BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

13 MARCH 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

WEB BASED PLANNING FACILITIES

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1   The purpose of the report is to update the Town and Community Council Forum on the range of planning facilities available online, including the facility to comment on planning applications. This will involve a short presentation and a live demonstration.

2.   Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

2.1   The delivery of the County Borough Council's planning functions has links to all three of the Council's Corporate Priorities as outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2020.

3.   Background

3.1   Over the last decade as part of its commitment to make planning information more widely accessible Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has invested in information technology to improve its service. This includes back scanning of historical information; adoption of an electronic document management system; publication of key documents on the website; adoption of the Planning Portal to submit planning applications online and introducing the facility to comment on planning applications via the internet.

3.2   Whilst improving the service to the public, the online facilities have also helped the planning service to maintain acceptable levels of service provision, against a background of budget cuts amounting to £216,000 in the past two years, out of a budget of £517,000 (a cut of 42%). It is important to recognise, therefore, that the uptake of IT based services by the Town and Community Councils and the general public is essential to the delivery of the planning service, as staffing levels are severely diminished.

4.   Current Situation/Proposal

4.1   BCBC facilitates consultees or any member of the public to submit comments online by directly using the links provided in the consultation letter or via the Council's main website.

4.2   Town and Community Councils are statutory consultees in relation to planning applications.

4.3   More recently a new back office IT system has improved the service available to the public to submit comments on applications.

4.4   Key documents including the Local Development Plan (LDP) as well as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Design Guides are also available to view and download from the website.

4.5   It is proposed to expand the online services in the future to include digital mapping information whereby members of the public will be able to locate a property on a map to check if there are any constraints for example tree preservation orders and existing planning consents.

5.   Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1   There is no impact on the Council's Policy Framework or Procedure Rules.

6.   Equality Impact Assessment.

6.1   There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7.   Financial Implications

7.1   There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

8.   Recommendation

8.1   The Town and Community Council Forum is recommended to note the report.

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7 March, 2017

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Background Documents
None