



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
TUESDAY, 30TH JUNE 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

M. Adams, J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent,
Mrs P. Leonard, M.J. Prew, Mrs D. Price, Mrs E. Stenner

Cabinet Members:

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

Together with:

M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), G. Parry (Highway Operations
Group Manager), J. Lougher (Sport and Leisure Development Manager), T. White (Waste
Strategy and Operations Manager), H. John (Principal Waste Management Officer), A. Price
(Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also present:

Councillor H. David (St. Cattwg Ward), Mr T. Brockett (Local Resident), G. Woods (Rugby
Development Manager - Welsh Rugby Union)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R.W. Gough.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 19TH MAY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19th May 2015 (minute nos. 1 – 14) 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. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee received verbal reports from Cabinet Members K. James, T.J. Williams and N. George.

Councillor N. George presented his first report in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services. Councillor George informed Members that he attended the official opening of the Project Gwyrdd energy recovery plant at Trident Park on Monday 22nd June. The company have also opened an education centre so that partner authorities can organise school visits for pupils to learn about the process used to recover energy from waste.

Councillor George also attended the Caerphilly Legacy Games at the National Indoor Athletics Centre, Cardiff on 24th June 2015. This annual event has been held since the London Olympics in 2012 and is used to promote a wide range of sports at all abilities to school children. The event promotes a full range of Olympic sports and allows pupils to trial each sport with a qualified coach, and in some cases with athletes that have competed at a high level. The event is supported by local primary schools and represents a valuable learning experience for pupils.

Members were informed of the success of the annual Caerphilly 10K race, which was held on Sunday 21st June 2015 and enjoyed its highest participation level to date. There were approximately 370 entrants in the Children's 2K race and 2300 entrants in the main 10K event. Once again the weather was fine, which contributed to a very successful event.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his report and the Chair invited questions from the Committee. Members were pleased to note the success and organisation of the Caerphilly 10K event. Reference was made to the recent Velothon cycling event and the Chair advised that as this event was not organised by Caerphilly Council, it would therefore not be an appropriate topic of discussion for the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning, informed Members of the success of the recent National Urdd Eisteddfod 2015 held at Llancaiach Fawr Manor, which is the largest youth festival in Europe and the largest event ever held at the Manor. 88,607 visitors attended the Eisteddfod between 25th-29th May 2015 and over 4000 people also visited the Manor House as part of the festival. The feedback from the Urdd organisers and the visitors was overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of all the efforts made by the staff of Llancaiach Fawr to welcome and look after the visitors and to support the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Members were informed that Liberty, a company set up by pupils from Lewis Girls School, represented Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen at the Young Enterprise Wales Final in Cardiff on 15th June 2015, having won the area final in March. They scooped the prize for best product (decorative ware) and just missed out on becoming the overall winners. Members were pleased to note this achievement and the Cabinet Member confirmed that the

pupils had been invited to attend the Mayor's Parlour at Penallta House in recognition of their efforts.

Councillor T.J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, presented his report and advised Members that a 12-week public consultation on Active Travel is underway, in order to comply with the statutory duties under the Active Travel Act. The consultation is an opportunity for the public to determine if the first Existing Active Travel Routes map for Caerphilly County Borough is fit for utility journeys (those journeys made to school or work, or for access to shops or services). Active Travel does not include journeys purely made for recreation or social reasons and only applies to certain areas of the County Borough. Further details are on the Council's website and available in libraries and the Cabinet Member encouraged wide participation in the consultation process. The results of the consultation will be reported to Members at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Highways Operations Group are about to commence a three month trial of a Multihog (a single-operator utility vehicle for use in a wide range of maintenance tasks) which will make a significant contribution to efficiency, quality, health and safety and cost savings. This will be in addition to the purchase of a Velocity Patcher (a single operator vehicle for efficient and effective pot-hole repairs), which is due for delivery in the autumn.

The Engineering Projects Group has recently invited tenders for major junction improvement works at Pwllpant roundabout, Caerphilly. Tenders are due back in late July with a programmed contract start date of mid-September pending Welsh Government approval.

Discussion of the Cabinet Member's report ensued and a query was raised as to the introduction of addition road-merging signage. The Cabinet Member advised that he would be meeting relevant Officers with a view to implementing improved signage. A Member queried the routes outlined in the Active Travel Plan and was referred to the Traveline service for comprehensive information on all available travel routes. A query was also raised in respect of an estimated completion date for the Pwllpant roundabout works, and the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would advise Members of the date following consultation with Officers.

The Cabinet Members were thanked for their reports.

6. CABINET REPORTS

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

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. SECONDARY SCHOOL RUGBY PROVISION WITHIN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH

At the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting of 31st March 2015, a request was received for a report to outline the current provision for secondary school rugby within the county borough.

Mark S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services) and Jared Lougher (Sport and Leisure Development Manager) were in attendance to present this report, together with Greg Woods, a representative of the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU). It was agreed that Mr Woods would deliver his presentation first, prior to consideration of the Officer's report.

With the aid of a slideshow presentation, Mr Woods outlined the collaborative working between CCBC and the WRU. As of June 2015, there are three sets of partnerships in place; a Lead Officer for rugby within the CCBC Sport Caerphilly Team, a partnership agreement with the CCBC Centre for Sporting Excellence in Ystrad Mynach, and a number of School Club Hub agreements.

The WRU School Club Hub programme is a three-year programme which commenced its roll-out across secondary schools in Wales in September 2014 as part of the WRUs strategic plan to increase rugby participation within schools and strengthen links to clubs. CCBC currently has two schools involved in the programme (Lewis School Pengam and Newbridge School), with a further four sites identified for the September 2015 roll-out (Coleg Gwent Crosskeys, together with Bedwas, Heolddu and St. Cenydd Comprehensive Schools). It is hoped that this programme will be extended to further schools in the future. Members were encouraged to relay details of any other CCBC schools who might be interested in participating.

Mr Woods outlined the rugby club landscape within the county borough and highlighted the success of local rugby clubs at a Premiership level (Bedwas RFC and Crosskeys RFC) and Championship level (Bargoed RFC and Newbridge RFC). Members were shown a table which listed all the rugby clubs in the county borough and used a 'traffic light' system to indicate the presence of mini/junior sides within each club. A comparative table showing the key trends across the Gwent area in respect of mini and junior rugby playing numbers showed that Caerphilly was increasing year on year and had almost three times as many players registered in 2015 (2287) compared to the next leading local authority.

Discussion of the presentation ensued and Mr Woods responded to queries regarding implications of future funding cutbacks on the collaboration and the involvement of Sport Caerphilly in promoting the scheme. Reference was made to the lack of mini and junior sides within some local clubs and Mr Woods highlighted the difficulties faced in establishing these teams (in that children often join the nearest neighbouring rugby club where there is no established mini/junior side in their home town). He suggested that interested clubs could form an under-7s and under-8s side and then expand through other age ranges once the teams were established within the league.

Members discussed the School Club Hub programme and the difficulties in attracting players to make up sufficient numbers for secondary school teams, and Mr Woods outlined the benefits of the scheme to participating schools, with it hoped that it would encourage more pupils to engage in sports-related activities. A full-time rugby officer based in each participating school will offer coaching support through a range of rugby-centred activities. Mr Woods also outlined the partnership working between the schools and their associated rugby clubs, and the rugby qualifications that would be cascaded via the programme.

A Members queried the financial implications of the programme and Mr Woods explained how the funding process is managed and allocated. Council Officers highlighted the benefits of the programme in that it is intended to engage more young people to increase levels of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The Officer's report was then presented to Members, which outlined details of the current secondary school provision for rugby and the future plans for the development of rugby in partnership with the WRU through collaborative working. In addition to the School Club Hub programme detailed by Mr Woods, a rugby development plan between CCBC and the WRU ensures that the offer of school rugby is joined up and avoids duplication. Partnership meetings are held on a monthly basis and performance is regularly reviewed, with progress evaluated against outcomes. Officers explained that it was intended for this collaborative partnership to continue whilst funding remained available.

Officers also outlined the other collaborative approaches between CCBC and the WRU, including the promotion of rugby via the Welsh Government's 5x60 programme, working with rugby clubs via the School Club Link approach, and one-off events to promote key messages

and the importance of participating in sport and physical activity (such as the annual Disability 6 Nations rugby event).

