each member) were outlined.

Mr. Burns, Head of Policy and Central Services outlined the recommendations from Cabinet to Council on 4th March 2004 that the increased role and potential of community/town councils should be welcomed, there should be support for the extension of coverage so that every area is represented, the proposed method of funding increased activities should be by way of grant rather than additional taxation via precepts and that there should be no extension on delegation of powers over planning decisions (as this might cause inconsistency of approach between different parts of the county borough).

Consideration was then given to the main issues contained within the summary document and to its proposal that the whole of Wales should be covered with community/town councils, its argument in favour of an enlarged role for community/town councils increasing their capacity to take on the delivery of local services, the financing arrangements and increased support and training for Clerks and other staff.

It was pointed out that whilst in favour of the coverage of the whole of the county borough with community/town councils there might not be support for their establishment in those areas where they do not already exist. It was felt that in those areas the development of Community First Partnerships and the Local Area Forums might influence the level of support for their development. Mr. Burns pointed out that these Groups operate alongside community/town councils and should not be perceived as being an alternative body.

With regards to an enlarged role for community/town councils, the representatives pointed out that in view of financial and personnel implications they would not generally be in favour of carrying out the provision of services delegated from principal authorities (i.e. maintenance of parks, cleansing, community centres/halls etc.). It was pointed out that whilst one community/town council may not be able to perform this function an agreement between several may be able to do so by achieving economy of scale and pooling administrative resources.

Reference was made to the proposed financing arrangements should a greater role be supported and it was noted that the report concludes that in order to effect the greater role it proposes, there should not be an increase in the tax raising limit currently imposed but that there should be an increased grant support via the Welsh Assembly and a transfer of funds from principal authorities as certain functions are delegated. This proposal was supported should any community/town council wish to consider its future development.

The representatives pointed out proposals for increased support and training for Clerks and community/town councillors and made reference to the use of One Voice Wales to provide advice and assistance, review the training needs of community councillors and clerks and developing comprehensive training and development programmes. In view of the perceived difficulties and the financial implications, Mr Burns pointed out that there are training and development programmes for country borough members and he could see no reasons why community/town councils should not be involved with this process.

Discussion then ensued on the increase in the role of community/town councils in the planning process and the representatives indicated that while they would not wish the delegation of decision making on minor planning applications they would support any proposals to enable representatives to address the Planning Committee, to be able to attend and express views at site meetings or for specific meetings to be held with individual community/town councils on contentious applications.

Mr. Burns pointed out that while there are specific guidelines relating to attendance at planning site visits and an agreed procedure for speakers at the Planning Committee he would discuss the matter with the Chief Planning Officer and Head of Legal Services to seek their views.

It was noted that the views of the community/town council representatives would be made known to the Members at Council on 4th March 2004 when they consider the recommendations of Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.