

**Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny  
Committee**

**(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft  
Teams)**

**Members Present:**

**12 January 2024**

**Chairperson: Councillor S.Pursey**

**Vice Chairperson: Councillor T.Bowen**

**Councillors:** C.James, L.Williams, W.Carpenter, A.Dacey,  
R.Davies, N.Goldup-John, S.Thomas and  
R.W.Wood

**Officers In  
Attendance** D.Griffiths, C.Morris, C.Plowman, M.Roberts,  
J.Stevens and T.Rees

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors W.F.Griffiths, J.Hurley, S.Jones and  
S.Paddison

**Observers**

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**1. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair noted that the Members of the Scrutiny Committee had agreed to scrutinise the following items from the Cabinet Board agenda:

Item 7: Dangerous Dogs Act 1991: Stray and Abandoned XL Bully Dogs - Change of Operational Practice.

Item 8: Regional Transport Plan - Update from Southwest Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Item 10: Traffic Regulation Order: Park Avenue and Siding Terrace (Revocation) and (30MPH Speed Limit) Order 2023

Item 12: Traffic Regulation Order: Princess Margaret Way, Sandfields, Port Talbot

Item 13: Commercial Property Grant: Former Royal British Legion Club, Eastland Road, Neath.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Nathan Goldup-John declared an interest in Item 8 as he works for Transport for Wales. He is permitted to speak.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 14/11/23 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Item 7: Dangerous Dogs Act 1991: Stray and Abandoned XL Bully Dogs - Change of Operational Practice.

Members wanted to make officers aware that there is a petition with the UK Government that has passed the threshold for it to be looked at. It has been requested that stage two of the legislation be delayed for 18 months. The committee that looks at petitions are looking at this matter again as the Government response didn't address the delay. Members wanted to alert officers to this as it might impact the Disposal of dogs that are brought into the pound.

Officers advised they were aware of the petition but not of any potential delays. The dog warden service role is to seize and help potentially rehome stray dogs. If there is communication required, all local authorities will be made aware, and officers will feed this back to staff.

Members were pleased to receive the report as they were aware of an attack in the authority where 2 XL Bull dogs were loose and caused extensive facial injuries to a woman. Members explained that the attack took place near to a primary school and it was fortunate that the attack hadn't happened to a child given the proximity.

The member had been advised that that the victims' partner had contacted council dog wardens but at that time there was nothing they could do, other than to refer the gentlemen to the police.

Members were happy that the authority now have some powers to do something about stray, XL bull dogs.

Members asked how officers can guard against undesirable owners of XL Bull dogs who will be keeping the dogs in more remote places.

Officers explained that the dog warden service, consistently works closely with police and that it would be a joint response when enforcing the legislation. Officers provided reassurance to members that as soon as officers are notified of an issue with a stray dog and particularly with this breed, they will react accordingly.

The report was noted.

#### Item 8: Regional Transport Plan (RTP) - Update from South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Officers were asked if any formal or informal response had been received to the covering letter that went in with the RTP. Members stated that it is important that both the funding is secured, and that the authority knows they are working to a realistic timetable.

Officers advised that they have had some informal feedback that the implementation plan is acceptable and that some minor alterations to the plan have been made. Officers advised that one of the things that was highlighted by the officers at Welsh Government (WG) was the importance of alignment with the strategic development plan (SDP). Members were advised that this will be challenging because they are running on different timescales, but officers will be consulting widely with colleagues on that.

Officers have been advised that the approval of the implementation plan that the £125,000 in financial support would be forthcoming. This hasn't arrived yet as all the regions have been asked to forecast what they would spend by the end of this financial year. There is a commitment that if they don't spend all that money, that it could be rolled forward, and that there is a promise of the financial support during the next financial year.

Officers will be reporting back to the CJC in February and officers are currently now working on the plan for change and that is the next iteration of the process, which needs to be sent off to WG at the end of February.

Officers will be bringing back a further report to this committee once it's been considered by the corporate joint community.

The report was noted.

Item 10: Traffic Regulation Order: Park Avenue and Siding Terrace (Revocation) and (30MPH Speed Limit) Order 2023

Members asked to clarify if the original exemption was missed, or is this report as a result of a local member requesting that change back to 30 Mph post, 20mph implementation?

Officers advised that it is a result of feedback from the local member, the local community and particularly residents on that street.

Members were advised that the request to reinstate to a 30mph limit has come from the local member.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Item 12: Traffic Regulation Order (TRO): Princess Margaret Way, Sandfields, Port Talbot

Officers highlighted that the traffic order does apply to both Sandfields East and West and that there is an error in the report that's been brought to officers' attention, and they will make that known to the cabinet board.

A member expressed their view that they were against this proposal at the time but wanted to understand how the consultation will work, when it will work, and who was going to be consulted.

Officers stated that subject to approval to go to advertisement, the order will be legally advertised, for a period of 21 days. The traffic section will consult with local members on the extent of the survey required, but it would be contained to Saint Margaret's Avenue rather than a wider area. The traffic team will consult with members on that, but as a minimum, it would include businesses on the seafront and residences nearby to the actual changes proposed.

Members questioned if officers had considered that this location is one of the authorities' destination tourist attractions and it is going to affect more than just the businesses on Princess Margaret Way and some residencies at the seafront.

Members stated that there is a cost to consult and being that it will affect people from all over the county borough should it be opened up

as it seems shortsighted not to especially as groups visit the seafront from elsewhere across the authority?

Officers explained that generally where there is a change in connection with traffic orders specifically, the primary concern is the impacts local to those changes and it is residents that can often find the changes impact on them negatively. Officers always consult the TRO rules in the locality and not, a countywide consultation. For the wider tourism and heritage strategy, officers advised that consultations would be under general principles and used the example that if there was a development of a new block of flats to be developed in the town centre the officers wouldn't do a wide-ranging consultation, it would be a localised assessment to see what the impact of parking and traffic would be in the in the locality and not the wider visitors to the town centre.

The chair clarified that when the orders are advertised, they will be open to anybody to respond to beyond that local area as well so a group could respond to that. Officers confirmed that it's open to the whole public to respond on it from further field, outside of the county and it will be advertised in the press. There will also be the local communication and formal letter drop to the residents and businesses that they agree with the local members at a meeting.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Item 13: Commercial Property Grant: Former Royal British Legion Club, Eastland Road, Neath.

Members noted that there is no named applicant for the grant and asked if the Royal British Legion had sold the building.

Officers confirmed that the building is owned by a local trader with a Neath address and they own the freehold of the property. Officers advised that there is no finance outstanding against the property, and they have carried out due diligence on the applicant as well.

Members expressed delight to have the report presented before them as the building has become an eyesore on the entrance into Neath and Eastland Road. Members expressed concerns because of what has been on social media about the current occupiers and asked if officers might be able to alleviate any fears.

Officers advised they were not aware of anything on social media, but they are content that the applicant is of sound repute, and that they have the funds to carry out a comprehensive, high-quality

refurbishment of the building. Officers also advised that they normally give up to 50% grant which is what they are doing on this occasion and are within their parameters. Officers would normally only limit to grants to about £50,000 or £60,000, but this grant is £82,500. They have stretched their limits on this application because of the prominence of the building and because it is a gateway building for Neath.

The chair thanked officers for the clarity of reassurance given to members.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

5. **Urgent Items**

There was none.

6. **Committee Action Log**

The Members of the Committee noted the Action Log.

7. **Forward Work Programme**

The Members of the Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

8. **Access to Meetings**

Members decided not to scrutinise any private items.

9. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

Members decided not to scrutinise any private items

**CHAIRPERSON**