

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2018**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2  
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB  
ON WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

TH Beedle	MC Clarke	SK Dendy	J Gebbie
M Jones	JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	AA Pucella
KL Rowlands	G Thomas	SR Vidal	DBF White

Apologies for Absence

MJ Kearns, SG Smith and KJ Watts

Officers:

Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Gail Jewell	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny

Invitees:

Lisa Jones	Regeneration Funding and Regional Engagement Team Leader
Jeff Peters	Projects and Business Approaches Team Leader
Satwant Pryce	Head of Regeneration and Planning
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration

26. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson of the meeting, Councillor C Green requested nominations to chair the meeting because she was unwell. Councillor Mike Clarke was nominated and seconded and he took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

28. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- RESOLVED:
1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 of 12 December 2017 be accepted as a true and accurate record subject to the addition of apologies for absence from Councillor Beedle.
  2. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 of 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

29. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report identifying the items prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the next item delegated to this Committee. She also presented the Committee with a list of potential items for comment and prioritisation and asked the Committee to identify any further items for consideration using the criteria form. Members were also asked to approve the feedback from the previous meetings and the list of responses including any outstanding.

There was an element of work in progress for the “Remodelling Older Persons Accommodation” and Members agreed that it should be kept on the work programme for review at a future date. A Member raised concerns about the staff structure and the number of Social Care Workers.

Members asked for the Corporate Director – Communities and ABMU and Cwm Taff representatives to be invited for consideration of the Prevention and Wellbeing and Local Community Coordination item.

A Member asked for the true cost of Parc Prison (including what Parc Prison and the third sector contributed) to be included in the “Budgetary Impacts of Parc Prison” report. Representatives from the probation service and the housing department should also be invited.

A Member asked that the report on ALN Reform included the cost of contracting out the social services assessments for DOLS.

RESOLVED:

Forward Work Programme Update

- 1 Members determined the following in relation to the feedback received from subsequent meetings:
  - 1.1 Appendix A – 12 12 2017  
With reference to the responses received in relation to Child Adolescent Mental Health Services, Members noted that most of the responses featured an element of work in progress and asked to retain the item on the FWP for future review.
  - 1.2 Appendix A – 08 01 18  
In relation to the current staffing structure for Ty Cwm Ogwr which was received as additional information, Members further requested clarification of the role of the 11 Social Care workers within the organisation.
- 2 Following the Committee’s discussions, Members determined the following in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme:
  - 2.1 Regarding the Prevention and Wellbeing and Local Community Co-ordination, Members requested that the following representation be invited to the meeting in 7 March 2018:
    - Representation from 3rd Sector;
    - Representation from ABMU / Cwm Taf.
  - 2.2 Regarding the Budgetary Impacts of Parc Prison, Members requested that the following information be included in the report request:
    - What Community Services does Parc Prison provide? What does Parc Prison give back to the County Borough of Bridgend;

- What 3rd Sector services are provided at Parc;
- Details of the Parc Prison's impact on housing;
- What input does the Probation Service have with working with the Authority and with the resettlement of prisoners;

And also the following representation be invited to the meeting:

- Representation from Health Service Provider;
- Representation from 3rd Sector – Drug and Alcohol services for example;
- Representation from Probation Service;
- Representation from housing department.

2.3 In relation to the Safeguarding item, Members requested that the following information be included in the report request:

- Costs associated to assessments that are contracted out.

The item below was highlighted by the Committee as a priority to be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for formal prioritisation:

Community Services

30. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services presented a report outlining the work of the Regeneration Service in relation to economic development and worklessness programmes and European Union funding for skills. She outlined the current position, the reduction in the number of staff providing the service, the key areas including supporting new business start-ups, supporting existing local businesses to develop, supporting new investment into the area and marketing and communications.

The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services outlined the economic prospects, challenges and priorities to the skills system, worklessness programmes, welfare reform and tackling unemployment and in work poverty. She explained that the focus was to mitigate the impact of austerity on the service and to provide best value. They were working closely with partners to cover any gaps in provision and there was little scope to take on any other work.

A member raised the issue of high rents in Bridgend market and asked what work was being done to attract new business. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that rent was only one factor and would not be enough to stop a business growing. There were a myriad of other factors such as changes to the pattern of buying. External agents had been instructed to promote the market and to simplify the rent arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration commended officers on the quality of the report. Officers were doing a sterling job for Bridgend and had a wealth of knowledge. The section accounted for a small proportion of the budget and any further cut backs would be a false economy. He was pleased that a representative from the college was at the meeting as there was an inextricable link between BCBC and Bridgend college. Contracts for phase 1 had been signed and exchanged and a site visit to Portishead had been arranged as a role model for Porthcawl. The market was important to Bridgend and he explained that he visited it several times a week. A market recovery plan was in place and the letting of the stalls had been subcontracted to professional agents. There had already been an improvement in footfall and tenancies.

A Member asked if there would be a response to the Welsh Government (WG) online consultation on Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit. The Regeneration Funding

and Regional Engagement Team Leader explained that the consultation event in January 2018 was the opportunity for WG to demonstrate how a programme might look. Officers would work together and feedback. They were looking at a number of issues such as a multi annual programme and continuing a partnership approach. A lot was happening behind the scenes but at this stage there was very little detail to report.

A Member suggested that the report should be condensed into an economic prosperity plan which linked into other plans and showed the ambition of the borough. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that a large amount of work was produced on a regional basis with WG input but he would look to see what could be done.

A Member asked if there was any firm indication from WG as to how succession funding would be addressed particularly for Bridge into Work where they relied on 77% EU funding. The Regeneration Funding and Regional Engagement Team Leader explained there was no absolute certainty to date but a regional engagement team was looking at delivery across Wales. A mapping exercise would be undertaken and they would look at gaps, risks and succession planning. There would be reports at the end of March and the end of the summer.

The Bridgend College representative explained that he was concerned about the implications of Brexit. They ran European projects to upskill students and 25% of the apprenticeship budget was from the EU. WG were committed to protecting the budget because this was a significant area of growth and strength.

A Member stressed the importance of not only getting people into work but also sustainability and upskilling to keep people in work. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that work was being done on a Working Skills for Adults programme and upskilling through the college. It was important to assist clients in securing more secure paid employment and to support people in employment to remain, upskill and move on. Bridgend college had an important role to play this.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained that work had been undertaken looking at anti- poverty and skills programmes with the ambition of funding flexibility to bring the two together with the aim of greater efficiency and effectiveness.

A Member explained that had worked closely with officers and praised their excellent work. He was concerned about proposed cuts in bus services and the potential impact on the town centre and economic areas. The Corporate Director – Communities, explained that this was still at consultation stage at the moment. He encouraged residents to respond to the consultation and to say how they would be affected by the proposals.

The Chairperson asked a representative from Bridgend Business Forum to give an overview of the organisation. He explained that it had been set up to support and encourage communication between more than 800 members. There was a core of active members who organised workshops on topics such as legislation and social media. There were also two high profile events each year which allowed businesses to share their success, celebrate and network. Management of the Forum had been strengthened and the Executive Board would be looking to move forward.

The Projects and Business Approaches Team Leader explained that Business Wales had four officers across Bridgend offering support to new start-ups such as legislation advice. They were currently looking at increasing pop-up businesses and targeting those who were hard to reach.

A Member asked how decisions were made about which business to support financially. The Projects and Business Approaches Team Leader explained that businesses were not always seeking financial support. There were 3 members of the team with more than 60 years of experience between them. One of the officers would meet with the applicant to understand the needs of the business and introduce them to other routes or organisations if applicable. They would look at business plans and complement the service provided by Business in Focus. All agencies worked well together to provide a joined up service along with the local authority.

A Member referred to the longlist of sites for logistic hubs as part of a wider commitment by Heathrow and asked what would be required to get the site shortlisted. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that 67 sites across the UK were being considered. The Bridgend site had good access arrangements and was a flat area of land suitable for a hub. She explained that she was in touch with Welsh Government and when the date of the site visit was known, accurate information that presented the site in the best light would be provided. It was difficult to assess how serious plans were and how much should be invested in the scheme at this stage although it was recognised that staff should be proactive rather than reactive. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that it would be helpful to be the preferred site in Wales, to gain political engagement then to contact local companies and ask them to demonstrate their support

A Member stated that when it came to the best use of resources, work carried out behind the scenes was not always appreciated. There were numerous benefits from tourism and one officer was a concern.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration explained that when it came to tourism, BCBC had institutional knowledge and he believed the county was a “sleeping giant” when it came to tourism and it was a false economy to cut back in this area.

A Member referred to the lagoon project and electrification of the railway and asked if there was any progress. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that these were both Swansea projects so BCBC did not have a large role to play in terms of getting the projects up and running. Projects of that nature created demand for work and skills and it was important to make sure the local economy would benefit.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration explained that he had been given a presentation on the lagoon project and the significant global technology associated with it. He was disappointed with the decision to end electrification of the railway at Cardiff and informed members that the Cabinet Member for Communities was in the process of drafting a letter to the AM's and Welsh Government requesting that Bridgend had a proper place in the Metro scheme.

A Member raised the issue of access to computers for residents in some parts of Bridgend such as Blaengarw. A number of businesses only allowed job applications on line which excluded applications from a number of households. It was not always possible to get to interviews on industrial estates by bus so once again applicants without transport were excluded from applying for certain jobs.

A Member asked what was being done to develop entrepreneurs in schools. He was advised that there was an active programme with officers going into the schools to deliver workshops etc. It was down to the schools to initiate contact but the results were positive. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that the Welsh Baccaalaureate qualification included elements such as finding a product, marketing and selling it.

A Member asked what period the data from the Annual Population Survey referred to because there was no date attached to the statistic. The date was unavailable so Members recommended that when any further data was presented to Committee it was imperative that a date was also referenced

The representative from Bridgend College added that they worked closely with Tata Steel and that Tata Steel had the second largest number of apprentices in Wales.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Members commended the work currently being undertaken within the Local Authority on economic development in Bridgend, but recommended that the Directorate consider condensing the information provided within the report into the production of an Economic Prosperity Plan. This plan would enable members of the public to easily digest and review the work being carried out in the service area. Members further recommended that the plan detail:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have got there?
- How will we know if we have been successful?
- What has been achieved?

b) Members expressed concerns regarding the potential gaps in funding post Brexit and the Committee recommended that urgent clarification be sought from Welsh Government regarding addressing succession funding planning.

c) Members highlighted the false economy in making cuts within the tourism service area and emphasised the need for a strong tourism presence to support employment and regeneration in the Borough, with particular reference to Cardiff City Deal and the prospective Heathrow Logistics Hub. Therefore the Committee recommended that sufficient resource was allocated to the collation of the Destination Management Plan, not necessarily from within the Local Authority but from effective partnership and collaborative working.

d) The Committee queried what support was available for citizens in the Borough with gaining information and applying for current employment opportunities who do not have access to the internet, as they may well have the skills required for the role but were being excluded for not having the ability to get online. Therefore Members recommended that new innovative ways of working were pursued into how businesses could advertise current jobs without using the internet and then how without access could they communicate with the employer. The Members suggested using a central area/hub/community centre.

e) In conjunction with the above comment and recommendation, Members emphasised the importance of improved transport links to isolated areas within the Borough, to enable commuting to places of employment and accessing training. Taking into account the lack of internet access in these areas, the Committee consequently recommended that the Directorate target consultation to seek the views and comments regarding the proposed cuts to bus services.

f) Members made reference to the statement made in the report regarding the most recent data from the Annual Population Survey and highlighted that there was no date attached to the statistic. The Committee therefore recommended that when any further data is presented to Committee that it is imperative that a date is also referenced.

Additional Information

- The Committee stressed the need for schools to target and develop their young entrepreneurs within their secondary schools and colleges by being proactive in requesting support and advice from the Local Authority and the third sector. In relation to this, Members requested to receive a case study following an entrepreneurship to evidence what was offered and the outcome following it – have they succeeded?

31. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 11:30