



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 2012 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Community Councillor C. Roberts - Chairman

Councillors:

D. Bolter, D.G. Carter, M.H. Newman, Mrs. K. Presley, J.A. Pritchard

Community/Town Council Representatives:

Aber Valley	- Mrs. E. P. Prendergast, Mrs. S. Hughes (Clerk)
Argoed	- G. Lewis
Bargoed	- H. Llewellyn
Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen	- Ms J. Gale
Blackwood	- M. Franklin
Caerphilly	- Mrs. U. Newman
Darran Valley	- C.R. Roberts
Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry	-
Gelligaer	- Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Llanbradach	- Mr. W.M. Thompson (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	- Miss. J. Rao
Nelson	- Mrs. G. Davies
New Tredegar	-
Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn	- Mrs. A. Nash, Mrs. H. Treherne (Clerk)
Rhymney	- D.T. Williams, Mrs. H. Williams
Van	- Mrs. E. Macey, Mr. J. Dilworth (Clerk)

Together with

D. Price (Parks and Outdoor Facilities Manager), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

One Voice Wales - Mr. Lyn Cadwallader (Chief Executive), Mr. Paul Egan (Development Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, H.A. Andrews, J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Collins, C.P. Mann, Mrs. D. Price, J.E. Roberts, A.S. Williams and Mrs. L. Williams. Community Councillors A. Angel, R. Cantelo and D. Woodman. Mr. G. James, Mrs. L. Tams, Mrs. S. Chick, Mr. J. Hold, Mr. K. Williams, Mr. G. Williams and Mrs. G. Thomas (Clerks of Argoed, Bargoed, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen and Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Darran Valley and Rhymney, Maesycwmmmer and Nelson Community/Town Councils respectively).

1. MINUTES - 21ST SEPTEMBER 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2011 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

2. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (minute no. 7(a))

It was noted that despite repeated requests for a representative of the Welsh Government to attend a future meeting to give a presentation on the implications for town and community councils following the Measure coming into force to date it has not been possible to make such arrangements. As previously agreed rather than restrict the presentation to the sixteen Community Councillors who sit on the Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee it will be opened to all Community Councillors.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the following items raised by the Community/Town Councils.

3. Update on Prosiect Gwyrdd

With regards to Prosiect Gwyrdd it was noted that it is now at the call for final tenders stage with the 2 remaining bidders (Viridor who are proposing an energy from waste plant at Trident Park, Cardiff and Veolia who are proposing an energy from waste plant at Llanwern, Newport). Both proposals include provision for energy (electricity) to be supplied to the national grid and heat to be supplied to an appropriate industrial user.

The next stage of the procurement will be the receipt and evaluation of the final tenders and selection of a preferred bidder in the late summer/autumn of 2012. The decision to select the preferred bidder will be taken by each of the 5 councils separately (the other procurement decisions are taken by a project board and/or joint committee).

The project also has a Joint Scrutiny Panel which has been independently scrutinising the process. This panel comprises 2 members from each of the 5 partner authorities (Councillors Dave Poole and Malcolm Parker from this authority). The Panel has recently visited energy from waste plants operated by the 2 bidders (in Slough and Newhaven) and will be inviting a range of stakeholders to give evidence over a 2 day period next month on the benefits, disbenefits, health facts, scientific emissions evidence, etc relating to energy from waste.

Members were advised that further information could be found on the project web site at www.prosiectgwyrdd.co.uk.

A query was raised on the reasons that Covanta had withdrawn its interest in the project and it was agreed that, if available, the information would be sought and Clerks advised accordingly. Reference was also made to the role of the Infrastructure Planning Commission with the remaining applications and again agreed that the information would be forwarded to the Clerks.

4. Signage in Parks

Mr. Derek Price (Parks and Outdoor Facilities Manager) attend to respond to queries raised in relation to insufficient signage in playgrounds and to a request that "No Dogs" and "No Smoking" signs are erected within fenced designated children's play areas. It was noted that there are currently 97 such areas and 25 MUGAs in parks and at other locations across the borough.

He advised of the consultation undertaken on the proposed revision of byelaws covering parks, playgrounds, sports facilities and open spaces, the results of which will be presented to a meeting of the Living Environment Scrutiny Committee on 20th March 2012. Once approved by the Welsh Government the Parks Section will commence a programme of new signage covering the byelaws for all of the areas specified within the schedule of locations identified in the document. The planned dog free zones will require separate signs due to the legislative requirements.

A further report in relation to making children's play ground smoke free zones is also being presented to that Committee, and, if endorsed signage will also be provided under that legislation.

5. Dog Fouling Prosecutions

It was reported that this financial year 38 fixed penalty notices have been issued for dog fouling, to date 6 have not been paid and 5 have been referred to legal for prosecution. Details of the campaign have been highlighted and more recently an article appeared in the South Wales Echo advising of a successful prosecution.

It was noted that if a dog fouls on designated land and a person who is in charge of the dog fails to remove the faeces that person is guilty of an offence provided that he or she has no reasonable excuse and that the owner of the land has not consented to the faeces being left. A person convicted of an offence under the Act is liable to a fine of up to £1,000. Alternatively, the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty may be offered in place of prosecution. The current fixed penalty is £75, which is discounted to £50 if paid within 14 days.

A query was raised as to how this is enforced and it was reported that the Public Protection Division has authorised a team of Enforcement Officer, Dog Wardens and Community Safety Wardens to issue fixed penalty notices. All Officers have received appropriate training to ensure consistency of approach. Enforcement work is either as a result of information being provided or as a result of general patrols. Those present were advised to contact that department if they have evidence of areas where dogs are allowed to defecate.

It was clarified that being unaware of a dog's defecation, or not having a device or other suitable means of removal of faeces is not a reasonable excuse for failing to comply with the order.

Dog control orders provide an opportunity for greater protection against anti-social aspects of dog ownership exhibited by an irresponsible minority. The report, which is to be presented to the Living Environment Scrutiny Committee, will seek approval to develop draft dog control orders for consultation and, in the event they are approved, signage will need to be erected in those areas that have been identified as such.

6. Open Cast Mining

In response to a query as to the stance the Council will take in relation to the new proposals for open cast mining at Nant Llesg, Fochriw it was noted that it is not possible to comment at this stage. The application has not yet been received and once it has been there will be a full consultation exercise.

7. Enforcement of Parking Restrictions

Details had been requested as to whether the county borough are considering taking over the responsibility for the enforcement of parking restrictions. It was reported that in the South Wales police area, Civil Parking Enforcement has been transferred to the region's local authorities and whilst few authorities had sufficient car parks to make this viable and cost effective alternative Cardiff Council are undertaking the role. As far as we are led to believe Gwent Police is not taking up this option and as such there are no proposals to take over the

responsibility at this time

8. Presentation One Voice Wales

Mr. Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive, gave a presentation on the role and core aims of the organisation that represents and provides support services to community/town councils in Wales. He advised that over two thirds of community/town councils are members and that One Voice Wales is increasing its recognition and influence both nationally and locally.

He advised that the organisation acts as the single representative voice for community and town councils in Wales and aims to promote a wider understanding and awareness of the role and contribution of community and town councils and to develop and advise on policy relating to that sector. It provides a high quality information and advice service to the member councils, provides training to develop the knowledge and skills of councillors and officers and promotes the sustainable delivery of services by community and town councils.

Mr. Cadwallader referred to both the national and local activities and referred specifically to the support offered to community/town councils individually by offering advice, guidance and lobbying on specific issues. He advised of the number of organisations at which Once Voice Wales is represented and to its ability to respond to policy consultation and develop national guidance. Its local networking activities gives the opportunity to share experience and best practice.

Mr. Cadwallader outlined the key services provided including the provision of legal advice, general guidance on system and service improvements, information on policy developments, implementation of a national training strategy, promoting take-up of all-Wales opportunities, promotion of best practice and providing networking opportunities. Subscription is around 0.5% to 1.5% of precept (registered dwellings) with equal contributions according to size. Whilst the Welsh Government is currently contributing to core costs, the long term aim of the organisation to be self-financing and to ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver a quality service.

It was noted that the current issues are to maintain services and membership levels, develop larger local councils committee and services, implement a new training strategy, develop the Charter, continue to influence policy development, develop One Voice Wales internally, ensure the potential of the sector is fulfilled, develop knowledge and skills and keep the pressure on the Welsh Government to deliver against commitments.

He confirmed that the challenges and opportunities for the future include the delegation of services with focus on improving local service delivery, whilst retaining or enhancing value for money and advised that delegation is easier to achieve when communications and other relationships are positive.

Mr. Paul Egan, Development Officer, referred to the benefits of being affiliated to Once Voice Wales and referred to the high quality legal advice, advice on improving service delivery, advice on accountability and governance (including HR/organisational issues, planning, standing orders) together with guidance on increasing community involvement and engagement. A comprehensive training programme has been developed to enable councillors to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their work and, as One Voice Wales maintains close links with the Welsh Government and other organisations, is therefore able to advise on the full spectrum of devolved and non-devolved policy matters.

It was noted that a quarterly newspaper is published and issued to member councils highlighting developments in the sector at both national and local level and the website is constantly updated to provide the latest information. Member councils are encouraged to share information about their news and activities through the One Voice Wales website and newsletter and they can then contact each other directly to learn from each other's experience.

The Chairman thanked both Mr. Cadwallader and Mr. Egan for their informative presentation and advised that the slides and handouts would be copied to each Clerk for information.

9. Memorials in Parks

A request was made for the criteria for placing memorials in parks and it was agreed that this would be sought and the Clerks advised accordingly.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.