

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 27 February 2019**

**Present** Councillors KK Manneh (in the Chair) SWJ Ashley, PJ Cathcart, M Day, LG Johnston, M Johnston, LM Ryan, M Villars & WJ Walker.

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council)

**ESP18/052 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors RhM Bennett (work commitments), AL Bird (personal) and SJ Brooks (personal),

**ESP18/053 Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have and sign the Interests Sheet to give details of the nature of the interest.

Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute ESP18/058 (Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee - Inquiry into Allotments) below.

**ESP18/054 Planning, Highways, Footpaths and Licensing Matters**

(a) Planning Lists

Members considered outstanding planning List 1263, 1264 and 1265.

It was **recommended** that no objection is offered in respect of Planning Lists 1263, 1264 and 1265.

(b) Planning Decisions of Torfaen County Borough Council.

Members considered recent Planning Decisions.

It was **recommended** that the planning decisions are noted.

(c) Pre Application Consultation: Proposed Redevelopment of Bus Depot for Lidl Foodstore and Replacement Bus Depot at Cwmbran Bus Depot.

Members noted that observations from several Members had been submitted to WYG Environment Planning Transport Ltd in relation to the above. (Minute CL18/084 refers). The Clerk undertook to provide Members with details of any response received.

Members underlined the importance of responses to planning matters being provided on behalf of the Council as a whole rather than as individual Members. The Clerk clarified the way in which responses were normally submitted.

It was **recommended** that the above is noted.

**ESP18/055 Parks & Open Spaces**

On 17 October 2018, Members received a detailed update on various initiatives of Torfaen County Borough Council in relation to open spaces and other projects. (Minute ESP18/033 refers)

Members asked that regular forums are set up every three months. It had not been possible to arrange a forum since the October meeting due to staff absences but this would be brought forward in the coming weeks. It would also allow a recent restructure exercise at Torfaen County Borough Council to take effect.

Henrietta Lucas, Senior Environmental Projects Officer at Torfaen County Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss the Open Space Assessment and Mapping Exercise. Community Councils would also be invited to attend a stakeholder workshop later in the year.

Members noted that the audit based assessment of open spaces with Torfaen would provide a robust evidence base to enable the local authority to develop planning policies as part the Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-33. Members noted the type of open spaces it covered and the reasons for the assessment. Data collected would allow sites to be mapped on Torfaen County Borough Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) and set standards determined through public consultation. The exercise would also assess whether there was a surplus or deficit of each type of space and address any deficiencies through developing LDP policies. Public consultation would include Ward Members and Community Councils. Questionnaires would be sent to allotment holders regarding existing provision and issues. Consultation with children had been undertaken through the local Play Sufficiency Assessment. Views would also be taken from sports clubs, schools and leisure facility providers on existing provision and future demand.

Henrietta Lucas particularly referred to the Green Infrastructure Assessment (Planning Policy Wales Ed 10), which would map green spaces throughout Torfaen and assess their quality against Green Flag criteria. This would lead to the development of projects to link up these green spaces to create a network and improve amenities for people and wildlife. The Public Service Board's Green Infrastructure Strategy would influence behaviour change so that management regimes provided greater benefits to people and wildlife.

Issues raised by Members included:

- the importance of providing Cwmbran Community Council with regular reports on the progress of the Open Space Assessment.
- the importance of town & community councils in general engaging with Torfaen County Borough Council on these issues.
- a request that Members are provided with a map of open space provision in each ward to inform better decision making and identify demand. (Henrietta Lucas agreed to provide such a map, which would also indicate if any of the open spaces were owned by Torfaen County Borough Council and possibly Melin Homes and Bron Afon.)
- the important contribution which school fields and playing fields could make to open space provision and the need to encourage community use of schools.
- concern at the amount of residential development taking places on areas of open space and the importance of engaging with Registered Social Landlords to protect areas of open space.
- the advantages of achieving Green Flag status. (Henrietta Lucas provided clarification on aspects of the Green Flag initiative.)

- the importance of protecting areas of open space in view of their significant contribution to the Well-being of communities and Place Planning.
- the potential to establish a MUGA at Cwmbran Park.
- the best options for open space provision on new developments and the importance of considering what type of provision was the most suitable.
- concern at the loss of areas of local open space and failure to maintain them, such as St Anne's Park in Pontnewydd and sports pitches at Llantarnam. (former school site)
- disappointment that the MUGAs at Llantarnam School had not been preserved.
- the potential for including facilities such as Greenmeadow Community Farm within the Open Space Assessment.

The Chairman thanked Henrietta Lucas for her attendance and willingness to answer questions.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) Members continue to receive regular reports and updates on the progress of the Open Space Assessment.
- (2) Andrew Osborne, Group Leader, Environment Strategy and Streetscene Operations (Torfaen County Borough Council) is invited to attend the next meeting of the committee to explain the outcome of the restructuring exercise referred to above.

#### **ESP18/056 Neighbourhood Services**

On 29 November 2017, Members discussed opportunities to raise matters with Torfaen County Borough Council in relation to Neighbourhood Services matters. (Minute ESP17/030 (a) refers). It was recommended that any Members wishing to submit questions to the Executive Member for Environment should first report them to this committee to ensure a co-ordinated approach. This was confirmed by the Council on 3 January 2018. Any matters raised will be referred to the Executive Member.

Members were asked to provide questions to the Clerk in advance of the meeting. No issues had been raised.

It was **recommended** that the position is noted.

#### **ESP18/057 Weed Control Policies: Torfaen County Borough Council**

On 16 January 2019 Members gave further consideration to the above. (Minute 18/047 refers) Members were advised that these matters were currently under review by Torfaen County Borough Council. Recommendations from the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Meeting had been considered by the Executive Member. Members considered the Executive Member's response.

It was **recommended** that the information is noted.

**ESP18/058 Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee - Inquiry into Allotments**

(Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.)

Members noted that the National Assembly's Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee was carrying out an inquiry into allotments. Observations were sought on the Welsh Government's strategic approach, the approach taken by local authorities across Wales; and on how to maximise the health, community and environmental benefits of allotments and community growing. Observations were to be submitted by 1 March 2019.

Members highlighted the popularity of allotments locally, which were well used. Members emphasised the importance of including provision for allotments within new developments. It was also important that national exercises such as this Inquiry were linked to local projects such as the Torfaen Open Space Assessment in view of the important contribution which allotments made to wider aspects of open space provision and Place Planning.

It was **recommended** that the above observations are submitted to the Inquiry.

**ESP18/059 Knauf Insulation Environmental Quiz ("Eco Quiz") 7 February 2019**

Members reviewed the success of the above event. The quiz had once again proved popular with local schools and provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. The Council was grateful for the continued support of Knauf Insulation. Members commented on the success of the event and the enthusiasm of the pupils who had taken part. The Clerk confirmed that the potential for staging events at Rougemont School had been discussed at the meeting of the Events & Community Projects Committee of 18 February 2019 (Minute ECP18/040 refers)

It was **recommended** that the success of the event is noted.

**ESP18/060 Exclusion of the Press & Public**

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was agreed that the following matter be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.

**ESP18/061 Task Force**

Members considered performance information about the recent work of the Task Force. Members discussed the Council's procedure for pursuing outstanding debts.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) details of income from the Task Force are reported to a future meeting, to allow Members to undertake a comparison exercise with recent years.

*Signed* .....  
(Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council)