



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT:

Community Councillor Ms J. Rao - Chair
Councillor J. Ridgewell - Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Andrews, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, L. Jeremiah, C. Thomas, R. Whiting

Cabinet Member for Social Care and Wellbeing - Councillor C. Cuss

Community/Town Council Representatives

Aber Valley	-
Argoed	-
Bargoed	-
Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen	-
Blackwood	-
Caerphilly	-
Darran Valley	-
Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry	-
Gelligaer	- J.A. Pritchard
Llanbradach	- Mrs. A. Reed, Mr. W.M. Thompson (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	- Ms. J. Rao
Nelson	- Mrs. G. Davies, Mr. T. White (Clerk)
New Tredegar	-
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	- Mrs. H. Treherne (Clerk)
Rhymney	- D.T. Williams, Mrs H. Williams
Risca East	-
Risca Town	- B. Hancock, B. Campbell (Clerk)
Van	- J. Leek

Together with:-

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), M. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), J. Reynolds (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), K. Dowdall (Senior Engineer), E. Sullivan (Interim Scrutiny Officer), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, J. Pritchard, Mrs M.E. Sargent and J. Taylor, Community Councillors D. Davies, D. Woodman and B. Allen and J. Hold, Mr. G. Williams, Ms. C. Mortimer, Mrs. G. Thomas and Mr. J. Dilworth (Clerks of Blackwood, Darran Valley and Rhymney, Gelligaer, Maesycwmmmer and Van Community/Town Councils respectively).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Community Councillor J Pritchard declared an interest in that she is a member of GAVO and proposes to speak on the item relating to GAVO when discussing the report in the draft budget proposals 2018/19.

Councillor Mrs C. Andrews declared an interest in the item relating to leisure provision throughout the county borough in that she is related to an employee within leisure services.

3. MINUTES - 19TH JULY 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2017 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

4. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT (MINUTE NO. 5)

Members were advised that a report is being prepared to be presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 12th December and a copy would be sent to all Clerks once it is available.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the following items raised by the Town and Community Council Liaison Committee.

5. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19

Mr S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) gave a presentation on the draft savings proposals for 2018/19. He advised that the report provides details of draft budget proposals for 2018/19 totalling £7.205m and is based on the Welsh Government (WG) provisional 2018/19 Local Government Financial Settlement.

In order to put the budget into context, he referred to the funding that is taken into consideration, revenue support grant and share of business rates from Welsh Government and council tax, making a total of £325.43m. With the aid of a pie chart, Mr Harris demonstrated how the county borough currently spends its money in each service area. He advised that in that we are facing a 1% cut in funding in funding from Welsh Government for 2018/19 there is a need to find savings totalling £7.2 m. In considering the financial outlook going forward, it is anticipated that savings of £11.02m will be required for 2019/20, £11.44m for 2020/21 and £11.48m for 2021/22.

Mr. Harris then made further reference to the report presented to Cabinet earlier in the day and advised of the draft savings proposals for 2018/19, with a proposed increase in council tax of 4.52%. In referring to the whole authority cost pressures, inescapable service pressures and services commitments that must be taken into account, he advised that the appendices to the report provide details of saving proposals by directorate/service area. It also shows those that will have no impact on the public (£4.682m) and those that will have impact on the public (low £1.218m and medium £1.305m).

Reference was then made to the consultation process which was launched on 13th November 2017 and runs to 8th January 2018 and to the methods that are being used to engage the public and enable them to have an opportunity to provide comments on the list of draft savings proposals for 2018/19:-

- Online and paper consultation.
- Articles in Newline.
- Use of Social Media.
- Face to Face: Making use of the Customer Service Vehicle, series of Drop-In Sessions across the borough, Viewpoint Panel, Community Groups, Special Interest Groups, Youth/Junior Forums, 50+ Forum etc.
- Engagement with employees and the Trade Unions.
- Consultation with Town and Community Councils.
- Consultation with the Voluntary Sector.

In addition to the above, there will be a series of special scrutiny committee meetings where Members will consider detailed reports on the savings proposals that will have an impact on the public (copies of which will be made available to each Clerk). Following the closure of the consultation process, a further detailed report will be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

In the ensuing debate, concerns were expressed at proposals to introduce a fee of £20 for household rat treatments and the impact this will have with residents not reporting rat infestations as they may be liable to pay the fee. Reference was then made to the impact on the voluntary sector in relation to proposals to decommission a number of contracts (Age Concern Hospital Discharge contract, 2 Luncheon Clubs contracts, DEWIS advocacy contract, Care and Repair contracts, GAVO and MENCAP contracts) and reduce services in other areas (externally commissioned respite care and Crossroads (Advocacy) service and to the comments listed for each. It was suggested that the cost of meals on wheels should be higher than the proposed increase of 20p per meal in order that the above and not cut.

In noting these concerns, Mr Harris advised that he would be attending the meeting of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee scheduled for 6th December 2017 as part of the consultation process to seek views on the proposals.

In consideration the issues raised, Mr Harris advised that decisions would be required to take any suggestions forward and that such concerns should be submitted as part of the consultation process. He reiterated that detailed reports on the savings proposals that will have an impact on the public will be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committee meetings early in December and that copies would be made available to each Clerk).

Reference was also made to the consultation on proposals to close Pontllanfraith leisure centre and the affect this would have on the exercise referral classes (this was dealt with under the next item when Members were advised that these classes had been relocated to New Tredegar some time ago).

Those present thanked Mr. Harris for his informative presentation and for responding to the queries raised during the course of the debate.

6. LEISURE PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY BOROUGH

Mark Williams, (Head of Community and Leisure Services), gave an overview of the current provision within the county borough and advised that there are 11 Leisure centres. In addition there are 4 school operated facilities at Islwyn high, Y Gwindy, YGG Cwm Rhymni and Lewis Boys, Markham community house and sports centre and the swimming pool at St Martin's comprehensive school. This number represents more than any other local authority in Wales.

It was reported that the 11 leisure centres cost the authority circa £1.8 million per annum, with 9 of the 11 falling into the 30-50 year age bracket (Cefn Fforest being the oldest). There is currently a maintenance backlog of circa £1 million across the 11 leisure centres.

In that this level of leisure centre provision is not sustainable in the current financial climate, a sport and leisure strategy, which will look to rationalise stock, is currently in draft form and once available the town and community councils will be consulted on its content.

In response to a query raised in relation to exercise referral classes (NERS) (which had been raised during debate on the previous item), it was confirmed that these have been relocated to New Tredegar leisure centre and there are ongoing discussions with ABUHB to facilitate cardiac rehabilitation at that centre. With regards to Pontllanfraith leisure centre, consultation on proposals to close the centre is currently underway, with a report detailing responses received being presented to Cabinet on 13th December 2017. Mr Williams gave assurances that Cabinet would take all consultation responses into account when making their decision on the future of the leisure centre.

A query was raised as to whether leisure centres could be transferred to trusts and it was explained that other authorities have had mixed experiences with this course of action but it will be considered once the leisure strategy is completed.

Members thanked Mr Williams for his presentation and for responding to the queries raised during the course of the debate.

7. A468/A469 PWLLYPANT ROUNDABOUT

Kate Dowdall (Senior Engineer) attended to provide details on the current position with this project and by way of an update she advised that the A468/9 Pwllypant Roundabout Highway Improvement Scheme was awarded to Walters UK Ltd on 6th September 2017. Construction works on the Pwllypant Roundabout started on the 9th October 2017. Unfortunately, due to a combination of events outside of CCBC's control (emergency gas leak repair at Maesycwmmmer, accidents on the A470 and M4) significant traffic delays were encountered by commuters travelling through the roundabout in the first few days of the works. These delays have now abated and council's monitoring of the scheme indicates that journey times have increased on average by 10 - 15 minutes as a direct result of the construction works. The current construction programme for the works is 52 weeks, however, the construction team are working to reduce this.

There had been a meeting held with the business community where their concerns had been aired. The impact of the temporary traffic management is under review and further mitigation measures are being considered. It was explained that currently, traffic is restricted to one lane around the circulatory and on the approaches to the roundabout. As part of these measures, the contractor has been instructed to open up the approaches from Trecenydd and Llanbradach to two lanes in the run up to Christmas and is aiming to achieve this by the 30th November 2017. It is hoped that the changes will reduce congestion and improve traffic flow at the roundabout over the Christmas period. The approaches will revert to one lane in the New Year.

Members were advised that there is a dedicated link on the CCBC website regarding the proposed highway improvements to Pwll-y-Pant Roundabout and this is updated as the scheme progresses.

The address of the link is: <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pwllypant>.

In addition the council operates an email update service for those people who have registered. The address of the link to register for this service is: <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Alerts>

Live traffic showing delays can be viewed using Google Maps to zoom into the area and switching on the 'Traffic' view.

Concerns were expressed on the knock on effect this work is having on other routes with an increased volume of traffic and subsequent delays and it was noted that motorists have been advised to consider other routes where appropriate. It was noted that prior to the commencement of the works on site there had been extensive consultation undertaken advising motorists to avoid the roundabout where possible. In addition to this, and as part of the ongoing communication strategy, traffic management measures include signs at strategic points throughout the borough advising of the works so the motorists can choose to alter their journey if they wish.

Reference was made to a number of other works currently underway (at Junction 28 of the M4 and to the A467 Bassaleg roundabout) and as to whether there had been any consultation on the proposed timing of the works. Ms Dowdall advised that meetings have been held with Welsh Government regarding these works and Officers have been liaising with neighbouring local authorities about proposed highway works in the area and what mitigation is possible to minimise the impact on road users. Unfortunately as the award was received in March 2017 (and has to be spent April 2018), and following the procurement, and to meet the required timeframes, the works were required to commence as soon as possible. The other schemes mentioned are under the same financial pressures. Officers co-ordinate the best they can and whilst there is an embargo on statutory highway schemes, where urgent (as in the case of Maesycwmmmer), works must be undertaken as a priority.

Moving forward, an assurance was sought that improvements to this section of the strategic highway network has sufficient capacity to meet future needs. Ms Dowdall advised that the scheme will improve the capacity of the junctions and improve traffic flow along the strategic route, which will improve efficiency, making better use of the existing highway network.

9. PUBLIC HEALTH WALES BILL

It was noted that the bill extends to smoke free areas to settings including school grounds and hospital grounds, and introduce a licensing scheme for procedures such as tattooing. It will also place a duty on local authorities to produce a toilets strategy, require public bodies to consider how their decisions will affect people's health, prohibit the intimate piercing of children, make pharmacy services more responsive to their communities and place a duty on the Welsh Government to produce a national strategy on preventing and reducing obesity.

Members were advised that Welsh Government have not yet advised of the timetable for implementation or the consultation on regulations to support the Bill and as such, there is no progress that can be made at this stage. There will be consultation on the Regulations, and an opportunity to respond as part of the consultation process at that time.

Reference was made to the Tenant Liaison Officers on site in Nelson seeking views as to how the allocation of the housing revenue account should be spent in the area and to the fact that most had requested public conveniences. It was thought that this relates to views on environmental works as part of the Wales Housing Quality Standard project and could not be used for this purpose but enquiries would be made.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm