

# ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**11 September 2015**

**Chairman:** Councillor A.Llewelyn

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

**Officers In  
Attendance** N.Evans, S.Brennan, Ms.C.Brettle, S.Ball,  
C.Millis, N. Davies, M. Jones and PWalker

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors M.L.James and A.J.Taylor

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## 1. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

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| Cllr. S Rahaman - | Reports of the Head of Property and Regeneration on Aberavon Seafront and the Aberavon Leisure and Fitness Centre as his brother owns a business on the seafront.                |
| Cllr. M Lewis -   | Report of the Head of Planning on Community Fund Policy for Renewable Energy Generating Developments as she has a pecuniary interest as there is a solar panel farm on her land. |
| Cllr. C Golding - | Report of the Head of Planning on Community Fund Policy for Renewable Energy Generating Developments as he works in the energy sector.   |

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 31ST JULY 2015.**

Members considered the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 and asked whether the issue in relation to Sandfields Comprehensive had been referred to the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny, the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that they would find this out and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Members also queried whether a letter had been sent to Barclays Bank and whether a response has been received. Members were advised that a letter had been sent to Barclays but it had taken longer than expected to find the right contact to address the letter to. It was further confirmed that a response had not yet been received but the Committee will be informed when one is.

The Committee noted the remainder of the minutes.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15.**

Members considered the work programme for the scrutiny committee. It was noted that the report cards from the planning section had moved to the next meeting.

The Chair advised the Committee that each Scrutiny Committee within the Council is due to undertake a specific piece of work on a chosen topic. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to undertake a piece of work around Tourism and how this has been managed since the removal of the team as part of the budget savings.

Members agreed that this should be the focus of the work and would be an opportunity to take stock of the current situation and how this could be managed going forward.

Following scrutiny the work programme was noted.

#### 4. PRE SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following items:

##### Cabinet Board Papers

##### i. Aberavon Seafront Regeneration – Update Report

Members considered an update report that provided Members with an update on the various regeneration schemes on Aberavon sea front.

£5.2million has been spent regenerating the seafront of which £4million has been funded from Europe. Members asked whether they could see any picture evidence of before and after the regeneration and were advised that this would be provided as part of the work around tourism that was due to be undertaken shortly.

Members asked whether the old skate park that had been on the sea front could have been re-used and it was confirmed that the wear and tear had deemed it not good enough to reuse. It was further confirmed that the new skate park had gone down well with users.

Clarification was sought on the Ocean Way car park and whether this can be opened all year round. It was confirmed that clarification would be sought from the parking services and would be reported back to a future meeting. In addition to Ocean Way Members asked whether the Scarlet Avenue car park was pay and display and Officers confirmed that it was.

Members asked whether there would be clauses in place for restaurants that wished to be locating to the sea front. Officers stated that it was a balancing act to ensure that the opportunities that are developed on the front complement each other are viable and provide a vibrant environment for both business and visitors.

Members enquired on the status of the burger bar and it was confirmed that it had been through significant changes over the years. Members further noted that there had been rumours in relation to the facility and were advised that the Council is actively seeking a solution and was now encouraging discussions between the owners and interested parties in the hope of identifying a solution.

Members stated their disappointment that the old Afan Lido site would be redeveloped but as residential led mixed use scheme. Members felt that it would be better to identify a hotel chain to use the land. It was confirmed that as part of the Local Development Plan the area had been earmarked for mixed regeneration use including up to 150 residential units. Members were advised that this was ongoing and until expressions of interest are received the Council is unclear as to what the exact development will contain.

It was noted that in relation to the crazy golf course reference was made to visitor research and members asked how this had been undertaken given that the tourism team had disbanded. Members were informed that the survey was written by the Council's survey team and the regeneration team had undertaken the survey.

Following Scrutiny the Committee noted the following points for consideration:

- Officers to consider the balance of restaurant type to be allowed in the area to ensure a mix of establishment type
- That the Council pursues a mix of developments on the former Afan Lido site with preference being for a hotel
- That the communication of the budget setting process is improved so that Members are able to liaise with their constituents and explain clearly the impacts of the budget setting process.

ii. Aberavon Leisure and Fitness Centre

Members considered a report on the progress on the Aberavon Leisure and Fitness Centre being developed at Aberavon sea front.

Members noted that the report asked for additional funding to be agreed and questioned what had happened to the contingency funding that had been included in the original funding package. It was confirmed that this had been used to deal with the contaminated land issue of the new site. Members asked what type of contamination was evident and officers stated that this information would need to be brought back to a future meeting.

Members asked where it was proposed the £22,000 would come from and it was stated that it would be taken from the Capital Programme and Members stated that they understood that this would then have an impact on other programmes. Members were made aware that

budget management within the project had been tight and every opportunity had been taken to keep costs low.

Members asked what are the differences in the youth service provision within the leisure facility to what is already in place. Members were advised that the new facility would not be able to have kitchen facilities. It was confirmed that this was not an ideal scenario. Members requested that the Children Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee consider the provision that will be made in the future and that the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be invited to attend the meeting.

Members were informed that there may be an opportunity to secure funding from the Community Benefit Fund due to the development at Baglan Energy Park but discussions would be required to check whether it could extend to Sandfields East.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board on the proviso that the relevant information was presented to the committee in the future.

iii. Economic and Community Regeneration Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 of 2015/2016

Members considered the report in relation to the first quarter performance. It was highlighted to Members that there was an issue in relation to complaints received and this was high following the Super Heroes Event that was recently held.

The majority of the complaints received were in relation to car parking and toilets. Members were advised that 5,500 were expected to turn up and the Council planned for 8,000 to turn up subsequently over 13,000 people attended the event.

Members were advised that the Department had learned lessons from the event particularly in relation to traffic management and the main issue was traffic attending the event from the Bridgend area turning right into the park caused delays.

A point was raised in relation to the performance of the number of library materials issued during the year per 1,000 population. This indicator had seen a decrease in performance and this was partly due to a driver being absent for 4 days. Members were advised that this was a unique event and one that has not happened since.

Following scrutiny the Committee noted the report.

5. **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.**

6. **PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following private items.

Cabinet Board Proposals

i. First Quarter Performance Review – Celtic Leisure

Members considered the private report in relation to the performance on Celtic Leisure and stated that there had been previous concerns in relation to cleanliness of leisure centres. Members were advised that there had been a management restructure and now Area Managers were in place which will address these issues and drive up standards.

Members were advised that the Council had committed to a ten year business plan and at the next meeting of the Committee the annual report for 2014/2015 will be presented by the Chief Executive of Celtic Leisure.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Council was looking to reduce the management fee as Celtic Leisure becomes more self-sufficient in the future.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

ii. Industrial Starter Units Portfolio Performance Report 2014/2015

Members considered the report on the Council's Industrial Starter Units Portfolio Report for 2014/2015.

Members noted that a number of units were classified as condition category B or C but asked what was being done in relation to the units that had been classified as category D. Members were advised that this generally was not an issue due to the nature of the business

undertaken at the units. The units served a particular market and the rents reflected the condition of the building.

Members asked what support is given to businesses that wish to expand and grow and it was confirmed that the business support unit assist where required. It was also further noted that the Council works closely with Swansea's Economic Development Team to ensure that businesses are close to any City Region developments.

Members asked whether the condition category included any energy efficiency assessment and it was confirmed that it does not and is solely in relation to the condition of the building.

A question was raised in relation to new sites and how they are purchased. Members were informed that the Council actively seeks European funding to develop new industrial units.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## **CHAIRPERSON**