

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2016 AT 4.00 PM

Present:

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

S Aspey	S Baldwin	E Dodd	CA Green
EM Hughes	M Jenkins	P Jenkins	CL Jones
CL Jones	M Kearns	R Lee	AY Morgan
HE Morgan	RL Penhale-Thomas	CL Reeves	M Reeves
CE Smith	R Williams	RE Young	

Apologies for Absence

Councillors M Butcher, L Grantham-Brooks, N Oram, G Phillips and D Sage

Officers:

Matthew Gilbert	Transport Policy and Strategy Officer
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Kwaku Opoku-Addo	Policy, Development and Transport Team Leader
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Yuan Shen	Corporate Improvement and Intergrated Partnerships Manager

132. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

133. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town and Community Council Forum of 12 September 2016 be approved as a true and accurate record.

134. ACTIVE TRAVEL ACT - INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

The Forum received a presentation by Steve Brooks, National Director of Sustrans on the Integrated Network Map for Bridgend.

He informed the Forum that the definition of Active Travel is walking and cycling as an alternative means to motorised transport for the purpose of making every day journeys. He stated that Wales is facing a number of serious challenges that Active Travel can help to address, such as: Health; Environment; Economic Development; Equality and Community Cohesion, which in turn represented five of the seven goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. He also stated that Active Travel also improves air quality and reduces road traffic accidents.

He commented on the vital role Town and Community Councils have in having interaction with their communities and bodies such as schools, employers and Chambers of Trade in engaging in the delivery of the Integrated Network Maps which have to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 24 September 2016. He stated that Active Travel presented the opportunity to discuss a vision for communities and is about changing the places people live for the better.

The Forum received a presentation by Matthew Gilbert, Transportation Policy and Strategy Officer on the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and what it meant for the Council and to the communities it serves. He stated that the aim of the Act which came into force on 25 September 2014 is to undertake active travel and to encourage people to leave their cars behind and use active travel where it is suitable for them to do so.

The Transportation Policy and Strategy Officer informed the Forum that the Act placed 24 new duties on local authorities which comprises a map of existing active travel routes (the Existing Routes Map); a map showing plans for active travel over next 15 years (Integrated Network Map); requirements to secure new and improved active travel routes and facilities, and promote active travel journeys and preparation of reports to the Welsh Government. He stated that the Integrated Network Map applies to 9 settlements in the County Borough but local authorities have discretion to map other areas. The Transportation Policy and Strategy Officer also stated that Existing Routes Map had been subject to a 16 week consultation supported by events for various stakeholders including schools and community groups. A total of 36 maps 18 showing pedestrian routes, 18 showing cycle routes were submitted.

The Transportation Policy and Strategy Officer informed the Forum that the Integrated Network Map shows plans and proposals for active travel over the next 15 years and subject to a 12 week public consultation. He highlighted the process of preparing for the Integrated Network Map which resulted in the desired routes being added to identify and assess potential routes and networks for the draft INM. He stated that the importance of the INM should not be underestimated as any routes not included in the INM were unlikely to receive funding.

The Forum commented on potential to encourage people to use rural pavements for commuting as cycle paths are used in such a way in Scandinavian countries. The Forum also commented on the need for the A48 to be looked at due a recent fatality and the pressures on the route from the Broadlands development. The Merthyr Mawr area has a number of footpaths used for cycling, running and walking and need to be made safer for leisure activities. The present 60 miles per hour speed limit at Merthyr Mawr south needed to be looked at as roads in the vicinity have become rat runs. The Leader informed the Forum that the Welsh Government has granted funding to enable the highways authority to carry out a programme of physical improvements and stated that strong evidence was needed to identify improvements to be made. The Policy, Transport and Development Team Leader informed the Forum that there are three barriers to making changes to the way people commute, namely, planning, funding and culture. He stated there is a need to plan for the future and to engage with communities so that problems can be identified. The Leader informed the Forum that the traffic review at Merthyr Mawr would be published.

The Forum questioned what work was being done in schools to promote active travel. The National Director of Sustrans informed the Forum of the work undertaken by the Bike IT Officer in schools in Bridgend to promote active travel, which had led to the reduction of school runs, increased bike safety and had got pupils involved in the INM. He stated there was a need to focus attention on under 5 year olds and aspiring parents on promoting active travel. The Transportation Policy and Strategy Officer informed the Forum that there is a suite of measures which could be put in place linking with Sustrans to achieve a reduction in car usage.

A member of the Forum commented at the lack of lockable facilities for bikes and locker rooms in some comprehensive schools which could be a barrier to encouraging pupils to cycle to school. The Cabinet Member Communities confirmed that Maesteg Comprehensive has bike racks and many pupils cycle to school there.

A member of the Forum commented that bus companies had ceased operating some routes as buses could not negotiate some roads due to parked vehicles on either side of the road. It needed to be impressed on residents to park on their drives otherwise bus services could be lost. A member of the Forum also commented that parents need to be educated when dropping children at school due to indiscriminate parking. The Cabinet Member Communities commented that the Council is to purchase a parking enforcement vehicle jointly with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to target areas of indiscriminate parking, particularly in the vicinity of schools. The National Director of Sustrans commented that there had been a lot of problems of street parking since Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen had opened. A member of the Forum commented that retail parks had encouraged the use of more car journeys. A member of the Forum also commented on the need for a cycle route to be developed to go to Porthcawl.

A member of the Forum commented that narrower roads had been developed at Parc Derwen designed to reduce speed but this had caused parking problems.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report.

135. WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015

The Forum received a presentation by the Group Manager Corporate Performance, Partnerships and Transformation on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act introduced four pillars of wellbeing, namely, Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental and the aim of the Act is to improve the wellbeing, social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of Wales.

To be able to improve wellbeing, the connectivity between the four pillars must be recognised and there was a need to focus activities on all four pillars to improve wellbeing. She stated that historically, social services have addressed only the social needs of clients, which had led to an unsustainable model of service delivery, spiralling costs, and interventions that are likely to fail.

The Group Manager Corporate Performance, Partnerships and Transformation highlighted the seven wellbeing goals. She stated that the Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which means that public bodies must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The principle is made up of five ways of working that public bodies are required to take into account when applying sustainable development. The Welsh Government has put in place the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act as the latest step in the journey to embed sustainable development in the public sector in Wales which has been recognised by the United Nations as a ground-breaking piece of legislation. The Group Manager Corporate Performance, Partnerships and Transformation highlighted the key parts of the wellbeing duty for public bodies and public services boards together with the key dates.

The Group Manager Corporate Performance, Partnerships and Transformation informed the Forum that the Act requires Public Services Boards to publish first Local Wellbeing Plans by May 2018. Town and Community Councils with income / expenditure of £200,000 must take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives in the local Wellbeing plan for the area. She stated that the Act requires Public Services Boards to involve all Town and Community Councils in the process of improving the well-being of the area.

The Forum received a presentation from Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales on the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act and the impact of the Act on Town and Community Councils. He highlighted the work and influence of One Voice Wales in the sector.

He informed the Forum that Section 40 of the Act placed duties on certain Town and Community Councils to all reasonable steps towards meeting local objectives in the local well-being plan that has effect in their areas and must publish a report for each relevant financial year detailing progress against local objectives. He stated that Town and Community Councils would need to integrate into their existing mechanisms for planning, monitoring and reporting on what they do. He also stated that PSB's must consult Town and Community Councils on local well-being plan by providing draft copy. Town and Community Councils can respond including making representations and should consider local well-being plans alongside their own plans for the year ahead. He stated that Town and Community Councils need to consider funding implications; engage with the community and agreeing next steps and implementing and monitoring progress. Town and Community Councils for which the duty applies are able to seek the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner.

The Chief Executive of One Voice Wales outlined the current sector developments for local councils which would see Town and Community Councils having extended responsibilities requiring greater capability and capacity. This would be achieved over 3 phases, with phase 1 commencing in 2016/17, phase 2 taking place between 2018/19 and 2019/20 and ending with phase 3 taking place between 2020/2023. He informed the Forum of the support of the Cabinet Secretary for Town and Community Councils.

The Forum noted that the Act will bring considerable additional duties for larger Town and Community Councils.

The Forum raised the issue of potential double taxation in the event of some Town and Community Councils taking over responsibilities undertaken by County Borough Councils. The Chief Executive of One Voice Wales informed the Forum that if a Unitary Authority stopped delivering a service and which was then delivered by a Town and Community Council would not be double taxation. However if a Unitary Authority continued to provide a service and it was funded by a Town and Community Council it could be deemed to be double taxation. One Voice Wales had taken the line that if Unitary Authorities could not afford to run some services, they could be run by Town and Community Councils. He stated that Town and Community Councils could also work with housing organisations and local businesses.

A member of the Forum questioned whether the Welsh Government could assume responsibility for education and social services which would allow local authorities to concentrate on the delivery of more local services. The Leader commented that most services run by local authorities are invisible to the public and that the Welsh Government already runs a key service, that being the health service. He did not believe that the Welsh Government running education and social services would benefit those services. He stated that the Council needed to look at its role in working more closely with Town and Community Councils.

The Chief Executive of One Voice Wales informed the Forum that One Voice Wales had been critical of the previous proposals for local government re-organisation. He stated that services run by Unitary Authorities were being stretched and therefore needed to work with Town and Community Councils to deliver services. He also stated that the Act would see significant changes to the way in which Town and Community Councils operate. The Act makes it harder to dissolve Town and Community Councils but makes it easier to establish Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report.

136. WEB BASED PLANNING FACILITIES

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

137. REVIEW OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS' CHARTER ACTION PLAN

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

138. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 6.17 pm