



REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.00 AM - FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 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 Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee held on 26th January 2018
(Pages 5 - 10)
3. To receive the Minutes of the Community Safety and Public Protection Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 17th January 2018
(Pages 11 - 16)
4. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2017/18.
(Pages 17 - 18)
5. 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
6. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
7. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART 2

8. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

28th February 2018

Committee Membership:

Chairman: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairman: Councillor L.Jones

Members: Councillors J.Evans, D.Cawsey, C.J.Jones,
D.M.Peters, S.Purse, S.Rahaman, R.L.Taylor,
O.S.Davies, R.W.Wood and H.Jones

This page is intentionally left blank

REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

26 January 2018

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

Councillors: J.Evans, C.J.Jones, D.M.Peters, S.Pursey,
S.Rahaman, R.L.Taylor, O.S.Davies,
R.W.Wood and H.Jones

Officers In Attendance S.Brennan, C.Morris, M. Thomas and J. Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.Wingrave and D.W.Davies

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Members made Declarations of Interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr. Leanne Jones – The report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection on Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice, because family members are employed in the Environmental Health and Trading Standards section.

Cllr. Saifur Rahaman - The report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection on Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice, and the report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on Aberavon Seafront Regeneration Update, because family members run a catering business on the Aberavon Seafront.

Cllr. Rachel Taylor – The report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on the Property Performance Report, because she is a trustee of Taibach Library.

Cllr. Sean Pursey – The report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on the Property Performance Report, because he is a trustee of Taibach Library and a member of the Plaza Community Group.

2. **MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH DECEMBER 2017**

Members noted the minutes from the previous meeting.

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

Members noted the scrutiny forward programme for 2017/18.

4. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

4.1 2 x Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Committee received information in relation to the 2 x Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as contained within the circulated report.

Members raised concerns that the Compensation Scheme set out in the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPG made the planning process potentially more bureaucratic and less democratic, limiting the input from local Members and communities. Officers informed Members that the purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) policy was to protect important habitats, species and sites of geological interest from the adverse impacts of developments. Officers explained that where harm was unavoidable, effective on-site mitigation measures would be required and only as a last resort, where mitigation was not possible, would off-site compensation be considered. Officers stated that given it was difficult for some developers to find additional land for off-site compensation and that many developers would rather pay the Council for compensation to be addressed, the scheme sought to set out the steps that the Council can take to provide a workable compensation service.

Members queried whether there was a comprehensive list of 'Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation' (SINCs) in the county borough. Officers stated that the process of identifying SINCs was ongoing. Officers added that the areas which were likely to generate interest from developers had already been looked at, but the more remote areas were still being assessed.

Members queried whether designated sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest) would remain protected under the SPGs. Officers stated that designated sites of European and national importance are already protected by legislation and national policy, whereas the LDP policy and SPGs related more to protecting sites of local interest.

Members queried the extent of the 'undeveloped coast' designation set out in the Landscape and Seascape SPG, as it appeared to include an area of the former BP site. Officers confirmed that this was a drafting error and that the LDP designation did not include land that was formerly part of the BP site. The error would be addressed prior to consultation. Members questioned if it was possible to extend the undeveloped coast designation. Officers stated that whilst it was not possible at this stage, all policies would be reconsidered when the review of the LDP commences in 2020.

Members referred to the 'green wedge' designations and queried whether they would still be subject to the same protection once the current LDP had expired. Officers stated that the relevance and extent of the green wedge designations would be considered in all future reviews of the LDP which would take place every four years.

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

4.2 Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice

The Committee received information in relation to the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice as contained within the circulated report.

Members queried how much income would the charge for business advice be likely to generate. Officers stated that it was difficult to anticipate as it was unclear how demand for the service would be affected.

Members raised concerns that businesses may be reluctant to pay for advice which could result in a decline in food safety standards and an increase in court action against non-compliant businesses. Officers informed Members that general advice would still be available free of charge and a starter pack would be e-mailed to all new businesses on request. Officers assured Members that public safety was paramount and the process whereby Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers inspect businesses would not be affected. Officers explained that businesses would only be charged for bespoke advice and general advice would still be provided. Officers stated that the effects of charging for business advice was likely to have a minimal impact on food safety, because any decline in the demand for bespoke advice would enable resources to be used to inspect other food businesses.

Members commented that Neath Port Talbot had a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and questioned whether this has been taken into account as it could deter businesses from paying for advice. Officers stated that the GDP had not been considered, but the new approach would be monitored and reviewed. Officers explained that providing bespoke advice specific to a particular business was a non-statutory function and other Authorities were already offering this service for a fee.

Members raised concerns that if businesses did not seek advice from the Authority at an early stage due to the cost, then there was a risk to public safety in the interim until businesses received their first inspection. Officers stated that general advice would still be provided to businesses and it is the responsibility of businesses to comply with the standards applicable to their business. Officers added that the Environmental Health and Trading Standards department aimed to inspect new food businesses at an early stage.

Cabinet Members commented that businesses had to register with the Authority before they could become operational, which minimised the risk to public safety. Cabinet Members explained that the advice provided by the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department was to help businesses improve their standards further. Cabinet Members stated that the advice currently offered had a cost element which was difficult to justify in the current financial climate. Cabinet Members added that neighbouring authorities had already introduced the charge.

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

4.3 Aberavon Seafront Regeneration - Update

The Committee received information in relation to the Aberavon Seafront Development Update.

Members acknowledged the improvements made to the Aberavon Seafront to date. Members queried whether it was possible to use the parcel of land indicated in the update as an additional area for car parking. Officers explained that the seafront already had sufficient parking facilities.

Members queried whether it was possible to explore the option of accommodating motor homes and caravans along the seafront, as other authorities were successfully generating income in this way. Officers stated that there were no plans to accommodate motor homes and caravans at this moment in time. Officers informed Members that motor homes and caravans would require significant space and this would cause parking issues on the seafront with the current road layout. Officers explained that staff would need to be employed to ensure that guests complied with onsite rules and conditions which would incur additional costs for the Authority.

Following scrutiny the Committee noted the Aberavon Seafront Development Update.

Item 4.4 – Property Performance Report

The Committee received information in relation to Property Performance Report.

Members queried whether Briton Ferry Library House and the units at Cwmgors Village Workshops were currently occupied or available to let. Officers stated that the cost of restoring Briton Ferry Library House to a functioning building was too high. Officers reported that a number of Registered Social Landlords had been contacted to discuss the possibility of taking over the building, but there was a lack of interest. Officers reported that all units at Glyncorrwg Workshops were currently occupied, and that occupation levels at Cwmgors Workshops were around 80%. Officers informed Members that the units in Cwmgors were old and basic, but were still functional.

Members enquired whether any of the workshop units in the county borough were at risk of falling into disrepair in the near future. Officers stated that the Authority should be able to maintain the units for the foreseeable future; however any mechanical and electrical failures would present significant issues. Officers informed Members that purchasing new units in the valleys areas would be the ideal scenario and there was a good business case for this as the units were at full capacity the majority of the time.

Members queried whether there were any plans to utilise the former Dyffryn Lower Comprehensive School. Officers stated that there were no plans at present.

Members queried if there were any updates regarding the possibility of a caravan site at Margam Park. Officers stated that discussions were still ongoing. Officers informed Members that an enquiry had been received from a developer who was interested in setting up a hotel near the Twyn Y Hydd site of Margam Park. Officers reported that the drainage work had already been undertaken to accommodate either development.

Following scrutiny the Committee noted the Property Performance Report.

CHAIRPERSON

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

17 January 2018

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

Councillors: C.J.Jones, D.M.Peters, S.Rahaman,
A.J.Richards, R.L.Taylor, O.S.Davies and
R.W.Wood

**Officers In
Attendance** J. Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.W.Davies and A.Wingrave

1. **RESOLVED TO ACT AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE IN LINE WITH SECTION 19 OF THE POLICE AND
JUSTICE ACT 2006**

Members resolved to act as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

2. **MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE 19 OCTOBER 2017**

Members noted the minutes from the previous meeting.

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

Members noted the scrutiny forward programme for 2017/18.

4. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - UPDATE BY INSPECTOR DECLAN
CAHILL**

Inspector Declan Cahill provided the Committee with an update on the progress made by South Wales Police and partners in relation to the Operation Grey Denver Action Plan. Inspector Cahill reported on

the work being undertaken by the Homelessness and Anti-Social Behaviour Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Inspector Cahill informed Members that MARAC was a partnership based group chaired jointly by the Authority and South Wales Police which met by-monthly and referred perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to the relevant support services where appropriate. Inspector Cahill stated that the previous meeting was held in December and it was reported that living accommodation had been provided for six out of eight repeat offenders who were previously homeless. Inspector Cahill informed Members that using the powers of arrest was always a last resort as the Police often dealt with vulnerable individuals who required assistance from various support services. Inspector Cahill added that the meetings were a long term commitment by all partners.

Inspector Cahill informed Members that Inspector Roy Portlock had devised a new patrol strategy with the objective of preventing crime, preserving life and buildings, and keeping the peace. Inspector Cahill stated that street patrols were in place in Neath town centre for up to two hours each day. Inspector Cahill explained that the Police had the power to issue Section 35 notices to individuals behaving in an anti-social manner which required them to leave a designated area for 24 hours. Inspector Cahill added that a breach of these conditions resulted in arrest.

Inspector Cahill updated Members on the progress made following the Committee's recommendation at the previous meeting to prioritise the development of a clear and accessible method of incident reporting and information sharing that met the needs of the public and businesses, as captured on the Operation Grey Denver Action Plan. Inspector Cahill reported that a mobile phone application had now been developed by the Authority and South Wales Police for local businesses to pass information to the local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) on duty in Neath. Inspector Cahill stated that this was an information sharing application which was not intended for public use, and not designed to replace the reporting of incidents via 101.

Inspector Cahill provided an update on the 101 crime reporting service. Inspector Cahill offered Members the opportunity to visit the call centre where the 101 calls were received in order to observe the process. Inspector Cahill reported that between April and October last year the call centre received around 500 emergency calls a day and around 2,000 comments were made on South Wales Police's Facebook page each day. Inspector Cahill informed Members that

since November the Police had allocated resources to monitor social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter for any reports and information on criminal activity. Inspector Cahill stated that these dedicated resources were monitoring social media sites 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Inspector Cahill re-iterated that the 101 service should always be contacted in the first instance when reporting crime.

Inspector Cahill updated Members on the progress made following the Committee's recommendation at the previous meeting to prioritise the development of an effective means of providing timely updates to inform the public and businesses of progress regarding town centre issues, as captured on the Operation Grey Denver Action Plan. Inspector Cahill informed Members that the Police had been working with the Authority on a brand which celebrated the successes achieved so far in dealing with anti-social behaviour in Neath town centre which would then be shared with the public via various media channels. Inspector Cahill stated that Police Officers and Special Constables were now required to put messages on Twitter when they were on street patrol in the town centre in order to make the public aware of their presence. Inspector Cahill added that this requirement had been in place since October.

The Chair circulated a letter at the meeting to Committee Members from a local trader who raised concerns over the negative effect that begging, homelessness and street agents were having on footfall in the town centre. Inspector Cahill explained that the street patrol strategy developed by Inspector Roy Portlock would ensure that there was regular surveillance in the town centre from Police Officers, Special Constables and PCSOs who would deal with any issues as they occurred. Inspector Cahill added that the street patrol strategy was a long term commitment. Cabinet Members referred to the comment made in the letter regarding the number of street agents present in the town centre and stated that they would contact the Planning Department to explore options to reduce numbers.

Members acknowledged the progress made by all partners to date in dealing with anti-social behaviour issues in Neath town centre and stressed the importance of maintaining the momentum. Members commented that they had noticed a significant improvement particularly on Windsor Road. Members stated that a police presence through the street patrols had made a difference. Members explained that there were still some ongoing issues. Members reported that there were five separate groups regularly seen in the

town centre consuming alcohol and retailers felt that this was affecting their trade.

Members questioned whether the homeless persons referred to in Inspector Cahill's update were from the county borough. Inspector Cahill stated that they were from the area. Members referred to the repeat offenders mentioned in Inspector Cahill's update and queried the nature of the offences. Inspector Cahill stated that the most common offences were shop lifting, begging and the disturbance of the peace.

Members queried how many Section 35 notices had been issued of late. Inspector Cahill stated that he did not have the information to hand, but mentioned that PCSOs did not have the authority to issue the notices. Inspector Cahill added that the Police were currently reviewing the powers available to PCSOs in specific areas.

Members enquired whether PCSOs were issued with items such as pepper spray and handcuffs due to the potential risks that they faced in their working environment. Inspector Cahill stated that PCSOs were not armed and there was no intention to change this arrangement at present. Inspector Cahill stated that the role of a PCSO was different to the role of a Police Officer as the purpose of a PCSO was to engage with members of the community and obtain information rather than enforce the law. Inspector Cahill added that PCSOs were issued with body cameras and were able to record any incidents.

Members queried how many Special Constables were allocated to the county borough. Inspector Cahill stated that he did not have the figures to hand, but estimated that there were currently around eight. Inspector Cahill informed Members that the Police were due to recruit additional Special Constables in the near future. Inspector Cahill stated that Special Constables were linked to specific areas such as Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea, but the Police were able to transfer them if there was an increase in demand.

Members stated that there had been instances of anti-social behaviour in the Pontardawe area where park benches and bins had been set on fire. Members stated that local Members and town councillors were encouraging residents to report incidents to the 101 crime reporting service by placing messages in Pontardawe Voice. Members stated that perpetrators in Pontardawe were aware that PCSOs did not have the powers to arrest and were not deterred by them. Members acknowledged that the PCSOs had done a lot of engagement work with youths in the community of Pontardawe.

Inspector Cahill confirmed that PCSOs did not have the powers to arrest, but Special Constables did have these powers.

Members commented that Pontardawe and Aberavon had experienced a significant rise in crime and queried whether the police were aware of these trends also. Inspector Cahill stated that he was not the responsible officer for the Pontardawe area and did not have the statistics to hand, but re-iterated that it was important for the public to report any incidents so that the Police could review and re-allocate their resources according to demand.

Cabinet Members queried whether there were any electoral divisions or wards that Committee Members wanted Cabinet Members to visit with them to establish whether there were similar issues in other areas within the county borough. Cabinet Members stated that they had already made evening visits with local Members and the Police to Neath town centre, Aberavon, Port Talbot town centre and Briton Ferry.

Following scrutiny the Committee noted the anti-social behaviour update by Inspector Cahill.

CHAIRPERSON

This page is intentionally left blank

**Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Committee Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2017/18**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
23 June 2017		
21 July 2017		
22 September 2017		
27 October 2017		
10 November 2017	Special City Deal	

27 November 2017	Special Budget	
8 December 2017	Tourism Task and Finish Group Update Report (Visit Wales to attend)	Scrutiny Officer/Andrew Collins
26 January 2018		
9 March 2018		
20 April 2018		