

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2018

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	N Clarke	P Davies
DG Howells	A Hussain	RMI Shaw	RME Stirman
G Thomas	E Venables	JE Williams	

Apologies for Absence

DRW Lewis and MC Voisey

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice

Invitees:

Councillor R Young	Cabinet member Communities
Satwant Pryce	Head of Regeneration and Planning
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Clarke declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 – Town Centre Regeneration because she knew one of the invitees.

Councillor S Baldwin declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 – Town Centre Regeneration because he was the Director/owner of a business in Bridgend.

26. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: 1) Forward Work Programme Update - That subject to the addition of “item” following “delegated” in conclusion 1, and the addition of a full stop at the end of the first sentence in conclusion 2, the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 of 6 December 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

2) Members asked why the Minutes from the 17th January 2018 had not been listed on the Agenda for approval. The Scrutiny Officer explained that the meetings had fallen close together in the diary and the minutes were not ready at the time of publication. Officers were aware of the recommendations contained in the minutes and would be taking action where appropriate.

27. 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.

Members expressed concerns regarding Waste Services and issues that residents were still experiencing. The Chairperson explained that the Committee would be considering this item at a future meeting where Members would have an opportunity to discuss concerns with the relevant officers in attendance.

With regard to the Empty Properties item, Members requested a baseline study on what properties were empty, how long properties had been empty and what attempts had been made to bring empty properties back into use, before the meeting. A definition of "empty property" was also requested and whether this included properties empty and for sale.

Members requested that Waste Services be added to the work programme for prioritisation and that Empty Properties should be put forward for webcasting.

RESOLVED: The Committee:

- (i) Approved the feedback from the previous meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 and noted the list of responses including any still outstanding at Appendix A;
- (ii) Re Empty Properties, Members requested a baseline study on what properties were empty, how long properties had been empty and what attempts had been made to bring empty properties back into use, before the next meeting. A definition of "empty property" was also requested and whether this included properties empty and for sale.
- (iii) Identified further detail required for other items in the overall FWP at Table B of Appendix B;
- (iv) Identified Waste Services for future consideration on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes at meetings following the Annual Meeting in May 2018;
- (v) Suggested that Empty Properties be recommended for Webcasting.

28. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Corporate Director – Communities presented a report providing Members with information on the service responsibilities within Town Centre Regeneration, how they were managed, how they could be developed with reduced resources and how they impacted on the three main town centres and their regeneration. The report also covered the specific requests previously made by the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Corporate Director – Communities stressed that it was important to note that the authority was not able to influence some areas as much as it would like eg empty

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properties but there were many examples of success when it came to funding requests, car parking pilots and highway improvements and the Council remained ambitious.

The Chairperson welcomed the invitees to the meeting.

A Member raised the issue of paying to park and asked why residents in Bridgend and Porthcawl had to pay, Maesteg was covered by a covenant but parking in Pencoed was free. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that he did not know the history but he suspected that payment for parking was used as a method of controlling parking which was not as much of an issue in Pencoed where street parking was available.

A Member asked for clarification on whether or not Pencoed was a town and if not, why did it have a Town Council and a Mayor. She was pleased to see that the report referred to the Council lobbying UK government to enable the implementation of a designed scheme to replace the railway level crossing with a re-modelled road bridge. The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration provided a background to the issue and added that a planning officer had sent an explanation to Members on how towns were dealt with in planning terms. There was a scheme for a major development at the level crossing and the next stage was securing support from Network Rail. The Cabinet Member for Communities said that there was no dispute, Pencoed was a town. The three principal towns had older town centres and major problems compared to Pencoed. A Member suggested that paying to park in Pencoed should be included in the car parking review. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the review had been undertaken over the last few months and a report would be submitted to Cabinet in March with options for consultation and income suggestions. There were no specific recommendations in relation to Pencoed.

A Member asked if the car parking review covered parking in schools. The Corporate Director - Communities explained that payment for car parking was used as a method to manage inconsiderate and dangerous parking and there was a risk that payment for car parking where this was not an issue would encourage parking on the roads which would lead to chaos. Payment for parking was generally used in town centres.

A Member asked if there were any proposals for parking meters in the town centres. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that this had been considered for Porthcawl seafront where there was a congestion problem. The review had looked at staffing charges and tariffs and if reducing charges would bring benefits to an area. A Member asked if it was wise to concentrate on the major towns and ignore the issues in the valleys and the communities. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the review was specifically looking at a parking strategy for BCBC and broader parking issues were separate to this review.

A Member asked if the review covered the opportunity for commuters to purchase monthly passes to BCBC car parks. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the review had looked at this and it was hoped that there would be an increase in the number of season tickets sold. Staff and Member parking had also been included in the review.

A Member requested clarification regarding residents parking. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that this was a long and complex process with knock on effects in different areas which had to be addressed as work progressed. It was difficult to see what the impact would be and what steps would be required for those affected. A permit would entitle a person to park in a street if a space was available not guarantee a space.

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An invitee asked if it would be possible for the final report on the car parking review and the criteria used to determine areas where resident permit parking was required to be forwarded to all town and community councils. Members discussed a number of issues such as reducing the number of bus routes, avoiding cars in towns at peak times, the infrastructure costs of park and ride, City Deal and parking commercial vehicles outside the home.

A Member questioned the role of Civil Enforcement Officers particularly in relation to car parks and in the valleys where there were no car parks. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that there was a contingent of staff covering all areas and the staff rota could be circulated which would demonstrate the coverage.

A Member requested clarification of the powers of the PCSOs and Police Officers in the Borough as there appeared to be a disparity of powers within the Authority and others across Wales in relation to parking and motoring offences. Officers agreed to find this information and to forward it to Members.

A Member asked for a definitive timeline on the implementation of the enforcement vehicle including when it would come into use and also for the terms of use of the vehicle. Members also asked for further clarification as to what traffic offences the vehicle would be able to capture, including offences such as tax, insurance and MOT checks. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the emphasis of the vehicle was improving traffic safety outside schools and not general parking issues. Foot patrols could move a vehicle on but the vehicle could then return with no consequence. The camera car could cover a greater area and was expected to achieve good results. A Member asked how the mobile unit would cover 68 schools at a specific time of day and what it would be doing at other times of the day and in school holidays. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that there were problems in other areas such as bus stops. The vehicle would be able to cover a few schools at one time and it was important to get to the point where people realised the vehicle could be in their area at any time and if they were parking illegally, there was a good chance they would get caught. He also confirmed that the vehicle would be used to police double yellow lines. A Member referred to the de-pedestrianisation of Bridgend town centre and the use of bollards and street furniture to demarcate the interface between carriageway and footway. Members were concerned that the proliferation of bollards, seats and bins could impede those partially sighted. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that the bollards would protect those on footway from cars and consideration would be given to spacing and colour contrast to ensure they were easily visible. The statutory process would ensure that vulnerable groups were taken into account.

The representative from Bridgend BID explained that there was pressure to open up the town centre as it had suffered following phase 2 pedestrianisation. The vacancy rate of 16% was being monitored. He explained that work to open up the centre was subject to funding and depended on grant bids. It was a substantial scheme and when it was implemented there could be issues with noise and dust.

A Member stated that it was not about driving through the centre but being able to stop, park and shop. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that limited parking spaces would be created and proposals would be included in the forthcoming consultation.

A Member asked how much of the Business Rates collected from local businesses came back into the Local Authority and what local services they contributed to. Officers explained that this information would be available from the Head of Finance. A member asked why there had been a decrease of 60% in business rates but an increase for

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Porthcawl where footfall was down by 21%. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained that footfall could decrease for a variety of reasons such as the weather, sporting events and the attractiveness of the place. It was a target for the next year to identify some of the reasons. A Member added that car parking in Porthcawl was a big issue as well as access along John Street and the wind tunnel effect. Members agreed that John Street was not attractive and a lot of work was required to make it more attractive to shoppers.

A Member congratulated staff on the achievements of the THI programme across the Council and investment into Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration thanked the Member for his positive comments.

An invitee commented on the way restoration of Maesteg Town Hall had been handled, the level of commitment in Porthcawl compared to Maesteg and that he would like to see commitment from the Town Centre Manager that she would interact more with the people of Maesteg. The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration confirmed that officers were totally committed to all towns in the Borough. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services explained the history of the Maesteg Town Hall project and that this was not to do with a lack of commitment but to circumstances beyond the control of the authority.

A Member referred to the proposed Watersports Centre at Rest Bay in Porthcawl and asked if there were plans in place to install a “changing places” facility. Members were advised that there were no plans for this due to the difficulty in managing such a facility due to the number of commercial enterprises that would be sharing the Watersports Centre. Members suggested that Officers review the decision to ensure there were adequate facilities available for disabled adults. Members suggested that as part of the lease of the building, the commercial enterprises manage and finance the facility for public use. Members also recommended that the facility included private changing rooms in addition to communal changing areas.

An invitee raised the issue of vacant flats in town centres which were falling into disrepair and asked what powers were available to compulsory purchase these dwellings. The Llynfi Valley would benefit from a small hotel but the Town Council was precluded from purchasing and developing a site. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that the issue of Empty Properties was due to be considered at a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting where relevant officers would be in attendance to answer the question.

The Chair of Maesteg Chamber of Trade explained that he was fully aware of the support in terms of investment in Maesteg Town Hall and of business community concerns regarding the project coming to fruition. He appreciated the explanation and endorsed the actions taken by the authority.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration stated that the thanks were appreciated and that empty properties continued to be a problem.

A Member asked how many blue disabled parking badges the Authority had issued to date and how that figure compared to the industry standard of 6% of available spaces marked as a disabled space. Officers agreed to forward the information to Members.

A Member asked why parent and toddler parking spaces had not been allocated in any BCBC car parks. The Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services advised that this was not enforceable and that it was not possible to save these places for those that genuinely needed them so it wouldn't solve the problem. It was generally

accepted that these spaces were needed but it was impossible to police. Members discussed the difficulties of getting young children in and out of cars and the importance of having both Parent/Toddler parking and disabled parking in car parks.

The Chairperson commended the officers for their brilliant work and the investment they had secured for the area.

Recommendations

1. Members recommended that Officers continue ahead as planned with the car parking review so no further delays are encountered, but to be mindful to act timely and implement phase 2 of residents permit parking if the problematic parking transfers to surrounding areas
2. Members were concerned that there were no plans in place to install a “changing places” facility at the new Watersports centre at Rest Bay in Porthcawl. Members recommended that Officers review this decision and install one at this premises to ensure there is adequate facility available for disabled adults and insist that as part of the lease of the building that the commercial enterprises manage and finance the facility for public use. Members also recommended that the facility include private changing rooms in addition to communal changing areas.
3. Members recommended a review of the Enforcement vehicle within 6-12 months of implementation to monitor performance and the information to be fed back to Members

Members asked for the following further information to be sent to them:

1. How many seasonal car parking passes had been purchased by the public for the Local Authority car parks. Members would also like to know the costs and frequency available to purchase.
1. The criteria on how the locations for residents permit parking are decided and what formula and criteria is applied to determine the areas. Officers to also forward this on to Town and Community Councils for information
2. An example rota of the Civil Enforcement Officer
3. Clarification of the powers of the PCSOs and Police Officers in the Borough as there was a disparity of powers in this Authority and others across Wales in relation to parking offences.
4. A definitive timeline of the implementation of the enforcement vehicle including when it will come into use and also requested to see the terms of use of the vehicle. Members also asked for further clarification as to what traffic offences the vehicle would be able to capture, including offences such as tax, insurance and MOT checks
5. How much of the Business Rates charged to business owners come back into the Local Authority and what local services they contribute to.
6. How many blue disabled parking badges has the Authority issued to date
7. Members welcomed the review of the de-pedestrianisation of Bridgend Town Centre and requested clarification as to when this was going to happen – members would like to see timescales of any further consultations that need to be undertaken, funding constraints and design plans.
Members asked if charging the public to park in Pencoed Town will be included within the Car Parking review to ensure fairness amongst the towns in the Borough

29. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 12:45