



HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 30TH APRIL 2024 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe – Chair
Councillor S. Williams – Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, C. Cuss, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, A. McConnell, B. Owen, H. Pritchard, J. A Pritchard, J. Rao.

Cabinet Members:

Councillors, C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure, and Green Spaces), J. Pritchard (Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), S. Morgan (Leader).

Together with:

Officers M. S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), D. Smith (Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Jones (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#) Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

The Chair informed the Scrutiny Committee that Agenda Item 8 – The Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25 was deferred due to the closeness of the Elections for the Police and Crime Commissioners

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Cushing, D. T. Davies, and L. Phipps

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26TH MARCH 2024

It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal votes (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 26th March 2024 (minute nos. 1 – 8) be approved as a correct record.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) presented the report, which outlined details of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet work programme and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal votes (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that Agenda item 6 (1) Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre – 20th March 2024 Cabinet report was called forward by Councillor Chapman

The Chair reminded the Committee that the decision had been made to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre following a Scrutiny process which began in 2017 and that reports had been presented to Scrutiny Committee meetings on a number of occasions prior to the decision by Cabinet to close the leisure centre. Therefore, any discussion at the meeting should purely be focussed on how the Cabinet decision was reached. The Chair then invited Cllr Chapman to explain why the report on Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre had been called Forward.

Cllr Chapman advised that in the previous Scrutiny Committee a breakdown of the figures had been requested and these had not been provided and he sought further clarification on this.

The Cabinet Member advised that the decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre had been made following consideration of a building survey from 2019 which indicated a maintenance backlog that consisted of three main priorities.

- 1 Very Urgent repair costs of £3,863.00.
- 2 Must be completed within two years costs of £202,672.00.
- 3 Must be completed within 3-5 years costs of £269,634.00.

It was highlighted that the costs totalled £476,179.00 and the Cabinet Member reminded Members that this was based on the costs of maintenance work back in 2019 and that the cost would be significantly higher now.

In addition, Members heard that the 3G pitch is coming to the end of its serviceable life and that the replacement costs for it would be £280,000.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Leisure Centre was 50 years old and would need significant investment. Members were then informed of the investment in 4 new 3G pitches in the Mid Valley, one at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) which would replace most of the functions at the leisure centre, one in Risca, one in Bedwas and another pitch was scheduled for a location which was still to be determined. In addition, there had been a £700,000 investment at Newbridge Leisure Centre which included the ongoing replacement of the 3G pitch, and there was further investment on a new fitness suite at Heolddu Leisure Centre.

Members were reminded about the savings the authority must make and the Cabinet Member confirmed that the decision was taken following consideration of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS) and the financial position.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and asked if the breakdown of figures could be circulated to the group, the Cabinet Member agreed to do this. The Chair asked if there were any further questions from Cllr Chapman, who confirmed that he was happy with the response provided.

A Member queried whether or not Cabinet had considered keeping the Leisure Centre operational via a Community Asset Transfer. The Cabinet Member confirmed that one group had come forward but did not take it further.

The Director for Economy and Environment confirmed that Officers had met with the group who were considering a Community Asset Transfer. During discussions, the group confirmed that they did not have a business plan on how to proceed and could not commit to the investment needed to bring the building back into beneficial use.

A Member sought confirmation that if another group were to come forward with a business plan for a Community Asset Transfer it would be considered. Members were advised that any future plans for the site would need to be carefully considered and ultimately referred to Cabinet.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports which were taken in the following order.

7. FINAL REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEWING THE RESIDENTS' PARKING POLICY

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report which sought to advise the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the final recommendations of the Task and Finish inquiry into the potential implications of changes to the current Residents' Parking Policy.

Members were advised that at a meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2022 Committee Members agreed that a Task and Finish

Inquiry into the potential implications of changes to the current Residents "Parking Policy" be carried out.

The report had been prepared in response to requests received from Councillor D. T. Davies MBE and Councillor A. Hussey and endorsed by the Joint Scrutiny Committee (Environment and Sustainability and Housing and Regeneration) on 15th December 2020, for amendments to be considered to the parking restrictions in residential areas.

Members were provided with an overview of what the Task and Finish Group discussed from their first meeting on the 7th December 2022 until the review ended on the 1st December 2023. In total there had been 6 meetings, and the Scrutiny Officer advised that the key part of the Task and Finish review was conducting a survey of all eligible residents living within parking scheme areas and that this month-long survey took place in the Summer of 2023. Members were advised that in total 1837 households had been contacted and given an option to either complete the survey online or receive a hard copy if they preferred. There were 312 responses received in total. The key question on the survey was did the current policy meet the needs of you and your household and the results from the survey showed that 71% replied no and 29% had responded yes.

The survey also sought views on the area of the current policy most in need of updating and results showed that the maximum times of operation Monday to Saturday, 8:00 AM to 6:00PM was the most nominated area of the current policy which needed updating. There were 91 nominations for this part of the policy to be updated, which influenced the group in making the recommendations within the report. The Scrutiny Officer then welcomed any questions from Members on the Scrutiny process and advised that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager, and the Transportation Engineering manager, were also present to answer any policy-related queries.

A Member queried the enforcement implications of changing the times of operation to 8:00AM to 8:00PM as additional resources would need to be committed and therefore the enforcement budget would be spread more thinly. It was also queried whether the Authority had considered the use of camera cars.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager confirmed that enforcement is focused on town centres primarily and enforcement is generally carried out when the towns are at their busiest and at school start/finish times. Members were advised that the hours are adjusted during the Winter, as Officers finished shifts earlier during the Winter months due to the reduced daylight hours. It was confirmed that there are 8 full time equivalent Officers to cover the whole borough. Members were also advised that the change in times to 8AM to 8PM is a maximum and that not all areas would adopt these hours, it would be determined based on the localised consultation as part of the traffic order process and that some residents might want restrictions to remain at 8:00AM to 6:00PM.

In relation to the camera cars, it was confirmed that this was currently being looked at and that Officers are in the process of gathering information to be able to report back to Senior Management and Cabinet in due course. Members heard how camera cars are generally only used to enforce restrictions where drivers are not permitted to stop such as bus stops, school keep clear markings and at pedestrian crossings where there are white zig zag lines.

A Member advised that the public are encouraged to visit town centres, but they have difficulty in finding parking spaces due to people overstaying or traders using disability badges and parking there all day and asked if there was anything that could be done about this. It was confirmed that Civil Enforcement Officers are currently undertaking an operation to combat the misuse of blue badges and they

would be issuing Penalty Charge Notices for any misuse. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager advised that they were happy to have a conversation with the Member on any local concerns they had outside of the meeting.

One Member sought clarification on what happens in situations where there are carers visiting residents and enquired as to whether additional parking permits are provided and queried if many complaints had been received from carers not being able to park outside properties. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Manager confirmed the current arrangements which allowed each property a maximum of two permits. One of which could be a visitor permit that could be used by carers. In relation to complaints, it was confirmed that there had been very few complaints and that the scheme was working well.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group advised that the Group had worked hard on the report and requested to place on record his thanks to every Member of the Task and Finish Group for their hard work.

The Chair thanked all Members of the Task and Finish Group and supporting Officers.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal votes (and in noting there were 15 for, 0 against and 0 abstention) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

1. The times of operation of the Residents' Parking Policy be changed to Monday to Saturday, 8am to 8pm as a maximum restriction (formerly Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm). This can be reduced depending on the local circumstances which will be considered as part of the traffic regulation order process.
2. The times of operation of all existing schemes are brought in line with the policy. This will be applied when the traffic regulation order for each area is progressed/reviewed.
3. Members endorse using Caerphilly County Borough Council communication channels to convey enforcement messages to residents with regards to residential parking infringements

8. INTERIM STRATEGY FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR GWENT 2024-25

The Chair advised that this item had be deferred due to the closeness of the Elections for the Police and Crime Commissioners

The meeting closed at 18:07 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2024, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR