



## **REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 21ST MAY 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chairman  
Councillor Mrs. E.M. Aldworth - Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

C.J. Cuss, R.T. Davies, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough, Ms. J.G. Jones, S. Kent, M.J. Prew,  
Mrs. D. Price, Mrs E. Stenner

Cabinet Member(s): K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development),  
D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and  
Engineering)

**Together with:**

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning),  
M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), C. Edwards (Environmental Health  
Manager), H. Morgan (Team Leader, Integrated Transport Unit), R. Kyte (Team Leader  
Strategic and Development Plans), V. Lewis (Senior Planning Officer - Strategic and  
Development Plans), P. Martin (Conservation and Design Officer), R. Urquhart (Team  
Leader), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services  
Officer)

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman,  
N. Dix, E. Forehead and A.G. Higgs.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2013 (minute nos.  
1 - 13, page nos. 1 - 7) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

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

### **4. CABINET REPORTS**

The Head of Community and Leisure Services gave an update on agenda item 4(2) - Management Restructuring in the Sport and Leisure Service.

### **5. VERBAL REPORTS OF THE CABINET MEMBERS**

The Scrutiny Committee received verbal reports from Councillor D.V. Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development.

Members were advised of the outcome of a complaint that had been made to the ombudsman by a member of the public about the Council's lawned cemetery policy. Following consideration the Ombudsman had concluded that the complaint did not require further investigation and the matter had been closed. Reference was then made to the temporary closure of Newbridge Leisure Centre in order to carry out essential work to the swimming pool and enhancements to the reception area. An update was then received on progress with the scheme proceeding on the former Ystrad Mynach Hospital site with the assistance of a £200k grant from Sports Wales.

Since January 2009, businesses in the Caerphilly County Borough have had access to over £2million from the Local Investment Fund. This additional investment has created nearly 300 jobs and allowed 26 new businesses to set up in the County Borough. A group of highly successful local businesses that received financial assistance from the fund showcased their success at a Business Support Event held at Tredomen Business and Technology Centre.

In terms of developments in Bargoed, discussions are ongoing between the Odeon Cinema and the Authority and should be finalised by the end of May 2013. Work to the Morrisons store is continuing at a pace and it is envisaged that the store will open early December 2013. There has been considerable interest in the 7 associated retail units and CCBC's agents believe they will be able to secure tenants for all of them.

The first phase of work to Newbridge Town Centre is now complete and phase 2, which concentrates on the area by the Memo/Institute, could start as early as August 2013. Improvements to the Institute are nearly complete. Ystrad Mynach will be the next town to benefit from the roll out of the town centre management function. Officers are gearing themselves up for a summer launch where town branding, regular audits and personal visits from the town centre management team will be introduced. The next town in the roll out will be Newbridge. This will commence once all current regeneration activity there has finished.

In partnership with the Council's Sports Development Unit, the Caerphilly 10k will take place on 23rd June. The event has attracted more than 850 entries to date. The third BBC Proms in the Park will be held in Caerphilly on 7th September and the Tour of Britain cycle race takes place on 19th September.

The Welsh Government initiative PLANT aims to increase the amount of woodland in Wales by encouraging the planting of new woodland. The Council has been involved in two PLANT projects, one at Llechryd and the other at Abertysswg and Phillipstown. All PLANT projects are fully funded by Welsh Government through the new environmental body Natural Resources Wales.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members for their informative presentations and invited questions. In terms of the reference to new businesses being set up in the County Borough, a Member asked for details of the actual areas in which the new jobs are being created and sought further information on the works being undertaken in the towns and villages. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development said that he thought that the jobs had been created throughout the County Borough but would seek confirmation and report back to the Member concerned. The Chair advised that he had requested a report on small towns and villages for presentation to the next meeting. Another Member sought information on behalf of his constituents on the proposed route and road closures for the Caerphilly 10k road race and was advised that details would be provided in the near future.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following.

### **6. COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY AT GELLIGAER - PRESENTATION**

The Scrutiny Committee welcomed Dr Peter Guest, Head of Roman Archaeology, Cardiff University. Dr Guest outlined the opportunities and challenges for community archaeology at Gelligaer by means of a colourful Powerpoint presentation.