Mr Woods and the Officers were thanked for their presentations, and it was agreed that a copy of the WRU presentation would be circulated to Members.

Following consideration of the report, Members noted the collaborative approach through effective partnership working to progress the development of rugby within the county borough.

8. APPORTIONMENT OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE BUDGET 2015/2016

Graham Parry (Highway Operations Group Manager) presented the report, which provided details of the proposed apportionment of the highway maintenance budget for 2015/2016.

The 2015/2016 budget totals £7,910,771, and full details of the proposed budget apportionment were listed in Appendix 1 of the report. The budget is split into the following areas: structural maintenance, safety maintenance, severe weather maintenance, street lighting, and other general maintenance. This budget incorporates the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget savings for 2015/16 as agreed at Council on 25th February 2015. The £2,028,375 street lighting allocation is inclusive of £1,389,550, which could be subject to further energy savings if investment can be found to replace existing lamps with LED units.

The 2015/2016 capital budget allocation, totalling £3,132,000 was detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, of which £700,000 relates directly to highway resurfacing. Further details of this, together with the other schemes/programmes to which the capital budget allocation relates, were included in the remaining appendices to the report.

Members were asked to note that the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) funding (for additional works such as carriageway reconstruction, highway resurfacing, footway resurfacing and bridge strengthening schemes) has now come to an end, and has reduced the capacity for pro-active planned works and schemes, which will lead to an increase in reactive works to repair roads and pathways on an ad-hoc basis.

Reference was made to the winter maintenance/severe weather portion of the budget which has been maintained at the 2014-15 level of £1.14m, as part of measures to protect this fundamental service area from savings. Members were advised that an additional contingency fund will be established to be used for extreme weather events and will be funded from any under-spend in that identified from winter maintenance of the Highways Operation Group accounts at financial year-end, and will be capped at £500,000.

Officers explained that the ongoing strategy is to actively achieve the most effective highway management arrangements to maximise planned works and reduce reactive maintenance, where appropriate, whilst ensuring the safety of highway users. This is directly challenged by significant anticipated cuts to the revenue budget over the next three years which will inevitably compromise the current level of service provided. In order to maintain the highway to an acceptable standard during this period of reduced funding, alternate strategies are being more widely utilised. These include preventative maintenance techniques and the use of new technology (such as the previously mentioned Multihog and Velocity Patcher machines).

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members sought clarification on details of the street lighting apportionment within the budget report, specifically in regards to innovative technology such as CMS and LED lighting, which has been identified as a zero allocation. Officers explained that this was not indicative of the Council's plans for this area in that such funding originated from another revenue stream, and it was agreed Officers would send Members further budgetary information regarding the installation of LED lighting. Officers also responded to general queries in respect of planned carriageway, footway and cycleway maintenance.

Officers confirmed that the overall highway maintenance budget had been reduced by £850,000 for 2015/2016, with the main reductions being within planned and reactive maintenance. As it is essential to maintain a balance and prioritise certain areas of maintenance, priority will be given to drainage and essential maintenance works, which will be augmented by the capital budget. A query was raised regarding the potential savings of the new technology and it was explained that the Velocity Patcher would cover its costs within 3 years, with potential for another 6-7 years of service after that time, and would also reduce associated labour costs. Members expressed an interest in viewing the results of the potential savings following the financial year end.

Following consideration of the report, Members noted its contents and the proposed apportionment and strategy of the highway maintenance budget for 2015/2016. It was noted that the Head of Engineering Services would be responsible for any appropriate decision-making that will be required during the financial year, in conjunction with Highway Managers.

9. CIVIC AMENITY/HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE REVIEW - REVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES LINKED TO MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SAVINGS

Mark S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services) together with Tony White (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager) and Hayley John (Principal Waste Management Officer) were in attendance to present the report.

The Chair advised that two requests had been received from local residents to address the Scrutiny Committee regarding Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centre policies and procedures. The first request was addressed prior to presentation of the Officer's report.

It was explained by the Chair that he had received a request from Mr Prosser to address the Scrutiny Committee but as he was subsequently unable to attend the meeting, he had requested that a statement be read out on his behalf. The statement referred to the current Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centre policy in respect of the two-hour timeslots allocated to tipping permits. In his statement, Mr Prosser asked for the Scrutiny Committee to consider a modification to the policy to remove the allocation of timeslots for permit use.

Discussion took place on the matter and Officers explained that there is already an element of discretion afforded to such instances and that it is stated on the permit that residents can contact the Council should they experience a problem with the allocated timeslot. It was confirmed that the Council had received very few complaints regarding this policy and had granted discretions to all requests received to date. Officers also clarified details of the processes involved in the allocation of timeslots.

Following discussion of Mr Prosser's request, Members unanimously agreed that Officers would write to Mr Prosser to advise him of the discretions available regarding missed timeslots.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services then presented the report, which advised Members of the effects of the Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centre policies and procedures on Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings and outlined their impact on recycling performance.

Members were reminded that as part of the Authority's MTFP, there have been two changes to the Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centre policy as agreed by full Council. Since October 2014, van and trailer use has been restricted to prevent the illegal and free deposit of commercial waste, with a permit scheme introduced for county borough residents. In addition (since April 2015) all household waste recycling centres are now closed for one day each per week. It is anticipated that these closures will achieve the £50,000 saving in 2015/16 as set out in the MTFP.

Officers confirmed that following a review of the van and trailer restriction scheme between October 2014 and March 2015, there has been an overall reduction in tonnage of approximately 3000 tonnes compared to the same period in 2013/14, which has generated significant savings of £270,000 over the past 6 months.

Members' attention was directed to Section 4.2 of the report, which outlined a series of amendments to the permit scheme in response to customer feedback. These have either now been implemented or are awaiting further development, and include amendments to the website layout, bilingual availability of the permit, amendments to allow for borrowed vehicles, amendments to allow residents to obtain a permit for same-day use, further detail on waste type to be included on the permit, and amendments to the system to allow a nominated person to dispose of waste from another person's property within the county borough.

It was anticipated that these amendments would alleviate the majority of complaints currently received from residents seeking to obtain a permit. Members were advised that several complaints had been received from residents who own vehicles exceeding the permitted sizes, but that if this restriction was amended, there could be an increase in throughput and potential misuse, and would require further IT development.

The Chair thanked the Head of Community and Leisure Services for his report, and invited Councillor Hefin David to address the Committee on behalf of a local resident (Mr Tony Brockett).

Councillor David referred to evidence which had been collated by Mr Brockett regarding the Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centre policy. A copy of this paperwork was tabled at the meeting. Councillor David explained that Mr Brockett felt that the current 1.8metre limit for trailers was too restrictive as many residents are likely to use trailers of greater length for domestic waste. A photograph of Mr Brockett's own trailer, measuring 2.1metres, was included in the evidence tabled to the Committee.

Councillor David referred to the customer feedback and subsequent amendments detailed in the report and explained that they did not include the issues raised by Mr Brockett. He also referred to Section 4.2.3 of the report which stated that larger vehicles are commonly associated with commercial activity, and he explained that this was not the case with Mr Brockett, who wished to use his trailer for residential waste. Mr Brockett had also collated comparative practices from a number of other authorities which exceeded the trailer restrictions imposed by Caerphilly Council. It was therefore requested by Mr Brockett that the Scrutiny Committee move an amendment *"to allow the use of a single axle trailer designed for domestic use, un-braked, and can only carry a maximum load of 550kg and be towed by the ordinary family car. Checks can be made on side and retroactive enforcement carried out where it is clear that the trailer is being used for non-domestic purposes"*.

The Chair reminded those present that as the Scrutiny Committee did not have decision-making abilities, they would only be able to make a recommendation to Cabinet in respect of the requested amendment.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services responded to the issues raised by Councillor David on behalf of Mr Brockett and explained that a relaxation of the current policy could lead to a reoccurrence of the commercial waste issues previously experienced by civic amenity sites. He also explained that retroactive enforcement would be a very difficult process to administer and it was more proactive to utilise the new policy in operation.

Discussion of Mr Brockett's request ensued and a Member queried whether a Notice of Motion would be a more appropriate course of action in respect of amendments to the policy. The Chair confirmed that the Committee were permitted to make a recommendation to Cabinet in the first instance if they were minded to do so. A Member voiced concern that if the size of permitted trailers was increased, then this could encourage additional requests to increase the size even further. In response to a Member's query, Officers confirmed that a

2.1metre trailer was of sufficient size to transport commercial waste, and explained that there could be significant cost implications to introduce an increased permitted trailer size. Discussion also took place regarding the disposal of large volumes of garden waste and Officers confirmed that there was a chargeable collection service available to residents as an alternative.

Following consideration of Mr Brockett's request, it was moved and seconded that the status quo in respect of the current trailer size (none permitted greater than 1.8metres in length) be maintained. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 abstention), this was agreed by the majority present.

Councillor David extended his thanks to the Scrutiny Committee for allowing him to make his representations, and he and Mr Brockett, who had been sat in the public gallery, left the meetings at this point.

Consideration of the report ensued and Officers responded to general queries regarding amendments to the permit scheme, the types of vehicles permitted under the new policy, the calculation of tonnage levels and the processes used by the Authority to meet Welsh Government recycling targets. Concerns were also raised regarding fly-tipping instances since the introduction of the van permit scheme. Officers explained that there had been an increased in fly-tipping outside the gates of some Household Waste Recycling Centres on the day of site closure, despite signage outlining the nearest open site and CCTV warnings. It was explained that if this persists then further enforcement actions will be considered, in addition to those already carried out against identified offenders.

Further discussion took place regarding the permit scheme and the allocation of timeslots. Members were advised that residents are entitled to 6 permits within a 12 month period, and as yet, the maximum allocation had not been reached. Officers also explained that the timeslots were used as an effective method of managing demand at civic amenity sites and as public awareness of the new policy was increasing, the Council were experiencing a subsequent decrease in queries. In addition, amendments to the system had also been introduced to provide greater flexibility by allowing residents to obtain a permit for use on the same day (previously a minimum of 1 day's notice had been required).

Following consideration of the report, and by a show of hands and the majority present (and in noting there was 1 abstention) Members supported the continuation of the van permit scheme with the modifications outlined at the meeting and listed in 4.2.1 of the report, together with the continuation of the 1 day per week closures at Civic Amenity/Household Waste Recycling Centres

10. IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE NO. 4 - IMPROVE AWARENESS, ACCESS, VARIETY AND USE OF LEISURE, COMMUNITY AND SPORTING FACILITIES

The report provided a review of performance for Improvement Objective No. 4 (Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities), including a summary of progress made during 2014/15 and identification of areas that require further focus.

The intention of this Improvement Objective was to improve the sporting and leisure facilities across the county borough, and increase the use of these facilities by encouraging residents to become more active. The Improvement Objective was chosen because it was recognised that being physically active is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle, and improving sport and leisure facilities and finding innovative ways to encourage residents to use the facilities on offer is one method of supporting residents to lead healthier active lives. There is also evidence to prove that active lifestyles can improve educational attainment and tackle social issues by transforming the lives of communities, particularly those in areas of deprivation.

There has been positive progress against most of the actions in the Improvement Objective, which were outlined in detail within Appendix 1 of the report. The report outlined the significant progress achieved in improving facilities and increasing levels of participation, and also recognised that more work is required, within current resource constraints. Officers explained that this Improvement Objective has not been re-selected for 2015/16 and therefore this would be the final report in respect of this area.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Officers responded to general queries in respect of key performance indicators and agreed to provide a report to the next meeting regarding the age profile of leisure centre users and a breakdown of the activities typically undertaken.

Members noted the contents of the report and the progress achieved against Improvement Objective No. 4 for 2014/15.

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

Arising from a query raised by Councillor C. Elsbury, it was agreed that a report detailing the age profile of leisure centre users and a breakdown of the activities typically undertaken would be provided at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

12. 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) Revenue Budget 2015/2016 Environment Directorate;
- (2) Caerphilly Local Access Forum Minutes - 13th March 2015;
- (3) Ystrad Mynach Town Centre Management Minutes - 7th April 2015;
- (4) Summary of Members' Attendance - Quarter 4 - 1st January 2015 to 14th May 2015.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR