



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 10TH JULY 2019 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, V. James, L. Jeremiah, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe and R. Whiting

Community/Town Council Representatives

Aber Valley	-
Argoed	- J. Moore
Bargoed	- H. Llewellyn
Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen	- Mrs M. Jones (Clerk)
Blackwood	- D. Davies
Caerphilly	- Mrs J. Hibbert.
Darran Valley	- P. Roberts and R. Chapman
Draethen, Waterloo and Rudy	- Mrs. V. Steel (Clerk)
Gelligaer	- J.A. Pritchard, Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Llanbradach	- Mrs. A. Reed, Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Maesycwmmer	- Ms. J. Rao (Vice Chair)
Nelson	- Mrs. G. Davies, Mr. T. White (Clerk)
New Tredegar	- Mrs B. Gingell
Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn	-
Rhymney	- D.T. Williams, Mr. G. Williams (Clerk)
Risca East	-
Risca Town	- T. Davies, B. Campbell (Clerk)
Van	- Mrs M. Jones (Clerk)

Together with:-

C. Edwards (Manager, Environment Health), L. James (Planning Officer), P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

It was with great sadness that the Chair paid tribute to Mr W. Thompson, former Officer of Caerphilly County Borough Council and Clerk to Llanbradach and Pwllypant Community

Council who had recently passed away. The Committee stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect for their friend and colleague.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: A. Angel, C. Andrews, A.G. Higgs, P. Leonard, T. Parry, M. James, M.E. Sargent, B. Zaplatynski and C. Cuss (Cabinet Member for Social Services).

Community Councillors: A. Bedlasi, P. Yandle (Aber Valley), C. Erasmas (Blackwood), K. Stanworth (Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry), B. Allen (Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn), J. Blackburn (Risca East), B. Hancock (Risca Town), J. Leek and T. Graham (Van).

and Clerks: Mrs S. Hughes (Aber Valley), G. James (Argoed), H. Williams (Bargoed), J. Hold (Blackwood), P. Davy (Caerphilly), G. Williams (Darran Valley), D. Gronow (New Tredegar), H. Treherne (Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn) and G. James (Risca East).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

Community Councillor H. Llewellyn confirmed that he had given apologies for the meeting but was show as present in the minutes. It was agreed that subject to the aforementioned correction the minutes be noted.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th March (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Meeting Start Time

In relation to the start time of forthcoming meetings, Members noted the revised start time for this meeting and the preference expressed at the Community Council Pre-meeting that they commence at 7.00pm. Members discussed the options including the possible use of special meetings for important issues, with some flexibility of start time for these matters, whilst retaining the 7.00pm start for the majority of meetings. However some Members felt that a 6.00pm start time would allow more time for debate particularly on more complex issues such as the forthcoming Budget consultation.

Having considered the various options it was agreed that all forthcoming meetings should commence at 6.00pm.

Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Toilet Strategy – Update

Clarification was sought in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Toilet Strategy and its compliance particularly in view of the recent judicial review on Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that an EIA had been conducted, formally approved and was without defect.

Clarification was then sought in relation to the consultation process for the strategy and reference to comments made by the Interim Corporate Director Communities during the Scrutiny process. The Committee felt that the consultation with Community Councils had not

been sufficient and the outcome of the strategy questionnaire could not be considered as a true reflection of opinion due to insufficient response numbers and the fact that the on-line questionnaire had been closed for part of the final day, curtailing the ability of people to respond.

The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that there had been wide ranging consultation including direct communication with Community Councils via the Liaison Officer. In terms of the closure of public conveniences as part of the Budget 2019/20 proposals there had been a very limited number of responses received despite it being highlighted on the Council's website, Newsline, Town Centre Management Group Meetings and discussed at the Community Council Liaison Group.

5. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) PRESENTATION

L. James (Planning Officer) gave a presentation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and how it could be utilised by Community Councils. It was explained that the CIL was a 'tax' on new planning developments to pay towards infrastructure improvements.

The way in which the fund was allocated was explained and it was noted that Town and Community Councils would receive 15% of the CIL pot, with bids scored and evaluated by an Assessment Panel before being presented to Cabinet for final approval. The Officer confirmed that areas without a Community Council also had a 15% allocation; however projects in these areas would be developed by Officers in consultation with Local Ward Members.

Officers would welcome any bids that would address infrastructure demands and Community Councils might want to look at match funding opportunities and support would be provided to help where possible. Members were advised that it had taken a while for the CIL money to accumulate however the fund currently stood at £1.4M.

Projects for which CIL money could be used were outlined and included play equipment, pathway improvements, PV solar installation e.g. a school roof or school/community Eco project and to progress electric vehicle facilities.

Clarification was sought in relation to CIL projects and it was confirmed that it could only be used for capital expenditure, unfortunately not for maintenance or repairs. Any project would need to consider this type of on-cost in relation to bids. Clarification was then sought in relation to adoption of roads and whether CIL money could be used for this process, the Officer confirmed that it could.

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) gave a presentation in relation to electric vehicles and how CIL monies could be used by Town and Community Councils to provide infrastructure for their use. The Officer outlined the drivers for the change to electric vehicles including the positive contribution they would make to climate change. Members were advised that Parliament had agreed a ban on the production of all petrol vehicles by 2040 so it was important to take vital steps to a supportive infrastructure in preparation for this date.

The Committee were advised of the strategic approach being taken in terms of carbon emissions and the work done to secure a carbon neutral local authority. There was a very real need to become more proactive in this area, Members were referred to a map which detailed current charge points and the various types of point, charging times and vehicles was explained.

It was noted that private developers were taking electric vehicles into account through the application process however a long term and holistic approach was needed. To date a feasibility study across all Gwent was underway, all public buildings and car parks would need to include facilities going forward. Public Service Board partners were also working together

on this issue. Funding streams were outlined and noted that central government funding was available to progress and currently 12 sites had been identified for match funding. The next steps to be taken were detailed and the Officer confirmed that CIL funding could be utilised for this and he would be happy to talk to Community Councils on how to progress.

Clarification was sought as to whether the charging points generated any income. Members were advised that it was envisaged that charging stations would operate in a similar way to current petrol stations, so there would be a charge and therefore would be an opportunity for profit.

Concern was expressed that as this was a non-essential service in today's economic climate money would be better spent elsewhere, for instance public conveniences. The Officer advised that this was driven by central government legislation so this must be progressed and the push for electric vehicle infrastructure and the future of electric vehicles stemmed from there.

Concern was then expressed at the cost of electric vehicles, particular when replacing an existing fleet of Council vehicles. The Officer confirmed that electric vehicles were currently very expensive however this would reduce as demand increased and in terms of Council vehicles their replacement was judged on a case by case basis but there were definite wins in using electric vehicles in terms of climate change and it was highly appropriate to pursue.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE

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

6. CAERPHILLY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

It was confirmed that C. Councillor J. A Pritchard and C. Councillor G. Davies would make the presentation to the Public Services Board meeting in September 2019.

Clarification was sought in relation to permanent representation by Community Councils on the PSB. The Officer confirmed that the offer made by the Public Services Board was not for permanent representation but for representatives from the Community Council to present how they could work with the PSB to deliver the Wellbeing Plan. Disappointment was expressed that this was not a permanent place but the Committee were hopeful that this would be the first step to securing that level of representation.

7. CCBC TOILET STRATEGY (UPDATE)

C. Edwards, Manager Environmental Health provide a brief update on the pathway of the Local Toilet Strategy and Members questions were welcomed.

Clarification was sought as to whether businesses could still join the strategy; the Officer confirmed that if contact details were forwarded to her department they would be happy to add.

The Officer provided an update on the digital mapping system used in relation to registering public accessible toilets, including hours of opening, facilities available etc. and advised that there was a wealth of information on public convenience available online and any new business can be added to the mapping system.

Concerns were expressed that the strategy did not take into account people with disabilities and that this was discriminatory. The Officer assured Members that the strategy had looked

at all legislation and criteria and it was fully compliant. In terms of closures the strategy shows the alternatives on offer in order to mitigate the loss including facilities in libraries, leisure centres and other buildings that allow access to the public. Stickers are clearly displayed in windows of businesses and buildings that allow the public access to their toilets. A Member referenced Ystrad Mynach Library and difficulties that they had experienced when trying the access facilities there. Staff had been very resistant to their request and no sticker had been on display. The Officer expressed her concern regarding the attitude of staff and confirmed that she would provide feedback to the Head of Library Services.

In terms of the stickers, she confirmed that they had been distributed to all participating premises and should be displayed in front windows, although they can be obscured by shutters when the building is closed. Assurances were given that checks would be made to ensure that stickers were being properly displayed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the Welsh Government Community Facilities Scheme, whereby an amount of money was made available to businesses such as public houses, to open their facilities to the public. It was the Members understanding that this money had not been taken up and asked why it had not been earmarked to keep toilets open. The Officer confirmed that as the funding in question had not been ring-fenced it had been absorbed into the Revenue Support Grant and used to fund other projects throughout the County Borough and advised that the spending of the Council Budget was not a matter under her control.

Member expressed their disappointment that Health Authorities had not participated to any extent in the strategy, with only two medical practices mentioned. The Officer confirmed that the Local Health Boards had been contacted and asked to participate but only three had come forward but they were working to encourage additional facilities to come forward as they are ideally situated within the community and have extended opening hours.

Concerns were expressed that some buildings, particularly Council Offices were not open in the evenings or on weekends. It was noted that the strategy would be reviewed and would look at encouraging more local businesses to take part. Concerns were then expressed that Leisure Centres were included on the list particularly given the Council plans for closures. The Officer advised that she couldn't comment on the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy or Leisure Centres as this was outside her service area and confirmed that the Toilet Strategy presented the best way to mitigate the closure of public conveniences and reminded Members that the Local Authority has no legal requirement to provide public conveniences.

With regard to provision it was noted that the Taxi Association had made an offer to work with Town and Community Councils to reopen facilities in the same way as it had in Caerphilly. Sadly, Members were advised that the recently reopened toilets had been badly vandalised on their first day of opening. It was also noted that The Artisan Market in Blackwood would be providing toilets for public use, in Risca Town; Churches in the area were exploring options to reopen. Bargoed Town Council was also exploring options to reopen their toilets and Ystrad Mynach toilets had been taken on by Library Services.

Clarification was sought in relation to the funding for the turnstiles installed in Caerphilly, it was confirmed that the Town Council had paid for them.

In conclusion the Committee noted recently correspondence from Welsh Government excluding toilets from water rates which it was hoped would encourage greater participation.

8. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Community Council Liaison Officer referred Members to the update included in their agenda pack and confirmed that an update on Civil Parking Enforcement would be presented

to Elected Members in October and she would look into the possibility of the presentation being made available to Town and Community Councils.

Members made reference to enforcement issues in areas where yellow lines have been renewed. Residents having parked in those areas for numerous years without issue have now been subject to enforcement and it was felt that traffic regulation orders needed to be revisited in order to address incidents of the nature.

Members also asked if the impact of Town Centre footfall as a result of civil parking enforcement had been looked. The Liaison Officer confirmed that regular updates on footfall were presented to the various Town Centre Management Groups. Community Councils were represented at these meetings so would aware of any changes in footfall.

Concerns was expressed that there was no direct telephone number for Civil Parking Enforcement on the CCBC Website and the Officer agreed to feed this back to the service area.

A request was made for an Officer to attend the next meeting in order to provide further information on the process; the Liaison Officer agreed that she would contact the Lead Officer and if available ask him to attend.

Clarification was sought as to how much money had been generated by enforcement and how much of that income was being spent to improve infrastructure. The Officer confirmed that she would make enquiries and provide feedback on the answers by the next meeting of the Sub Committee.

Meeting Closed At: 20:30pm