

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

3 June 2016

Chairperson: Councillor A.Llewelyn

Councillors: C.P.Golding, A.Jenkins, M.Jones, D.Keogh,
Mrs.M.A.Lewis and Mrs.S.Paddison

Invited Councillors: D.W Davies, Mrs R Davies, E.E Jones, D.Lewis,
C. Morgan, and Mrs A.Wingrave.

**Officers In
Attendance:** Mrs.N.Pearce, Collins, C.Morris and S. Curran

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors M.L.James E.V Latham S.Miller and
A.J.Taylor

1. **MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 22ND APRIL 2016**

The Committee noted the minutes.

2. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17.**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme for 16/17 and were reminded that the Forward Work Programme Planning Worksop will be taking place where the Committee will meet to plan their work for the year.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

3.1 Planning Business Plan 2016-17

The Committee received the Planning Business Plan 2016-17 as contained within the circulated report.

Members from the Environment and Highways Scrutiny Committee were welcomed to the Committee for joint scrutiny of this item which crosses the remits of both the Environment and Highways and Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committees.

Members were informed that the service now incorporates Planning and Public Protection and a major achievement had been the inclusion of Environmental Health and Trading Standards into the Planning Department.

Members praised the successful completion of the 13 week public examination of the LDP (Local Development Plan) as well as the number of appeals against planning applications which had been upheld and the number of complaints dealt with within 48 hours.

Members noted a trend in the business plan relating to 'doing more with less' and that as resources decrease it is inevitable that performance will suffer. Members continued to note the increase in the amount of legislation being created by Welsh Government with no additional resources accompanying it to allow for the work to be completed. Members also expressed concern at monetary penalties being imposed if set timescales for planning applications were not met which was putting extra pressure on the service and its staff.

The Committee queried how staff are kept updated of changes to legislation and expressed concern in particular for part time workers with whom it can sometimes be difficult to get issues resolved. Officers shared the concern and committed to looking into how certain issues in relation to part time workers could be resolved.

Members queried if the situation at TATA Steel would have any effect on the East Pit site. Officers confirmed that although a small amount of business is conducted with TATA Steel it is not their main customer and the uncertain future of TATA should have no real impact on East Pit.

Further information was sought on the collaboration proposed for the Fabian Way area and Members were pleased to note the wide area that the planned proposal encompasses and looked forward to receiving more information via a SPG to this Committee.

Members requested a staff directory be produced now that Environmental Health and Trading Standards had joined the Department and a re-structure has taken place and suggested a Member Training Event may also be useful.

Members discussed the issue of abandoned properties across the County Borough and asked for an update on the proposed 'triage' service in relation to this. Officers explained the 'triage' was still in early development stages with the aim of reducing the number of officers having to be involved with investigating sites by getting groups of officers together in the early stages of the process to discuss and agree enforcement options. Members looked forward to an update on the approach as it is progressed.

Following scrutiny the report was noted with the Committee noting the ongoing performance of the service against the business plan be a priority.

3.2 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP)-
Consideration of the Parking Standards Consultation Draft
Supplementary Planning Guidance; the Pollution Consultation
Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance and the
publication/consultation procedures to be implemented.

The Committee received the Consultation Draft Parking Standards and Pollution Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as contained within the circulated report.

The draft parking standards SPG supplements LDP Strategic Policy SP20 (Transport Network) and Policy TR2 (Design and Access of New Development) and Members were informed

about the standards that will need to be achieved in respect of parking provision across Neath Port Talbot.

The draft Pollution SPG supplements LDP Strategic Policy SP16 (Environmental Protection), Policy EN8 (Pollution and Land Stability) Policy EN9 (Developments in the Central Port Talbot Area) and Policy EN10 (Quiet Areas). Members were informed about the relevant matters which will need to be taken into account when developments are being planned.

Members noted the level of detail included in the report and praised all those involved in the work undertaken.

A query was raised in relation to home environment juxtaposed against parking criteria. An example was cited of having very good parking arrangements but living in cramped plots with very limited outside space and it was queried if developers are provided with minimum standards in relation to the home environment. Officers explained that this will be explored in the preparation of the 'Design' SPG and it was agreed that all future developments need to be sustainable.

Members asked if rural and urban areas are taken into account when considering parking standards and were informed that Zones and Thresholds are indeed included taking this into account.

Members noted that for cost efficiency reasons batches of SPGs will be published for consultation and the first will relate to 5 key strategic SPGs. Members looked forward to receiving subsequent SPGs in relation to Planning Obligations, Affordable Housing and Baglan Bay Development Framework and noted that responses to the consultation would be brought back to this Committee.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Resolved: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **PRE- SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

5.1 Bowls Pavilions

The Committee received information relating to the granting of leases of Bowls Pavilions to the user Bowls Clubs and Organisations as contained within the circulated report.

Concern was raised by a Local Member that they had not been consulted on the proposal despite it stating in the report that they had.

Members queried the sale of alcohol in the Bowls Club premises and Officers committed to looking into lease conditions and feeding back any issues to the Committee.

Members noted that the pavilions at Bryn, Ystalyfera, and Blaengwynfi are located within recreational grounds which are held by the Council on charitable trust. The Committee wanted to ensure that the Council have been discharging their obligations properly in relation to this and recommended to the Cabinet Board that:

‘...the leases/sublease of the Bowls Pavilions to the respective Bowls Clubs and Organisations on the standard terms, set out in the circulated report, be approved subject to full compliance with the Charities Act’

Following scrutiny, and with the above amendment, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

5.2 Proposed Disposal of the Former Pontrhydyfen Primary School.

The Committee received an update on the outcome of the recent informal tender exercise for the former Pontrhydyfen Primary School as contained within the circulated report.

The committee considered representations from a local member on behalf of one of the bidders. Following consideration of all the information available to them the

Members were supportive of the recommendation to be considered by Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON