



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

M. Adams, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, V. James, L. Jeremiah, T. Parry

Town and Community Councils:

T. White (Clerk), B. Campbell (Clerk), H. Williams (Clerk), L. John (Clerk) and Community Councillors: M. Moore, H. Llewellyn, R. Chapman, B. Gingell, G. Davies, T. Davies, J.A. Pritchard, P. Roberts, C. Erasmus, J. Mullen, and T. Davies.

Also Present:

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Community Councils C. Mortimer, P. Davy, H. Williams, S. Hughes, and Councillors C. Mann, C. Andrews, A. Angel, B. Jones, M. James.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 21ST JULY 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Community Councillor J. Pritchard provided an update in relation to the Gwent Public Services Board and advised that the first meeting of the Local Delivery Group has taken place and had considered the establishment of the Group and its Terms of Reference.

Community Councillor Pritchard expressed her disappointment in the composition of the Group and that there appeared to be a democratic deficit in this regard. Given the fairly important elements under discussion she was disappointed in the reports and presenting Officers.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE – PRESENTATION

The presentation updated the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee on the Council's response to climate change and how Community Councils could play a valuable.

The Officer highlighted the main areas of response, for example Leading by Example and Informing and Influencing Others, he also outlined what support is available to assist Community Councils.

Minimising carbon emissions and environmental impact of buildings by utilising energy efficient insulation, LEDs and appliances, carrying out an energy audit, using renewable energy such as PVs and heat pumps, reducing waste and water use.

Transport was also an area where Community Councils could lead by example, reducing travel, participating in active travel, using public transport, sharing vehicles, and moving to electrical vehicles and installing electric vehicle charging points. Procurement also provided options for carbon reduction, by sourcing locally, buying 'green', joining together to buy in bulk and investing money wisely.

The Officer went on to explain how carbon offsetting could be achieved through land use, for example, planting trees, maintaining green space and protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

The Liaison Group noted how important informing and influencing others was, Community Councils were encouraged to use their contacts and communications to raise awareness and understanding of climate change. They could also support and enable local groups and individuals who were undertaking projects in their area. Community Councils were encouraged to comment on consultations such as the Local Development Plan and Local Well-being Plan and to comment on planning applications in their area.

In concluding his presentation, the Officer outlined the various avenues of support available including Welsh Government Zero Carbon publications, Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust, National Resources Wales and Sustain Wales. Members were asked to note that there was funding available for environmental project through the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Community Empowerment Fund.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his presentation and Members questions were welcomed.

Clarification was sought in relation to an 'energy audit' and the Officer confirmed that Paul Rossiter from the Carbon Trust could assist, and he would be happy to circulate contact information to anyone interested.

Members discussed the transition to electric vehicle and the infrastructure improvements that would be needed to support this, concerns were expressed in relation to supplies in terrace streets, and the space that would be required to facilitate home charges. Questions were also asked as to whether any funding was available to residents for installation of the fast charge ports.

The Officer confirmed that the infrastructure requirements were being developed and advised that there were plans to install public charge points in the county borough's 11 car parks and residents will notice more and more appear. Members also noted that commercial charging

points were being developed along similar principles to the petrol station and this facility would also drive forward the charging infrastructure.

In referring to the presentation slides and public transport the Liaison Committee agreed the importance of this in terms of carbon emissions but acknowledged that due to COVID the passenger numbers had declined and hoped that this would improve over time.

In relation to tree planting, the Liaison committee noted that this would of long-term help to carbon reduction but that it would be several years before benefits would be realised. Members felt that plant diversity across the board needed to be considered and this should include verges around roads and reference was made to the planting being done by schools and the importance of tree management policies was emphasised.

The Officer agreed that public transport numbers had declined but as public confidence increased this would improve, he also confirmed that overall journeys had also reduced with the increase in agile/home working. The Officer accepted that tree planting was a long-term commitment but one that should be made.

Reference was made to hydrogen fuel cells and the Officers confirmed that the technology was improving and developing all the time but was at this stage primarily in use in heavy vehicles. A Member confirmed that JCB was investing in this area and there was already a bus service operating in Northern Ireland powered by hydrogen fuel cells.

Clarification was sought in relation to the Community Empowerment Fund and how it could be used for projects of this nature. The Officer confirmed that the next round of funding would be released in February 2022 and then in June 2022.

Members requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated to all Community Councils for information and the Committee Clerk confirmed that she would facilitate this request.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the presentation.

6. BRIEFING NOTE ON ISSUES RAISED BY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

A Members expressed concerns in relation to service cuts and the setting of the Council Precept and why Caerphilly seemed to be setting one of the lowest precepts while reducing services, like the provision of small street sweepers and queried the methodology of the Chief Executive behind this decision making.

The Committee Services Officer confirmed that the setting of the Budget was a decision of Council and informed by reports to Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council and consultation with the public and stakeholders rather than the Chief Executive, however she would ask the Chief Executive and the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer to provide a presentation to the next meeting of the Community Council Liaison Committee on Budget Setting, Medium Term Financial Planning and Precept.

The Clerk of Risca Town Council expressed his thanks for the funding assistance for this year's Remembrance Day Parades and requested that they be passed on to the Leader of Council. This was echoed by all those present and the tremendous efforts by Community Councils, Council Staff and Residents for this year's commemorations were formally acknowledged.

A Member advised that this did not seem to have been mirrored in Deri and Fochriw and the Chair expressed his disappointment that the same assistance had not been provided to the Darran Valley.

The content of the briefing note was considered and accepted.

Meeting closed 7.10pm