



REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 3RD APRIL 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Elsbury - Chairman
Councillor D. Bolter - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman, Mrs D. Price, D. Rees, T.J. Williams

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning: Councillor R. Davies

Together with:

A. O'Sullivan (Chief Executive), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), P. Griffiths (Principal Planner, Countryside and Landscape Services), G. Bowes (Invasive Plant Species Officer, Countryside and Landscape Services), M. Noakes (Senior Engineer, Engineering Division), L. Cooper (Assistant Engineer, Engineering Division), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Davies, M. Davies, R.T. Davies, J.O. Evans, D.T. Hardacre, Mrs V. Jenkins, Mrs J.G. Jones, S. Kent, M.G. Parker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 21st February 2012 (minute nos. 1 - 11, on page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

4. CABINET REPORTS

The Cabinet report listed on the agenda had not been requested to be brought forward for review at the meeting.

5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER

Councillor R. Davies, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning, gave a verbal report to Members and made reference to the following:

Bargoed – the multiplex cinema tender, worth £5M, has gone out and there are currently nine potential operators. Phase 2 works were completed in February with the contractor currently completing any outstanding defects on the contract. Phases 3 and 4 (Hanbury Road and Hanbury Square) are currently out to tender. The successful contractor will commence in July and the £3 million scheme will be implemented within a 10-month contract - with completion expected in May 2013.

The Go2Bargoed project that promotes local products, services and events to the community, offers businesses up to 50 per cent financial support towards the cost of a new website or ecommerce website to generate online sales.

Caerphilly – the resurfacing project at Owain Glyndwr sports field was successfully completed last weekend and it is now ready for future events.

The building on the site of the new library has been demolished but the stonework has been saved and will be incorporated into the new façade.

Events in the town centre will be held on 26th May, to coincide with the Olympic torch being carried through the town.

Cwmcarn – increased charges in the café has addressed its financial shortfall following an audit of rates and a new charging regime. While it was an unpleasant decision, it will help with future regeneration projects.

Newbridge - Phase 1 of the public realm enhancements commenced in January 2012 and will run until October 2012. The refurbishment of the listed Institute and Memo also commenced in January and will run until December 2012. The restoration of the adjoining Memorial Hall will commence January 2013 and run until December 2013.

Apprenticeships – CCBC is the only local authority in Wales to have its own trainee scheme. In the first 6 months, more than 150 young people have benefitted from the Traineeship Scheme. The Authority is working with Caerphilly Business Forum and Jobcentre Plus to develop support for local businesses, which will help them to recruit local people in apprenticeship roles.

Communities First - Applications for the proposed cluster areas were submitted at the end of March. As a result of criteria changes, each cluster area must provide a detailed delivery plan, a community involvement plan, specific project development plans, proposed staff structures and a financial spreadsheet before 29th June 2012.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his presentation and congratulations were given for recent and ongoing regeneration projects.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL

The report provided Members with an update of the progress made in the treatment of invasive plant species across the County Borough. In particular Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

Officers demonstrated the main actions and outcomes of the efforts being made to combat the spread and establishment of invasive weeds, in partnership with the 5 local authorities in the Heads of the Valleys area and also the other members including the CCW, EA (Wales), South Wales Rivers Trust and Keep Wales Tidy.

The Managing Invasive Plants project has been running throughout the Heads of the Valleys region since 2009 and the post of Invasive Plant Species Officer is now funded largely through the Heads of the Valleys Initiative for which CCBC acts as the lead authority. Members were asked to note however, that the Officer does operate throughout the whole county borough, and is partly funded from CCBC's core funds. In addition, a potential revenue source is the increasing role for officers to provide advice to mortgage companies and homebuyers, as mortgage providers are now seeking assurances that Japanese Knotweed is not present prior to the release of funding to home buyers.

In closing Members were advised that the Heads of the Valleys funding for this project expires at the end of the current financial year and a further bid has been submitted for an additional 3 years. Species publicity/control leaflets, prepared as part of the project, were made available at the meeting.

Members discussed the report and officers responded to general questions. Confirmation was given that the Welsh Government did not have an overall strategy but had produced advice notes on the control and treatment of invasive plant species.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

7. NEW ROADS IN CAERPHILLY, HIGHWAY DESIGN GUIDE AND SPECIFICATION

The report sought comments from Members, prior to consideration by Cabinet, on the adoption by the Council of the "New Roads in Caerphilly" highway design guide and specification document and those items in the recommendations.

The Council's first highway design guide for developers was issued for use in 2003, having been adopted by the Local Planning Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Substantial changes in both highway construction methods and design standards, and general design requirements have taken place since 2003 and the original guidance document now requires updating.

The proposed new guidance documentation named "New Roads in Caerphilly" has been prepared, in two volumes, for the benefit of developers to assist them to prepare road schemes that are likely to prove acceptable to the Highway Authority for adoption; but also to secure consistency of detail matters in order to facilitate future maintenance of adopted roads by the Highway Authority.

Members discussed the report and officers responded to general questions. In particular, the practicality of the documents being made available on the Authority's website and clarification of the word 'satisfactory' when referring to the standard of road construction work. Officers agreed a copy of the finalised guide would be made available in Penallta House's Resource Centre.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report and recommended to Cabinet that, for the reasons contained therein:-

- (1) the "New Roads in Caerphilly" document be formally adopted as a required Council standard;
- (2) future technical updates to "New Roads in Caerphilly" be undertaken by officers using delegated powers;
- (3) "New Roads in Caerphilly" be sold to developers as hard copy only at a cost of £150.00 per volume and updates charged at £25.00 per annum. These costs to be reviewed annually by officers with the aggregate increase not exceeding an average of 5% over any 5 year period; and
- (4) the accompanying CD to "New Roads in Caerphilly" of standard construction details be sold to developers at a cost of £200.00 each and on subsequent subscription at £50.00 per annum. These costs also to be reviewed each year by officers as in recommendation number (3) above and paragraph 9.3 of the original report.

8. HIGHWAY HIERARCHY

The report sought comments from Members to Cabinet on the proposal to include the cross valley link roads to Angel Way (A469) and the former A469 road within the Council's highway hierarchy as 'Distributor Roads'.

The establishment of the Council's road hierarchy was designed to facilitate the efficient use of the highways network by ensuring that traffic is channelled onto the most suitable routes in order to maintain appropriate environmental, amenity and safety conditions. The three Angel Way link Roads and the former A469 road through Bargoed and Gilfach roads were not listed in the Local Development Plan because they were only recently been opened to traffic. The report sought to address this, to give some protection to them from future development.

Members discussed the report and officers responded to general questions.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report and recommended to Cabinet that, for the reasons contained therein:-

- (1) the following four roads be considered as distributor roads for the purpose of Policy SP20 (C) of the LDP:
 - (a) Cl.III Angel Way (A469) Britannia Roundabout to A4049 Aberbargoed Roundabout.
 - (b) Cl.III Angel Way (A469) Bargoed Roundabout to A4049 Commercial Street, Aberbargoed.
 - (c) Cl.III Angel Way (A469) Bargoed Roundabout to Cl.III Cardiff Road, Bargoed.
 - (d) Cl.III Lewis Comprehensive School Gilfach to Station Road Roundabout.
- (2) all distributor roads to be revised at the first review of the LDP.

9. ADVISORY PART TIME 20MPH SPEED LIMIT PILOT SCHEME: A468 COMMERCIAL ROAD, MACHEN

The report sought comments from Members on the effectiveness of an advisory part time 20mph speed limit pilot scheme implemented on the A468 Commercial Road in Machen; and whether it should continue.

Following concerns raised by the local community about excessive traffic speeds and pedestrian safety in Machen village, an advisory part time 20mph speed limit scheme was introduced in August 2011.

Welsh Government's guidance is that mandatory 20mph speed limits should be self enforcing and therefore only used where mean vehicle speeds are 24mph or below, or where traffic-calming measures are planned as part of the speed management strategy. As the A468 Commercial Road is a principal route that carries a high percentage of HGVs, and is a principal artery for emergency service vehicles, the provision of physical traffic calming measures to reduce the mean traffic speeds were not considered appropriate for the location.

The advisory part time 20mph speed limit was therefore introduced by the use of a single traffic sign erected on each approach that incorporates a red coloured 20 roundel and four LED flashing amber units.

Data collected during the pilot indicated an overall reduction in the average and 85th percentile traffic speeds at the site. The combined mean speed during the start and end of the school day reduced from 30.3mph to 24.6mph, while the overall weekly mean speed reduced from 33.4mph to 28.6mph.

In view of the positive speed reduction achieved, it is considered that the pilot scheme has been a success and that the advisory part time 20mph speed limit should remain in place. However, it is recommended that a further traffic survey be carried out in 12 months in order to ascertain whether the measures continue to have a long-term positive impact on traffic speeds.

Following discussion on the content of the report, the Scrutiny Committee made reference to the possible roll out of the scheme to other wards within the county borough and they questioned the anticipated time period for the pilot to continue. Officers reminded Members of the Authority's existing Speed Management Strategy.

A Member requested a report on the location of the borough's existing and proposed 20mph speed zones. Officers confirmed that a report detailed the requested information was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 6th June 2011, and it was agreed that a copy would be forwarded to the Member.

In closing, Members congratulated officers on the work carried out.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report and advised officers that the advisory part time 20mph speed limit should remain in-situ and continue to be monitored.

10. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

The following requests for reports to be prepared for consideration at future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee were made as follows:

- (1) Councillor T.J. Williams requested a report on the possibility of introducing a weight restriction for motor vehicles using the Waun Borfa Road.
- (2) Councillor Mrs A. Blackman requested a report to review the Council's policy on directional signs for schools. Following a brief discussion, Councillor Blackman clarified that she sought a review of a report to the Technical Scrutiny Committee on 31st May 2001, and subsequent Cabinet decision on 19th June 2001, relating to Traffic Signs to Establishments.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted without discussion:

- (1) Management of Utilities on the Highway;
- (2) Welsh Assembly Government Development Control Quarterly Survey (July - December 2011);
- (3) Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme;
- (4) Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 13th December 2011;
- (5) Minutes of the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group held on 16th February 2012
- (6) Minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 8th March 2012;
- (7) Minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 8th March 2012.

The meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2012, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN