



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies (Chair)
Councillor A. Hussey (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M.A. Adams, A. Collis, C. Elsbury, S. Kent, B. Owen, J.E. Roberts

Cabinet Members:

J. Pritchard (Infrastructure and Property), A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet)

Together with:

M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), D. Roberts (Principal Group Accountant), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer)

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would take place via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Evans, A. Gair, A. Leonard, D.W.R. Preece, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds, Mrs J. Stone and T.J. Williams, together with Cabinet Member N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 26TH OCTOBER 2021

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2021 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 6 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held on 26th October 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 10) be approved as a correct record.

Councillor D.T. Davies abstained from voting on the minutes as he had not been present for the whole of the meeting.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

5. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) presented the report, which outlined details of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period December 2021 to March 2022. Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet work programme and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the details of reports scheduled for forthcoming meetings and a Member requested that a report in relation to resident permit parking be added to the Forward Work Programme for a date to be confirmed.

A Member referred to the Pedestrian and Cycle Zones (School Streets) that had been postponed from December 2021 to the February 2022 meeting and expressed concerns as this was initially requested as an annual report to review the 18-month road closures around 4 schools in the county borough, but the Council were now coming to the end of the 18-month period. Mark S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment) gave assurances that the report would be brought to the February 2022 meeting and confirmed that the road closure orders could be extended if it was felt necessary.

It was moved and seconded that subject to the inclusion of the aforementioned report on permit parking, the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 7 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of an additional report in relation to resident permit parking (date TBC), the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK MAP

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property introduced the report, which sought Members' views on the draft Active Travel Network Map and reported responses from the public consultation, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval, and to enable the Active Travel Network Map to be submitted to Welsh Government by 31st December 2021 to meet the Council's statutory obligations.

Members were advised that the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires all local authorities in Wales to continuously improve their active travel routes and plan how routes will join up to form networks so that people can more easily get around by bicycle or as a pedestrian for their everyday journeys to work, school and other local destinations. Active travel is important in promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing the negative impacts of traffic upon neighbourhoods and communities. The original Integrated Network Map (INM) for Active Travel routes and proposals in Caerphilly county borough was adopted in 2018. The Act requires a periodic review of the INM to develop what is now termed the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM).

A three-stage public consultation was undertaken on the Active Travel Network Map, the final stage of which encompassed a statutory 12-week public consultation to seek residents' and stakeholders' views on the existing and proposed new routes. Members were advised that there was a disparity in the number of consultation responses by area, with the key reason being that the Act only applies to specific designated areas in Wales, which have been determined by Welsh Government and are based on the population size of settlements. Those communities and areas included within the Act were listed in Section 5.4 of the report. The initial consultation phase saw a significant response rate, with the further two phases receiving a reduced but still encouraging response rate. The final consultation took on board all the comments in the first and second consultations.

Overall, it was noted that a wide range of respondents contributed to the consultation, including schools, young people and groups with protected characteristics. Members were referred to Section 10 of the report which set out in detail the stakeholder mapping process around the Active Travel Network Map and the engagement activities around the consultation, including an email campaign, social media, paper copies of the consultation map and survey, flyers/posters, meetings with Elected Members, and engagement with people with protected characteristics.

Arising from the consultation feedback, 216 kilometres of new routes have been added compared to the approved INM. The ATNM routes were prioritised in accordance with the prioritisation matrix set out within the WG Active Travel Guidance and an outline of the process was included at Appendix 1, with the detailed list of proposed prioritised routes arising from this process included at Appendix 2.

Upon further investigation, not all routes might be compliant with the Active Travel Design Guide. Potential routes will need to be further analysed and developed before funding bids are submitted to Welsh Government for delivery. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property has asked for clarity on the new routes and how the Council can work together to expand active travel, which is of utmost importance when funding from Welsh Government becomes available. Engagement with local ward members will take place and the Cabinet Member welcomed work with local members for any schemes of consideration in the future.

Mr Clive Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager) advised Members that the intention is to conditionally submit the Active Travel Network Map to Welsh Government by the statutory deadline of 31st December 2021 and then seek Cabinet approval for the final version of the Active Travel Network Map in January 2022. Members were advised that due to restrictions around Covid-19, the Council have been unable to undertake face to face consultations, which has been a drawback for some groups, but a positive is that the new online tool that Welsh Government has provided for all local authorities to use has generated far more comments and responses than the previous consultation around the Integrated Network Map, and so despite these challenges, there has been a very good response to the three-stage consultation around the Active Travel Network Map.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members expressed their support for the ATNM and one Member referred to the positive engagement activity and encouraging level of response to the consultation around the ATNM, despite the challenges around Covid-19.

A Member asked if there was a way to view a breakdown of the ATNM routes within Active local ward areas. Mr Campbell confirmed that although the routes can be viewed graphically via the mapping system link contained in Section 5.9 of the report, he would arrange to circulate a spreadsheet listing the routes by area and ward to Members following the meeting. Mr Campbell also advised Members that the Integrated Network Map adopted in 2018 identified 112 routes, whereas the ATNM has identified almost 400 routes and therefore is a much more ambitious plan.

Having considered and discussed the report and provided views on the draft Active Travel Network Map and the proposed changes following the public consultation, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendation be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

Having considered and discussed the report and provided views on the draft Active Travel Network Map and the proposed changes following the public consultation, it was RECOMMENDED that the Active Travel Network Map be reported to Cabinet for approval.

8. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT 2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (PERIOD 5)

Mark S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment) introduced the report, which informed Members of projected revenue expenditure for the Economy and Environment Directorate for the 2021/22 financial year. The report summarised the most recent budget monitoring projections for 2021/2022 based on the latest available financial information and more detailed budget monitoring figures for each of the Service Areas within the Economy and Environment Directorate were set out in the report appendices.

Members were requested to note the contents of the report and the detailed budget monitoring pages in respect of the Infrastructure, Public Protection and Community and Leisure Service Divisions which fall under the remit of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee. Members were asked to note that the budget monitoring position in relation to the Regeneration and Planning Division falls under the separate remit of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the report and in response to a Member's query on underspends across all service divisions, Mr Williams confirmed that 50% of any directorate underspends are transferred into the General Balance fund and the other 50% remains in the directorate reserve fund. The Member also queried the size of some underspends and Mr Williams explained that these are offset by one or two sizeable overspends in other

service areas, such as Waste Management, and also clarified that underspends can be transferred into another part of the directorate where needed to offset an overspend.

A Member queried the costs of spend around tackling fly-tipping clearance and asked if this information was contained in the report. Mr Williams explained that as this is a budget monitoring report that reports on budget headings, this particular information would not be included. However he confirmed that if Members wished for a detailed fly-tipping analysis around costs and trends, he could look into bringing forward a report in this regard. However, Mr Williams emphasised that the Council are hardening their stance on fly-tipping enforcement and are now publicising successful prosecutions and the names of offenders on social media, together with details of the fines imposed. However, it is acknowledged that this issue remains an ongoing battle for the Council, as the fine received is often inadequate, and so individuals are willing to risk the chance of a fine which is lower than the cost of hiring a skip.

In response to further queries around costs and whether fly-tipping is on the increase, Mr Williams confirmed that fly-tipping clearance forms part of the Cleansing budget, and that fly-tipping activity around enforcement and clearance has increased, although it is unclear whether the issue itself is increasing or whether the number of reported cases has increased.

A Member asked whether there is a mechanism to increase the minimum level of fine imposed upon fly-tipping offenders. Mr Williams explained that the level of fine imposed upon successful prosecution is at the discretion of the Magistrates Courts, and although the Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows for a maximum fine of £20,000, this is very rarely imposed. Although there has recently been a noticeable increase in costs and victim surcharges imposed by the courts, mandating the minimum level of actual fine would require a change to legislation by UK Parliament.

Following consideration of the report, the Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report and the detailed budget monitoring pages in respect of the Infrastructure Services Division, Public Protection Division, and Community and Leisure Services Division

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their support over the past year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 6.05 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 8th February 2022.

CHAIR