



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2017 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

C Elsbury, J Fussell, B Jones, S Kent

Together with:

Town & Community Councillor Mrs J Hibbert, Mrs L Williams, Mr J Dilworth (Clerk), Mr C Thomas (Centre Manager Castle Court), Mr Tidridge (Heol Trecastell Residents Association)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), P. Hudson (Marketing and Events Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), K. Dowdall (Senior Engineer), M Reynolds (Project Manager), R. Collins (Contract Supervisor), C Jones & N Rolfe (Walters) & A. Jones (Clerk)

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Mr Highway opened the meeting and requested nominations for Chair. Councillor S Morgan nominated Councillor B Jones and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Elsbury.

Councillor B Jones took the Chair and invited nominations for Vice Chair. Councillor S Morgan nominated Councillor Elsbury and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Kent.

Councillor Elsbury accepted the position.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Bevan, D.T. Davies, C. Forehead, J. Pritchard, Town & Community Councillor Professor Deacon, Mr Jones (Tommy Cooper Society).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

4. MINUTES – 7TH MARCH 2017

The minutes were taken as read.

The Chair informed the group that she had spoken with Mr Whetter, following the previous meeting and discussed the Go2 MyTown website.

Mr Highway advised that the decision was made as part of the Medium Term Financial plan and a version of the Retail Property Index is on the Council's website as PDF document. I.T department have been asked to procure a developer for a new stand-alone Choose the High Street site.

The group were advised that following discussions this is ongoing and not concluded.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

5. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO CAERPHILLY TOWN

Andrew Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) introduced with report which provided an update on matters relating to Caerphilly Town and introduced Kate Dowdall and representatives from Walters to update the group on the Pwll y Pant Roundabout works.

Ms Dowdall introduced herself, officers and representatives from Walters to the group.

Ms Dowdall advised the group that a presentation was given to the group approximately a year ago she then passed plans around showing the improvement infrastructure that was agreed back in 2008.

The plans showed how pedestrian crossings by Pwll y Pant had to be incorporated and discussed how full-time/partial time signalisation will be introduced to enable easier flow of traffic.

The group were advised that there is a lot of infrastructure works that need to be carried out which include the diverting of sewers, gas main, power cables and construction of retaining walls.

There have been a number of issues with land ownership & ecology issues have needed to be addressed in relation to slow worms all of which has had to be funded.

The group were advised that the works have been well publicised for businesses and residents. There are three planned public information days where the contractor will be available to address any concerns. There is a dedicated website, news line feature, newspapers publicity and residents have been contacted to keep the community updated on the works. Residents have been encouraged to sign up to the road works alerts and email alerts.

Councillor Kent asked if other authorities have been notified of the disruptions. Ms Dowdall advised that all Councils were sent an email asking them to place the works and disruptions on their websites.

The group discussed problems with queueing at its busiest times but were advised it is difficult as there are no alternative routes so queueing will be inevitable.

Mr Rolfe advised that it is difficult as constraints within the tender means that one lane has to remain open in all directions. The group were advised that the works have been planned as sympathetically as possible to reduce and keep the disruption to as minimal as possible.

Councillor Kent questioned the timing of the works and would there be an economic impact starting the works in the winter.

Ms Dowdall advised that there was 1.5 million funding from Welsh Government which had to be spent by March under strict financial constraints. The Authority would have preferred more time but there is a tight schedule to organise and get things in place.

Members raised concerns as to whether the works would improve the traffic. Ms Dowdall advised that it is difficult to assess this until the works are completed but given the traffic modelling undertaken in 2013 and 2015 and based on the LDP plan, the scheme should make a difference and accommodate future developments too.

The group discussed how signalling would be monitored and adjusted to allow the best flow of traffic around the roundabout.

Councillor Elsbury advised that the modelling of this work is based on the current LDP which did not have developments at Pandy Road and Gwern y Doman & Virginia Park these sites may result in potentially 2500 extra cars on the road.

Councillor Elsbury asked if there was anything in place to help retailers.

Ms Dowdall advised that they would not be entitled to compensation as this is for residential properties only under the part 1 claims. Businesses would need to contact the valuation office which deals with Business Rates.

Ms Dowdall advised that part 1 claims are payable to residential properties 12 months after the roadworks have been completed if applied for.

The group discussed problems with areas such as: Llanbradach and Pandy Mawr Lane. Ms Dowdall confirmed that these will be monitored.

The group were advised that a number of designs were considered but due to the location and restriction of the site the design options are limited.

Councillor Fussell asked if HGV companies have been notified of works and disruptions.

The group were advised that a lot of publicity has been carried out for residents and businesses and the wider public. Signs are on display, notices advertised and information has been placed on websites. Mr Dean Smith from Traffic Management has also contacted freight companies.

The Chair thanked Ms Dowdall and Walters for their update.

Members were referred to update 1 provided in the report on Unique Places. The Chair thanked Mr Highway

Members were referred to update 2 provided in the report on 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet.

Mr Highway informed the group that so far there were only 20 offers in Caerphilly town centre this year compared to 40 in the previous year. The Chair thanked Mr Highway

Members were referred to update 4 provided in the report for Park Lane. The Chair thanked Mr Dallimore and stated that this was good news.

The Chair raised concern over the current condition of 73 Cardiff Road. Mr Highway confirmed that he advised colleagues in Building Control and also Planning Enforcement. Consideration was being given to writing to the owner to request that the buildings appearance is improved

Members were referred to update 5 provided in the report on Public Realm works by the visitor centre.

Councillor Elsbury confirmed that in relation to the works mentioned in the last paragraph, these have been completed and would like to pass on thanks to Mr Glenn Cooper for a fantastic job.

Mr Dallimore informed the group that the authority will be looking to place artwork there and Mr Cooper will be looking at surface and contacting members for school involvement. The Chair thanked Mr Dallimore and Mr Highway for update.

Members were referred to update 6 provided in the report on Workingmen's Hall. It was raised as to whether or not the funding previously agreed has been used. Mr Highway confirmed that the monies are still set aside and the work is planned.

Members were referred to update 7 provided in the report on summer and Christmas Events. Mr Hudson advised that the weather hindered the events. The Big Cheese brings people from all over the world and the Christmas market brings in large numbers of visitors by coaches from all of the Country.

There was additional security in place this year which had a positive impact on antisocial behaviour. Ms D Stephens (Pub watch) said that it was a massive success with very little anti- social behaviour and a pro-active and discreet police presence. Feedback from Pub watch was also positive.

Mr Hudson thanked Ms Stephens for her comments.

Mr Thomas (Centre Manager) advised the group that he has been liaising with the Events Team on ways to integrate the events planned in the Castle Court Shopping Centre with the wider town centre events programme. Mr Highway thanked Mr Thomas for his attendance at the meeting and support.

Members were referred to update 8 provided in the report on 'Choose the High Street Property Index'. Mr Highway confirmed that this information is available as a PDF document on Caerphilly Council Website.

Members were referred to update 9 provided in the report on Procurement of footfall counter. Mr Wilcox confirmed that feedback on the figures generated would be available once the new system is verified and calibrated. Mr Highway and the Chair thanked Mr Wilcox for all the hard work put in with liaising with the new provider.

Members were referred to update 10 Air Quality. Mr Highway advised the group that if there are any questions the members can contact Maria Godfrey directly and she will be happy to answer any queries

Members were referred to update 11 Parking Enforcement. Mr Highways advised that this is an issue that has been raised in other meetings and reassured the group that it was currently being considered by the Council and that Officers would be working alongside colleagues in neighbouring authorities and Gwent Police to explore the various options available. The matter had been place on the forward work programme for the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee and would be subject to full consultation processes before its consideration by Cabinet and approval by Council.

Members discussed current parking issues, the pressures on Gwent Police resources and its impact on illegal parking on the town. It was clarified that Gwent Police would still have obligations under the Road Traffic Act for some parking offences but that the majority of illegal parking would be subject to Civil Parking Enforcement in whichever way the council determined. It was noted that there was a statutory process to be followed which must be approved by Welsh Government.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the update.

Having fully considered its content the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group noted the update report.

6. CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Mr Highway presented the audit and the following items were raised

Homeless group have identified 3 individuals and a case officer is working with them on a one to one basis to provide help.

Mr Highway advised that the police are looking at patterns of behaviour where individuals are begging and trying to educate the public.

The group were advised that a donation of bulbs from Trethomas allotments has been given for the floral displays.

Ms Stephens has advised that the street café works very well. Mr Highway thanked Ms Stephens and Pubwatch members for their work on the scheme and in particular their support for the volunteers who run it.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

Mr Highway read out a letter received from the Tommy Cooper Society who wished to thank Cadw for the Tommy Cooper Fez-tival which was held in the Castle on Sunday 15th April 2017 and was attended by several thousand families and entertained by comedians and magicians. There was extensive media coverage and all proceeds were donated to Cadw for the defibrillator fund.

Mr Jones confirmed that a second fez-tival will be held on the 15th April 2018 and hoped that the Council and Cadw would see the value of the fez-tival to the area.

The meeting closed at 15:48pm

CHAIR