



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 29TH OCTOBER 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, C.J. Cuss, R.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, Ms E. Forehead, R.W. Gough, A.G. Higgs, Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent and Mrs D. Price.

Cabinet Members:

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

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), I. MacVicar (Group Manager Operations - Asset Based Services), D. Phenis (Sport and Leisure Services Manager), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

Also Present:

Sara-Jayne Byrne (Pricewaterhouse Coopers).

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Sara-Jayne Byrne of Pricewaterhouse Coopers, who was present to observe the evening's meeting, and introduced the Members and Officers in attendance.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, M.J. Prew and Mrs E. Stenner.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the start of the meeting.

Following presentation of Cabinet Member K. James' report (Agenda Item 6), Councillors J. Bevan, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, R.W. Gough, and A.G Higgs declared an interest in an item that was discussed. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 16, page nos. 1 - 8) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

5. CABINET REPORTS

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

6. VERBAL REPORTS OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering updated Members on developments relating to the Engineering Services division. Winter maintenance arrangements are continuing with the addition of two replacement gritters and high salt levels. The majority of the carriageway and footway resurfacing programme has been completed. Road Safety Education and Training is continuing with a Mega Drive event recently held at Ystrad Mynach College. The design for the proposed highway improvements at the A467/A472 junction in Crumlin are progressing well, and relining works are due to commence shortly on the Pontywaun section of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The Cabinet Member also referred to major collaborative refurbishment works being undertaken at Trinant Hall Viaduct, stating that they would be of great benefit to the area.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and full discussion followed. Members queried the possibility of traffic monitoring in the Crumlin Viaduct vicinity and it was confirmed that the issue is being addressed. Members also clarified arrangements relating to the Authority's gritter fleet.

Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development, then presented his report and updated Members on the tendering process currently being undertaken for the Heritage Lottery Funded project at Llancaiach Fawr and refurbishment works at Blackwood Miners' Institute. The Welsh National Mining Memorial was unveiled in Senghenydd on 14th October 2013, and the planning application for the surface mine at Nant Llesg has now been submitted. Councillor James also announced plans for a meeting of the Rights of Way Committee to be arranged prior to Christmas.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and discussion ensued. Members queried details of the Nant Llesg planning application and Councillor James confirmed that it was undergoing a full consultation process, with residents permitted to submit their interest outside the 21 day consultation period.

At this point in the meeting, Councillors J. Bevan, Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, R.W. Gough and A.G Higgs declared an interest in the discussion of the Nant Llesg planning application, being members of the Planning Committee, which had yet to hold a meeting to consider this item.

Members clarified with the Cabinet Member details of the Rights of Way Committee membership and it was confirmed that it was a Cabinet Committee, with the last meeting being held on 2nd March 2012.

Finally, Councillor D.V. Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services, addressed the Committee. His report congratulated Catering Services for achieving the IIP Bronze standard in Investors in People, which represented a significant achievement for the service. Councillor Poole informed Members of the new Community Safety initiative entitled “Caerphilly After Dark”, due in November and focusing on Caerphilly and Blackwood town centres. Monday 21st October saw the launch of the SmartRewards loyalty scheme at Newbridge Leisure centre, and on Wednesday 23rd October, the refurbished Risca Leisure Centre was officially reopened by the Minister for Heritage, Culture and Sport.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and discussed with Councillor Poole the usage of various leisure centre facilities and the allocation of sessions.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following.

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS – THEATRE AND ARTS SERVICE – BLACKWOOD MINERS’ INSTITUTE

Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning, and Ian MacVicar, Group Manager Operations - Asset Based Services, presented the report, together with Gareth Hardacre, Head of People Management and Development. The report informed Members of the outcome of discussions and consultations with trade unions and staff regarding a restructure of staff at Blackwood Miners’ Institute, and invited Members to endorse the report’s recommendations prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Members were reminded that a report regarding a new staff structure at Blackwood Miners’ Institute was originally presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 2nd July 2013. At that meeting, Members had requested that a decision in respect of staffing arrangements at Blackwood Miners Institute be deferred, pending further information from consultations with the trade unions and staff involved with the proposed restructure.

The report included a number of proposals regarding the restructuring of staff, including the deletion of the full time and part time caretaker posts. This was a consequence of planned and reactive maintenance and the budget being transferred to CCBC Facilities Management in April 2012. Whilst the GMB trade union had no concerns with the majority of the proposals, concerns were raised in relation to the proposed deletion of the caretaker posts.

Management had carried out a careful and detailed analysis of the caretakers’ roles and responsibilities and concluded that there were insufficient responsibilities to justify the employment of one full time and one part time caretaker. Under the proposed new operational arrangements, some tasks would be carried out by Facilities Management on a pre-booked basis, with other daily duties carried out by the Duty Managers.

Members were reminded that the purpose of the proposal was to ensure the implementation of a suitable structure in order to meet the current and future needs of the Blackwood Miners’ Institute.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for resubmitting the report and then invited questions from the Committee. Members discussed the report in detail, and Officers clarified working arrangements relating to the Facilities Management team and details of the redeployment scheme. Members also requested that the importance of caretaking and cleaning positions within staffing structures be noted.

Members expressed concern that the proposed structure would not provide sufficient capacity to manage caretaking and facility management duties. In particular, Members queried whether a business case and the proposed staffing structure had been developed to take into account the expected increase in occupancy and revenues following the completion of the recent building improvement works.

Following detailed discussion of the issues contained in the report, and by a show of hands and a majority vote, Members voted against the recommendations in the report, namely:

1. That the recommendation to Cabinet to delete a full time caretaker and one part time caretaker post be supported, and it be agreed that two permanent part time Duty Manager posts be created and that the positions be ring fenced for the existing 4 relief Duty Managers;
2. That the two caretaking staff members be offered redeployment within the Council.

Members moved and seconded an additional recommendation to Cabinet and, by a show of hands and a majority vote, it was recommended to Cabinet that the deletion of one caretaker post be deferred for a period of 12 months in order for further detailed analysis of the building's occupancy and caretaking duties to be undertaken.

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

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which informed Members of the long-term effectiveness of an Advisory Part Time 20mph speed limit pilot implemented on the A468 Commercial Road in Machen, and the recommendation for it to remain in place.

Mr Campbell advised Members that in the past, concerns had been raised by the local community about excessive traffic speeds and pedestrian safety in Machen, particularly adjacent to the local primary school. An Advisory Part Time 20mph speed limit was subsequently introduced on the A468 Commercial Road in August 2011 as a pilot scheme for the Authority.

Following implementation of the scheme, traffic surveys were carried out and the results compared with previous surveys in order to evaluate the scheme. It was determined that speeds within the pilot area had reduced between 4mph and 7mph since implementation of the scheme. It was therefore recommended to Members that the Advisory Part Time 20mph speed limit remained in place and that the Council's Speed Management Strategy document be revised/updated to include appropriate guidance/criteria for the use of this type of speed management measure.

Members welcomed the report findings and expressed interest in the possibility of the pilot scheme being rolled out to other areas. Councillor S. Kent requested information from Officers in relation to fixed penalty notices and the Road Casualty Reduction Partnership and it was arranged for this information to be provided.

Following discussion of the report, Members noted the recommendation that the Advisory Part Time 20mph speed limit remains in place and that the Council's Speed Management Strategy document be revised/updated to include appropriate guidance/criteria for the use of this type of speed management measure.

9. CAERPHILLY 10K

Dave Phenis, Sport and Leisure Services Manager, presented the report to Members, which provided feedback on the Caerphilly 10k run which took place on Sunday, 23rd June 2013.

The Caerphilly 10k run was organised in 2013 due to the increased demand for running events and the opportunity to provide a mass participation event as part of the Council's events portfolio. Mr Phenis outlined the successes of the event, with 600-1000 runners anticipated and 1700 runners participating on the day. Positive feedback was also received from participants and spectators regarding the location, with the iconic backdrop and single-lap route with full road closures around the town centre proving particularly popular with participants. The report also highlighted several areas for improvement in relation to event specifics and road closures, and acknowledged that communication with local residents was of crucial importance.

The Council's social media channels received a tremendous amount of positive comments regarding the 10k run, and the Caerphilly 10k website received over 36,000 hits between 26th April and 26th June 2013. Mr Phenis outlined the event costs and attributed the event success to teamwork between numerous Council departments. Mr Phenis also informed Members that the Caerphilly 10k run had created a legacy, with several former running clubs re-established since the event and several new running clubs created as a result.

Discussion ensued between Members regarding the possibility of a future event and Mr Phenis confirmed that the business case would be prepared for future consideration by Cabinet within the next few months. Members requested that other town centres be considered as a possibility for a host location in future years.

Members noted the recommendations contained in the report and extended their congratulations and thanks to all departments involved in the success of the event, and expressed a wish to see the event held again next year.

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

The following requests were received: -

1. Councillor R.T. Davies requested a report on proposed rail passenger services from Caerphilly to Machen and Bedwas to Newport.
2. Councillor R.T. Davies requested a report on how Caerphilly County Borough Council could support the voluntary organisations responsible for the management of the Caerphilly and Bedwas Workmen's Halls.
3. Councillor N. Dix requested a report on car parking charges across the borough and their impact on town centres. He was advised that this information could be found in the report "Management and Enforcement of Highway-Owned Public Car Parks" which was presented to the last Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting on 17th September 2013. The Chairman asked that Councillor Dix be provided with a copy of the report, and Councillor Dix then requested a further report to review the impact of car parking charges on town centres.
4. Councillor J. Bevan requested a report on the impact of fly-tipping in Caerphilly County Borough Council.

11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Agenda Item 9(4) – Summary of Members Attendance – Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 was brought forward for discussion. The Chairman discussed levels of Members' Attendance and encouraged Members to improve on their attendance at scrutiny meetings.

Agenda Item 9(6) – Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme was brought forward for discussion. Jonathan Jones, Democratic Services Manager, updated Members on the progress of the Forward Work Programme.

The following reports were received and noted without discussion:

- (1) Local Investment Fund Progress Report;
- (2) Road Traffic Casualty Reduction Performance in Caerphilly County Borough;
- (3) Budget Monitoring and Trading Account Report 2013/2014;
- (5) Voluntary Sector Sub-Committee Minutes – 18th September 2013.

The meeting closed at 18.39 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN