



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
TUESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 2018 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chair

Councillors:

C. Elsbury, A. Hussey, S. Kent, J. Ridgewell, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, A. Whitcombe,
T.J. Williams and W. Williams

Cabinet Members:

N. George (Neighbourhood Services), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations Champion), Mrs E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection)

Together with:

M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), R. Hartshorn (Head of Policy and Public Protection), M. Headington (Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager), H. Jones (Principal Waste Management Officer), M. Lloyd (Acting Head of Engineering Services), R. Kyte (Team Leader Strategic & Development Planning), T. Stephens (Interim Head of Planning), T. White (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), L. Lane (Corporate Solicitor), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

Councillor K. Etheridge (Blackwood Local Ward Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, Mrs C. Forehead (Vice-Chair), R.W. Gough, A.G. Higgs, Ms P. Leonard and B. Zaplatynski.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 12TH DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12th December 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 12) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. MINUTES – 13TH DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13th December 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 4) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. MINUTES – 18TH JANUARY 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18th January 2018 (minute nos. 1 - 3) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

7. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the reports from Councillors N. George, Mrs E. Stenner and S. Morgan which provided an update on their respective portfolios, and had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

The report from Councillor N. George (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services) updated Members on the Pride in Your Place Awards 2017, as well as the work of Scrutiny Working Groups. The report from Councillor Mrs E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection) provided an update on Development Management and Strategic Planning, including preparations surrounding the regional Strategic Development Plan.

The report from Councillor S. Morgan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability) updated Members on developments across the Engineering Projects Group, Highways Operations Group, Transportation Engineering Group, Welsh Government TAIS tourist enhancement scheme, local tourism, the WG Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme, the Welsh Government Economic Action Plan, and the Regeneration Strategy and Caerphilly Basin Masterplan to be considered later in the meeting.

In referring to Councillor S. Morgan's report, a Member queried whether a road traffic impact assessment had been carried out in the area surrounding the Pwll y Pant roundabout improvements. The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would consult with Officers following the meeting and respond to the Member in due course.

The Cabinet Members were thanked for their reports.

8. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) presented the report, which outlined details of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period February 2018 to July 2018. The Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet Work Programme as appended to the report and suggest any changes prior to it being finalised and published on the Council's website.

It was noted that the agenda would be lighter than anticipated on 27th March 2018 due to changing scope for the Waste Review report. In view of this, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to the scheduling of two additional reports for this date: Land Drainage Byelaws, and Sustainable Urban Drainage – Legislation Changes. The Scrutiny Committee also agreed that the Review of Town Centre Management and Event Programme report scheduled for 15th May 2018 be split into two reports to allow ease of consideration for each item.

Members were reminded that a workshop to consider and agree the Committee's forward work programme for the year ahead will be held in May 2018, and were encouraged to make every effort to attend. In addition, the Chair referred to the potential for site visits ahead of several future agenda items and stressed the importance of Member support when such visits are being arranged by Officers.

Subject to the foregoing additions, it was unanimously agreed that the revised Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

9. APPOINTMENT - MARK S. WILLIAMS

The Scrutiny Committee congratulated Mr Mark S. Williams on his recent appointment to the post of Interim Corporate Director of Communities.

10. CABINET REPORTS

The Cabinet report listed on the agenda had not been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION – PROVISION OF RECYCLE BINS TO RESIDENTS

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor K. Etheridge, which at his request, had been deferred from the Scrutiny Committee of 12th December 2018.

Councillor Etheridge presented his Notice of Motion, which called for current recycle bin policy to be amended "to take into consideration vulnerable people who have never received a recycle bin provided by the Authority, and one is provided on request free of charge only in exceptional circumstances". Councillor Etheridge explained that 'statements of truth' were completed by two elderly disabled residents in support of their circumstances, and he called for the policy to show a more sympathetic and reasonable approach to residents in exceptional circumstances regarding replacement bins. He also referred to the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 13th December 2016, during which it was resolved that the current charging policy for replacement bins be retained and the option of issuing second hand containers at a lower price be explored further by relevant Members and Officers.

In responding to the representations from Councillor Etheridge, Officers confirmed that over 50,000 households were issued with a brown recycling bin free of charge upon introduction in 2009, and that a charge for replacements has only been levied since Medium Term Financial

Plan savings came into effect in the last few years. It was explained that the charging policy is equally applied to all residents and not open to interpretation, and that it could be very difficult for the Authority to define and determine “exceptional circumstances”. Members were reminded of the £60k savings that had been achieved by removing the provision for free replacement bins, and it was emphasised that it would not be feasible to incorporate any changes to the charging regime into the budget proposals in time for presentation to Council the following week.

Several Members commented on the policy of charging for a replacement bin even if the original is stolen. In response to queries on replacement costs and the number of replacements issued, it was confirmed that a £25 charge is levied for replacements and that the number of replacement requests has significantly decreased compared to when free replacements were being offered. Members were also reminded that residents may put out recycling in clear sacks or the older-style purple recycling boxes if they do not wish to pay for a replacement bin. A Member suggested that there was scope to examine a means-tested approach towards the charging regime for recycling bins and Officers outlined the added bureaucracy and transaction costs that could arise from this process.

Having considered the Notice of Motion, it was moved and seconded that a further report be prepared to examine the financial implications on a means tested approach towards the charging regime for replacement recycling bins. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that a further report be prepared for consideration by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee to examine the financial implications on a means tested approach towards the charging regime for replacement recycling bins.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

12. DELIVERY OF “STREETSCENE” SERVICES IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH – MEMBERSHIP AND SCOPE OF SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Mark S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities) introduced the report, which sought the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the establishment and scope of a cross-party Scrutiny Working Group to examine the delivery of “streetscene” services such as grounds/green space maintenance and cleansing.

Members were advised that due to reducing budgets across these services over the past few years and likely future pressure on the Authority’s finances, there is a need to consider the relevant importance of these services to the Council and its electorate and also consider whether specific elements of these services should take priority over other parts of the service. This exercise will culminate in a recommendation to the full Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet, and will enable a cross-party, member-driven strategic approach to be taken in the future financing and delivery of these key front-line services. Members were therefore asked to give consideration to the membership of the Scrutiny Working Group, scope of its work programme and timescale for reporting the outcome back to the full Scrutiny Committee.

Presentations were received from T. White (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager) and Mike Headington (Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager) on the current methods of service delivery for key “streetscene” services across their respective service areas. Members noted the details of the services provided, budgetary pressures, staffing structure, geographical spread and customer satisfaction levels across both areas. Within Waste Strategy and Operations, Officers outlined cleansing statistics and standards, details of budgetary considerations and pressures, key spend areas, and details of partnership working.

Across Green Spaces and Transport Services, an overview of parks and countryside operations was given, including the service remit and frequency of grass cutting programme, and the management of green spaces, country parks and nature conservational areas. The Scrutiny Committee were also provided with an overview of cemetery management and future development plans, as well as the management of war memorials and allotments across the county borough.

Officers responded to queries in relation to fly tipping and the disposal of waste collected by partner agencies, and it was also confirmed that the Authority does not send any waste directly to landfill. Members discussed the Council's remit regarding the management of bowling greens. In response to a query regarding the reduction in posts across the streetscene service areas, Officers explained that these had occurred through processes such as retirement and vacancy management.

Discussion took place regarding the establishment of the Scrutiny Working Group. It was confirmed that these meetings would take the form of daytime sessions and that the relevant Head of Service / Service Manager would liaise with Working Group Members regarding the specifics of timescales, scope of services to be examined and scope of work for the Group.

Nominations to the Group were sought and received from Councillors J. Ridgewell, T.J. Williams, W. Williams, A. Hussey and J. Scriven, and a nomination was also received for Councillor R.W. Gough in his absence. The Chair asked that Councillor Gough and the other Scrutiny Committee Members not in attendance be contacted following the meeting, to determine whether they would be interested in joining the Working Group.

A Member requested that feedback from the Group be reported to the Scrutiny Committee and it was confirmed that a report would be presented in June 2018 to detail the outcome and findings of the Working Group.

The Officers were thanked for their presentations and for responding to the queries raised during the course of the debate.

13. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH DRAFT REGENERATION STRATEGY – A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS 2018-2023 SUPPLEMENTED BY THE DRAFT CAERPHILLY BASIN MASTERPLAN

Tim Stephens (Interim Head of Planning) and Rhian Kyte (Team Leader Strategic & Development Planning) presented the report, which sought Members' views on the Draft Regeneration Strategy entitled 'A Foundation for Success 2018-2023' and the Draft Caerphilly Basin Masterplan, prior to presentation of these documents to Cabinet for approval to carry out a public consultation exercise.

Members were advised that in order to benefit from the transformative change in the wider Cardiff Capital Region with the investment of City Deal, the Valleys Taskforce and further funding streams, it is necessary to set out the strategic priorities for the regeneration and enhancement of Caerphilly County Borough. This involves identifying opportunities that will make it more prosperous, healthier, resilient and equal, setting priorities that align and enhance regional work and are readily capable of being realised.

The Draft Regeneration Strategy has been developed as an overarching document to set out and achieve these aims and will be underpinned by a number of other documents, including the Draft Caerphilly Basin Masterplan, which sets out the future development and regeneration opportunities proposed for the Caerphilly town centre within the context of the wider Caerphilly Basin. The Draft Regeneration Strategy concentrates on 4 strategic themes (Supporting People, Supporting Business, Supporting Quality of Life, and Connecting People and Places) which set out the broad principles for regeneration and the strategic priorities to be tackled. Officers outlined examples of how these could be achieved. The Draft

Regeneration Strategy also acknowledges the challenges that face the County Borough, seeks to identify the actions and delivery mechanisms required to address key issues, and places an emphasis on partnership working.

Members noted that subject to Cabinet endorsement, it was intended to undertake a 4-week public consultation exercise on the Draft Regeneration Strategy and Draft Caerphilly Basin Masterplan (from 26th March 2018 to 24th April 2018). A copy of both documents were appended to the report.

Detailed discussion took place on the contents of the Draft Regeneration Strategy and it was agreed that Officers would respond to Members directly on a number of in-depth queries following the meeting. Members referenced a need to improve educational achievement and highway infrastructure across the county borough and sought clarification on the intended lead agencies for these areas. Officers explained that the Draft Regeneration Strategy places a focus on multi-sector working and for agencies to work together to implement such improvements. Officers responded to queries regarding similar strategies in the past and the outcomes and actions that have been generated as a result. It was explained that the new Regeneration Strategy is intended to fill the identified gaps and take a partnership approach towards meeting these aims, including the proposed establishment of a Board to co-ordinate and take forward the actions identified in the Draft Strategy.

Concerns were expressed that some proposals contained within the Draft Regeneration Strategy (such as the development of a Caerphilly South East Bypass) could potentially conflict with the Draft Outline Regional Transport Strategy, the Council's Local Development Plan and Air Quality Action Plan. It was emphasised that the Draft Outline Regional Transport Strategy represents a regional approach whereas the Draft Regeneration Strategy concentrates on a more county-wide approach. It was also explained to Members that the Draft Regeneration Strategy reflects the current adopted Local Development Plan and Air Quality Action Plan and that a number of proposals contained within the Draft Strategy may be reconsidered moving forward.

Discussion also took place regarding the Draft Caerphilly Basin Masterplan, and Officers outlined the series of Strategic Objectives which will drive the delivery for the vision of the town and translate directly into a series of projects and actions. In response to Members' queries, it was explained that the Draft Masterplan seeks to harness the opportunities arising from the City Deal Investment Fund and will also incorporate the areas surrounding Caerphilly. It was explained that the Masterplan will be complemented by a number of other strategies, such as the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and future regional Strategic Development Plan, and Officers also provided further information on how potential City Deal funding could potentially be utilised in order to help deliver some of the proposals contained within the document

Reference was made to the consultation process and Officers confirmed that following ratification by Cabinet and a period of public consultation, the proposals within both the Draft Regeneration Strategy and Draft Masterplan would be revised to take into account comments received and reported to Council. Members expressed concerns that a 4-week period of consultation might not be sufficient for interested parties to fully examine the sizeable draft documents.

Following discussion on this matter, it was moved and seconded and unanimously agreed that an extended consultation period for both documents (from 4 weeks to 6 weeks) be recommended to Cabinet.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the foregoing amendment in respect of the consultation period, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. Members took a vote on each of the recommendations in turn and by a show of hands and the majority present (and in noting there were 3 against with 1 abstention), it was

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that for the reasons contained therein, the Draft Regeneration Strategy 'A Foundation for Success 2018-2023' be endorsed by Cabinet as the basis for a public consultation exercise commencing 26th March 2018 for a period of 6 weeks.

By a show of hands (and in noting there were 4 against with 1 abstention) and following the casting vote of the Chair it was

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that for the reasons contained therein, the Draft Caerphilly Basin Masterplan be endorsed as the basis for a public consultation exercise commencing 26th March 2018 for a period of 6 weeks.

14. DRAFT OUTLINE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Marcus Lloyd (Acting Head of Engineering Services) presented the report, which asked Members to consider the draft Cardiff Capital Region - Outline Regional Transport Strategy (appended to the report), along with the consultation document issued by the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA).

Members were advised that the role of the CCTRA is to lead the delivery of the transport vision for the region and this draft outline strategy is considered a key step towards its realisation. The strategy provides a baseline on which to develop and assess plans, programmes and projects in support of the City Deal, and for partnership working with Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Transport for Wales, industry partners and other key stakeholders. The consultation will allow all key stakeholders to ensure that their objectives are considered and that the consultation will allow the strategy to be informed and refined from the stakeholder knowledge and expertise.

The Scrutiny Committee were referred to the Draft Strategy as appended to the report, which also listed short-term actions to progress the Strategic Priority interventions, and a draft pipeline of transport schemes. It was explained that the purpose of the consultation exercise is to identify whether there is stakeholder agreement with the transport objectives, the proposed Strategic Priority Interventions and the short term actions to progress these actions. The stakeholder consultation questions were included in Appendix B to the strategy and Members noted the closing date of 23rd March 2018.

Discussion took place regarding the need for sustainable and accessible transport across the county borough to access central areas such as Cardiff, and Officers confirmed that these are being examined under the aims of the South Wales Metro scheme, which will look at improving Park and Ride links and highway network connections and place an emphasis on regional working. Officers provided an update on the tender process in relation to the Metro scheme and clarification on the bid criteria. Members expressed a need for a rail link to Newport and it was confirmed that this is being considered as part of the Metro scheme. Members queried progress in respect of electrification works by 2040 and Officers confirmed that this is being examined to determine whether this is achievable. Members also expressed a need for affordable rail travel as an incentive to reduce car usage.

Following discussion on the report, the Scrutiny Committee supported the Draft Strategy in principle but felt it would be beneficial to seek the views of all Members within the county borough on the stakeholder consultation questions. It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability would arrange to circulate the Strategy documents and stakeholder questions to all Members in order to seek their views and to enable an overall response to be produced on behalf of the Authority in accordance with the prescribed closing date.

The meeting closed at 7.25 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 27th March 2018, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR