



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
TUESDAY, 1ST JULY 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, Ms J.G. Jones, Mrs P. Leonard, M.J. Prew,
Mrs D. Price, A. Rees, Mrs E. Stenner

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), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate
Services and Section 151 Officer), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services),
C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), D. Phenis (Sport and Leisure Services
Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee
Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury,
R.W. Gough and S. Kent.

The Chair also welcomed Councillor A. Rees to his first meeting of the Regeneration and
Environment Scrutiny Committee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 20TH MAY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20th May 2014 (minute nos. 1 - 15, on page nos. 1 - 8) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

5. CABINET REPORTS

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

6. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, informed Members that a programme of carriageway and footway works had recently commenced within the county borough to further improve the condition of the Authority's road networks. These works would continue throughout the remainder of the year, with a large proportion taking place over the summer. The Cabinet Member also referred to the resurfacing of the re-opened A469 road between New Tredegar and Pontlottyn following the recent landslide and thanked local ward members for their support during this time.

Major relining works on the Pontywaun section of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal were nearing completion, with a total of 230m of canal channel relined to address an issue with a long-standing major leak. Plans were ongoing to re-fill this section of canal and re-open the towpath by the end of July. Members were also informed that the last scheme in the rail park and ride project was completed last month in Rhymney, doubling the number of car parking spaces in operation. An official opening ceremony with local dignitaries would follow shortly.

Members raised concerns in relation to road resurfacing works and loose road chippings and were advised to email the Cabinet Member directly with further details so that the matter could be investigated. The Committee also thanked Council staff involved in the reopening of the A469.

Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development, informed those present of the intended closure of Cwmcarn Forest Drive from November 2014. This was in order for a tree felling exercise to take place following an outbreak of larch disease. Members were advised that whilst the Forest Drive would be closed, the Visitor Centre and Café, together with all walks, bike trails, the lake and campsite would be open for business as usual. The Cabinet Member responded to questions relating to larch disease and clarified that a date for the reopening of the Forest Drive had not yet been confirmed by the Forestry Commission.

The Cabinet Member also informed those present of the new First World War exhibition 'Our Duty To Bear' which was currently being prepared by Winding House staff for display in the main gallery.

Councillor D.V. Poole, Community and Leisure Services informed Members that a number of events recently took place to mark National School Sport Week, including a version of the Commonwealth Games with over 600 pupils involved. Members were reminded that Caerphilly were the only authority in Wales to have 100% of schools registered and engaging with the event, and that pupils were benefitting from improved wellbeing and learning through cross-curricular activities

The 2nd annual Caerphilly 10K race took place on Sunday 22nd June 2014, with an increase of 39% in registration compared to last year. This year also saw the introduction of a junior race, and Members extended their thanks to all staff, participants and spectators for continuing to make this one of the most successful events in Caerphilly Council's events calendar.

Members were informed that the Gwent Trading Standards Project is progressing and that views were currently being sought from staff, residents and other stakeholders on the proposal for a regional service. A website had been developed reflecting the work of Trading Standards in Gwent and it was anticipated that the full business case would be presented to the Committee for their consideration in September 2014.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. EXTENSION OF BEDLINOG LINE / DOWLAI'S PARK AND RIDE

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, presented the report, which informed Members of the potential to extend the current freight line between Ystrad Mynach and Cwmbargoed to Dowlais Top to facilitate the potential future reinstatement of a passenger service, and sought the comments of Members prior to the report being considered by Cabinet.

The report highlighted the findings of the Sewta Rail Strategy Review 2013, which proposed extending the passenger rail network to Bedlinog via Nelson and Trelewis along the existing freight line. Further details of the review were appended to the report. Following this review, Merthyr Tydfil Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council jointly commissioned a further study to examine the practicality of extending the proposed service further north to Dowlais Top, to the north-east of Merthyr Tydfil.

A number of key recommendations arose from the study and a number of advantages and practicalities in extending the line were highlighted, including the opportunity for a new station at Nelson and enhanced connectivity between Merthyr Tydfil and Ystrad Mynach/Caerphilly. It was envisaged that Merthyr Tydfil Council would take the lead in developing the scheme further, supported by Caerphilly Council, including thorough discussion with Network Rail and Arriva Trains.

A number of queries were raised by Members in relation to funding, public consultation and the frequency of such a rail service, and Officers confirmed that these matters would become clearer during the next stage of the process, which addressed the feasibility of the project. Members were advised that the project was currently at stage 1 of the Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process.

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

RECOMMENDED that the report be submitted to Cabinet for approval, thereby facilitating Officers and Members to make formal representations to the Welsh Government to ensure the scheme is recognised and considered as rail priorities are developed.

8. REVIEW OF IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE NO. 4 FOR 2013/14

David Phenis, Sport and Leisure Services Manager, presented the end of year progress report against the Improvement Objective relating to improving awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities.

