

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Community Liaison Committee meeting held virtually on
Friday, 23 April 2021 at 10.00 am

Community Liaison Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor M Webber – Chairperson
Councillor R Bevan
Councillor B James
Councillor R Jones
Councillor S Pritchard
Councillor A Raines

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Ms L Lawson – Performance Manager
Mrs S Daniel – Senior Democratic Services Officer

18 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Margaret Griffiths
Pontyclun Community Council

19 Declarations of Interest

None received

20 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2021
were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting

21 Climate Change

The Performance Manager gave members an update on RCTCBC
contribution to tackling Climate change. She advised of the Councils
Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and its Work Programme and
advised of the Climate Change commitment and work so far. She
advised that the Council were keen to work with Town and Community
Councils to encourage residents and businesses to play their part in
tackling Climate Change.

Examples of the Councils work so far included:

- **Energy and Efficiency** - 100% of electrical energy is from
renewable sources. Energy efficient technology in schools and

- buildings. Developing Taffs Well Sprint Renewable Energy Project
- **Mobility** – Developing Transport Hubs as part of Town Centre Developments e.g Porth. Continue to develop Active Travel Routes. Developing Infrastructure to support LCVs eg Llys Cadwyn
 - **Greening our Local Environment** – Healthy Hillside Project. Restoring Peat Bogs. Exceeded WG recycling targets and reduced waste to land fill.

The Performance Manager further advised of the Councils current Climate Change Commitments which included:

- Signed up to UK100 Clean Energy Commitment
- the Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2030
- the County Borough to be Carbon Neutral as close as possible to 2030
- to exceed the Welsh Government targets for recycling 80% by 2025 (WG Target 70%)
- to start an ongoing conversation with residents, communities, businesses, staff and partners so that we all take responsibility collective for the future

A member asked what the Authority proposed to increase the use of electric cars.

The Performance Manager stated that this was still in the very early days. She added that Welsh Government has some plans on electric vehicle charging that they were looking into. Between now and the Climate Change Conference of Parties in November 2021 there would be a push on this and initiatives to drive this agenda forward. She added that as well as the use of Electric Vehicles, Council encourage the use of public transport and a change in habits.

The Chairperson added that if members had any ideas to let us know. She advised that there was a large charging mechanism in the middle of Cardiff city for busses to utilise electric charging and are adamant and committed to supporting the initiative but further research was required. She added that staff working from home has improved the carbon footprint and the Authority will be trying to capture this going forward.

A Member asked if applications for new housing developments should have an electric charging point put in the planning applications. The Cabinet Member advised that they were expecting Welsh Government to come out with this as part of their Climate Change agenda. He added that part of the process would also come through the Local Development Plans but we are awaiting for further guidance and would be working closely with planning on this.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications added that the new housing developments taking place in Llanilid has this

infrastructure in place for fast charging.

The Chairperson advised that conversations were ongoing in the Climate Change Committee on how to address this issue in areas where residents do not have the facility to park their vehicles on private driveways – Church Village being one example where cars are parked one side of the street, across from their properties. She advised that this would be an issue for around 70% of properties in the Borough.

RESOLVED: Members noted the update

22 Update Report - Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications provided members with an update as services continued to reopen within the guidelines set by Welsh Government. He advised on the following:

- Leisure to reopen outdoors from next week, with Pontypridd Lido also included. Booking information will be posted online in the next few days
- 3rd May indoor leisure centres to reopen with an announcement on council website to give details on how they will reopen in a covid secure way
- Council is within a purdah period at the moment so restricts certain business
- Elections would run differently this year due to the pandemic with results likely be published late on the Friday afternoon. There are also four by-elections, two for Community Councils and two for Borough Councils taking place on the same day.
- Community Renewal Fund – opens on the 7th May closes on the 31st May. More information is available on the website.

A member asked if information can be shared with Town and Community Councils about voluntary management committees. The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised this could be shared with members following the meeting

RESOLVED: Members noted the update

23 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the report to the Committee that summarised the various elements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 that received Royal Assent on the 20th January 2021. He advised members

that that a version had already been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet and that this version was tailored to Town and Community Council's specifically.

He highlighted the key following areas for member's consideration:

- Extension of the right to vote in local government elections - Extending the vote franchise to 16- & 17-year olds and foreign citizens legally residents in Wales
- Two Voting systems - Enabling councils to choose between a 'first past the post' (FPTP) or a 'single transferable' (STV) voting system
- Public participation including the broadcasting of meetings and holding virtual/ hybrid meetings
- Miscellaneous provisions such as support provided for Community Councils
- Annual reports, code of conduct.
- General Power of Competence

A member commented on the provision to host hybrid meetings and stated that whilst he welcomed the provision Community Councils should be mindful how they do this. He commented that his Community Council had already tried to hold a hybrid meeting but as they did not have the right set up and equipment the technology was not great and did not make for an easy to follow meeting.

The Chairperson advised that the Authority had just refitted and installed a new state of the art chamber that is now far more usable and fit for purpose to allow the Authority to hold hybrid meetings and to be able to webcast meetings. She added that it was fully wheelchair friendly and members were welcome to attend for a visit once restrictions allow

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications added that some of the provisions whilst intentions were good, he understood they were difficult to deliver on. Having also undertaken a hybrid meeting before the completion of new chamber equipment he sympathised with the difficulties experienced of the members.

Members were concerned that the guidance in the Act was not clear and were unsure when they were able to hold meetings in person again and how they could manage these where social distancing measures needed to be adhered to but there was a potential for members of the public to turn up. The Service Director replied that the legislation was unclear due to a crossover in legislation where the temporary Coronavirus legislation ceases and the Local Government and Elections Act takes effect. He advised that members should take an operational decision on how to

progress with their meetings in the short term.

A Member referred to the General Powers of Competence and asked if the Authority had come to a view on the relevant qualification for clerks to satisfy the condition. The Service Director Democratic Services and Communication replied the Authority had not yet come to a view.

A member asked if there was provision for Town and Community Council representation on the Authority's Standards Committee. The Service Director responded that there was provision and this was currently utilised with two Town and Community Council members that sat on the Committee. The Chairperson encouraged members to explore other avenues before a complaint is referred to the Ombudsman as this was a lengthy process and there may be other opportunities to resolve locally in a timelier manner. She added that the Authority were available to support the Community Councils

RESOLVED: Members noted the contents of the report.

24 Digital Support Fund

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communication presented the report for Members' information on the digital support fund bid that had been submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, to support Town and Community Councils with digital engagement with residence.

The bid included "the development of a digital support framework to further support RCTs Town and Community Councils with digital engagement as the Council recognise that Community and Town Councils offer a means of connecting with residents at a local level. If successful, this work would promote participation within communities and support broader diversity in terms of engagement and representation at a Community Council level

Details of the suggested support provided were as follows:

- Officer support to 12 Community / Town Councils on virtual meetings
- Support to clerks on scheduling and supporting virtual meetings
- Supporting respective Town and Community Councils with digital participation and identification of solutions to support Community

Councils to deliver upon the new requirements contained within the local government Act.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications continued that going forward, a meeting with the clerks will be scheduled to discuss the general support needs and a programme of support will be built upon.

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report

25 Urgent Items

None