

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**22 April 2016**

**Chairperson:** Councillor A.Llewelyn

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

**Officers In  
Attendance** A Collins, B Riseborough, A Spooner-Cleverly,  
N Thomas, P Walker T Davies and S Curran

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

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1. **MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MARCH  
11TH 2016**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the last meeting of the Committee of the Civic Year and extended his thanks to colleagues and officers for their valued contributions to the Committee. Members observed that there was no Forward Work Programme included for their information at this meeting due to it being the last meeting of the Civic Year and noted that the 16/17 Work Programme would include Town Centre Regeneration and an in depth piece of work on Tourism.

The Committee extended their best wishes to the Vice Chair, Councillor Ian James due his recent ill health and agreed that a card be sent from the Committee.

Members received the minutes from the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The Committee noted that the situation in relation to TATA remains ongoing and fast paced and that the Chief Executive is involved in all

discussions. Updates, as they become available will be brought to the Committee.

Members asked for an update in relation to Cymmer Pool. Officers confirmed that Afan Valley Leisure Group had withdrawn from the site and the pool will be closing with a view to commencing demolition in the Summer; ownership of the site has been transferred from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate to the Environment Directorate.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the minutes.

## 2. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

### Cabinet Board Proposals

#### 2.1 Coca Cola Parklives Partnership Inter Authority Services Agreement

The Committee received information in relation to the Coca Cola sponsored Parklives programme which offers funding to encourage participation in the outdoors to both improve participation levels and health across the Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend areas as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that £400,000 had been secured over a four year period. The City and County of Swansea will be the host Local Authority for the programme but parks and open spaces within Neath Port Talbot will be utilised to offer a variety of free activities.

Members discussed the variety of Friends Groups which are in existence and who offer a range of activities such as running, walking, Zumba etc. and asked if this programme would support such existing groups. Officers confirmed that existing groups will be unable to apply for this funding and that the programme is to support new groups, existing groups can apply for Community Chest Funding.

Members discussed whether Coca Cola could be approached to engage further with initiatives in the County Borough i.e. keeping the town tidy.

Members noted that whilst the programme in general is positive the sponsorship from Coca Cola is questionable as they are not a company who are linked in general with healthy products.

The costs for the programme were queried and Members drew attention to the £13,000 which is allocated to events whilst higher figures are attributed to areas such as co-ordination and travel.

Officers explained the 'events' will be one off promotional events and all other costs are day to day delivery costs of the programme.

Members drew attention to the fact that some facilities in the Council's ownership have been transferred to community organisations and asked if the programme would be working with these organisations and facilities. Officers stated that the parks that would be utilised for the programme initially would be Margam Park in Port Talbot, Gnoll Park in Neath and Parc Ynysderw in Pontardawe.

Members noted that the aim of the programme is to increase the number and diversity of people engaging with physical activity with a targeted audience of for example, inactive people and people living in Communities First areas. They raised concern that if the programme focusses its activity in the three central locations listed, the targeted beneficiaries will not be reached.

The Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Cabinet Board that the proposed locations of the Parklives Programme (as detailed within the circulated report) be reviewed, in relation to accessibility to the targeted audiences, in accordance with the views expressed at the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, and an information report be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee following the signing of the partnership agreement

Following scrutiny, and with the inclusion of the above recommendation, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board. Cllr S

Paddison was not in support of the programme and requested it be minuted as such.

## 2.2 Community Development Delivery Plan

The Committee received the Community Development Delivery Plan for 2016/17 as detailed within the circulated report.

Members discussed the importance of digital inclusion but raised concern that there are some areas in the County Borough who are still unable to get online, particularly in the Valley areas. The Committee referenced the Swansea Bay City Deal and the Council's recent adoption of their 'Digital by Choice' Strategy and how access to robust internet signal is imperative for businesses and more disadvantaged people.

Members asked for an update on the Social Enterprise Strategy. Officers admitted resources have been an issue and even though work with NPTCVS (Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service) is ongoing further work needs to be completed to ensure it is robust. Members commented that Social Enterprise solutions are becoming more and more important and looked forward to receiving further information on the Social Enterprise Strategy as more work is completed.

Members asked for further information in relation to the Volunteer Group at Afan Forest Park and asked if they have direct links to the Council. Officers ensured they would check with Project Officers to ensure the right support was being offered.

Members raised concern at the steady loss of volunteers and noted a decline in enthusiasm for volunteering. The Committee agreed that careful management of volunteers is essential and they should be seen as part of a wider team.

Members discussed the importance of communication, particularly in communities where events are held such as job fairs and welfare rights support and the importance of ensuring messages are co-ordinated and reach their targeted audiences.

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

### 3. 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 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

### 4. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

#### Cabinet Board Proposals

##### 4.1 Urgency Action-1373

The Committee received the report on an Urgency Action in relation to the acquisition of Burrows Yard, Aberavon that was taken by the Director of Environment in consultation with the requisite Members as contained within the circulated report. The report was dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 but due to a clerical error the report was delayed in being reported back to Members.

The Committee received apologies from the Democratic Services Department for the clerical error and were assured that processes have been put in place to prevent any further such errors from occurring.

Members were dissatisfied at the lack of communication in relation to the decision that had been taken and queried why it had been undertaken by Urgency Action initially. Officers explained that the project had come under the Welsh Government's Vibrant and Viable Places programme but was only added to the programme at the very last minute and the timescales set from Welsh Government for acquisition of the site dictated that the decision be taken via Urgency Action.

Members discussed the importance of communication in general but particularly in relation to this site which is seen as the cornerstone of Aberafan. An update was provided to the Committee on the site; due to the complex site issues the site investigation report has taken longer to complete than first anticipated and a final version is still awaited.

Members raised concern about the future of the project in relation to the upcoming EU Referendum; they were informed that the project funding has been ring fenced by the UK Government so the outcome of the EU Referendum will have no impact on the progress of the project.

The Committee requested an update report due to the time lapse since the decision had been taken. Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

## **CHAIRPERSON**