

Mae'r cofnodion hyn yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth yng nghyfarfod priodol nesaf y Pwyllgor.

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next appropriate meeting of the Committee.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at the Meeting Room, Lido Ponty, Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd on Thursday, 22nd March 2018

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor S. A. Bradwick – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

A. Chapman	G. Stacey
M. Fidler Jones	W. Treeby
P. Howe	T. Williams
D. Owen-Jones	M. Weaver

Officers

Mr N. Wheeler – Director Highways & Streetcare Services

Mr D. James – Head of Regeneration and Prosperity

Mr T. Phillips – Traffic Services Manager

Mr A. Griffiths – Head of Highways & Engineering

Mrs W. Edwards – Head of Community Services

Mr S. Gale – Service Director, Planning

Mr O. Jones – Team Leader, Planning Policy

Mr S. Humphreys – Head of Legal, Planning & Environment

J. Nicholls – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Cabinet Member

R. Bevan – Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing

Other Members

G. P. Thomas – Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor G. Jones.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor S. A. Bradwick declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5 – Residents Parking Scheme in Pontypridd, Aberdare and the Rhondda – “I pay for residents parking permit of £10 every year as I live in a residents parking bay zone 202.”

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on the 25th January 2018 subject to it being noted that the Cabinet Member, Environment & Leisure left the meeting prior to Committee undertaking pre scrutiny of the ‘Increasing Recycling Performance’.

36. CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair requested that members are mindful of consultation deadlines and pre scrutiny processes when posting information to social media.

37. INCLEMENT WEATHER ARRANGEMENTS

At the request of the Committee, the Director, Highways and Streetcare Services was invited to deliver a presentation outlining the arrangements that were in place to deal with the recent inclement weather. Scrutiny was informed that advance planning and early implementation of a clear, consistent message was key to keeping residents informed of arrangements.

It was reported that essential services within both Adult and Community Services were maintained throughout the period of bad weather and the main roads and highways were salted and gritted to ensure that blood bank and hospital routes remained open. The Director also reminded scrutiny that strong and clear advice in respect of school closures had assisted parents and guardians with safeguarding issues.

Scrutiny **RESOLVED** that a letter be sent to the Director on behalf of the Committee to extend it’s thanks to all the frontline and support staff across the County Borough for their hard work during the recent snowfall.

38. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

Further to consideration of the report presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd January 2018 regarding the engagement of the Executive at future Scrutiny Committees, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing presented an update on the progress made with regard to his portfolio.

As well as receiving an update on the relevant information relating to the portfolio areas, such as town centres, businesses and employment, Scrutiny was invited to challenge any matters within the report as appropriate.

The Cabinet Member received a number of questions in relation to town centre initiatives and programmes and discussed the new investment to create a new Treorchy/Gelli bypass which would benefit the Upper Rhondda Fawr by alleviating the traffic in Stag Square. The Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity confirmed that, following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing, this scrutiny committee would review town centre regeneration, to include street cleansing, street furniture as well as a recycling strategy for the town centres within RCT, during the next municipal year. The Cabinet Member referred to a recent Cabinet Decision to set up a pilot scheme regulating the placement of street furniture on the highway within Pontypridd town centre for a period of one year commencing from April 2018.

Following discussions regarding the role of Housing Associations within RCT Members requested that an invitation is extended to Trivallis to attend a future meeting. Members were reminded that Trivallis had formerly attended this Scrutiny Committee in December 2016 to discuss residents' engagement with the Councils' recycling initiatives.

Scrutiny raised a query in relation to the introduction of the Local Development Order (LDO) to Treforest Industrial Estate and Parc Nantgarw, and whether there has been evidence of its success. It was reported that the innovative LDO is in its infancy but the Treforest Growth Forum, a vehicle by which local businesses in the locality meet and discuss any issues or barriers they have, enables the Council to work closely with its partners.

The Cabinet Member outlined the number of investments and initiatives that have been and are being undertaken in the town centre of Pontypridd and how the Business Improvement District (BID) set up to improve the local trading environment is helping to deliver the priorities that matter to local businesses. He added that all town centres are unique and therefore a programme of town centre improvements is being delivered to identify where the long-term support to local towns should be directed.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing for attending the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Acknowledge the progress made in advancing the portfolio responsibilities of the Cabinet Member;
2. Include 'Town Centre Regeneration' (street cleansing, street furniture and a recycling strategy) on the forward work programme of this Scrutiny Committee; and
3. Invite Trevallis to a future meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

39. IMPACT OF RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEMES IN PONTYPRIDD, ABERDARE AND THE RHONDDA

The Head of Highways and Engineering explained that scrutiny had previously requested an update in respect of the impact of the residents' parking schemes in Pontypridd, Aberdare and the Rhondda. He introduced the Traffic Services Manager who was present to deliver a power point presentation in relation to the residents' parking schemes across the County Borough under the following headings:-

- What is Residents Parking?
- Who is eligible?
- How schemes work
- History of RP in RCTCBC
- Progress to date – schemes implemented to date since 2014/15
- What's next?
 - Commitment to review
 - Common complaints associated
 - The review process
- What have we learned?
 - Common anxieties associated with implementing new schemes
 - Does the current Council Policy need to be reviewed?
 - Proposals for 2018/19

Following consideration of the presentation the Traffic Services Manager answered a number of queries relating to the scheme such as confirming that carer's permits can be applied for free of charge and passed on as appropriate. In terms of the next steps scrutiny was informed that there is a commitment to review a number of schemes across the County Borough, complete a number of site surveys such as those in Porth and Taffs Well and consider the need to review the Council Policy. It was confirmed that Elected Members would be informed of the findings of the reviews.

It was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information contained within the presentation.

40. RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS ASSESSMENT 2016/17.

The Head of Community Services presented the report of the Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services in respect of the Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh Public Library Standards Assessment for 2016/17.

Committee was informed that this is the third assessment report to be received under the Fifth Quality Framework which was introduced by the Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport in April 2014. It consists of 18 core entitlements which stipulate what all libraries in Wales should offer and 16 Quality Indicators (7 of which have outcome targets). Members were informed that the Fifth Framework is made up of four themes.

The Head of Community Learning outlined the results relating specifically to the performance of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Library Service which indicated that all 18 core entitlements were met in full; of the 7 quality indicators the service met three in full, 3 in part and failed to meet 1. The reduction in staff hours and opening hours were identified as negatively affecting performance against the Quality Indicators.

The Head of Community Services explained the reason for failing to achieve some of the quality indicators but added that as the library in Rhydyfelin is now located in a new building that has Wi-Fi it will meet the relevant indicator for access to Wi-Fi for the 2017/18 assessment. Members were reminded that the Local Authority is unable to meet the quality indicator in respect of ICT due to the lack of investment in additional digital equipment as it is considered inappropriate to invest in additional Public Access computers when there is sufficient capacity available on current computers to meet customer needs.

Scrutiny acknowledged that despite the lack of funding to some areas of the service to improve staffing levels and book acquisitions the assessment had produced a positive outcome and the customer surveys had reflected customer satisfaction rates of 99% ('very good' and 'good').

The Head of Community Services advised Members that a report had been presented to Cabinet on the 22nd March 2018, in respect of a number of proposals set out to improve the Council's Mobile Library Service and looking to initiate an eight week consultation on the proposals. Furthermore, scrutiny was asked to inform the consultation together with all relevant stakeholders. It was agreed that Scrutiny Members would be consulted by email on the proposals. It was further agreed that should the proposals be approved by Cabinet that Scrutiny could suggest appropriate areas for the 48 longer stops to inform a way forward for Cabinet.

It was **RESOLVED**:-

1. To acknowledge the content of the letter and the Annual Assessment Report received from Welsh Government;
2. That scrutiny acts as a consultee to the proposals to improve the quality and range of services provided by the Mobile Library Service to a standard comparable with that of static libraries; and

3. That should the proposals be approved by Cabinet; scrutiny undertakes a review of the mobile library stops and informs a way forward to Cabinet.

41. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE –HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO’S) - CONSULTATION

The Service Director Planning presented his report in respect of the draft supplementary planning guidance – houses in multiple occupation which had been presented to Cabinet on the 19th December 2017. Cabinet approved the draft supplementary planning guidance – houses in multiple occupation for the purposes of public consultation for the period 25th January and 23rd March 2018. Subsequently, Scrutiny was asked to provide its views as part of the Council’s formal consultation process.

The Service Director advised that evidence collected by officers has indicated that there is an over concentration of HMOs in some parts of Treforest which in turn leads to a range of issues that can undermine the social cohesion of those communities. Members were advised that supplementary planning guidance is one tool that can be used to assist in the consideration of planning applications both in terms of resisting applications for inappropriate HMOs or HMOs in areas that have already got high concentrations and also assist in raising the standard of new HMOs and guiding any future HMOs to the most appropriate locations.

Scrutiny reviewed the detailed reports and received a power point presentation which explained the benefits which HMOs can bring in terms of providing affordable accommodation to students or those on low wages as well as the issues associated with high concentrations of HMOs and the effects they can have on the local community. The Service Director Planning reported that 94% of the HMOs within RCT and 32% of all households within the ward are HMO, (being the highest in Wales) and he outlined the reasons why there is a need for an SPG in Rhondda Cynon Taf, to provide clarity to all future applicants, to overcome the key concerns of the local residents and for there to be a balanced representation of HMOs in the community.

Following consideration of the suggested SPG Policies, Members were minded to agree with the Policy HMO 2 10% ‘Threshold of Concentration of HMOs’ which would allow for a reasonable amount of HMOs to accommodate those who would benefit from this form of living across RCT. It was also discussed and agreed to allow a higher threshold of 20% close to the University of South Wales, in the Treforest Ward; (although in reality most parts of Treforest already well exceed the 20% threshold).

Following consideration of the report and questions asked of the Officers and Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing who was also present it was **RESOLVED:-**

1. That Scrutiny supports approval of the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and the proposed policies within it; and

2. That Scrutiny visits the purpose built student accommodation at Llwyncastan, Pontypridd in the next municipal year;

The meeting closed at 7.35pm

Chair
S. A. Bradwick

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