

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Minutes of the meeting held at the Lido Meeting Room, Ynysangharad Park,
Pontypridd on Thursday, 28th September 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

A. Chapman	D. Owen-Jones
M. Fidler Jones	G. Stacey
J. James	T. Williams
W. Jones	M. Weaver

Officers

Mrs J. Cook – Director, Regeneration & Planning

Ms A. Virgo – Project Team Leader Funding & Implementation

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

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors G. Jones and W. Treeby.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no personal declarations of interests made, pertaining to the agenda.

12. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members of the Committee to the Lido Meeting Room in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd. He also announced that Rebecca Jones (part of Welsh Translation Services and present at the meeting) had been awarded Fedal Y Dysgwr yn Eisteddfod Yr Urdd, (Young Learner of the Year in the Urdd Eisteddfod) and was to be congratulated on securing a post as translator within Welsh Translation Services at Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

13. 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.

14. PROGRESS OF THE TAFF VALE REDEVELOPMENT

The Director, Regeneration & Planning presented her report which provided an update on the progress of the Taff Vale Redevelopment.

Members were provided with background to the development site since March 2015 when the Council acquired the Receiver's long leasehold interest and in 2016 when further funding was approved by Full Council. Members were informed that securing the right development for the site was of paramount importance not only for Pontypridd but for the wider area of RCT and therefore advice was sought from commercial advisors and views gathered in order to achieve the right development for the site.

Committee was advised that in October 2016 planning permission was approved and a multi disciplinary team brought on board following Cabinet approval. Following demolition of the remaining site structure which was completed by March 2017, a two day public exhibition was held in the former Housing Advice building in Pontypridd.

It was reported that the Design Commission for Wales Review Panel considered the redevelopment plans in September 2016 and again in March 2017 to positive reviews. The tendering process was outlined following endorsement by Cabinet of the next stages of the development programme and a contractor was successfully appointed.

Committee was informed that an announcement had been made by Welsh Government that the new headquarters for Transport for Wales would be situated in the redeveloped Taff Vale site. Since the announcement detailed work has continued to be carried out and full planning permission granted by the Council in September 2017.

Further details about the redevelopment site were reported such as the opportunity to include the Taff Vale/Ynysangharad Park Link Bridge which will link the town, Lido and park and which will be a matter for a separate report to Cabinet.

The Director, Regeneration and Planning outlined the funding package for the development of the site and informed Scrutiny that the final funding package will be reported to Full Council in the autumn with all other funding opportunities continuing to be explored. In conclusion Scrutiny was advised that construction will commence in January 2018 with a projected completion date being July 2019.

Scrutiny had the opportunity to view the design by means of Power Point slides and then viewed a flythrough which provided a more detailed overview of the proposed plans.

Following the presentation the Director of Regeneration and Planning answered several questions in respect of the Taff Vale Redevelopment site such as car parking associated with the Taff Vale redevelopment and future plans for buildings surrounding the Taff Vale site. Members were advised that the basement car park will be re installed for tenants of the buildings, however it was noted that as the site is situated within a sustainable location with access to rail and bus amenities and with existing car parks within Pontypridd town currently underused, it was considered that there is sufficient car parking available to accommodate the office users. It was also confirmed that 80 cycle storage racks with shower facilities will be incorporated into the design so as to encourage alternative modes of transport.

The Director, Regeneration and Planning informed Scrutiny that a report had been considered by Cabinet on the 21st September 2017 which outlined the future strategic opportunity areas for Pontypridd and Treforest. The report outlined several projects for the Pontypridd town centre such as future opportunities for the redevelopment of the Goods Yard and Bus Station. The Director emphasised the importance of building on current and future regeneration projects within the town of Pontypridd.

In response to a query regarding occupation of the office buildings, the Director of Regeneration & Planning confirmed that regular meetings have been held with representatives of Welsh Government and Transport for Wales in respect of occupying the largest office building and discussions with other larger, significant organisations are ongoing to secure full occupancy of the remaining two buildings. Scrutiny was informed of the importance of achieving best value for money and a market led rental income which will be higher in this redevelopment than in some existing converted accommodation. That said the Director recognised the importance of the requirements of the small to medium sized businesses in RCT who require affordable rental space. Scrutiny was also informed that the individual floors can be sectioned off should there be a requirement to rent the floors separately.

In conclusion, a Member asked how the balance could be achieved with the development of a modern structure in an historic market town such as Pontypridd and how the past can be honoured in view of many of the older buildings being demolished. The Director, Regeneration & Planning stressed the importance of always achieving the balance and being able to create new spaces which complement the history of the town rather than attempting to

mimic the original, older buildings. She referred to Taff Vale site and Pontypridd Museum and Old Bridge as an example of how old and new can successfully blend together.

The Chair thanked the Director, Regeneration & Planning and the Project Team Leader Funding & Implementation for a very informative and insightful presentation and Committee **RESOLVED** to:-

(i) Acknowledge the information provided in respect of progress made at the former Taff Vale Precinct, and

(ii) Agree to receive a future progress report to its meeting on the 22nd March 2018 (in line with the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme).

14. WORK PROGRAMME

Whilst considering the Work Programme, the Chair requested that Rhondda and Aberdare are included in the assessment of the impact of Resident's Parking scheme, to be discussed at the meeting scheduled for the 30th November 2017.

The Chair also reminded Members of the Committee that there would be a tour of the Aberdare Community School at 3pm on the 26th October 2017 prior to the Crime & Disorder Committee at 4pm. Should Members wish to undertake the tour they were advised to contact the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

The Chair suggested that Members of the Scrutiny Committee undertake a tour of Viridor Waste Plant in Cardiff which would enhance their role in respect of monitoring the Council's participation rates in recycling across RCT. It was agreed that the Senior Democratic Services Officer would arrange the tour and inform Members accordingly.

Committee **RESOLVED** to note the updates in respect of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm

Chairman
S. A. Bradwick