



STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.00 am FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2018

COMMITTEE ROOMS A/B - NEATH CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. To receive the Minutes of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee held on 1st December 2017 (*Pages 3 - 10*)
3. To receive the Minutes of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee held on 11th December 2017 (*Pages 11 - 14*)
4. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2017/18.
(*Pages 15 - 16*)
5. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
6. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 12 January 2018

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor R.Thomas

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, N.J.E.Davies, R.Davies,
W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, C.James, A.McGrath,
J.Warman, R.W.Wood and S. ap Dafydd

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

1 December 2017

Chairperson: Councillor S.M. Penry

Councillors: R.Davies, W.F.Griffiths, C.James, A.McGrath,
J.Warman, R.W.Wood and S. ap Dafydd

Officers In Attendance D.Griffiths, M.Roberts, R.George, H.Hasan,
A.Lewis and Brumby

Cabinet Invitees: E.V. Latham, A. Wingrave

1. **MINUTES OF THE STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes.

2. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Scrutiny Committee noted the work programme.

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee selected the following items:

3.1 Traffic Order – Shelone Road, Briton Ferry

Officers provided an amended form of wording for the recommendation, as follows 'that the proposed implementation of a 20mph Speed Limit and Traffic Calming Measures at Briton Ferry (exact locations as detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report), be implemented.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the recommendation to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

3.2 Streetscene and Engineering Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 of 2017/18

Members considered the quarterly performance management data for the second quarter of 2017/2018 as contained within the circulated report.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

3.3 Langy Bridge, Glynneath

Members received an overview summary in relation to the condition of Langy Bridge as contained within the circulated report.

Members were informed that Langy Bridge was originally built in the 1800's and carried a section of rail line across the River Neath. The bridge has pedestrian access on one side and now only serves as a footbridge, the railway having closed and the track on either side having been removed.

It was also explained that the footbridge is not a registered footpath, adopted, or historically listed structure but is sited on the southern side by land owned by the local authority and on the northern side by land owned by the Aberpergwm Estates.

The bridge serves no direct access although remains popular with walkers and dog walkers as a leisure route with responsibility for maintaining the bridge currently vested with Streetcare Services.

The Head of Streetcare went on to explain that in April 2017 the Council's Engineering Section carried out an inspection on the bridge and shortly after advised that it should be closed to the public and access prevented until such time as the bridge was removed or remedial works undertaken.

Members were then informed that an attempt was first made to close off the footbridge using a pedestrian guardrail in November 2001. Following installation the guardrail was immediately torn down and, following legal advice warning

signs were displayed advising the public 'footbridge is unsafe – to be used at own risk'.

Since this time the Head of Streetcare pointed out that the condition of the bridge has continued to deteriorate and following the latest condition report a new barrier installed. In October 2017 this barrier was removed and another installed which was also taken down. A further replacement is currently being put up.

Problems identified within the inspection report included:-

- Damage to the cutwaters that protect the masonry piers and undermining due to water scour;
- Missing pedestrian guardrail on the spans themselves and above the wing-wall at the southern end
- Hole in the concrete deck slab and severe spalling to the soffit of the slab
- Severe corrosion of the bridge support brackets

Following the completion of the inspection report, Members were informed that three estimates were obtained.

Estimate one involved the refurbishment of the bridge to footbridge standard (£444,150). Estimate two involved installation of a new 50 metre span footbridge (£681,750), while estimate three outlined demolition of the existing superstructure, leaving the abutment walls on either side but including reducing the height of the bridge piers to one metre (£90,000).

The Head of Streetcare proceeded to inform the Committee that as the bridge superstructure spanned the boundary of the Glynneath and Blaengwrach county borough electoral wards, the three associated local members had been informed of the safety concerns and the various options.

It was then pointed out to Members that taking into account the budget position of the authority, the ongoing inspection and maintenance liabilities, and the prospect for future investment, the recommendation of officers would be to support estimate three.

Members were also advised that in response to the proposed options put forward representations had been received from local members and Glynneath Town Council outlining their opposition to demolition of the structure. In addition, the Town Council and local Members voiced their support for replacing or refurbishing the bridge as a strategic feature to support regeneration of the Valleys and boost the local tourism economy by reinstating the old railway line and utilising any available grant funding, if viable.

The Head of Streetcare informed the Committee that should the superstructure be removed, the abutments could still potentially be refurbished and reused at a later date if future funding were obtained to install a new single span footbridge.

Furthermore, the Head of Streetcare made clear that whilst capital refurbishment/replacement schemes have been estimated with respect to maintaining a footbridge, officers believe there is little or no prospect of funding for such schemes being available from Council resources due to competing priorities.

Members were also told that as far as any restatement of the railway is concerned, this would need to be subject to a rail feasibility study covering the whole of any proposed route and any scheme would be a project costing multiple millions to realise.

The Head of Streetcare also highlighted that for Langy Bridge alone, the cost of reconstruction to modern standards would be several million pounds and emphasised that the section of railway concerned did not form part of the former main railway line.

Following the conclusion of the overview summary by the Head of Streetcare one of the local Members asked to address the Committee to speak in favour of maintaining or replacing the current superstructure,

The member highlighted the community support for retaining the bridge following the submission of a petition signed by 803 local residents. In addition, the member explained that the bridge was regularly used by walkers, dog walkers and runners and if the structure was removed this would result in the loss of

a significant access point and local feature enforcing a considerable diversion for individuals utilising the current route.

Furthermore, the member pointed out that the bridge was located in an area that had been designated for re-generation as part of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys and enquired whether potential funding to invest in a new footbridge structure could be accessible via the Pen-y-Cymoedd wind farm community chest fund, along with any funds currently allocated for potential demolition of the bridge structure.

In response, the Head of Streetcare emphasised that he took absolutely no satisfaction in recommending that the current footbridge span should be removed. Nevertheless, the Head of Streetcare reminded the Committee that the Council has finite resources with a total of 450 bridges and roads located throughout the County Borough that have to be inspected and maintained via one single maintenance budget fund reduced year on year due to ongoing budget austerity measures. This has resulted in Members having to be asked to make very difficult decisions with regard to council owned structures.

The Head of Streetcare also explained that as the current footbridge was not a registered footpath or an adopted or historically significant structure it was unfortunately not eligible for any grant funding including community chest funding.

Members then proceeded to ask the Head of Streetcare whether the option of an asset transfer of the structure to a local Town or Community Council had been considered.

The Head of Streetcare told Members that he would be more than content to proceed with a community asset transfer of the structure to a local town or community council.

However, he cautioned that such an action could place an exceptional financial burden on the relevant town or community council as they would be required to take responsibility for all risks and liabilities associated with the structure as well as ensuring the safety and security of the bridge going forward.

It was also pointed out that in order to fund the cost of replacing the current bridge structure (excluding insurance premiums,

inspection and health and safety costs) would be just over £680,000. This level of upfront funding without access to external grant funding could be financially crippling for any town or community council to undertake.

Following further discussion Members enquired whether there was any possibility that remedial measures could be put in place to make the bridge safe while further discussions continue on a possible community asset transfer arrangement to a third party organisation.

The Head of Streetcare responded by re-stating his view that the bridge was dangerous, unsafe and unfit for use with significant corrosion and spalling to the superstructure and sub-structure. In addition, the Head of Engineering and Transport explained that even to make remedial repairs to the bridge (for example, repairing the masonry piers) would result in initial costs of £250,000 which would have to be met by a town or community council, or other organisation, following any asset transfer and exclude any works which would then bring the structure back into safe public use.

Members also raised their concerns about the continued and persistent vandalism of the barriers placed at the bridge for the safety of members of the public and the potential risk of an accident occurring at the site due to the structure's deteriorating condition.

The Head of Streetcare and the Head of Engineering and Transport responded by confirming to Members that they had the same concerns and as such, in the absence of alternative options would advise Members that the current bridge superstructure should be removed and the masonry piers lowered.

In addition, the Head of Engineering and Transport informed Members that works to commence removal of the structure would not be possible until April, 2018 at the very earliest due to National Resources Wales (NRW) restrictions associated with working in the river. As such this would offer a window of opportunity for interested third parties to submit any formal propositions in relation to the possibility of a community asset transfer.

Following scrutiny the Committee were supportive of the recommendation to be considered at Cabinet Board.

Officers also confirmed they will meet with elected representatives from Glynneath Town Council in due course to re-consider the liabilities of pursuing a potential community asset transfer, while progress continued with tendering arrangements with demolition contractors.

CHAIRPERSON

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STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

11 December, 2017

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, S.ap.Dafydd, R.Davies, C.James, H.Jones, A.McGrath and R.W.Wood

Officers In Attendance D.Griffiths, M.Roberts, Mr. S Cook and A.Manchipp

Cabinet Invitees: Councillor E.V.Latham

1. **CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE'S BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2018/19**

As part of the public consultation on the budget proposals, Committee considered the report of the Director of Environment, as they related to the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee. Members then raised the following points:-

- ENV 802 - Members asked for clarity around the proposed saving of £200k in relation to the tendering of the contractual arrangements for the MREC. Officers advised that current arrangements were related in large part to the failed Private Finance Initiative Contract and at present involved a lump sum payment for treatment of residual waste. The potential new contract would move to a cost per tonne basis, including defined income for recycle, and the tendered rates being considered indicated the savings included in the FFP would be achieved.
- Concern was expressed at the proposed 100% increase in the parking charges at the Gnoll Country Park, and would this result in less people visiting the Park or more on street parking? Members also asked for details of the disabled concessions. Officers advised that the proposed increase at the Gnoll Country Park was not aimed at making a profit but at

reducing the subsidy at present paid by the Authority. In addition Members noted that more accessible parking bays were designated for disabled blue badge holders. With regard to the increase in off street parking, Members noted that a Traffic Regulation Order would be implemented prior to 31 March 2018 to address this.

- ENV 803 - Members asked whether there had been discussions with Powys County Council in relation to the proposals re the Pwllfawatkin Household Waste Recycling Centre and Powys' facility at Lower Cwmtwch and were advised that negotiations were ongoing and that perhaps only one of the sites might be used going forward.
- In relation to the £52 yearly pass which can be bought for each of the Country Park sites, Members asked whether payment could be made on a monthly basis. Officers advised that the administration of this would be prohibitive.
- Members suggested that there be 2 tiers of charges: one for the tourist areas (which would encourage tourism) and the other for all remaining areas? Officers responded that this would be unmanageable. Consistency was an issue throughout the County Borough, however in order to draw up the proposals the particular facilities were considered.
- The cost of buses parking at the Country Parks was raised, wherein it was noted that all vehicles paid the same tariff (the cost at Margam Park would have to be verified after the meeting) - this could be reviewed moving forward.
- Members asked what posts the staff savings of £30k referred to and were advised that it was believed to be a post in the Planning Section, but all applications for ER/VR were being considered with respect to potential efficiencies.
- In relation to the Seafront Strategy, it was noted that the relevant Ward Members were supportive of the proposals contained in the circulated report.
- In relation to the increase in charges, Members noted that this also referred to Pontardawe. Some Members expressed concern that this may reduce the footfall or that the public may find alternative parking, perhaps on street. Officers advised that, in line with the National Guidelines, Pontardawe was deemed a town and that the same tariff was proposed as both Neath and Port Talbot. It was also noted that vandals had damaged the machine in Pontardawe on several occasions, and that the Police would be investigating the incidents. The proposals were subject to consultation and the final decision would be made by Members in the New Year.

- Members discussed the implementation of digital/virtual residents' parking permits and noted that there would be a £2.50 administration charge. In order to 'police' this a Mobile Enforcement Van would scan number plates and Officers could issue penalty notices. Clarification was also given on the issuing of holiday/ visitors' permits.
- Members noted that the charge for Staff and Member permits would be the subject of a separate report to the Personnel Committee.
- Members were please at the proposed introduction of the mobile CCTV van and its use outside schools. Officers advised that checks would be made to ensure that the correct Traffic Orders were in place and thereafter the mobile unit would patrol outside of schools to ensure compliance with the Orders. This would generate income for the Authority which could be used to offset such things as the purchase and training associated with the new service and increases in NNDR in 2018.

CHAIRPERSON

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(DRAFT)
Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2017/18

| Date of Meeting | Agenda Item | Officer |
|------------------|-------------|---------|
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| 8 September 2017 | | |
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| 20 October 2017 | | |
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| 1 December 2017 | | |
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| 19 January 2018 | | |
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| 2 March 2018 | Update on Side Waste Task and Finish Group | Scrutiny Officer/Mike Roberts |
| | Japanese Knotweed | Mike Roberts |
| | | |
| 13 April 2018 | Lighting; Benefits, Costs and Savings realised | Mike Roberts |
| | Information on Refuse and Recycling Team (part of Cabinet Report on Waste Strategy Review) | Mike Roberts |

- Recycling and Refuse Teams Performance- Part of Waste Strategy Review