



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT:

Community Councillor J. Rao - Chair
Councillor D. Havard – Interim Vice Chair

Councillors:

Carl Thomas, Andrew Whitcombe, Ann Gair, Carol Andrews, Mike Adams, Alan Angel, Teresa Parry, Colin Mann, Andrew Farina-Childs, Ben Zaplatynski, Leeroy Jeremiah.

Town and Community Councils:

Bob Campbell, Marcia Jones, Tony White, Helen Williams, Helen Treherne, C. Councillor G. Davies, C. Councillor H. Lewellyn, C. Councillor J.A. Pritchard.

Cabinet Member: R. Whiting

Together with:-

R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from A. Davies, C. Mortimer, A. Pallister, S. Hughes, Councillors A. Higgs, M. James, P. Leonard, M.E. Sargent.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

Subject to rewording in relation to page 7 of the minutes, the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

4. MATTERS ARISING

In relation to page 5 of the minutes clarification was sought as to whether any progress had been made in this regard and it was noted that due to delays and restrictions as a result of COVID 19 the position was the same.

Reference was made to page 3 of the minutes and the comments of the Chief Executive in relation to her commitment to work closely with Community Councils going forward. Community Councils welcomed this proposal and expressed how much they were looking forward to working more closely with Mrs Harry.

5. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL RESPONSE TO COVID 19

Mr R. Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection provided an update on the Councils response to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

The Emergency Planning Structure was explained and the multi-agency response to pandemic was detailed. Members noted the issues in relation to the provision of PPE had how the various bodies had worked together to secure the much-needed supplies. The way in which existing staff had been redeployed to support services was explained, including programmes like the Buddy Scheme and replacement Free School Meals delivery service.

The role of Public Protection and Environmental Health Services regarding infection control, support and advice was noted. Trading Standards and Licensing Teams worked together on enforcing the 26 sets of regulations enacted because of the pandemic and additional staff were brought in to help business with compliance.

Regarding contact, track and tracing provisions, Mr Hartshorn highlighted the work of Health Board partners and Welsh Government in establishing the various teams that would initiate and take the programme forward. It was noted that 350 staff across Gwent, all working in an agile and digital environment for the first time had come together to face this completely new challenge. Members were advised that additional funding had been secured to recruit even more staff to the programme.

Mr Hartshorn confirmed that post 'fire-break' the number of cases had reduced he emphasised however the need to remain vigilant as this continued to be a very challenging time.

Mr Hartshorn expressed his admiration for his staff and the service that they have been able to provide under such difficult services, many had worked 7 days a week to ensure the public safety.

Members thanked Mr Hartshorn for the update and expressed their appreciation and thanks to him and his staff that had worked so hard throughout the pandemic.

Clarification was sought in relation to socialisation particularly around pubs, clubs and social distancing requirements and enforcement action. Mr Hartshorn outlined the enforcement process from initial inspection, support and advice and triggers for the issuing of improvement or closure notices. However, it had been established that the bulk infection rate stemmed from social interaction within the home environment rather than pubs and clubs etc. but should a premise be found to be non-compliant then they would be closed.

Further clarification was then sought on private/home enforcement action and Mr Hartshorn confirmed that this would sit with Gwent Police.

The Chair thanked Mr Hartshorn for the update and expressed her thanks to him and all the staff who had worked so hard over recent months on behalf of the Community Council Liaison Committee.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE

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

6. UPDATE FROM THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

Community Councillor Judith Pritchard as representative to the Caerphilly Public Services Board provided an update on the last Board meeting.

Councillor Pritchard advised that the new hospital 'The Grange' was now open and leaflets had been delivered to householders regarding the services provided.

An update was received in relation to the COVID Business Rate Grant and Councillor Pritchard requested that Community Councils encouraged as many businesses as possible to apply.

Members were referred to the Public Services Board Website which stored the minutes of the various boards meetings and Councillor Pritchard encouraged those present to access this facility. In terms of COVID 19 response the Board had received an update on the work done by the Council to keep essential services operating and how vulnerable householders had been contacted in order to get help to those most in need. Councillor Pritchard noted the positive response from Food Banks which she felt was very good.

The Boards priorities going forward were discussed which included the Wellbeing Plan, Future Generations, COVID, Brexit and Climate Change.

The Board also received a presentation on Mental Health and the worrying impact that the pandemic is having. It was noted that Aneurin Bevan Health Board would be reviewing its mental health provision and would be looking to engage with communities on a more thematic response to mental health challenges,

The Public Services Annual Report was presented, and Members were advised that it contained some interesting video presentations utilising the SWAY platform, it made the annual report much more interactive and engaging. Councillor Pritchard encouraged all those present to view the report.

In concluding her update Councillor Pritchard expressed her concerns in relation to proposals for the Public Services Board to change to a Pan Gwent platform. Finally, the Board had considered 'questions from the public' and one had been submitted by Mrs J. Garland in relation to planning. However, the Board had deemed this to be a Caerphilly County Borough Council matter only, which Councillor Pritchard felt was a pity due to the wide-ranging impact of planning.

The Chair thanked Community Councillor Pritchard for her presentation and a few Members expressed concern that they had not received the Health Board Leaflet on the opening of The Grange. It was agreed that a query would be raised with the Health Board on the leaflets distribution as it contained some very useful information.

7. BUDGET AND PRECPEP 2021/22

The Community Council Liaison Officer explained that due to the extraordinary circumstances around the pandemic, Welsh Government would not be confirming the Local Government Settlement until the 22nd December 2020. This meant that the usual consultation process would have to be condensed to achieve the required deadlines for the submission of the draft budget proposals to Council.

In terms of the setting of the Community Council precept, this would still need to be done to the established timeframe, it was accepted that this was far from ideal but unfortunately these were unprecedented times. Public consultation process would still include the Caerphilly Conversation, copies of the questionnaire would be going out to every household and the Communications Team had offered to organise briefing session with Community Councils on the survey.

Communities Councils expressed their disappointment in the reduced time frame and limited consultation process around this year's budget proposals and expressed concern as to the impact that this would have on precept setting, particularly if there were proposed cuts to service provision. It would be impossible for Communities Councils to plan for such eventualities within their precept under these circumstances.

8. BREIFING NOTE ON ISSUES RAISED BY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The content of the briefing note was considered and accepted.

In relation to the Item No. 3 of the note – Waste Facilities/Plants – Management and Enforcement during COVID, Members debated an enforcement matter within the Nelson ward and a particular provider currently under investigation by Natural Resources Wales over a contamination incident.

Members noted the distress the matter had caused to the residents of the area, it was noted that a working group had been established and Caerphilly County Borough Council and Natural Resources Wales were working together on this matter.

Meeting closed 7.30pm