

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 4 September 2019 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Cwmbran Community Council, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY**

**Present** Councillor KK Manneh (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, RhM Bennett, SJ Brooks, AL Bird, M Day, M Johnston, J Rees, WJ Walker and DH Williams

. Also Clare Facey (Administrative Officer)

**Absent** Councillors LG Johnston, F Jones, LM Ryan and M Villars

*(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)*

**ESP19/017 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillor M Villars (personal)

**ESP19/018 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.

**ESP19/019 Neighbourhood Services**

Members had been asked to provide advance notice of any matters they wished to raise with the Executive Member (Torfaen County Borough Council).

Members discussed the use of weedkiller at a local school, which had been witnessed by Members at a recent visit to the Summer Playschemes. The Executive Member had indicated that this work had not been undertaken by Torfaen County Borough Council's contractor. Members discussed the potential health & safety risks of the weed killing at length. Members expressed concern that, notwithstanding the Executive Member's response and the fact that site was a voluntary aided school, the fact remained that weedkiller was being applied in close proximity to children attending the Playschemes. Members identified this as a serious safeguarding issue and considered it important that children were not put at risk as a result of such operations. Members referred to the responsibility of the Executive Member for Children, Families & Communities in relation to such matters.

Members also referred to the recent use of weevils in the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal in Torfaen to combat non-native water ferns. The Executive Member had apologised for the failure to notify Cwmbran Community Council about the proposed operation. However, Members remained concerned about the failure to notify the Council, citing another example of an operation involving Swan Rescue at the Boating Lake, about which there had been no notification to the Council. Members considered that such examples called into question the principles of the Charter which governed the relationship between Torfaen County Borough Council and town & community councils. Members also discussed these examples within the context of the Code of Conduct. Members also referred to concerns about Torfaen County Borough Council's decision to charge the Council for the use of the site for the 2019 Big Event.

Members considered that the Council's continuing concerns about consultation and notification in relation to Neighbourhood Services matters should be drawn to the attention of Torfaen County Borough Council.

It was **recommended** that the Clerk contact the Leader of Torfaen County Borough Council to obtain a response to the concerns expressed by Members, as set out above.

## **ESP19/020 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters**

### (a) Planning Lists

Members considered outstanding Planning Lists 1288 and 1289.

It was **recommended** that no adverse observations are offered in relation planning lists 1288 and 1289.

### (b) Planning Decisions of Torfaen County Borough Council.

Members considered recent Planning Decisions.

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

### (c) Proposed Erection of 25 houses at Land South of Rosemead, Ty Canol Way; (Pre Application Consultation)

Members considered notification from a developer in relation to the above. Observations from a ward member had already been submitted in response. Members indicated concerns about the proposals arising from increased traffic and noise and the impact on local amenity. Members also referred to the strength of opposition to the proposals on the part of local residents.

It was **recommended** that the above observations are forwarded to the developer.

### (d) National Development Framework

Members noted that the Planning Directorate was producing the first National Development Framework (NDF). The NDF was a 20-year plan for Wales up to 2040. It covered issues such as housing, energy, economy, transport and the environment. It identified where nationally significant developments should take place, where key growth areas were, what infrastructure and services were needed and how Wales could help combat climate change. It was about making the best use of resources, creating accessible healthy communities and protecting our environment.

Members noted that the NDF was not about local matters which were normally dealt with at local authority level but rather took a broader look at what Wales, as a whole, needed in order to achieve prosperity and well-being now and in the future. It would be part of the Development Plan (DP) and would be used to inform planning decisions. It was important to be aware of as it is the highest level of the DP system and so the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan would be required to be 'in conformity' with it. The section on SE Wales in particular was relevant for Torfaen. A report was due to be presented to Torfaen County Borough Council in October to consider Torfaen's participation in the SE Wales SDP.

A consultation exercise was seeking views on the draft (NDF). Members were encouraged to take the opportunity to comment (either in support or opposition) if they feel that this part of the Development Plan did not represent their views. Observations are requested by 1 November 2019. Further details are available from the Clerk or via <https://gov.wales/draft-national-development-framework>. As part of the consultation exercise, drop-in sessions would take place around Wales, including Newport (11 September 2019). The Chairman of the Council agreed to attend this event and report back.

Members discussed the importance of the NDF and were mindful of its significance in informing future deliberations around planning issues.

It is **recommended** that

- (1) Members submit any observation to the Clerk for forwarding to the Planning Directorate as part of the consultation exercise.
- (2) the Chairman of the Council attend the consultation event on 11 September 2019 and report back to Members.

#### **ESP19/021 Parks & Open Spaces/Active Travel**

Members considered progress on issues raised at the last meeting.  
(Minutes ESP19/005 and ESP19/014 refer)

Torfaen County Borough Council had appointed external consultants (Chris Blandford Associates) to prepare a shared green Infrastructure strategy for the Torfaen Public Services Board (PSB). Information about a workshop held with town & community councils had been circulated.

The consultants would also be addressing town & community representatives at the Local Councils in Partnership meeting on 5 September 2019. Information arising would be distributed to Members.

Footpath maps remained awaited from Torfaen County Borough Council.

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

#### **ESP19/022 Tree Planting at Ty Coch Picnic Site**

In 2013, the Council undertook tree planting in the vicinity of Ty Coch picnic site. At a meeting held on 10 April 2019, Members recommended that a site visit is undertaken to view the progress of the planting. (Minute ESP18/065 (3) refers.)

At the meeting of Full Council held on 8 May 2019 however, Members noted that the Clerk had visited the area to undertake an initial assessment of the progress of the planting. (Minute CL18/110 refers). As only three trees had survived, potential new, replacement species would now be identified. Torfaen County Borough Council has agreed to provide advice on the most appropriate species to plant however planting would be best undertaken between October and March. Cwmbran Community Council would also be required to maintain the planting, including cutting back any overgrowth onto the pathway. This could be undertaken by the Task Force during the gardening season.

Members had also been asked to contact the Clerk to provide details of sites within their wards which might prove suitable locations for tree planting by the Council.

It was **recommended** that further consideration is deferred pending a detailed report from Councillor SWJ Ashley on options for tree planting around Cwmbran. (Minute ECP19/019 (2) refers).

**ESP19/023 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.

**ESP19/016 Task Force**

Members considered performance information about the work of the Task Force.

The Administrative Officer also reported progress in relation to enquiries being made by the Clerk about introducing an "apprenticeship" type scheme for the Task Force. (Minute ESP18/069 refers).

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

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