

**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

24 January 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Councillors: S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, N.T.Hunt, H.N.James,
S.A.Knoyle, S.M.Penry, S.Purseley and
S.Rahaman

**Officers In
Attendance** S.Brennan, C.Morris, L.Beynon, N.Headon,
N.Jones and C.Plowman

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.Wingrave and E.V.Latham

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor S.Bamsey - Joint Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection and Head of Property and Regeneration - as his relative owns a property that could be awarded compensation.

2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020**

The forward work programme was noted.

3. **CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION'S
BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2020/2021**

Officers gave an overview of the Regeneration and Sustainable Development supplementary information regarding the saving proposals for the Environment and Regeneration Directorate's budget, as set out in the Cabinet report of 20 January, 2020.

A discussion took place around the savings on public conveniences, officers explained that there had been a change in legislation whereby rates would no longer be paid. A report would be brought to Cabinet Board in the future.

Officers explained that there had been an increase of income from a slight raise in rent at Sandfields Business Centre, this would show a small saving.

Officers informed members that the number of buildings owned by the council had reduced over the years, this meant there had been a decrease of 25k in building maintenance. It was noted that the council still maintained the buildings owned by the council, and a rolling-programme had been put in place to survey these buildings annually, although there remained a lot of work to be carried out.

A discussion took place regarding the need for more Industrial Units and the support of existing businesses. Officers explained that the councils Business Support Team were available to advise and help business with grant applications etc. Officers highlighted that there were many local business success stories, whereby one business employed over 35 staff, although some businesses needed additional help with payments, some struggling businesses were able to pay money owed over a period of time. Officers stated that the council was keen to expand on local businesses and staff were committed to ensuring businesses had as much support as possible.

Members were reminded that their comments from this meeting would form part of the formal consultation response for the Budget 2020/21. They were asked that if they had any other proposals for budget savings not included within the attached report that they approach officers for their consideration.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee considered the following matters:

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026 –
Consideration of: Draft LDP Review Report; and the publication/
consultation procedures to be implemented

Officers highlighted that the first stage of the review was to prepare and publish a “Review Report” which identified key issues to be considered when taking the existing LDP forward, this set out areas where the current LDP was delivering and performing well, in addition to those areas where changes may be required.

Members questioned if we would continue with the economic-led growth strategy or would there be alternatives. Officers explained they would continue to look at an economic led strategy, it was noted that other alternatives were not yet clear as were are at the early stages. It was highlighted that the Decarbonisation Agenda was being pushed, and officers would hold a number of stakeholder / public engagement events and develop the alternatives for the Preferred Strategy stage.

Members questioned the increasing concern of land viability as the viability was only accurate at the time of the assessment. Officers explained that a new regional viability study/ model was currently being developed with local authority colleagues within the Mid and South West Wales region. It was noted that we need to do things differently at the Candidate site stage, sites would not go into the plan without sufficient evidence (including viability assessments).

Officers explained that there was a lack of expertise in regard to the historic environment and there was a need for a more collaborative approach, it was highlighted that this was a good policy and we need to identify resources to deal with these issues moving forward.

Officers explained that there was a LDP reserve available, and the LDP was put in the budget as a pressure every year. It was noted that three senior posts had gone, therefore the reserve was used to buy in expertise to fill the gap.

Members were pleased that the issues currently surrounding Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) would be assessed as part of the preparation of the Replacement Plan which would not have any weight until it is adopted in 2024. Officers highlighted that a seminar would take place on 12 February, 2020 and members were encouraged to attend.

A discussion took place on the valleys, members agreed that it was good to see a focus on the Valleys, officers commented that it was something we need to continue to look at and possibly do more.

Tourism would be brought through as part of the valleys, although proposal were already in place in certain areas.

Members queried what would happen with the LDP with the change of councillors in a new election (scheduled in 2022) and how this would deliver what we want. Officers explained that it is an issue as 2026 is the end date, and the LDP covers a 15 year period. At 2022 the Plan would have gone through the first formal stage of plan preparation: the 'Preferred Strategy'. Once we get to the second formal stage: the 'Deposit' stage (scheduled for 2023) it cannot be changed as the Council are saying that this is the plan we want. Officers had to deal with this as part of the first LDP where there was a change in administration; where officers did an all Members' Seminar discussing issues at spatial area and ward level and set out what had been done before based on evidence. Officers would engage with members throughout, all decisions taken as a council would be backed with evidence.

It was noted that there is a new joint committee being set up to deal with transport issues in South West Wales, the Chief Executive would lead and Head of Engineering and Transport would support. The opening of valley line would have a huge cost.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

5. **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 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

6. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE ITEMS**

The committee considered the following matters:

Harbourside Strategic Employment Site Port Talbot - Land and Rights in the Ownership of Associated British Ports

Officers gave an overview of the private circulated report.

Officers gave an overview of the private circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

Port Talbot Peripheral Distributor Road Phase 2 - Payment of Compensation under the Provisions of Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1971

Officers gave an overview of the private circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

The Disposal of part of the Former Burrows Yard Site together with the remediation of the Council's Retained Land

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

Community Focused - Area Wide Air Quality Monitoring Pilot Programme

Officers gave an overview of the private circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

CHAIRPERSON