

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

16 September 2016

Chairperson: Councillor A.Llewelyn

Councillors: M.Crowley, A.Jenkins, M.Jones, D.Keogh,
Mrs.M.A.Lewis and S.Rahaman

**Officers In
Attendance** S.Brennan, S. Curran, C. Plowman and
P.Walker

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

It was with deep regret that the Chair advised the Committee of the death of Mr. Russell Ward, Chief Executive of Celtic Leisure and former Officer of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. As a mark of respect Members stood for a minute's silence.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

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

Cllr C.M. Crowley: Private Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration re: Little Warren Playing Fields and Pavilion as he is President and Trustee of Aberavon Green Stars RFC.

2. MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15TH JULY 2016.

Members asked for an update in relation to the action to the European Structural Funds Update following EU Referendum Result report whereby the Committee had requested that a letter be drafted to the UK and Welsh Government requiring the commitment to replace the loss of EU funding in Wales. Members were informed that

the letter would be drafted and sent on behalf of the Committee in due course.

In relation to Digital Advertising Boards, Members asked for an update in relation to the size of the screens and whether or not live events will be broadcast. The Committee were informed that the precise size of the screens has not been determined but the size will be significant; live broadcasts have not been included as part of the proposal at present but could be considered as the project progresses and Members felt that live broadcasts could enhance the value of the screens going forward.

The Committee noted the Minutes.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17.**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Committee will be a Special Budget Meeting to consider the Budget and Forward Financial Plan proposals under the remit of the Committee and will be held on 21st October 2016.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

4. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE- PROSPERITY FOR ALL (REGENERATION AND EMPLOYMENT)- QUARTER 1 2016-17**

Members received the Corporate Improvement Objective-Prosperity for All (Regeneration) Quarter 1 information as contained within the circulated report.

Members were provided with a progress update for the first three months of 2016/17 for Regeneration and were informed that overall all activities planned for 2016/17 are on track for completion despite ongoing challenging circumstances surrounding the economy.

The Committee received information about the work that the Economic Development Team have been involved with including; private investment to Aberafan Seafront, the next phases of re development of Neath Town Centre and plans for camping and caravan facilities at Margam Park.

Members noted the appointment of a Business Development Officer to focus on the economic development elements of tourism and

asked if the officers' details could be circulated to them for their information.

The Committee were informed of the Economic Development Team's responsibility in delivering community benefits to increase supply chain opportunities for local businesses and identifying local jobs for local people. Members noted the issues that can arise when smaller businesses attempt to put bids together for larger projects and the challenge that this can present which can often be a barrier to them. Members questioned if the paperwork is as simplified as possible and while Officers confirmed that while every effort is made to simplify the process, legally there are still procurement and health and safety issues which always need to be addressed through the bidding process.

Members were pleased to note that funding has been secured for the establishment of a Regional Marketing Suite at the Bay Campus which involves the development of a Regional 3D Map and they welcomed a future demonstration of the map to a meeting of the Committee.

The Committee queried what actions were taken by the team to assist with smaller start-up businesses. Officers explained that bids are welcomed through the Coastal Community Scheme which offers this sort of support to new businesses.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted.

5. **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT SERVICE (PASS) SERVICE REPORT CARD**

The Committee received the report card for the Physical Activity and Sport Service (PASS) Team, as detailed within the circulated report.

The PASS Team supports projects and initiatives to provide opportunities to enable the Community to become more active and enjoy healthier lifestyles. It is a non- statutory service with the majority of the revenue budget grant funded and has on average 20 full time equivalent employees.

Members were pleased to note the performance in the Service Performance Quadrant on the percentage of children hooked on sport which is measured by Sport Wales every two years. In 2015 Neath Port Talbot was number one in Wales for participation with 55% against a Welsh average of 48%.

Members noted that all revenue expenditure is within budget and no FFP savings are at risk.

Members appreciated that the team had previously had an excellent sickness record but that during this period there were two cases of long term sickness absence which had affected the teams' performance in this area. Members went on to note that in addition to holding Performance Development Reviews the service area annually holds a planning day to agree targets for the year which offers staff the opportunity to engage further with the process.

Members questioned how the Walking Groups were advertised and even though there is information available online this information is limited.

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

6. PONTARDAWE ARTS CENTRE REPORT CARD

The Committee received the report card for the Pontardawe Arts Centre as detailed within the circulated report.

Pontardawe Arts Centre aims to improve the cultural offer in the County Borough by the delivery of a balanced artistic programme within the resources available working in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales and Film Agency Wales. Theatres and the Arts are a non- statutory service and whilst the core revenue budget has been reduced for two consecutive years, grant funding is received to fund the service. There are 7.8 full time equivalent staff.

Members were pleased to note despite the budget cuts of 2014/15 and achieving the necessary savings to come in on budget the venue still maintained its target performance and delivered on all its priorities for the period with user figures, ticket and ticket sales increasing.

Members noted how the loss of the Marketing Officer had had a profound effect on the performance of the team and that maintenance instead of growth is being concentrated on going forward with an increased use of volunteer staff

Members were pleased to note that there was no sickness within the team in 2015/16 and that no employees had left due to unplanned departures.

Members discussed the Centre's use of Social Media and commented that while the Centre's presence on Twitter was highly visible their Facebook presence is less prolific and more difficult to find. Officers committed to feeding this back the Centre staff.

Members asked if information in relation to all three Art Centres be brought together in a future report so that a solid comparison of data and performance could be made.

Members raised an issue in relation to Welsh translation whereby an error had recently occurred in the translation of a word giving it a different meaning than what was intended. Officers were aware of the issue being referred to and were looking into it further.

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

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE REPORT CARD & UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Committee received the report card for the Community Development Service as detailed within the circulated report.

The Section's key priority is to provide a community service through community centre buildings which meet the community need, encourage community involvement and work towards achieving healthy safe sustainable and confident local neighbourhoods of all age groups. It is a non statutory service with 5 full time equivalent staff members.

Members heard how the Forward Financial Plan for 2015-16 required revenue budget savings of £450,000 to be added to the existing identified Forward Financial Plan savings of £50,000 which resulted in a total saving of £500,000. The achievement of these savings a complete review of the building stock of the 12 community centres was undertaken.

The Committee discussed the priorities of the section and were encouraged that a new Service Level Agreement will require the community centres to routinely collect data within agreed set templates.

Members were pleased to note the very low levels of sickness absence within the team.

Members queried the transfer of Taibach Community Centre and asked for a report on the complaints apparently raised about cleanliness and other management issues at Baglan Community Centre and how they are being addressed to be brought to a future meeting.

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

8. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

8.1 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2016-2017- Quarter 1 Performance (1st April 2016-30th June 2016)-Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning.

Members received the quarter 1 performance management data as included in the circulated report.

Members noted that there had been an increase in the number of people using Public Libraries in the first 3 months of 2016/17 but a slight decline in the number of library materials issued during this period. The increase in numbers is largely attributed to the extra work staff are doing to attract audiences to the venues for activities and events and Members praised the staff for their work and commitment whilst providing an excellent service.

Members asked if this increase in visitor numbers had translated into any increased revenue and it was explained that the service does not currently generate income from visitors. A future service model of libraries was discussed such as exploring 'internet café' options, introducing coffee machines and focussing on income generation.

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

8.2 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2016-2017- Quarter 1 Performance (1st April 2016-30th June 2016)-Environment.

Members received the quarter 1 performance management data as included in the circulated report.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted.

9. **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 12 A to the above Act.

10. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

10.1 Celtic Leisure- Quarter 1 Performance

Members received information in relation to the performance of Celtic Leisure for the first quarter as contained in the circulated report.

Members heard how the trading surplus in the first quarter of this financial year is £21k showing a positive variance of £48k against the submitted business plan which predicted a £27k deficit in the first quarter. Total company income for the first quarter was £57k ahead of the budgeted position.

Members praised the performance of Celtic and reiterated their praise of the late Russell Ward, Chief Executive of Celtic Leisure.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted.

10.2 Proposed Redevelopment of Aberavon House, Port Talbot.

Members received information in relation to the proposed redevelopment of Aberavon House, Port Talbot as contained within the circulated report.

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

CHAIRPERSON