



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 1ST APRIL 2014 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, R.T. Davies, N. Dix, R.W. Gough, Ms J.G. Jones,
S. Kent, Mrs P. Leonard, M.J. Prew, Mrs D. Price, Mrs E. Stenner

Cabinet Members:

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),
T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure
Services), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader,
Urban Renewal & Conservation), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer) and
R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

1. WELCOME – NEW MEMBER

The Chair welcomed Councillor Mrs P. Leonard to her first meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee. He also extended his thanks to Councillor Leonard's predecessor, Councillor Miss E. Forehead, for her valued service during her time as a Member of the Committee.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Elsbury and A.G. Higgs, together with Cabinet Member K. James.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

4. MINUTES – 18TH FEBRUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18th February 2014 (minute nos. 1 - 12, on page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

6. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

7. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, updated Members on the situation regarding funding cuts to the concessionary travel scheme in Wales. The bus operator Stagecoach had recently written to the Welsh Government and local authorities to advise of their intention to launch a legal challenge over the reduction to funding. Stagecoach indicated that the funding cuts could result in a number of service reductions and depot closures, with the possibility of services within Caerphilly County Borough being affected. The full impact of these cuts had yet to be confirmed and local authorities were seeking to urgently meet with the Welsh Government to discuss the issue further.

Members discussed the funding cuts and emphasised the need to meet with the Welsh Government to resolve the issue, raising concerns that residents living in rural areas of the county borough could be affected by service reductions. Details of the commercial and contractual bus operators within the Authority were queried and it was arranged for Officers to provide this information to Members.

It was confirmed that repair works on the closed A469 Troedrhwiwfach road to Rhymney were progressing well, with Welsh Water and the Council's NCS team working hard to reopen the road in the coming weeks. The Cabinet Member informed those present that he had recently met with Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, to discuss proposals for a new road system in the affected area, and that he would keep Members updated regarding any such developments.

Councillor D.V. Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services, advised Members of his recent visit to view the Project Gwyrdd incinerator at Trident Park, Cardiff. Significant progress had been made to date with completion likely later this year.

The Disability Six Nations Rugby Tournament recently held its 10th anniversary at Trinity Fields School and Penallta RFC, with over 120 children from schools across South East Wales competing in the event. The Caerphilly 10K race will return for the second consecutive year on Sunday 22nd June 2014, with many more entrants anticipated this year. Safer

Caerphilly successfully launched their second Project Bernie campaign on 28th March 2014, which is aimed at reducing the incidence of deliberate grass fire setting.

The Cabinet Member advised that unfortunately the final two bidders involved in the Heads of the Valley Organic Project had withdrawn from the procurement process. The partnership authorities (Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen County Borough Council) would review the situation with officials from the Welsh Government in order to consider a future strategy. Members were also informed that the Authority's Leisure Strategy was currently being finalised, which would assist decision-making in planning the future of leisure provision in the county borough.

The withdrawal of the bidders from the waste procurement process was queried, with the Cabinet Member confirming that one bidder had taken the decision to withdraw completely from the South Wales region. It was confirmed that the procurement process would have to be started again and would take a number of years, that approval from the Welsh Government would have to be sought, and that contract suppliers would be used for the Project in the interim period.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members for their reports.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which updated Members on the evaluation and review of the current adopted Speed Management Strategy and its operation within the Authority.

Members were advised that the existing Speed Management Strategy was adopted in May 2009, with the main aim to make a positive contribution to casualty reduction and encourage slower speeds. In response to a number of issues raised, the Strategy had been reviewed and evaluated, and a number of changes recommended in order to incorporate current legislation and national guidance.

Members were pleased to note the proposed changes to the Strategy and discussed the report in detail. There was particular interest in the proposed appraisal and policy for 20mph speed limits and zones, and Officers clarified the process involved, together with consultation surrounding the Strategy and sources of available funding.

The use of vehicle activated signs (VAS) and vehicle speed intervention levels were discussed, and it was noted that road users were encouraged to report any defective VAS to the Authority. Officers also responded to general queries regarding the various speed cameras in operation and the enforcement agencies responsible for each type of camera.

Reference was made to Appendix F of the Speed Management Strategy which evaluated road traffic collisions prior to and following the introduction of the Strategy. With regards to the KSI data (Killed and Seriously Injured) listed in the Appendix, Members commented that they would wish to see the split between the two casualty types detailed in future reports.

Following discussion on the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained therein be adopted. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) The Speed Management Strategy be amended to include the new Road Safety Framework for Wales casualty reduction targets, reflect the change to the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership name and current practice/ liaison regarding road traffic matters with Gwent Police and other changes as a result of legislation and changes as detailed in Appendix C of the report;
- (ii) The use of an advisory 20mph speed limit be included where a mandatory speed limit cannot be promoted;
- (iii) Bidding continue for Safe Routes in Communities funding and Road Safety Grant, and 20mph limits and zones be included in the form where they can be supported and satisfy the existing Speed Management Strategy criteria;
- (iv) The Speed Management Strategy continue to be used as an efficient and effective approach to speed management on roads in Caerphilly County Borough;
- (v) Other road safety concern sites for vulnerable people (e.g. playgrounds) be reviewed and assessed as part of the duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act.

8. RISCA AND PONTYMISTER TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning, and Allan Dallimore, Team Leader, presented the report, which detailed the draft Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan 2014. Plans are currently underway for the regeneration of the town centre and this Action Plan will act as supplementary planning advice to the project.

Members were advised that the draft Action Plan had been developed by Officers and consultation had been carried out with key stakeholders. A public consultation exercise had recently been completed with comments being fed into the draft Plan. A wider consultation programme was currently ongoing and an amended Plan incorporating any resulting comments would be presented to Cabinet and Council in due course. As part of the wider consultation, Members of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee were asked to comment on the draft Plan attached to the report.

Following discussion on the content of the report, Members were pleased to note the regeneration plans for the town centre and endorsed the draft Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan.

It was moved and seconded that once the wider consultation programme had been completed, the recommendation contained therein be adopted. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that once the wider consultation programme has been completed, the Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration and Council for formal adoption.

9. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SAVINGS – VANS AND TRAILERS AT CIVIC AMENITY SITES

Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services, presented the report, which outlined proposals to achieve savings relating to vans and trailers using the Authority's Civic

Amenity sites, and sought the views of Members on the proposed recommendations contained within the report.

Members were reminded that as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan savings proposed by the Community and Leisure Services Division for 2014/15, the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee of 20th January 2014 subsequently recommended to Cabinet that a charging regime for vans and trailers be introduced at Civic Amenity sites.

In view of the debate that arose at that meeting relating to the banning or charging of vans and trailers, Officers undertook comparative research across Welsh Authorities and established that a number of systems were in place. Members were advised that total “van bans” were rare, with most Authorities implementing a “hybrid” system of charging for common household vehicles, together with bans for very large vans and trailers commonly used by commercial undertakings.

The report therefore recommended the introduction of a number of controls, including charging for smaller vans and trailers and banning larger vans and trailers from using the sites. Members were advised that proof of CCBC residency would be required when purchasing a permit, that time windows would be used, and that new signage at sites would be implemented, with a view to introducing the new policy at the end of May 2014.

Discussion ensued regarding the report and Members expressed concerns that there could be an increase in fly-tipping as a result of the new policy. A query was raised as to whether the charges would be inclusive of VAT or have an additional charge for VAT. The Head of Service clarified that he believed the charge to be inclusive of VAT but that he would investigate and verify the information for Members. The Authority’s bulky waste collection service was discussed and Members commented that it could potentially be cheaper for householders to use this service as opposed to paying the charge at civic amenity sites.

Members considered the recommendation in the report and specifically the proposal in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report:

- 4.2.1 Charges are introduced for small vans (“transit” size and below) and small trailers (<1.8m in length) carrying household waste. Charge levels to be:-
- £35 for a car derived van (eg: “escort “ van, transit connect etc) and trailers < 1.8m long
 - £70 for larger vans up to “ford transit” size.

They debated the proposal to charge £35 for trailers less than 1.8m long, and suggested that a reduced charge for trailers be introduced, with the charge proportionate to the size of the trailer. It was proposed that a reduced charge be introduced for smaller sized trailers and that the recommendation within the report be amended accordingly to incorporate this proposal.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation at paragraph 4.2.1 be amended and the remainder of the recommendations be accepted as detailed in the report. By a show of hands, this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) Charges be introduced for small vans (“transit” size and below) and small trailers (<1.8m in length) carrying household waste. Charge levels to be:-
 - £35 for a car derived van (eg: “escort “ van, transit connect etc);
 - £70 for larger vans up to “ford transit” size;
 - a reduced charge for trailers less than 1.8m and for that charge to be determined according to the size of the trailer;
- (ii) Charges be implemented via the advance purchase of a tipping permit from

one of the Authority's cash or customer first offices, and that the permit be a single use permit to be handed in at the site;

- (iii) Vans greater than "ford transit" size, Luton Vans, tippers and trailers > 1.8m in length be banned from using the sites;
- (iv) Proof of residency be requested when purchasing the permit, to ensure that the sites are used by Caerphilly CBC residents only;
- (v) The Authority introduce time windows (during the least busy periods) when vans and trailers with a valid permit can use the sites, and that these times vary between sites and be advertised in advance;
- (vi) Signage be displayed at each site outlining the policies and procedures, warning users that failure to comply may result in legal action for illegal tipping (each site has full CCTV coverage to assist evidence gathering).

It was arranged for Officers to provide an review report at a future meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee after the charges have been in place for 6-12 months.

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

The following requests were received:-

- (i) Councillor J. Jones requested a report on the enforcement of cyclists using their bells on cycle paths and was advised to contact the Chair of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee regarding this request.
- (ii) Councillor S. Kent requested a report on the Authority's wind turbines and that a comparison be detailed between the original and current estimates of power generation.
- (iii) Councillor S. Kent requested information in relation to vehicle activated signs and road casualties and was referred to Officers, with Councillor Kent to confirm what information was required.
- (iv) Councillor R. Gough raised concerns regarding the possibility of WG funding to the Public Convenience Grant Scheme being withdrawn and the impact it could have on the Council's decision to close a number of public conveniences within the Authority. Officers clarified that details regarding the funding had not yet been finalised and that further information would be brought back to a future Scrutiny meeting.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. There were no items brought forward for review.

- (1) Review of the Impact of Car Parking Charges on Town Centres;
- (2) Welsh Government Report: Local Authority Services Performance 2012/13;
- (3) Bargoed Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 29th January 2014;
- (4) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 7th February 2014;
- (5) Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 11th February 2014;
- (6) Risca Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 18th February 2014;
- (7) Ystrad Mynach Town Centre Management Group Minutes – 4th March 2014.

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 20th May 2014 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR