



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chairman

Councillors:

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

Also present to observe: C. Durham.

Cabinet Members:

K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development) and D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services).

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), C. Davies (Team Leader, Pollution Control), R. Kyte (Team Leader, Strategic and Development Planning), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor T.J. Williams (Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering), together with Councillors N. Dix, Ms E. Forehead and A.G. Higgs.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Elsbury declared an interest in item 9(1) – Update on the Caerphilly Rural Development Plan. Details are minuted with the respective item.

Councillor M. Prew queried as to whether he was required to declare an interest in relation to a forthcoming Cabinet report regarding progress of the Centre of Sporting Excellence at Ystrad Mynach. Councillor Prew was advised that as the Cabinet report was not listed on the agenda for this Scrutiny meeting, he was therefore not required to declare an interest at this particular meeting. The interest should be declared at the relevant meeting.

2. MINUTES – 2ND JULY 2013 AND 17TH JULY 2013

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs A. Blackman in the list of apologies for the meeting of 2nd July 2013, it was:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 14, page nos. 1 - 8) and 17th July 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 3, page nos. 1 - 5) 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

There had been no requests for either of the Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

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. Councillor D.V. Poole also presented a report on behalf of Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering.

Councillor D.V. Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services, informed Members of the possibility that Risca Comprehensive School and Risca Leisure Centre may be closed for up to a week, owing to an issue with the water pumping system. Arrangements had been put in place for specialised contractors from Wolverhampton to remedy the fault as soon as possible.

Members were advised of recent successes, with the Waste Team winning the APSE National "Waste Management Service Team of the Year" Award for the second consecutive year. The Sport and Leisure Service and Building Cleaning Service were also nominated for APSE awards, and Catering Services have reached the EDUcatering 2013 Excellence Awards finals. Welsh Government figures for the last financial year show that Caerphilly achieved a combined recycling and composting rate of 57% - the second best in Wales and well above the Welsh Government target.

Risca Leisure Centre recently received a visit from the Minister for Local Government to view a number of improvements and investments made in the Centre. Penallta House is hosting a Pride in Our Pitch event on 18th September 2013, promoting collaborative working to protect and enhance the Authority's sports pitches. The final phase of refurbishment work has commenced at Blackwood Miners' Institute and is due for completion in October 2013.

Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development, informed the Committee that Cwmcarn Forest Drive has retained its Green Flag accreditation, and Members were asked to note the hard work put in by management and staff over the last year. Figures indicate that visitor numbers to the Authority's Country Parks over the summer were 25% higher than the same period last year. Members were informed that a programme of tree removal is currently underway at Parc Cwm Darran due to the presence of larch tree disease, and that a similar programme will soon follow at Cwmcarn Forest Drive for the same reasons.

Grant funding has been secured via the Authority's Urban Renewal Team for the Welsh Government's "Tranquil, Cleaner and Greener Places" programme, which includes regeneration of the Navigation Colliery site, development of the former Energlyn Sidings area, and progression of the Upper Sirhowy Valley Project.

Councillor D.V. Poole, on behalf of Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, advised Members of changes to bus services from Monday 9th September 2013. Members were also informed of the commencement of works for a new train station at Energlyn and Churchill Park, and a new platform and passing loop at Tirphil station to enable an extra service. The Authority's Winter Maintenance Plan is well underway with full stock levels of salt, and SEWTA funding has been awarded to progress the design of highways improvement to the A467/A472 Crumlin Junction. The first phase of major re-lining works to the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal is due to commence in early October.

Members thanked the Cabinet Members for their presentations and discussion followed. It was confirmed that press releases had been issued on several of the achievements in the Cabinet Members' reports. Members welcomed the developments to the train stations and discussed the reductions made to the Welsh Government bus subsidy.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following.

6. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, and Claire Davies, Team Leader for Pollution Control, presented the report, which provided Members with an update on air quality findings to date in the Caerphilly and Hafodyrynys areas. The report also set out proposals for the next stage in management of air quality, with a focus on locations of poorer air quality.

The Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area was designated in September 2008, and since that time, further detailed air quality assessments have been undertaken. Air quality monitoring locations at Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road have shown nitrogen dioxide results above the air quality objective. Air quality assessments along Hafodyrynys Road, Crumlin, have also shown nitrogen dioxide results above the air quality objective.

Following the update, a full discussion took place on the issues raised in the report. Councillor J. Jones requested a list of the areas monitored for air quality, and Members discussed current traffic and cycle arrangements in Caerphilly Town Centre. Officers clarified the section of Nantgarw Road currently subject to air quality issues, whilst confirming that the Authority has a duty to carry out air quality reviews.

Members queried costs associated with the Action Plan for the Air Quality Management Plan and it was confirmed that this is dependent on short, medium, and long-term issues and what practical cost-effective measures can be implemented to mitigate the problem. Members clarified the membership and purpose of the Steering Groups and it was confirmed that there is an existing group for Caerphilly, with one to be established for Hafodyrynys following Cabinet approval. It was also clarified that Steering Groups are made up of a number of stakeholder representatives, such as ward members, technical officers, businesses and groups in the area.

Clarification was sought on figures cited in Section 1.1 of the Draft Air Quality Action Plan, and it was confirmed that these are regional figures and similar to those in other parts of the UK. It was clarified that the Environmental Health Team liaise with health agencies in areas where there are high nitrogen dioxide levels as this could result in respiratory complaints.

Having fully considered and commented on the recommendations detailed in Section 9.1 of the report, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, unanimously recommended to Cabinet that, for the reasons contained therein:

1. The Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area be extended to incorporate certain properties along Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road, Caerphilly as delineated in the map in Appendix 2;
2. A draft Air Quality Action Plan for improving air quality in and around Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area be issued for consultation as attached at Appendix 4;
3. An Air Quality Management Area along Hafodyrynys Road, Crumlin as delineated in the map in Appendix 3 be designated;
4. A Steering Group in relation to the Hafodyrynys Air Quality Management Area be established.

7. PROPOSED GWENT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

Mr Hartshorn explained the purpose of the report, which advised Members of the intention to seek Cabinet approval to progress a project to establish a combined Gwent Trading Standards Service. Trading Standards has been identified by the Welsh Government as an area that should be considered for collaborative service delivery. Caerphilly had agreed to act as lead authority for the shared service. The amalgamation of such a service would include staff transferring to Caerphilly Council under TUPE arrangements. A Project Team would identify and address all associated personnel matters, legal issues, governance and financial arrangements, as well as IT and customer contact requirements.

Mr Hartshorn informed Members that at this stage, the report is solely seeking approval to establish a Project Team to progress proposals for a Gwent Trading Standards Service and to seek agreement to utilise Welsh Government grant funding to further develop the project. Any final agreement to establish a Gwent Trading Standards Service would be subject to consideration of a detailed business case by the respective meetings of full Council.

Following the presentation of the report, Members raised a number of concerns and queries with Mr Hartshorn. Members emphasised that the service levels should be consistent across all the authorities involved. There were concerns raised about the possibility of the lead authority absorbing the costs associated with the collaboration project. Mr Hartshorn clarified that the Regional Collaboration Funding referred to in Section 4.5 of the report is to provide for a Project Team to progress the detail of the proposed service and includes resources to provide all necessary professional advice.

Members queried the collaborative process with other authorities and the personnel implications of this process for staff. It was confirmed that there has been discussions with trade unions and that regular briefing sessions will be held with staff. It was emphasised that no decisions will be made in regards to personnel arrangements prior to the development and approval of a detailed business case.

It was queried whether collaboration would bring about a reduction in the level of service provision and Members asked what improvements and benefits would be brought about by a collaborative service. It was clarified that whilst Caerphilly have an established Trading Standards service, they face budgetary pressures, and collaborative working would strengthen the sustainability of the service. A collaborative Trading Standards service would combine the skills available from all 5 Gwent Authorities and would ensure effective delivery of services whilst achieving cost savings where these are identified. The constitutional model

for the proposed shared service was queried, and Mr Hartshorn confirmed that he had met with his counterparts and agreed on the lead authority model and Caerphilly being the host authority, with governance arrangements to be established through the project.

It was queried whether a collaborative service would affect accountability and it was confirmed that there would be a service level agreement in place between Caerphilly and the other authorities and examples of previous collaborative working, such as Blaenau Gwent's pest control service, were cited to Members. It was confirmed that the issue of scrutiny would be considered and addressed as part of the governance model.

Members asked to be kept up to date as the project progressed and that further reports be brought to the committee.

Having fully considered and commented on the recommendations detailed in Section 9.1 of the report, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, unanimously recommended to Cabinet that, for the reasons contained therein:

1. A Project Team be established to progress proposals for a Gwent Trading Standards Service with Caerphilly Council as the Lead Authority;
2. The funding contribution of each Local Authority for the new service to be based upon the resources required for the new service, rather than existing resources;
3. Any final agreement to establish a Gwent Trading Standards Service will be subject to consideration of a detailed business case by the respective meetings of full Council.

8. GELLIGAER CEMETERY EXTENSION

Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services, presented the report, which advised on the implications for the future provision of burial space at Gelligaer Cemetery. The report indicated that there are currently around 50 new grave spaces remaining within the existing cemetery, providing approximately 16 months of burial space, and highlighted a critical need to extend the cemetery to accommodate future burials.

The report outlined two phases to the proposed extension, as outlined in Appendix 1. Phase one, on the eastern part of the site, would have the capacity to accommodate circa 770 new graves, which would service the local community for a further 25 years. Phase two would be running in parallel on the western half of the site, and would require archaeology work and the subsequent reinstatement of the site for use as a cemetery. This phase would have the capacity to accommodate circa 1090 new graves and would service the local community for a further 36 years.

Members discussed the financial implications of the proposed extension as stated in the report, and noted the recommendations contained in the report.

9. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – ‘THE FUTURE OF OUR PAST’ HERITAGE BILL

Rhian Kyte, Team Leader, Strategic and Development Planning, presented the report, which advised members of the contents and key considerations of the Heritage Bill ‘*The Future of Our Past*’, a consultation on proposals for the historic environment of Wales, which was issued by the Welsh Government on 18th July 2013.

The consultation document outlines the measures under consideration to improve the protection of the historic environment in Wales, incorporating policy interventions, improvements to guidance and legislative proposals, and secondary legislation amendments.

The Welsh Government will analyse and consider all consultation responses, along with any other evidence to further develop the proposals for the Heritage Bill, and intends to introduce the Bill to the National Assembly for Wales before the end of the current Assembly term.

Members discussed the contents of the report and consultation document in detail. It was queried as to whether the merging of Conservation Area Consent with planning permission would reduce the processing time for planning applications, and it was confirmed that potentially there could be some reduction to this. The Key Objectives relevant to the Authority's Local Development Plan to 2021 were also discussed in relation to the consultation document, including the County Borough's historic natural and built environment.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the consultation document and the proposed measures under consideration to improve the protection of the historic environment in Wales. By a show of hands, Members unanimously recommended to Cabinet and thereafter Council that, for the reasons contained therein, that a formal response on *'The future of our past'* as reflected in the report be submitted to the Welsh Government.

10. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE – REPORT OF CONSULTATION

The report provided Members with a summary of the comments received as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Charging Schedule Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area, with subsequent funds raised used to fund various developments in the council, local community and neighbourhoods. Regulations require that any authority wishing to charge this levy must prepare a Draft Charging Schedule for consultation.

The report summarised the main issues raised in respect of the Viability Report and the Draft Charging Schedule, along with the officer analysis and response. Members' attention was drawn to Point 4.6 of the report, with Officers seeking authorisation to continue negotiations with the health board and partner local planning authorities to work towards setting the Primary Healthcare Use Rate at an acceptable level to all.

Members noted the Representation submitted in respect of the Draft Schedule and the analysis and response set out in the Report of Consultation. Having fully considered and commented on the recommendations detailed in Section 9.1 of the report, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, unanimously recommended to Cabinet and Council that, for the reasons contained therein:

1. The recommendations set out in the Draft Charging Schedule Report of Consultation be approved;
2. That Officers be authorised to continue negotiations with the health board and partner local planning authorities to work towards setting the Primary Healthcare Use Rate at an acceptable level to all, with a view to reporting the outcome and recommendations of the negotiation back to Cabinet for agreement;
3. That the Draft Charging Schedule be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination.

11. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS - THEATRE AND ART SERVICES - BLACKWOOD MINERS INSTITUTE

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 29th October 2013, in order to allow Councillor N. Dix to speak on the matter.

12. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2013

The report outlined the contents of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Second Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for Members' consideration. During presentation of the report, four Strategy policies in Points 4.21 to Points 4.27 of the report were highlighted as being triggered and therefore considered in more detail in the AMR. Members were advised of an amendment to AMR Recommendation R2 of Report Point 4.38 as follows:

*R2 That the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan is rolled forward to cover the plan period **up to 2031**, and the Evidence Base and Policies across all topic areas be reviewed to ensure that all forecasts and assumptions underpinning the plan and contained within the Policy Framework of the plan cover the revised plan period.*

Members stated concerns with point 4.27 of the report in relation to releasing greenfield sites for development and Officers confirmed that they would explore the way forward in relation to this process. Members queried the incorporation of the Localism Bill and the identification of the Local Development Plan in relation to community assets, and it was confirmed that there would be a need for public consultation and that a review of the process would follow.

Members noted the findings of the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report and the implications of the recommendations contained therein. Having fully considered and commented on the recommendations detailed in Section 9.1 of the report, and subject to the amendment to AMR Recommendation R2 Report Point 4.38, the Scrutiny Committee, by a show of hands, unanimously recommended to Cabinet and Council that, for the reasons contained therein:

1. That the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report be considered;
2. That the revised Draft Delivery Agreement be approved;
3. That the LDP Focus Group Meeting Notes of 19th July 2013 be noted;
4. That the deadline for the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report to be submitted to the Welsh Government before 31st October 2013 be noted.

13. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which reviewed the current adopted policy for the appraisal and implementation of 20mph speed limits and zones in Caerphilly County Borough, and to consider their widespread use in residential areas.

Mr Campbell clarified the Council's adopted Speed Management Strategy, which seeks to implement 20mph speed limits and zones in accordance with national guidance and best practice. Other local authority practices were reviewed, with Appendix 1 of the report summarising Portsmouth City Council's implementation of the 20mph speed limit signage only scheme, and showing no appreciable benefit. Mr Campbell highlighted several areas of the report, including issues to consider regarding the implementation of lower speed limits, police enforcement, the RoSPA position on 20mph zones and limits, Welsh Government funding, policy and guidance, road safety performance in Caerphilly and current funding availability.

Members queried the possibility of implementing a 20mph zone around schools and play areas and it was clarified that this would involve identifying specific priorities and would link in with existing schemes, such as the School Travel Plan. Members stated that they would wish to see further evidence of traffic calming measures and incidences, and felt that introducing such zones could lead to the improved education of drivers in regards to road safety issues.

Members noted the report recommendations that the Authority's existing approach to progressing additional 20mph speed limits and zones be supported, and that the appraisal of additional 20mph speed limits/zones should continue to be consistent with the current policy included in the adopted Speed management Strategy. Members requested that a future report be produced to review the Council's Speed Management Strategy and consider how the Council's approach to 20mph limits could be made more flexible.

14. MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF HIGHWAY OWNED PUBLIC CAR PARKS

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which informed Members of the Council's procedure for carrying out enforcement in the Council's off-street public car parks and to provide information relating to the numbers of Excess Charge Notices issued in the County Borough for offences committed overnight relating to non-ticket issues. Mr Campbell drew Members' attention to the full list of managed off-street of car parks listed in Appendix 1, summarised the enforcement procedure in Appendix 2 of the report and clarified the list of excess charge notices and infringements in Appendix 3 of the report.

Members thanked Mr Campbell for the report and clarified several items contained in the report, including specific infringements, staffing numbers, the use of car parks by residents, ticketing and enforcement timescales and the calculation of car park capacity. Having considered and discussed the report in detail, Members noted the contents of the report.

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

There were no requests for items received.

16. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Councillor C. Elsbury declared an interest in Agenda Item 9(1) – Update on the Caerphilly Rural Development Plan, as several of his relatives have received funding from the Rural Development Plan, including a family member specifically named in the report.

The following reports were received and noted without discussion:

- (1) Update on the Caerphilly Rural Development Plan;
- (2) Convergence and Future European Funding 2014-2020;
- (3) WLGA Waste Finance Data Report 2011-12;
- (4) Bargoed Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 5th June 2013;
- (5) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 3rd July 2013;
- (6) Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 10th July 2013;
- (7) Risca Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 24th July 2013;
- (8) South East Wales Transport Alliance Minutes – 15th March 2013;
- (9) Voluntary Sector Sub-Committee Minutes – 19th June 2013;
- (10) Grants to the Voluntary Sector Sub-Committee Minutes – 11th July 2013;
- (11) Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN