

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD IN CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON MONDAY, 29 JUNE 2015 AT 4.00 PM

Present

Councillor MEJ Nott OBE – Chairperson

Cllr H E Morgan	Cllr M W Butcher	Cllr C L Jones	Cllr E M Hughes
Cllr M Reeves	Cllr R D Jenkins	Cllr G Phillips	Cllr C L Reeves
Cllr R Williams	Cllr C E Smith	Cllr R L Thomas	Cllr H J Townsend

Town/Community Councillors

Cllr R D L Burns – Bridgend  
Cllr A Davies – Coity Higher  
Cllr B L Nash – Coychurch Lower  
Cllr T M Jenkins – Garw Valley  
Cllr R Davies – Laleston  
Cllr C R Griffiths – Llangynwyd Middle  
Cllr P W Jenkins – Maesteg  
Cllr M Kearns – Pyle  
Cllr D Newton-Williams - Porthcawl

Officers:

Kevin Mulcahy	Group Manager - Highways Services
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Jo Norman	Finance Manager – Communities and Corporate
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons as given:-

Councillor J McCarthy – Prior engagement  
Councillor Y Nott – Constituency business  
Councillor D Sage – Medical appointment

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present at the meeting other than Councillors R Williams, A Davies and C R Griffiths, declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5., entitled Town and Community Council Fund 2015-16, in that they were either County Borough Councillors, Town/Community Councillors or both, and had an indirect interest in Projects either approved in 2014/15 or proposed (by way of bids) in 2015/16, in their Wards.

91. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum dated 30 March 2015, be approved as a true and accurate record.

**92. ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL SITES**

The Corporate Director – Communities submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to advise the Forum of the current School Crossing Patrol (SCP's) Policy and Site Assessment Criteria.

By way of background information, the Head of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that there were around 24 permanent SCP's employed by BCBC, with no relief SCP's employed at the present time. Both the recruitment and retention of these employees had proven difficult, including those occupying relief positions, especially since the removal of a retention payment that had been previously given.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that there were 39 SCP sites, though a few of these were historical sites and needed to be investigated further to determine their exact status and ascertain if they were still required or could be considered for disestablishment.

He then referred Members to Paragraph 3.4 of the report, which gave details of the pertinent pieces of legislation that were relevant in respect of School Crossing Patrols.

Paragraph 3.5 of the report confirmed that while local authorities could appoint School Crossing Patrol Officers at SCP's, it was not a legal/statutory requirement to do so. These Officers however, if appointed, did have the power to stop traffic, with those drivers that failed to do so facing a fine, penalty points on their driving licence or a possible disqualification under the Road Traffic Act 1984. In terms of children crossing SCP's the onus was on their parents or guardians to ensure they did safely.

As detailed in the Road Safety GB School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines, consideration of the provision or disestablishment of SCP's in any given location should be carefully thought through, and appraisals conducted of the different sites, should be carried out objectively and be capable of withstanding challenge or criticism. Guidance that should be followed represents best practice, but as confirmed above, is not statutory. Details of site assessment criteria etc, was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services recognised that the removal of an SCP could cause some unrest in the community within which it is situate, however, if it did not meet the criterial laid down by the necessary guidelines then the funding for the continued provision of this could be met by the appropriate Town/Community Council or Community group, though the SCP would still require to be employed by BCBC but funded for by the community.

A Member referred to page 12 of the report and some additional factors that should be taken on board when considering Site Assessment Criteria for the provision or disestablishment of a SCP. He noted these factors, however, he added that inspections of sites should not only be carried out as a 'one-off spot check', but a few times ie at different times of the day, as traffic is busier at certain times of the day at certain locations as opposed to others. He added that the appropriate Town/Community Council should also be advised when a survey is undertaken, as a form of good practice.

The Group Manager Highway Services explained that careful consideration is given when considering Site Assessment Criteria for a SCP as was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, including any variance in traffic conditions at different times of the day. This included SCP's situate outside schools where traffic congestion was examined at school starting and finishing times. He added that the guidelines as showed in the report were followed in as thorough a manner as was possible.

He added that current resources would not necessarily allow for Town/Community Council's to be advised when such a survey is to be undertaken, though the results of any survey on whether to provide a new SCP or disestablish an existing one could be conveyed to them.

A Member whilst welcoming the report, felt that it would be advantageous if the retention payment previously paid to SCP Officers could be re-introduced, as this may help with the recruitment/retention of these staff. He also asked if these Officers could also issue parking fines in the same way as Civil Parking Enforcement Officers could do.

The Group Manager Highway Services advised that the retention payment had been withdrawn due to budget cuts that had been required under the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In terms of SCP Officers issuing tickets for parking fines, he explained that this was not possible as they were not trained to do so and it fell outside the remit of their role.

He further added that he shared Members concerns with regard to members of the public parking their vehicles on the highway in the vicinity of schools, and both the Police and Civil Parking Enforcement Officers were monitoring this issue. However, it was proving a difficult job to control, as the number of schools outweighed the resources that were available to sufficiently monitor this potential problem in and around them.

A Member referred to Paragraph 3.6 of the report where reference was made to School Crossing Patrol Officers having the power to stop traffic on a SCP site. She asked if the vehicle did not stop, then could the School Crossing Patrol Officer take the vehicle registration number of the vehicle and report the driver to the Police.

The Group Manager Highway Services confirmed that this action could be pursued and the Police could issue an appropriate sanction. There may obviously be a difficulty if there were no witnesses to such an offence occurring.

A Member stated that a problem in relation to the recruitment and retention of School Crossing Patrol Officers, could be that the position is fairly low paid and does not offer enough hours of employment. He wondered if the position could be supplemented by further hours as part of a more generic role, such as being combined with a Classroom Assistant or School Janitor role.

The Group Manager Highway Services confirmed that this was something that could be explored further.

A Member closed debate on this item by suggesting that Members of both BCBC and Town/Community Councils, contact the Communities Directorate should they have any concerns about School Crossing Patrol Sites that currently exist, or whether Members felt that these should be added to in any problem areas of the County Borough, should such location meet the Site Assessment Criteria of the Road Safety GB Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines (2012).

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

93. **TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUND 2015-16**

The Corporate Director – Resources submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to bring to the attention of the Town and Community Council Forum the capital allocation for Community projects for 2015/16 as identified in the Capital Programme.

By way of background information, the Finance Manager – Communities and Corporate referred Members to Paragraph 3.1 of the report which outlined in bullet point format, the criteria followed for the allocation of this fund, as approved by Cabinet.

Future reviews of the criteria for allocation of this fund would be reported to both Cabinet and the Forum in due course.

The Finance Manager – Communities and Corporate then referred Members to Paragraph 3.2 of the report, which outlined a Table (1) that provided an update on all the historic projects approved in 2014/15, upon which she gave an update on their status.

She then explained that in terms of the present situation, bids for the allocation of the 2015/16 budget (£50k), were invited from all Town/Community Councils, and the following projects have been submitted and were detailed in Table 2 of the report, entitled 'Bids Received 2015/16'.

Table 2 included the Total Project Cost of all the total number of bids received, and this amounted to between £202,464 - £217,464, of which a total of £84,992 was requested to be funded from the Town and Community Council Fund.. The paragraph that followed this Table ie 4.2 gave a more detailed description of the bids and the type of work being provided as part of the respective bids.

The Finance Manager – Communities and Corporate concluded her submission, by confirming that a detailed review of spend against allocation on projects between 2008/09 and 2011/12, identified an underspend of £35,356. She explained however, that Cabinet had approved to utilise this underspend to meet the shortfall against projects submitted in 2015/16 (£34,992). Furthermore, funding had now been approved for all the projects as detailed in the report.

Members positively acknowledged the financial commitment made by the Authority for the Community Projects as detailed in the report, which they felt would be invaluable to the various communities they served.

A Member felt that the manner within which funding was being contributed by the local authority for such Projects was a very effective use of budgeting through a type of match funding style. He asked however, if there was any possibility of the Cabinet considering an increase in the budget allocation for future such Community Projects for the next financial year and beyond.

The Chairperson (and Leader) advised that consideration would be given to this in terms of the overall budget. He agreed that the funding was excellent in that it allowed for Town/Community Councils to develop different schemes that they felt were required and would be of benefit in their own community.

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

94. **SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, which informed the Town and Community Council Forum of items that may be considered at future meetings as part of the Forward Work Programme (FWP).

These items were outlined in Appendix A to the report.

**TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM - MONDAY, 29 JUNE 2015**

The Chairperson (and Leader) urged representatives of the Town and Community Council Forum to write to the Democratic Services Section at a future date, should they wish for any further items to be considered for placing on the Committee FWP.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees reiterated this, adding that any items to be considered as part of any future business of the Forum, should satisfy the terms of remit of the Committee, which was “items of mutual interest to both tiers of Authority”

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

95. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items

The meeting closed at 4.54 pm