Dr Guest summarised his experience of archaeological excavations and outlined the possibilities for the Gelligaer site. Slides were shown of examples of artefacts that were likely to be recovered during the dig together with images of other sites in the UK and Europe where similar projects had taken place.

There were a number of partners that would potentially be involved in delivering the project as well as an opportunity for the local community to become involved in activities. Gelligaer Historical Society appeared to be very keen and able to assist with the day-to-day running of the project.

The Chair thanked Dr Guest for his very interesting presentation and invited discussion on the proposals for the site. Members were advised that it was intended to meet with key stakeholders in terms of roles and degree of management of the project. It was proposed to hold a community event in September, involving local schools and the wider community and anticipated that excavation works would commence in 2014. A further report to update Members on progress would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

### **7. GELLIGAER CEMETERY EXTENSION**

The report sought approval for a joint working project between Caerphilly CBC and Cardiff University Archaeological Department at Gelligaer Cemetery extension site.

Members were advised that Gelligaer Cemetery is nearly at capacity and requires an extension to accommodate future burials. The extension site lies immediately adjacent to the Gelligaer Roman Fort Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and initial investigations on the proposed cemetery extension site indicate significant Roman remains of national importance. A full archaeological inspection of the site is required before the site can be used as a cemetery.

The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendations in the report as follows:-

1. To note the content of the report and the proposals for a joint working venture to undertake archaeological investigative works to facilitate the extension to Gelligaer Cemetery.

2. To note the potential financial implications of the retention of any artefacts which are discovered on site and recommend to Cabinet that any artefacts be donated to the National Museum of Wales.

## **8. INITIATIVES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES - PRESENTATION**

Officers from the Council's Health Improvement Team gave a detailed presentation setting out current health improvement initiatives in the Caerphilly County Borough.

The presentation covered the background to the Wellbeing agenda in Caerphilly County Borough; an update to the Chief Medical Officer's report; the scale of some of the challenges faced; initiatives and successes to date and the way forward.

It was noted that Caerphilly County Borough has one of the lowest levels of physical activity in Wales (adults); one of the highest smoking rates amongst adults (24%); 40% of adults reported that they usually drink more than the recommended guidelines; very poor dental health in young children; the 7th highest for prescribed anti-depressants in the UK and 62% of adults are classified as overweight or obese. The big issues for the Team are therefore smoking, healthy eating, physical activity, alcohol misuse and mental illness and Officers explained what they are doing to address these issues.

No Smoking signs had been erected in playgrounds and parks and at the entrances to schools. No Smoking Day on Wednesday, 13th March encouraged smokers in the county borough to save a packet by quitting the habit. Each year smokers receive support to quit smoking and begin a new healthier lifestyle. This year's campaign "Save a Packet", led by Health Challenge Caerphilly, aimed to show smokers what they will gain when they get support to quit smoking and begin their new healthier lifestyle. Twenty five schools in the County Borough participated in the project. School children in the County Borough have also been creating striking graffiti art to encourage people to say "No" to smoking. Pupils at Plasyfelin Primary School, Tir-y-berth Primary School and Rhymney Comprehensive School worked with Lloyd "the Graffiti" Roberts to produce colourful display boards for their school.

The Authority has recruited 76 Community Health Champions, with 100 plus waiting to join. All Year 6 pupils in its primary schools have benefited from attending Crucial Crew. Over 2000 pupils have visited the Safety Zone. Crucial Crew is working in partnership with CCBC services, Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue, the Forestry Commission, Red Cross and CRI. Ninety five of the County Borough's schools are participating in the Caerphilly Healthy Schools Scheme. Other initiatives delivered by the Health Improvement Team include healthy living activities, a child safety DVD and partnership working across the Authority. Details were received of forthcoming events across the county borough together with contact details for the Health Improvement Team.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their very informative presentation. A full discussion took place on the issues raised.

## **9. BUTETOWN RHYMNEY - HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND - TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE FUND BID OPPORTUNITY**

The report updated Members on the background to issues in respect of the Bute Town roofs; provided an overview of the main conclusions that have emerged from the recent Bute Town Roof Condition Survey; referred to recent developments including correspondence received from Huw Lewis AM and the Butetown Residents' Association and informed Members of the potential funding opportunities from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Following meetings with Huw Lewis AM and the HLF, a roof condition survey of Butetown roofs was recently commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council, which was funded through the Welsh Government's 'Heads of the Valleys Programme' assisted by up to £20,000 funding. Davies Sutton Chartered Architects and Conservation Consultants, who are specialists in dealing with historic buildings, prepared the report. The report has now been finalised and a summary of its recommendations is set out in the report to the Scrutiny Committee.

Since the earliest that the TH funding is likely to be 'on-stream' is mid 2015, the total estimated projected second quarter cost for 2015 to undertake this work is estimated to be £959,073, including preliminaries and contingency costs, but excluding professional fees and VAT. This breaks down to a cost of £20,849 per property (based on 46 properties).

The Roof Condition Survey Report recommends that the following actions should be implemented as an on-going process to guide the conservation led approach to the repair of Butetown roofs:-

- The application for funding to undertake works be pursued;
- The commissioning of specialist investigations and surveys to include, asbestos surveys of the properties;
- The development of detailed repairs and remedial works to the roofs;
- A comprehensive consultation process with residents, organisations, visitors and others to illustrate a summary of the proposals for the repairs, highlighting the key issues, including potential benefits, threats, opportunities and restrictions.
- It would need to be clear that even if CCBC provides capital funding and if grant applications are successful, the residents themselves would be expected to make a contribution and undertake the basic maintenance as explained in paragraph 4.6 of the report.

The local ward member fully supported the recommendations contained within the report and thanked the officers concerned for all the work they had undertaken in this respect. Officers advised that the local residents had been provided with a copy of the survey report but had not yet commented on the content. Officers were keen to engage with the residents to progress the scheme.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the background and detail of the Butetown project.

## **10. REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED LOCAL BUS SERVICES**

The report quantified the scale of the cuts to revenue funding for local bus services implemented by the Welsh Government (WG) for 2012/13 and 2013/14 together with the previously confirmed savings to the Council's internal revenue budget for subsidised local bus services identified under the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Appendix 1 to the report identified local bus service contracts with the highest subsidy per passenger and considered the impact of withdrawing these services, with recommendations to terminate a number of services to remain within the reduced budget available in 2013/14. Appendix 2 summarises the comments received at the members' Seminar on 6th March 2013 and Appendix 3 summarises the responses from Town and Community Councils and Community Partnerships.

Members were advised that a petition containing approximately 250 signatures had since been received from Blackwood Town Council objecting to the proposed withdrawal of security cover at Blackwood Interchange. Correspondence had also been received from local ward members in this respect.

Following detailed consideration, Members unanimously endorsed the recommendations contained in the report as follows: -

1. It is recommended that Members review the content of the report and the appendices.
2. That Members comment on the report so that this can be included in a subsequent report to Cabinet.
3. That Members comment on the proposal to formally review the services in 12 months to evaluate any further impact arising from changes to commercial services or further WG funding cut announcements.

In addition, the Scrutiny Committee proposed that officers explore the feasibility of the cost of the contract for security cover at Blackwood Interchange being renegotiated with the company concerned.

## **11. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA**

The following requests were received: -

1. Councillor D. Price requested a report on the terms and conditions within car parks in the County Borough.
2. Councillor J. Jones requested a report on the roll out of the 20 mph speed limit throughout the County Borough.

## **12. INFORMATION ITEMS**

The following reports were received and noted without discussion:

1. Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme;
2. Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group Minutes - 13th March 2013;
3. Risca Town Centre Management Group - 25th March 2013;
4. Grants to the Voluntary Sector Sub-Committee Minutes - 19th March 2013;
5. Prosiect Gwyrdd Joint Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 23rd November 2012;
6. Prosiect Gwyrdd Joint Committee Minutes - 7th February 2013;
7. Voluntary Sector Sub- Committee Minutes - 20th March 2013;
8. Bryn Compost Liaison Group Minutes - 13th February 2013;
9. South East Wales Transport Alliance Minutes - 25th January 2013.

The meeting closed at 6.47 pm.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN