

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at the Meeting Room, Lido Ponty, Ynysangharad War
Memorial Park, Pontypridd

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor S. A. Bradwick – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

A. Chapman	D. Owen-Jones
M. Fidler Jones	W. Treeby
G. Jones	T. Williams

Officers

Mr D. Batten – Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside

Mr J. Bragg – Countryside & Rights of Way Officer

Mr A. Griffiths – Head of Highways & Engineering

Mr S. Vaughan – Service Manager E Procurement

Mr R. Wistow - Ecologist

Mr N. Wheeler – Director Highways & Streetcare Services

Mr S. Humphreys – Head of Legal, Planning & Environment

J. Nicholls – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Other Members

G. P. Thomas – Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P.
Howe, W. Jones and M. Weaver.

17. WELCOME

The Chairman extended a welcome to Ms Katherine Symmonds from the
Wales Audit Office who was present to observe proceedings.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor M. Fidler Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 3 – The Environment Act (Wales) 2015 Biodiversity Duty and the example of Pollinators - 'I am an advisor for 'Bees for Development'

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on the 28th September 2017

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

20. The Environment Act (Wales) 2015 Biodiversity Duty and the Example of Pollinators

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside explained that the Local Authority has prepared a plan which sets out what it proposes to do in response to the introduction of the Environment (Wales) Act, which came into force in March 2016. Members were advised of some of the key proposals which are being developed in partnership with other service areas across the Council. The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside introduced the Council's Ecologist who with the aid of Power Point would highlight the key areas of the local plan which will set out proposals for the implementation of the new biodiversity of Rhondda Cynon Taf and its significance on both a local and national level.

The presentation included reference to the Council's work relating to pollinators and how the council owned land, which is a rich resource of grass flowers and grasses, is managed. In particular reference was made to a number of successful initiatives including the award winning 'Healthy Hillside's' project which has been jointly managed by RCT Council, NRW, the Fire Service and the Wildlife Trust.

Following the detailed presentation made by the Council's Ecologist, who responded to many questions raised, Members praised the work being undertaken throughout RCT. It was **RESOLVED** – to receive the position update and to acknowledge the proposal to continue to develop pollinator action throughout RCT.

21. Review of 'Out and About' – The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan For Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside presented the report of the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services in respect of the proposed review of 'Out & About' ; the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for

Rhondda Cynon Taf. Members were advised that the Improvement Plan had been produced in 2007 under the provision of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and in 2016 Welsh Government published guidance regarding a review of these plans. It was confirmed that an assessment report for Rhondda Cynon Taf has been prepared which includes the following (and which was available for members to view in the form of handouts):-

- An evaluation of the original 'Out & About';
- Consideration of the current condition of the access resource;
- Future public need;
- Active Travel;
- Public Service Board and the Well-being Plan for Cwm Taf;
- Area Statements; and
- Land managers, heritage and nature conservation.

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside confirmed that the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee would have the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny of the proposed review to inform a recommended way forward and feedback to the Cabinet.

The Countryside and Rights of Way officer delivered a PowerPoint presentation which accompanied the briefing note and plan assessment to inform the proposed review for RCT.

Following the presentation and a question and answer session it was

RESOLVED:-

1. That a formal review of Out & About: the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf is necessary; and
2. That the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee will pre scrutinise the review of 'Out & About' ; the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf at a future meeting and feedback to Cabinet.

22. UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE ANNUAL KPI IN RESPECT OF THE NUMBER OF LOCAL BUSINESSES SUBMITTING BIDS/TENDERS FOR COUNCIL CONTRACTS

The Service Manager E-Procurement provided an oral update in respect of the outcome to the former review undertaken by the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee into the number of businesses submitting bids/tenders for Council contracts. Scrutiny formulated a recommendation which acknowledged that there was a need to alter the reporting timescale from a quarterly to an annual frequency which would better capture the Key Performance Indicator and produce a more meaningful end of year result.

Members were informed that the change in the reporting timescale has had a positive impact on the Key Performance Indicator (LPRO107 % of bids/tenders submitted by local businesses) and he attributed the positive upturn to the recommendation formulated by members of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members were also provided with information relating to the Corporate Procurement Unit and the number of mechanisms it has in place to encourage local suppliers to bid for Council contracts such as the number of workshops held within the local community to engage with smaller, local companies has attracted an increasing number of interest, from 237 companies in 2015/16 to 434 in 2016/17.

The Service Manager E-Procurement concluded his oral update and it was **RESOLVED** to receive a further progress report in twelve months.

23. HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Head of Highways & Engineering presented a Power Point presentation in respect of the Highways/Transportation Infrastructure Investment Programme update under the following headings:-

- Governance
- Investment Plan Priorities
- Progress since April 2016
- Progress – Highways 2017/18
- Expenditure
- Progress – Transport Infrastructure 2017/18
- Maerdy Mountain
- Highway Surfacing
- Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link
- Control and Monitoring
- Communication
- Percentage Change in Carriageway Condition

The Head of Highways & Engineering concluded his presentation and showed a clip from Youtube in respect of the Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link.

Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee posed a number of questions in respect of the presentation and they also praised the high level of communication in place and information available during the work related to the Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link which was largely attributed to a number of traffic regulation order exhibitions and the integration of the contractor with the local community.

Members thanked the staff involved in keeping the highways open in the recent inclement weather.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update provided in respect of the delivery of the highways/transportation infrastructure investment programme and to receive a further update within six months on the provision of the Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link subject to confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order by the Welsh Ministers.

24. NEXT MEETING

The Chairman reminded Scrutiny Members that the next meeting of Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee would take place on Thursday, 25th January 2018 in Bryn Pica and he also reminded Committee about the forthcoming site visit to Viridor in Cardiff on Thursday, 14th December 2018 with transport leaving Clydach Vale at 8.30am.

The meeting closed at 6.49pm

Chairman
S. A. Bradwick

This page intentionally blank