



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH MAY 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds - Chair

Councillors:

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), N. George (Community and Leisure Services), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), R. Passmore (Education and Lifelong Learning), D.V. Poole (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering), R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services).

Also in Attendance:

T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs B. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CABINET – 29TH APRIL 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2015 (minute nos.1-8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. IMPROVING GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

Following on from the report presented to Cabinet on 2nd October 2014 and subsequent report to Council on 27th January 2015, the Improving Governance Programme (IGP) has continued the good progress achieved in 2014 and positively noted in the Follow-up CGI Inspection Report by Wales Audit Office in January 2015.

The list of the previously outstanding recommendations and relevant actions included in the original IGP, with information on the latest progress, is provided in Appendix 1 to the report. Since the report to Cabinet in October 2014, a further 4 recommendations/improvements have been addressed, namely: clarity and comprehensiveness of reports to committees; electronic Council (webcasting and committee documents system); strengthening risk management processes and clarification of roles and responsibilities for whistleblowing procedures.

The original IGP recommendations that are outstanding and therefore the focus of the current activities are set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report. Whilst one proposal for improvement has been completed the remaining 7 listed in paragraph 4.7 are well in progress. The IGP is continuing to meet regularly and to monitor the progress of the outstanding actions. The next report to Cabinet is scheduled for October 2015 when it is anticipated that the majority, if not all, of the outstanding actions will be complete.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, Cabinet noted the progress described in the report in addressing recommendations and proposals for improvements by the Wales Audit Office included in the WAO Public Interest Report on the Chief Officers Pay published in March 2013, the WAO Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Essential Car Users and Annual Leave Allowance published in December 2013, the Special Inspection Report published in January 2014 and the WAO Report Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest (January 2015).

5. PROPOSED PARK AND RIDE FOR YSTRAD MYNACH RAIL STATION

Councillor M. James, Ystrad Mynach Ward, had been granted permission by the Leader to address Cabinet in respect of this item.

The report sought Members' views on the proposal to use Council owned land off Cedar Way, Ystrad Mynach, managed by Ystrad Mynach Primary School, towards the provision of an additional park and ride facility for Ystrad Mynach rail station.

In order to facilitate the delivery of the scheme, a part of the recreational land currently used by local schools would be required to facilitate the access for the park and ride. The land in question provides less space than recommended in the building regulations but the proposed scheme would not impact on the current useable recreational grassed area. There is also the possibility of negotiating improvement and accommodation works as part of the scheme. A plan showing the land that would remain available for recreational activities is included in Appendix 4.

During his address, Councillor James outlined the concerns of the schools whose pupils use the recreational land for sporting events and curriculum and extra-curricular activities throughout the year. The land is also used by various clubs in the area. A copy of the letter of objection from the primary schools, together with officer responses/comments, is included in Appendix 3 to the report.

Councillor James sought clarification on the site visit referred to in paragraph 4.3 in the report. Mr Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, advised that the invitation to attend this had been sent by Network Rail to Cabinet members. Councillor James proceeded to outline the reasons why he felt that the scheme would have a detrimental impact on the local community and environment, referred to an alternative area of land that might be suitable for this purpose and asked Cabinet not to support the recommendations in the report.

Following Councillor James' address, Mr Campbell highlighted the key points in the report and responded to the issues raised. Members were advised that the recently completed station improvements and 'access for all' scheme at Ystrad Mynach rail station had presented an opportunity to consider a park and ride car park extension to the existing oversubscribed car park.

Welsh Government has expressed its strong support for the scheme and has engaged a consultant to develop a detailed proposal with a view to delivering it by April 2016, funded from its south east Wales Metro programme. The funding would need to be spent by the end of March 2016 and WG require confirmation by the end of May 2015 that the Council supports the scheme and would make available the land required to provide the access road. A copy of the latest scheme proposal is included in Appendix 2. The proposed layout offers 121 car parking spaces in addition to the existing 93 spaces. The need for the proposed scheme is set out in paragraphs 4.16 to 4.22 of the report under 'Strategic Considerations'.

Mr Campbell informed Members of the consultation that had been undertaken with the schools. The schools were initially advised of the proposal by email on 5th December 2014 including a preliminary plan proposal. Officers subsequently attended a meeting of the Ystrad Mynach primary school governing body in January 2015 at which the Headteacher of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Alta primary school was also in attendance. The scheme proposals were discussed along with the issues and concerns raised by the schools. The meeting concluded with the schools stating that they objected to the proposals. A letter was subsequently received via email on 23rd March 2015, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 3. A summary of the responses given together with the potential mitigation offered by the scheme is also included in Appendix 3. A further meeting has since been held with the Headteacher of Ystrad Mynach primary school and representatives of the governing body. Mr Campbell confirmed that he would have further discussions with the schools if the scheme proceeds.

Should the scheme proceed the access road would require planning permission. A public consultation would be undertaken as part of the planning process and WG has indicated that it would hold a public exhibition for the scheme for the local community.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the officer's report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report:-

1. Cabinet agreed that part of the Council owned land off Cedar Way in Ystrad Mynach (as shown in Appendix 2 of the report) should be used to allow the provision of an additional park and ride facility for Ystrad Mynach rail station.
2. The operational responsibility for the land necessary to deliver the scheme be transferred to the Engineering Services Division and officers be delegated to continue liaising with Welsh Government and their consultant/partners to progress the scheme, including the submission of the relevant planning application.

The meeting closed at 2.48 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 3rd June 2015.

CHAIR