

Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

21 May 2021

Chairperson: Councillor R.W.Wood

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, D.Keogh, A.McGrath, W.F.Griffiths, R.Davies, J.Hale and S.Jones

Officers In Attendance: D.Griffiths, M.Roberts, N.Headon, C.Plowman, H.Hasan, S. Owen and J Davies

Invitees: Councillors M.Harvey, A.Wingrave, A.Llewelyn, S.Lynch, S.Paddison and S.Pursey

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Rosalyn Davies

Re: Design Options for the Remediation of Cilmaengwyn Tip above Godre'r Graig Primary School as she is a Governor at Godre'r Graig Primary School.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2021 were approved.

3. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board items

Accessibility to Aberavon beach via the new Slipway Access Ramp at Scarlett Avenue Car Park

Members received a report in relation to the accessibility to Aberavon beach via the new slipway access ramp at Scarlett Avenue car park.

Officers provided an overview of the circulated report which contained four different options that the Council could consider implementing, along with the associated risks; option one and option three were

noted to be the most suitable options, particularly option one which minimised the many risks associated with using the ramp. It was added that Officers had received some correspondence from the public in regards to having access via the ramp, in which option three would permit; however, this would include taking on board the risks associated with this and carrying out the relevant measures listed in the circulated report including installing signage and additional disabled car parking close to ramp.

Local Members for Sandfields West and Sandfields East, who were in attendance at the meeting, shared their concerns in regards to the recommended option one and the accessibility issues to Aberavon Beach; some of these concerns had also been highlighted by a number of their residents. The local Members also provided their thoughts on the other options contained within the circulated report and why the ramp should be utilised for access onto the beach.

Taking account of the Council's duty of care to the public and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, Officers stated that they would not recommend simply opening the ramp for public use as it had not been designed for this; if Members wanted to look into this as an option, it was noted that the Committee would require an additional report.

Members were informed that it was as a result of a planning condition, as to why the ramp wasn't allowed to be opened to the public, through biodiversity approaches etc.; the ramp was built to provide access for coastal defence work and to an associated standard which did not include for general public access. It was subsequently retained to provide access and egress to the foreshore for beach cleaners and emergency access only. The options were prepared in this context.

A discussion took place in relation to the timescales of implementing option three, to which it was noted that progress could be made within a month to six weeks.

Concerns were expressed in relation to leaving the gate open as it could encourage people to drive onto the beach, which would have an impact on the safety of other users. On the other hand, it was noted that the ramps onto the beach were the only way to bring sail boats and the like onto the beach; this was an opportunity for the community and could encourage more people to use it.

A formal amendment to the recommendation contained within the circulated report was proposed and seconded, which changed the recommendation from 'option one' to 'option three'; the details of which were contained within the report.

It was determined that the Committee were in support of the amendment to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Traffic Regulation Order/s: Cilfrew

A report was provided on a proposed 20 mph speed limit traffic regulation order at Cilfrew Village in Neath.

The Committee was informed that in 2020, the Council received a road safety grant from Welsh Government to implement traffic calming measures to reduce speed, for example speed ramps; there was a lot of opposition to that scheme from the local residents. However, it was highlighted that speeding was a significant issue in the area, which is why Welsh Government originally supported the scheme; 85th percentile of traffic were travelling at 38mph which was concerning to the department and the Road Safety Manager.

Following this, it was stated that a petition was submitted by the community, opposing the proposals at that time and asking if alternative measures could be considered in terms of trying to reduce the traffic in the locality; subsequently, the Road Safety Manager had further dialogue with Welsh Governments Road Safety Teams and it became known that they were going to be considering 20mph pilots that Authorities were able to bid into. It was explained that there were six pilots that were taking place across South Wales and Neath Port Talbot Council were fortunate enough to be successful in making a bid to participate in that pilot, and can now work with Welsh Government and GoSafe around implementing a different type of road safety measure in the area.

Subject to Cabinet Board approval, it was noted that Officers would be sending out circa 500 letters within the local community, and both the local Member and the Road Safety Manager will be going into the community and making themselves available during the consultation period to promote the scheme and to discuss the proposals with the local community; the proceedings with the letters and the advert would commence on 1 June 2021.

Members asked for detail on the initial cost of the whole project, to which it was stated that it was in the region of around £72K this year, the total grant was £140K.

Officers were asked why there was a need for 20mph in small housing closes. It was confirmed that the criteria around the pilot required to cover a whole community area and it was recognised that in some of the areas individuals wouldn't be travelling at that speed; the feeder road and the main road were the key areas of concern. It was highlighted that this pilot would likely run for two years across Wales in selected areas and it would then inform the precursor to a national default limit of 20mph in Wales; it didn't necessarily mean that it will be retained, however if it worked and the community believed that it had been beneficial, then it was likely to be retained. Officers added that all of the data and information that will be gathered from the pilot will be fed into Welsh Government and into a wider review on the default limits; Welsh Government were very keen to draw boundary around the whole community as oppose to singular main road routes.

It was queried why the area of Cilfrew was picked for the pilot. Officers confirmed they did look at some other areas across the County Borough, however there were a few factors in choosing this particular area. It was noted that Welsh Government had picked different size communities as part of the pilots; in other parts of Wales they picked a whole town and in other parts, such as rural communities, they had picked two or three streets. Officers stated that Cilfrew was a mid-sized cluster of community, with around 500 properties; this fitted in with the mix of data Welsh Government were trying to obtain to inform the wider review on the speed limit nationally. It was added that the area also currently had road safety issues that needed to be addressed. Officers highlighted that it was recognised that only a certain amount of capacity and resource was available; a lot of the work would be delivered by the GoSafe partnership and the Council would be doing the engineering works, however a lot of the work will also involve data analysis that would be completed behind the scenes.

Members asked if there had been any road accidents in the area, to which it was confirmed that there had been; the area would not have met the Welsh Government criteria to be considered if there wasn't sufficient factual evidence around this. In order to qualify on the original application, Members were informed that it required evidence in relation to the level of speed from the covert speed data information; Officers and Welsh Government also would have looked at the police statistics for near misses and accidents with minor injuries. It was mentioned that there had not been any major incidents

in the area where there had been a fatality. Officers agreed to share the detail of the evidence with Members outside of the meeting.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

Design Options for the Remediation of Cilmaengwyn Tip above Godre'r Graig Primary School

Members were presented with a report which proposed to direct award Earth Science Partnership work to investigate design options and produce budget estimates for works associated with the remediation of Cilmaengwyn Spoil Tip.

A discussion took place in relation to the remedial options contained within the circulated report, in particular option three 'the demolition of Godre'r Graig Primary School building and reusing the site with a community benefit'. Members asked for clarity on how the site could be used for a community benefit, if the site was not safe for staff and pupils in the primary school. Officers stated that the consultants would be tasked to identify if there were any suitable community benefits and would provide feedback to Officers once completed; it would not likely involve the site being developed in terms of housing or community halls, however there may be other green-type community benefits that could be appropriate.

It was asked if Officers had a timescale for Earth Science Partnership (ESP) to carry out the feasibility study. Members were informed that the consultant was part of the South Wales Regional Framework that had recently been tendered, within that framework the Council could make a quick award subject to Cabinet Board approval; this could be completed after the three day call-in period. In regards to the time to undertake the study, it was noted that the Council had to enter into negotiations with ESP, however it was likely to be around four to six weeks to complete the study.

Detailed within the circulated report it stated that the ESP were commissioned in 2019 to investigate the tip material and landslip above Godre'r Graig School; Members asked for clarity on what landslip Officers were referring to. It was noted that the awareness of the Pantteg landslip, Ty Gwyn landslip and the history around the Godre'r Graig and Cilmaengwyn area raised concerns; the recent geological activity in Pantteg prompted for a closer look at the Godre'r Graig area, particularly around the school, keeping in mind the educational review of education in the valley area. Members were

informed that initially, a desktop study was completed, which flagged some concerns; this led to completing more detailed testing and analysis work, which unfortunately due to the risks involved there and the history, resulted in Godre'r Graig Primary School being temporarily closed at the time. It was added that since completing the monitoring, movement had been identified in that area; therefore, more investigation was required.

It was asked why complete removal of the spoil was unlikely to be favourable, as detailed in the circulated report. Officers stated that anything was doable in terms of engineering solutions, however it was down to the physical ability to carry out the activity; whilst also taking into consideration time scales and costs. It was mentioned that Officers carried out some initial calculations, purely mathematical, based upon the volume of material on the site that would need to be taken off site; this was in the region of £4million and didn't take into account safe access routes onto the site. It was added that smaller vehicles would be needed to complete this operation due to the nature of the topography there, so it could take up to 18 months to two years to take the volume of material off the site, and carry out the mitigation works that would be required.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

4. **Forward Work Programme 2021/22**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme 2021/22.

CHAIRPERSON