

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

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

**Members Present:**

**20 January 2017**

**Chairperson:** **Councillor A.Llewelyn**

**Councillors:** M.Crowley, A.Jenkins, M.Jones, D.Keogh,  
Mrs.M.A.Lewis, J.D.Morgan, Mrs.S.Paddison,  
S.Rahaman and A.Taylor

**Officers In Attendance** S.Brennan, S.Ball, P.Walker, M. Wynne,  
D. Phillips, C.Morris, J.Dennis, L.Dennis, S.  
Freeguard and N.Evans

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

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

Cllr. M A Lewis made the following declarations at the commencement of the meeting. Report of the Chair of Economic and Community Regeneration on the review of Tourism Support in Neath Port Talbot as she has a pecuniary interest and the Report of Head of Planning and Public Protection on Two Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents on Open Space and Green Space and Development and the Welsh Language as she has a pecuniary interest.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AND  
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 DECEMBER  
2016**

Members noted the minutes but were asked to agree a change that Cllr. A J Taylor was replaced by Cllr E V Latham at the previous meeting.

Members were asked whether they still wished for a representative from Welsh Government to attend a future meeting to discuss the Enterprise Zone. It was agreed that a representative should be invited

to attend a meeting in approximately six months time to give an update.

Members asked whether there was a further update in relation to New Sandfields Aberavon and officers stated that it was expected that an announcement would be made by Welsh Government shortly and a further update would be available for the next meeting.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17.**

Members considered the committees forward work programme and noted that there was a point included that the Committee wished to consider an update on Town Centre Regeneration and Members agreed that this should be delayed until the new cycle of meetings and should include information from some of the key employers in the County Borough and how they can contribute to the regeneration.

Members noted that there were several service report cards due to be presented to the next meeting and asked whether it was time consuming completing them. Officers stated that on occasions there are conflicting priorities and managers have to stop doing what they are doing to complete the report cards.

Members stated that they welcomed the report cards as it allowed them to understand in more depth the service area and the issues managers were facing. However, some concern was raised in relation to the time required to complete.

It was agreed that these comments would be passed to the relevant officer.

4. **PRINCESS ROYAL THEATRE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the service report card for the Princess Royal Theatre.

Members asked why there was a large change in ticket numbers in 2014/2015. Officers confirmed that this was because they had not been able to secure enough headline acts so this resulted in fewer tickets sold.

Members continued and asked how the figure of 50781 users equated to the low number of tickets sold and it was confirmed that

this was because the theatre had been privately hired more during 2014/2015.

Officers were asked whether the theatre suffered from the 'Swansea' effect and in particular the Grand Theatre. Members were informed that it was in direct competition with the Grand Theatre which had 1200 seats as opposed to the Princess Royal Theatre which had 800.

Members asked whether the Theatre was on course to meet the target of 25-30 shows for 2016/2017 and it was confirmed that there had currently been 15 shows however, recently when trying to book certain acts they require a payment of up to £10,000 upfront and the service is not prepared to take this risk.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## 5. **MARGAM COUNTRY PARK REPORT CARD**

Members considered the service report card for Margam Park.

Members asked what the service was doing to promote the location to increase income from filming. Officers stated that they had good relations with all location managers on film and television and there were regular visits to the park to deem its suitability for the respective programmes. Officers advised that between 2011 and 2015 there were a number of big programmes and films filmed at the park and in addition to the filming income this had brought with it a high secondary spend in that the films used local carpenters and plumbers for example.

Members asked whether the park had thought about selling souvenirs online. Officers stated that this had been considered previously but due to postage costs it had not been taken forward. Members suggested that it is now the norm for customers to pay postage and packing and that the service should consider this in the future.

Members asked for an update in relation to the proposed campsite at the park. It was stated that this had been 8 years in negotiations and that there were progress made and an agreement had been reached with Welsh Water in relation to the drainage for the site.

Members felt concern that whilst the number of functions held at the orangery had increased there had been a decrease in the number of weddings. Officers agreed that this had been a concern but were

happy to report that since a wedding exhibition at the beginning of January there had been 8 confirmed wedding bookings.

An update was requested on whether Go Ape had been a success since its introduction to the park. Officers stated that it had not been a huge success however, it was suggested that the company should investigate the feasibility of introducing a course for younger people as this was a success when a mobile trail was at the park for a set period of time.

Members asked for an update in relation to Twyn yr Hydd and it was confirmed that at the moment this was commercially sensitive and a report would be brought back to a future meeting.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## 6. **ACCESS MANAGED SERVICES**

Members considered the report card for the Access Managed Services area.

Members asked for more information in relation to the cash less system for school dinners and had concerns that there may be individuals who do not have digital access. Officers confirmed that this would not be a barrier as they could still pay in cash. Further concern was raised that the Council had entered into an agreement with Parentpay as an online payment system when the Council had previously developed an in house system. Officers advised that a scoping exercise was underway to investigate all opportunities but the preferred option would be to use an in house system.

Officers were asked for clarity in relation to the projected overspend and stated that this was in relation to the catering review of primary school meals and there was a potential issue in reducing the wage bill so that the level of savings identified would not be delivered.

Members noted that the review of cleaning had been ongoing for some time and asked for clarity on a completion date. Officers advised that this was still ongoing with a view to bringing two areas together but an accountancy issue had been identified that required solving.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## **7. STRATEGIC PROPERTY & VALUATION REPORT CARD**

Members considered the report card for the Strategic Property and Valuation Service.

Members noted that previously there had been a number of ER/VR posts removed and asked whether any more were planned. Officers stated that none were planned as it was not possible to remove any more staff from the service.

Members asked for clarity in relation to the District Heating and asked for this to be brought to a future meeting.

Members asked what work was being undertaken in relation co-location of organisations. It was confirmed that work was ongoing with social services and health colleagues and discussions had been held with South Wales Police and shortly discussions would commence with Mid and West Wales Fire Service.

Officers were asked whether as part of a Community Asset Transfer Policy whether local communities would be given advance notice of the possibility of assets that would be transferred. It was confirmed that the Council has clarified the process so people understand it but it was agreed that a more robust strategy was required which would also include transferring assets in as well as out.

Members asked whether there was a review on going in relation to public conveniences and officers confirmed there was that was looking at all aspects including the location and frequency of use. A report would be brought back to the Committee at a later date.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE TOURISM SUPPORT IN NEATH PORT TALBOT**

Members considered a report on the level of tourism support in Neath Port Talbot.

Members were advised that the report was the culmination of the work of a smaller group of Members of the Committee who undertook the review.

The Chair of the Committee extended his thanks to the Members of the review along with the external witnesses who gave their time to provide evidence including Visit Wales from the Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the report and stated that it was good that a previous decision made by the Council has been looked at with a fresh pair of eyes. It was further stated that in the current economic climate it was difficult to identify additional resources but this area would be looked at critically going forward.

Following scrutiny the Committee were supportive of the recommendations contained within the report.

## 9. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee Scrutinised the Following Matters:

### Cabinet Board Proposals

10.1 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) – Consideration of: the Open Space and Greenspace Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG); the Development and the Welsh Language Consultation Draft SPG; and the publication/consultation procedures to be implemented

Members were advised that there was nothing new within the documents from a policy perspective.

Members were asked to note that there was an amendment required to the recommendation and that following legal advice the consultation period would not commence until following the local government elections in May 2017.

Members asked for clarity in relation to Section 106 agreements and whether these are in addition to others and it was confirmed that it was and other issues are to be factored in.

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

## 10. **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.**

**11. PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following private matters:

**Cabinet Board Proposals**

**12.1 Energy/Carbon and Water Performance Report 2016**

Members considered the report on Energy/Carbon and Water Performance for 2016.

Members asked whether investigations could be undertaken within schools so that temperature can be controlled on a more efficient basis. Officers confirmed that work was being undertaken with schools looking at control issues and it was confirmed that it is a training requirement to train staff on new systems that have been installed.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

**12.2 Proposed Refurbishment and Redevelopment of Aberavon House, off the Civic Centre, Port Talbot.**

Members considered a report on the redevelopment of Aberavon House.

Members asked for clarity in relation to the Officers delegated powers and the grant. Officers confirmed that this was just formalising an agreement that would see the Council act as the facilitator of the grant.

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

**CHAIRPERSON**

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