

**TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM - TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 2018**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 2018 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

S Aspey P Davies	SE Baldwin Cllr R Davies	Bennett Cllr L Desmond- Williams	JPD Blundell RM Granville
AA Pucella MC Voisey	CE Smith Warren	SG Smith KJ Watts	JH Tildesley MBE

Apologies for Absence

Cllr P Gwilliam and RL Penhale-Thomas

Officers:

Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Richard Matthams	Development Planning - Team Leader
Jonathan Parsons	Group Manager Development

160. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received the following Members:-  
Councillor R Penhale-Thomas  
Councillor PW Jenkins  
Councillor P Gwilliam

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

162. REMUNERATION OF TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

The Chairperson invited to the meeting Mr. L Jones, from Welsh Government, and Ms. S. Willey and Mr. G. Owens from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, in order to give a Presentation on the above topic.

The Presentation covered the following:-

**Community and Town Council Groupings**

The Panel believed that the wide variation in Community and Town Council size, means the responsibilities and accountabilities of Councillors must also vary.

Councillors managing income of expenditure of £1m and those delivering significant services, including those perhaps delegated from Principal Councils, are operating in a much more complex environment than a Council, with an annual budget of less than £30k.

The Panel examined a range of measures we could use as the basis for grouping Community and Town Councils to reflect these differences.

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We concluded that using income or expenditure figures better reflects the activity levels of a Council than population ratios or precepts which the Panel found did not always correlate to income or expenditure.

Reflecting on consultation feedback on the draft Annual Report, the Panel has formed 3 groups of Community and Town Councils on the basis of the level of income or expenditure, whichever is the highest, in the previous financial year.

It was also easier for Councils to understand which group they belong to ie:-

<u>Community/Town Council Group</u>	<u>Income or Expenditure in 2017-18 of</u>
A	£200k and above
B	£30k - £199,999k
C	Below £30k

The Officers from the IRWP then went on to talk about various Determinations made as follows:-

### Determination 44

Community and town councils in Groups A and B must make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.

### Determination 45

Community and town councils in Group C are authorised to make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.

### Determination 46

Community and town councils in Group A must make available an annual payment of £500 each to a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses.

### Determination 47

Community and town councils in Groups B or C are authorised to make an annual payment of £500 each to up to 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses if that is claimed.

### Determination 48

Community and town councils are authorised to make payments to each of their members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties. Such payments must be the actual costs of travel by public transport or the HMRC mileage allowances as set out in the annual report.

### Determination 49

If a community or town council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it may authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its members at the maximum rates set out in the annual report on the basis of receipted claims.

Determination 50

Community and town councils are authorised to pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties as set out in the annual report.

Determination 51

All Community and town councils must provide for the reimbursement of necessary costs for the care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or formal carers) and for personal assistance needs up to a maximum of £403/month on production of receipts from the carer. Reimbursement must be for the additional cost incurred by members in order for them to carry out their approved duties. Reimbursement shall only be made on production of receipts from the carer.

Determination 52

Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Civic Head payment to the mayor/chair of the council up to a maximum of £1,500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

Determination 53

Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Deputy Civic Head payment to the deputy mayor/deputy chair of the council up to a maximum amount of £500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

Members of Principal Councils

Members in receipt of a band 1 or band 2 senior salary from a Principal Council (Leader, Deputy Leader, Member of the Executive, cannot receive any payment from a Community or Town Council other than travel and subsistence expenses and reimbursement of the costs of care.

However, they can hold a senior role in the Community or Town Council.

**Annual Timetable**

March

Council must consider each determination in the IRPW's final report and record its formal decision in relation to the non-mandated determinations which will apply to all members.

May

From the date of the General Meeting, all mandated payments and those non-mandated payments the Council has adopted to be made to all members. Proper notice must have been received by the Clerk from any member making a personal decision to forgo part or all of the payments.

September (by 30<sup>th</sup>)

Publish, and send to the IRPW, details of all payments made to individual members for the previous financial year in an 'Annual Statement of Payments. *The IRP has produced*

*a pro forma to help with this, which is available to download from the Panel's website. This pro forma can be amended each year.*

### October

Consider the determinations in the IRPW's draft report for the next financial year and use this to inform Budget plans.

As this concluded the Presentation, the Chairperson opened up the meeting for questions.

A Member noted that allowances/expenses could be payable to Town/Community Councillors, but raised concern over the fact that they had no resources/and or capacity to arrange for or recruit a suitable Responsible Finance Officer to undertake regularly calculating these payments, and wondered if the County Borough Council for that particular area could assist to this end, through for example, a type of Service Level Agreement. He felt this was something that could be taken up with the HRMC. He also asked if these payments would be spread out over the course of a year, or paid as a one off lump sum, and if such payments would be subject to income tax and national insurance reductions.

A member of the IRWP advised that it was entirely up to the appropriate Town/Community Council if they paid the above in instalments or as a one-off payment, and a body such as One Voice Wales would be able to give them advice on what kind of payments were subject to tax etc. Obviously expenses would not be subject to tax/national insurance he added, due to the fact that whatever the Town/Community Councillor paid out of their own pocket, they would be entitled to receive this back as a net sum reimbursement. A payment in the form of an allowance however, would be subject to tax as it was a sum of money that would required to be declared by the person in receipt of this, at the end of a tax year.

A Member felt that it was important to look to improve levels of diversity in respect of Town/Community Councillors, particularly given that in the recent local elections there had been 66% of uncontested seats at Town/Community Council level, with the majority of seats being occupied by white males. He felt that it was not shameful for Town/Community Councillors to accept expenses and allowances in situations where this was permitted. He added that whilst local authorities should make it known to the public the extent of payments they make to Councillors with Town/Community Councils also adopting the same approach, he asked the IRWP representatives if it was necessary to actually name the members who were in receipt of such payments.

A member of the IRWP, advised that names of Town/Community Councillors who are paid any kind of payment for a particular role they fulfil in a Town/Community Council do have to be named as they do if they are serving a County Borough Council, as this extent of information reflects accountability to the constituents the particular Authority are serving. These payments are also set by the IRWP and not the Town/Community Council, and it is a requirement of this body, for a Town/Community Council to be open and transparent to the general public when it comes to payments to certain key members. Though this was only applicable to payments and allowances, as opposed to expenses that any Town/Community Council had paid out and was then re-claiming back. The public did not need to be apprised of this he added.

A Member asked, if a particular Town/Community Council happened to serve on two such Councils, could they in effect claim twice for undertaken a specific role for which a payment could be claimed, to which a representative of the IRWP replied that they could. He clarified that the IRWP advised Town/Community Councils as to what posts

there could be a payment or an allowance for, and it was open for them to then decide if they wished to adopt this. He emphasised, that the payment or allowance was not set by Town/Community Councils but by the IRWP. Town/Community Councils just had the scope to adopt these or otherwise, should Members wish to accept any such payments. Town/Community Councils did however, have the power to decide how many roles could be subject to a payment, as long as the amount for any such given role did not exceed the level set by the IRWP.

A Member advised that it would be helpful if the Annual draft IRWP report was made available earlier, so that it was more in line with the time when Town/Community Councils set their precepts.

An IRWP representative confirmed that the timetable for establishing the draft IRWP was set by Welsh Government, however, he added that the IRWP could take this point up with them.

**RESOLVED:** That the Presentation be noted.

163. **BRIDGEND REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP)**

The Corporate Director – Communities submitted a report, that outlined the stages undertaken to date in progressing the Replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan (2018-2033), with this focusing on:

- The Bridgend Local Development Plan (2013) Review Report (Appendix 1 to the report). This document sets out the proposed extent of likely changes the existing LDP (2006-2021) and seeks to confirm the revision procedure to be followed in preparing a replacement LDP. It is proposed that the Replacement LDP will cover a plan period up to 2033, which is the end of a 15 year plan period that will commence in 2018; and
- Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan Delivery Agreement (Appendix 2 to the report). The Delivery Agreement sets out how and when the local community and other stakeholders can contribute to the preparation of the Replacement Plan and a timetable for its preparation. It is proposed that the Replacement LDP will cover a plan period up to 2033

Both the Review Report (for the existing LDP (2013)) and the Delivery Agreement for the replacement LDP will be submitted to Welsh Government before the end of June 2018, after being agreed by Council.

The report was accompanied by a power point Presentation given by the Development Planning Team Leader, who was accompanied by the Group Manager Development.

The Presentation covered the following areas:

1. What is an LDP – A high level Strategy allocating land use throughout the County Borough. This will portray the key objectives of this, Public Service obligations and Wellbeing plans. The LDP will account for sustainable development and sustainable growth provision.
2. The Council will monitor the LDP for performance purposes, and it is required to be reviewed every 4 years.

The LDP helps enhance and deliver/create the following:-

- New homes/Affordable Housing
- Employment

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- Town Centres
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Green Infrastructure
- Education provision
- Preventing inappropriate development
- Sustainability
- Future Generations

All aspects of the Plan will need to be assessed to consider if they remain sound. This will include:-

1. The LDP's Vision
2. Its Objectives
3. Spatial Strategy
4. Policies and Designations

The full Review will follow exactly the same preparation process and stages as the original adopted LDP.

Changes to the LDP will be informed by:-

- Significant findings and concerns identified in the 3 AMR's that have been published since the Plan was adopted;
- Any significant contextual changes (such as National, Regional or local conditions and circumstances);
- New evidence;

The next part of the Presentation covered all the stages associated with the progression of the LDP, including the timetable for these. It would culminate with the LDP being adopted in August/September 2021.

It was explained that a number of key stakeholders would be involved in the Review Report, with 'targeted engagement' taking place with stakeholders etc. Examples of these were, the general public, Welsh Government, Home Builders Federation, Natural Resources Wales, CADW, Welsh Water and Town/Community Councils.

Key issues of the LDP would be satisfying the new Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (and to deliver the objectives of this); Active Travel, to provide and enhance effective transport links, and to comply with Renewable Energy de-carbonisation targets set by Welsh Government.

The LDP would identify:-

1. New Strategies and Sites (Evidence based)
2. PPW (chapter 8) and TAN1 tells us deliverability and financial viability of sites, which are key considerations
3. Each allocation in the new Plan needs to be justified at 'examination' by the Planning Inspectorate.

With regard to collaborative working in the development of the LDP, this would take the form of the following:-

- LDP Theme Groups (Officer Working Groups, Education, Regeneration, Highways, etc);

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- Stakeholder Working Groups (NHS, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, and Utility Companies (various));
- Informal Member Briefing sessions (Sub-Area approach);
- LDP Steering Group and Development Control Committee; and
- Consultation with other Local Planning Authorities

The Risks of not having an LDP, were:-

1. There being less control for BCBC;
2. Inappropriate development/uncoordinated/ad-hoc development construction;
3. Planning by appeal
4. Affordable housing being compromised
5. New infrastructure and funding being compromised
6. Regeneration projects compromised – funding bids
7. Investor confidence compromised

On a final note, the Development Planning Team Leader confirmed to Members, that the current LDP had secured over £8m in S106 Agreement funding.

A Member made a number of comments, namely that the LDP needed to target the provision of small retail businesses which were diminishing leaving empty shop properties; more residential/affordable housing in town centres, and more control than currently was the case with Houses in Multiple Accommodation, particularly those that were un-registered.

The Development Planning Team Leader advised that the above would be addressed through Evidence Based updates being carried out, including Retail Needs Assessments, and building flexibility in the LDP to make adaptations that will comply with any future market changes. The Vibrant and Viable Places programme would also address any demand for the provision of increased residential accommodation in town centres which would result in increased footfall in these locations.

A Member enquired about the existing moratorium on the construction of residential development in Pencoed, and if this was intending to be lifted under the provisions of the new LDP.

The Development Planning Manager advised that the moratorium in place in Pencoed, was due to the current situation with regards to the level crossing there which was generating too much vehicular traffic. If this could be resolved as well as the bridge at the railway station being widened or renewed, then this would reduce traffic and support the moratorium being lifted. Investment was required however, in order for this position to be rectified and the current situation to then change. Dialogue was ongoing to this end, with various transport providers.

The Development Planning Team Leader added, that it was too early to look at the regeneration issues of the LDP at this stage, but these would be explored at an appropriate time in the future, including dialogue taking place with individual Town/Community Councils to address this and other areas the LDP would cover in each respective area of the County Borough.

A Member felt that when considering areas where new residential developments were intending to be constructed, brownfield sites and areas within settlement boundaries should be considered first, as opposed to looking at locations in the countryside.

The Development Planning Manager said this was a process that was always followed under planning law, policy and guidelines.

A Member noted that 20% of Affordable Housing should be provided for in Bridgend, however, he felt that this should be increased to 30%.

The Development Planning Manager advised that issues such as house market prices and viability were looked at when gauging the level of Affordable Housing that was required for any given location.

The Leader encouraged Members to go back to their Town/Community Councils with the message that they were statutory consultees in respect of the LDP, and that the Local Planning Authority would welcome their input on suggested future land uses in their respective Constituencies.

A Member pointed out that demands on the National Health Service were increasing, given that there used to be 79,000 people in the County Borough which had risen to 135,000 at present with a projection that this would further increase to 150,000 in the future. She asked what was in place as part of the LDP considerations, to ensure that they had sufficient resources, facilities (extra GP Surgeries etc) and equipment to cater for the future care of constituents given the anticipated increase in population in areas of the County Borough where there was growth.

The Development Planning Manager confirmed that the local authority did liaise with the NHS on issues such as the above, with the view of advising them that there had been an increase in growth in a particular area of the County Borough, through for example, the provision of an increase of residential housing developments, such as there had been in Parc Derwen, Coity.

A Member advised that there were problems being experienced in Porthcawl with a lack of car parking provision, and high rents/rates for retail premises imposed by Landlords, resulting in an increase in empty vacated shop premises.

The Development Planning Manager advised that an increase of rates imposed by Landlords of shop premises could not be looked at in conjunction with the LDP, however, there were other departments of the Council that could look at this, for example the Property and Finance Departments. He suggested that as a first form of contact, she contacted the Regeneration Department and the Town Centre Manager.

The Group Manager Development closed debate on this item, by advising that the new LDP would have to be fit for purpose in terms of allocated land uses in all areas that comprise the County Borough, as the document would be the subject of scrutinising by both Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate for Wales.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

164. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 18:15