

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND
ON MONDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2013 AT 4.00PM

Present:

Councillor M E J Nott OBE - Leader - Chairperson

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
M W Butcher	H E Morgan	M Reeves	D B F White
E Dodd	D G Owen	C E Smith	R Williams
L Ellis	D R Pugh	R Thomas	M Winter
E M Hughes	C L Reeves	H J Townsend	

Town and Community Councillors:

Brackla	-	C L Jones
Coychurch Higher	-	N Oram
Llangynwyd Middle	-	L M Jones
Maesteg	-	P W Jenkins
Merthyr Mawr	-	W Willis
Newcastle Higher	-	M Wilkins
Ogmore Valley	-	M Jenkins
Porthcawl	-	M Clarke

Officers:

N Young	-	Corporate Director Resources
E Fry	-	Group Manager Regeneration
M Evans	-	Team Leader Tourism
M Lewis	-	Integrated Partnership Manager
A Rees	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor G Phillips	-	Work Commitment
Councillor D Sage	-	Unwell
Town Councillor R D L Burns	-	Unwell
Town Councillor R J Hancock	-	Prior Commitment
OBE		
Community Councillor M Kearns	-	Prior Commitment
Community Councillor B Nash	-	Prior commitment

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum of 22 July 2013 be approved as a true and accurate record.

44 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Leader informed the Forum that he had requested the Corporate Director Resources make a presentation on an overview of the budget due to the budget shortfall facing the authority.

The Corporate Director Resources gave an update on the budget overview for 2013-14 and informed the Forum the Council has a net budget of £256m, Council Tax had increased by 3.5%, with Directorate savings of -2.1% (£3.7m). Staff costs excluding schools accounted for 67% of the net budget. The Corporate Director Resources gave an update on the budget overview for 2013-14 which would see a cash cut of -3.4% from the Welsh Government. It was estimated there would be a budget shortfall of £13m giving rise to significant budget pressures faced by the Council. This picture was not dissimilar to the budget situation by many other local authorities in Wales. She informed the Forum the Council would need to approve its draft budget by 10 December 2013.

The Corporate Director Resources informed the Forum of the forecast budget shortfall which would see the Council's forecast net budget for 2017-18 being £203m which would be below the net budget for 2007-08 of £205m. The Corporate Director Resources commented on the steps which the Council is taking to respond to the budget shortfall by making tactical improvements, operational efficiencies and strategic redefinition, through quick wins, streamlining the cost base and creating a low cost operating model.

The Corporate Director Resources outlined to the Forum suggested areas where the Council could work in partnership with Town and Community Councils to deliver services.

A member of the Forum expressed concern that by asking Town and Community Councils to deliver services traditionally delivered by the County Borough there would in effect be double taxation could prove to be unpopular with citizens. A member of the Forum considered that working in partnership with the County Borough would need to be the subject of consultation as it would come at a cost to citizens. The Leader requested that members of the Forum take back to their Town and Community Councils for consideration ways in which they could support the County Borough in the delivery of services.

In response to a question about double taxation, the Corporate Director Resources referred to a guide on the issue which had been produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and stressed the importance of understanding which services matter most to communities. She gave examples of grass cutting which communities may want to take place on a more frequent basis than the Council may provide or the management of parks and/or refurbished sports pavilions. She said the starting position was to establish which services, if any, Town and Community Councils might be prepared to take on and to then explore mechanisms that would allow that to happen.

A member of the Forum commented that Town and Community Councils would need to have an understanding of the costs of providing services traditionally delivered by the County Borough.

A member of the Forum suggested that letters be sent to each of the Town and Community Councils prior to the setting of precepts so that they can consider the types of service they could potentially take on.

RESOLVED: That the Leader write to all Town and Community Councils on areas where they may want to consider working with the Council to provide services in the future and provide a copy of the presentation.

45 POLICING IN BRIDGEND

The Forum received a presentation from Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy who is the newly appointed Divisional Commander Central BCU Serving Bridgend and the Vale. He informed the Forum of the Mission, Vision and Values together with the areas of prioritisation for South Wales Police. He stated that South Wales Police was on target to make £47m of budget reductions over a 4 year period and to reduce the number of police officers and police staff by 2016. South Wales Police was faced with having to meet the challenges of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery; the Silk Commission – devolution debate; Winsor reforms; Regionalisation and the economic climate and welfare reform. He stated that the Central BCU had been in a state of constant change with a reduction of 6 sectors to 4 sectors and a flattening of command structures. He outlined to the Forum a comparison of performance in the Central West sector covering Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl in 2006-07 and 2013-13 which had seen crime reducing by 28%.

The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum of its areas of business which involved providing a 24/7 365 days emergency service; community policing; CID; an Investigative Hub; Public Protection; Community Safety; an Intelligence Unit and Command and Control. He outlined to the Forum the Division's performance in relation to Priority 1 – Crime Reduction and Prevention which had the lowest recorded figures of crime compared to the other Divisions in South Wales Police, although there had been a slight increase in the summer months which was attributable to minor offences and assault with injury. He stated there had been an improvement in the detection rate in the Division. In relation to Priority 3 - Strong, swift response to Anti-Social Behaviour, there had been reduction as per profile but more than expected. In relation to Priority 6 - Putting victims at the heart of our work, the satisfaction for the 12 months ending August 2013 stood at 88.7%, the highest recorded level of satisfaction for the Force ever. Follow-up satisfaction for the 12 months ending August 2013 stood at 77.7%, the highest recorded level of satisfaction for the Force ever. He stated that the Central BCU continued to reap the benefits of the Trick implementation and surpassed the 83.0% target, recording a satisfaction level of 84.0%.

The Chief Superintendent informed the Panel that in 2014 it was proposed to reduce the number of sectors from 4 to 3 which would see the merger of Bridgend and Porthcawl South, the merger of Maesteg and Porthcawl North and the merger of Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan. These changes were necessary due to the need to make savings. The number of Constables would be protected by reducing the management structure. There was also the potential to increase the number of Constable posts. The changes were also being brought about by the need to have compliance with the policing model with briefing and deployment Hubs in Bridgend / Aberkenfig. The changes would also see the effective placement and deployment of Patrol and Neighbourhood Team resources Bridgend and Porthcawl Sector Maesteg, Pyle and Cornelly sector, however Neighbourhood Policing Teams would be unaffected.

The Chief Superintendent outlined to the Forum the highlights achieved by the Division which were that victim satisfaction was the best in force, partnership working with a Force Award/ National Recognition for fly grazing; Connecting Families/Flying Start/Invisible Walls/Communities First and Integrated Offender

Management. April 2014 would see major investment by South Wales Police with a Bridewell custody facility being developed in Bridgend. He stated that residents would receive a satisfaction survey in November 2013. It was the goal of the BCU to reduce demand by making the best possible use of the people and resources and buildings it had available; exploit every opportunity to contribute to early intervention/prevention strategies with partners; robust and effective offender management; a problem solving culture and a get it right the first time and a victim comes first approach. Where crime and ASB happens the Police do everything to stop it happening again and to deter and disrupt OCG activity in the BCU. He stated that there had been a noticeable change in the profile of repeat offenders in that there had been a reduction in the number of younger people offending but this had not been the case with 30 – 40 year olds who continued to re-offend. At the core of the BCU's function was the South Wales Police motto Ich Dien – To Serve.

A member of the Forum stated that he had dialled the 101 service to report a house alarm which had been activated, and had been asked a series of questions by the operator as to whether he could see anyone acting suspiciously in the vicinity and questioned whether the operator had the authority to determine a response to the call. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that the Police would respond if the alarm was connected to the Police and an assessment would be made which was likely that there would be a response to the call within the hour.

A member of the Forum questioned the Chief Superintendent in relation to the impact the proposed reduction in the number of sectors would have on community policing and in responding to emergencies. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that the community policing team was based in Pyle and it was intended to close Porthcawl police station and dispose of the building. In the case of emergencies, resources were drawn from outside the boundaries of the Division. He stated that the public would not see a change to the service they receive from the police as a result of a reduction in the number of sectors.

A member of the Forum questioned what would happen to the police station in Bridgend Town Centre due to the opening of the Bridewell facility. The Chief Superintendent informed the Panel that there would always be a police presence in Bridgend Town Centre and options for a police presence in the town centre were being looked at following the opening of the Bridewell facility.

In response to a question from the Forum, the Chief Superintendent stated that he is a believer in the role of the PCSO as they fill a gap in service provision and that many PCSOs become Constables. He also stated that the allocation of additional to PCSOs was being considered.

The Forum referred to the decrease in the crime rate and the recent spate of arson attacks in the Llynfi Valley. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that all incidents are recorded which are robust and ethical. He stated that mental health had increased and with the development of the Bridewell facility it would ensure the correct facilities and advice was in place. He also informed the Forum that the Police were working hard to detect the series of arson attacks to property in the Llynfi Valley and the Police are working with representatives of Maesteg RFC to make them less vulnerable.

A member of the Forum questioned the Chief Superintendent in relation to the distribution of the survey. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that 111 addresses per ward would be randomly selected to receive the survey which

would be delivered by PCSOs. Previous surveys on policing had seen significant returns.

The Forum questioned the funding of the Bridewell suite. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that the Government had introduced controls for cells in that they must be fit for purpose. He stated that the cost of the suite was being funded by South Wales Police.

In response to a question from the Forum on communities being prepared to pay for the cost of policing, the Chief Superintendent stated that this was being considered by the Silk Commission.

A member of the Forum informed that Porthcawl Town Council had developed good partnership working with the Police in relation to anti-social behaviour emanating from licensed premises and that pub watch was also working well, however there been an increase in the rate of burglaries. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that 48% of burglaries occurred as a result of premises being insecure.

A member of the Forum questioned whether the emergency services could work together to share facilities. The Chief Superintendent informed the Forum that the Police model of conducting business was different to that of the fire service, however the Police worked in partnership with the other emergency services and was developing a joint facility with the ambulance service in Llantwit Major.

In response to a question on indiscriminate parking in John Street, Porthcawl, the Chief Superintendent would discuss this issue with the Forum representative from Porthcawl Town Council.

The Forum thanked the Chief Superintendent for his presentation on policing.

46 BRIDGEND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Group Manager Regeneration reported on the Bridgend County Borough Destination Management Plan which is a shared statement of intent to manage the County Borough as a destination in the interests of tourism, over a stated period of time. It outlined how Destination Management will take place and articulated the agreed roles of the different stakeholders and is supported by a Destination Action Plan which will identify what actions will take place. In producing a Destination Management Plan and a Destination Action Plan which had been developed in consultation with colleagues internally and external partners, it was setting in place processes and actions for delivering the Bridgend Tourism Strategy. The vision of the Destination Management Plan is *“To develop a thriving visitor economy in Bridgend County Borough which celebrates the unique strengths of the place, supports jobs, generates business opportunities and improves the range of amenities available for visitors and local people”*. The Destination Action Plan will support the delivery of this vision by focusing action support the development of the tourism product; support the development of tourism infrastructure and raise the profile and attract more visitors to Bridgend County Borough.

The Group Manager Regeneration informed the Forum the team will work closely with other council departments and external partners to manage the destination and promote those products that will make a difference to the tourism footfall and spend in the County Borough. Events like the British Seniors Open golf tournament and Dragon race bring in thousands of visitors who stay overnight which increases their spend.

The Team Leader Tourism informed the Forum that the Council had recently won a social media award for developing a smart phone information application known as Dare to Discover which will help the visitor discover what there is to do, where to eat, places to stay, events, walks and special offers in the County of Bridgend. The app gives the visitor special offers to use while visiting the area and allows the visitor to pick a walk and track progress along the route. The visitor can then create their own points of interest, review and make comments on others, add photos and videos.

The Tourism Team had also developed a Perfect Day Workbook which was listed on Bridgend Bites, residents were given the opportunity to publish what they considered to be their perfect day.

Members of the Forum questioned whether the Tourism Team had looked into the cost effectiveness of the Big Local App which showed details of events and facilities in towns and cities in the United Kingdom. The Team Leader Tourism informed the Forum that it was working with the Bridgend Tourism Association who had created a free app showing local destinations. The Group Manager Regeneration informed the Forum that the Tourism Team is working on developing a number of apps and was also producing information in hard copy format for those who do not use smart phone technology.

The Group Manager Regeneration informed the Forum that every £1 spent on promoting tourism in the County Borough resulted in £14 being brought in to the local economy.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Forum noted the report.
(2) That the Forum be provided with details of the Dare to Discover app.

47 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer Cabinet and Committee submitted a report which informed the Forum of the requests for items to be presented to future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report and the Corporate Director Resources make a further presentation on an update on the Budget to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.47pm.