The report summarised the progress made during 2013/14 and also identified areas that require further focus. Indications were that significant progress had been made in improving sports and leisure facilities and increasing levels of participation, but that more work was required to improve the quality of life for residents, in encouraging them to lead healthier active lives. Appended to the report were a set of key performance indicators which monitor progress against targets and compare performance against other local authorities.

A number of positive outcomes within the Improvement Objective were highlighted, including the development and implementation of the Smart Rewards Scheme, which was introduced in conjunction with the Youth Forum, and which aids the retention of leisure centre customers by rewarding them for their loyalty. Members were advised of the success of the new Aqua Passport programme, which has been introduced in all the county borough's swimming pools and promotes positive engagement with schools and parents to ensure children are provided with the opportunity to learn how to swim by the age of 11. The success and benefits of the exercise referral scheme were also referenced, with a large number of patients now remaining active following completion of the scheme.

Reference was made to the hard work and commitment of all Sports and Leisure Service staff, including the support of volunteers in delivering Community Sport. It was explained that volunteer retention needed to remain a priority if further increases in participation were to be realised. It was also advised that Improvement Objective 4 would be carried forward to 2014/15 and reported on again next year.

Members discussed the report and made a number of suggestions as to the recruitment of volunteers in delivering Community Sport. Reference was made to the performance indicators that related to swimming, with Members querying the target level of 91% for children aged 11 years to be able to swim 25 metres. It was explained that whilst this was an ambitious target, it was hoped that the actual 58% result would be improved upon once a number of improvements to the Aqua Passport had been implemented. Officers also clarified the enrolment process in regards to the Aqua Passport scheme.

Members were pleased to note the performance indicators which demonstrated that the number of children aged 3-6 and 7-11 participating in sport 3 times a week were over and above the target levels of 30% and 35% respectively. Members placed on record their appreciation to staff with regards to this achievement, and noted the progress made against the Improvement Objective to date.

9. STRATEGIC FACILITY FOR WASTE TRANSFER AND BULKING OF RECYCLABLES

Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services, presented the report, which advised of the need for a strategic facility for waste transfer and bulking of recyclables, detailed the business case for such a facility at the Duffryn House Site, and sought Members' views on this proposed development prior to the matter being considered by Cabinet.

The report outlined the background to discussions over waste transfer infrastructure during the last 5 years and Members were referred to the appended business case which highlighted the need for a modern waste transfer facility. Members were informed that the Authority currently utilised the Waste Transfer Station at Full Moon, Crosskeys to bulk its residual and recycling waste prior to onward transportation for disposal/treatment. However, the capacity of waste was frequently exceeded, especially during sustained inclement weather or holiday

periods and there was subsequently an urgent demand for a modern, fit for purpose Waste Transfer Infrastructure.

It was explained that a number of possible locations had been assessed and examined in further detail within the business case, with the Duffryn House site identified as the most suitable location for a new waste transfer facility.

Members raised a number of queries and concerns regarding the proposal to locate the waste transfer facility within the Duffryn House site, including the locality of the facility to adjacent offices and neighbouring houses. Officers confirmed the layout of the proposed facility and advised Members that assessments had been carried out in relation to environmental impact and planning regulations. The consultation process was also queried by Members, with Officers confirming that this was an ongoing process.

Reference was made to the other locations detailed in the business case and whether these could be considered as alternative locations for a waste transfer facility. It was explained to Members that there were a number of reasons why these locations were unsuitable, including access issues, relocation costs and site issues, which were detailed further in the business case, and that of the five sites listed, the Duffryn House location was the most viable.

An amendment was moved and seconded in that the matter to determine the location of a waste transfer facility be deferred for the time being. Following a show of hands, and by the majority present, the motion was declared lost.

Members were reminded of the pressing need for a strategic waste transfer facility, particularly in regards to uncertainty surrounding the future arrangements for the recycling of food and green waste.

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

RECOMMENDED that for the reasons contained therein, the Business Case for the development of a Waste Transfer Station at the Dyffryn House Site be supported, and that this recommendation be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

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

1. Councillor C. Cuss requested an update in regards to Caerphilly County Borough Council's Communities First programme.

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) Public Protection Enforcement – 2013/14;
- (2) Annual Report On The Consumer Advice Service Provided By Trading Standards;
- (3) Trading Standards Enforcement of Age Restricted Products Legislation 2013-14;
- (4) Apportionment of Highway Maintenance Budget 2014/2015;
- (5) Revenue Budget 2014/2015 Environment Directorate;
- (6) Summary of Members' Attendance – Quarter 4 – 1st January 2014 to 7th May 2014;
- (7) Bryn Compost Liaison Group Minutes – 10th February 2014.

The meeting closed at 6.44 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 16th September 2014 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR