

# **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION CABINET BOARD**

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT – G. NUTT**

**4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2014**

### **SECTION C– MATTER FOR MONITORING**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: Glynneath, Margam, Blaengwynfi, Baglan, Aberdulais, Bryn & Cwmavon and Coedffranc**

### **CORPORATE COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE MONITORING REPORT**

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to advise Members on comments, compliments and complaints received which have been received through the Authority's Complaint Policy by the Directorate for the six month period from April to September 2014.

#### **Background**

The following number of comments, compliments and complaints have been received by the Environment Directorate.

Comments	-	0
Compliments	-	2
Stage 1 Complaints	-	2
Stage 2 Complaints	-	5

#### **Compliments**

##### **Case 1**

A compliment was received from a member of the public who had attended the Enterprise Club at Sandfields Business Centre in June thanking everyone involved for all the expertise and friendly welcoming atmosphere.

##### **Case 2**

A compliment was received from South Wales Police and Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service to an Officer of the Environment Resources Section for all the work undertaken to ensure that the Safety Advisory Group functioned to the best of its ability.

## **Stage 1 Complaints**

### Case 1

A complaint was received from a local trader regarding the Glynneath Regeneration Scheme. The complainant had concerns about the slow progress of the works within the town centre and in particular, the excessive coning off of pavements which was affecting trade to his premises.

### Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found unforeseen drainage works had been carried out along the pavements which had caused additional disruption. However, with the co-operation of the contractors, the length of operations along the High Street had been reduced and the pedestrian barriers had been reconfigured to improve access to shops.

### Case 2

A second complaint was received regarding the Glynneath Regeneration Scheme from a local trader who was concerned about the length of time being taken to complete the works. The complainant stated that due to a loss of street parking in the area, there had been a considerable downturn in trade to their store.

The complaint was investigated and found that the scheme was ahead of programme. However, it was acknowledged that the ongoing works would inevitably disrupt and inconvenience traders and visitors to the town. It was recommended however, that communication between traders and operators be improved to ensure disruption is minimised.

## **Stage 2 Complaints**

### Case 1

A complaint was received from a resident of Blaengwynfi who wished to complain about the Authority's Local Development Plan. The complainant stated that officers had not fully considered the policy of the Community

Economic Regeneration Section in forming and implementing the Local Development Plan in this area. In addition, he stated Officers had not been helpful in dealing with his concerns and in particular, in submitting his appeal.

### Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found that correct procedures had been implemented in drawing up the plan and all relevant sections had been consulted before its implementation. A log of Officers meetings with the complainant had also been kept, which indicated that Officers had spent a considerable amount of time and effort in dealing with the complainant and in advising him of the various options available to him should he wish to submit an appeal. In view of this, the complaint was not upheld and was investigated within the 20 day guidelines.

### Case 2

A complaint was received from a member of the public regarding the restoration of the Park Slip/Margam Open Cast Coaling Site Restoration Scheme. The Complainant had concerns regarding the slow progress of restoration of the site, its future outcome and in particular the lack of action taken by the Authority in resolving the issue. The complainant also had concerns regarding the lack of minutes taken at meetings between agents and officers and requested the matter be investigated.

### Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found that whilst the developer had not submitted a detailed restoration strategy as is required by the operating conditions of the site, both NPT and Bridgend Council had jointly commissioned an independent restoration scheme for the site, with a view to securing restoration of the site. However, the complicated legal position with regard to this site has prevented the LPA's from serving enforcement notices and discussions ongoing with regard to the future of this site. It was also noted that minuted meetings were not a legal requirement in this instance. The complaint was not therefore upheld and was investigated within the 20 day guideline.

### Case 3

A complaint was received from a resident of Baglan regarding his inability to access the Planning web pages on the Authority's web site. The complainant

stated that due to this issue, the consultation time for this particular planning application should be extended.

## Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found the Authority's web pages were in working order. In addition, it was noted that the complainant had been advised of several alternative methods of accessing the information he required should he have wished to do so. In view of this, the complaint was not upheld and was investigated within the 20 day guidelines.

## Case 4

A complaint was received from a resident of Cilfrew regarding a Building Control Officer's decision not to provide a completion certificate for his property. The complainant stated that as he had complied with Building Control regulations and the section were in possession of the necessary inspection reports, a completion certificate should be issued. His complaint had been considered by the Section Manager but the situation remained unresolved.

## Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found that the completion certificate had been withheld, as full payment for his application had not been received. Legal representation was sought and it was decided that whilst the Authority was not legally bound to provide a completion certificate, it was agreed that a certificate could be issued in this instance and the complaint was upheld. The complaint was investigated within the 20 day guidelines.

## Case 5

A complaint was received from a resident of Cwmavon regarding the determination of a Planning Application in his area. The complainant argued that the officers had not been consistent in determining the application when compared with a previous application in his area and wished for his complaint to be investigated.

## Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found that given each application must be considered on its individual merits, it was evident that material differences between both applications had been considered in detail by Officers and agreed by Members of the Planning & Development Control Committee. In view of

this, the complaint was not upheld and was investigated within the 20 day guidelines.

### Case 6

A complaint was received from a resident of Skewen regarding the incorrect advice he had received from the Planning Section. He stated that due to this advice, he believed he did not require permission to replace his garden shed. In addition, after being served an Enforcement Notice, the complainant stated that he had not received sufficient advice from the Enforcement Officer regarding the appeal's process. He also stated that an incorrect fee had been quoted to him by the Enforcement Officer.

### Conclusion

The complaint was investigated and found that the Planning Officer had provided the correct advice with respect to replacing the structure. It was also found that the Enforcement Officer had provided the complainant with sufficient information regarding the appeals process, however, on investigation, it was noted that an incorrect fee had been quoted in an accompanying letter, to which, an apology was made. Whilst it was noted that an incorrect fee had been quoted, the complaint was not upheld and was investigated within the 20 day guidelines.

### **Recommendation**

That the Comment, Compliments and Complaints Monitoring Report be noted.

### **List of Background Papers**

Mail Monitoring System  
Files Ref. TA8, TA8/C

### **Officer Contact**

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