

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT)

MINUTES of a meeting held on 28th November, 2006.

Present: Councillor N.P. Hodges (Chairman); Councillors Ms. L. Burnett, J. Clifford, Miss J. Cole, N.J. Gibbs, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, G. John, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, Mrs. A.J. Moore, Mrs. A.J. Preston, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, W.C. Vaughan, E.T. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also present: Councillors G.A. Cox, A.M. Ernest and A.J. Readman.

555 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -

These were received from Councillors P. Church and R.F. Curtis.

556 MINUTES -

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 24th October, 2006 be approved as a correct record.

557 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

No declarations were received.

558 WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES - PEER REVIEW (REF - MINUTE NO. C2728) -

The Waste Peer Review of all Welsh local authorities had been delivered by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with the support of the WAG and had been carried out between 5th – 7th June, 2006. The review team had benchmarked the Council against what would be considered to be an excellent waste management authority using the three main themes of Vision and Strategy; Management and Governance: and Outcomes and Delivery. The main outcomes of the report were generally extremely positive with the Council having identified many strengths, achievements and examples of good practice. Amongst the areas of action and/or improvement identified, the most significant were the need for a more corporate approach to joint working (Making the Connections) and a higher profile for waste in corporate strategy, the fact that the Risk Assessment framework did not identify long-term high risks of waste management, and that potential food waste collections needed to be evaluated. In response to the above, Committee was notified that the Corporate Plan had now been amended to take account of the concerns raised; that the Council had recently embarked on a challenging and innovative project for a regional partnership approach to waste management, and that significant progress had been made in effecting

sub-regional arrangements regarding residual waste disposal; that biodegradable bags would be utilised for green waste collection during 2007 as a precursor to tackling the issues around food waste, and that as soon as a local solution could be identified either to introduce in-vessel composting or some other form of heat-treatment, food waste collections would commence; and that the Whole Authority Risk Assessment would address the increasing risks of waste management.

Cabinet had, on 25th October, 2006 considered the Peer Review report and had resolved

- that the report be noted and its conclusions welcomed,
- that a further report be presented to the Cabinet Advisory Committee – Visible Services on the action to be taken to address the areas identified for improvement,

and had referred the report to this Committee for consideration.

Following discussion on the above and related matters, which included further consideration of issues relating to both green and food waste, it was

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the findings of the Peer Review and the information presented at the meeting be noted.

559 TRAFFIC TASK AND FINISH GROUP -

The following report of the inaugural meeting of the above held on 14th November, 2006 was submitted:

Present: Councillors G. John, Mrs. A.J. Preston, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, E.T. Williams and Councillor S.T. Wiliam (substituting for Councillor N.P. Hodges).

Also present: Councillor Mrs. M. Kelly Owen.

(a) Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman -

AGREED - T H A T Councillors N.P. Hodges and N.J. Gibbs be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. Given the absence of both of the above, Councillor S.T. Wiliam was appointed Chairman for the meeting.

(b) Apologies for absence -

These were received from Councillors N.J. Gibbs and N.P. Hodges.

(c) Declarations of interest -

No declarations were received.

(d) Identification of Subject to be considered and Scope -

Prior to the commencement of discussions, Members were reminded of the limited timescale within which the Scrutiny Committee required the Task and Finish Group to have concluded its work and the need, therefore, for the subject identified for consideration to be focussed and to have achievable outcomes within the specified timescale.

The Scrutiny Committee had, on 24th October, 2006 had suggested “car parking in the Vale (except in Penarth)” and “the impact on traffic flows for the Vale as a consequence of the highway improvements at Baron’s Court junction” as potential topics for consideration. Discussion subsequently ensued on both, together with a third option relating to the provision of individual disabled parking bays and the current lack of an approved policy relating to the provision of the same. After some debate, the points raised against the selection of car parking as a topic, which included:

- that to revisit the previous studies in relation to all the town centres which had already been reported to Cabinet would not prove particularly useful*
- that it was an inappropriate piece of work for this time-limited Task and Finish Group*
- that major regeneration works in Holton Road and potential similar works in Penarth meant that consideration of car parking at this time in those areas would be premature,*

were accepted. As regards traffic flow into the Vale as a consequence of the highway improvements at the Baron’s Court junction, it was also accepted that consideration of this matter at this time would be premature given that the engineering works at that junction had yet to be completed and that the seasonal variation in traffic flows over the Christmas period would mean that any data collected at the current time would not prove useful in assessing future trends once the works had been completed and the traffic flow settled down.

Paul Gay (Operational Manager - Engineering Design) then expanded upon the issues relating to individual disabled parking bays (IDPBs). He had originally submitted a report to Cabinet in January 2004 which had sought confirmation of the policies and procedures currently used in dealing with issues relating to the provision of IDPBs in residential areas. The demand for IDPBs had always exceeded the Council’s budget with, on average, some 6 - 10 being installed each financial year and there was currently a significant backlog. The process of determining applications was lengthy and that, coupled with the time expended on responding to complaints from dissatisfied applicants, only served to exacerbate the problem of dealing with such applications expeditiously. It was suggested that, were clear and definitive procedures to be approved by the Council for dealing with all such applications, the process would be considerably quicker and seen to be transparent and fair to all. Cabinet had, back in January 2004, deferred consideration of that request for a further joint report from the Directors of

Community Services and Environmental and Economic Regeneration in order that issues relating to both traffic management and social need could be assessed. That report was still outstanding. In order to expedite the production of the aforementioned report and prepare a comprehensive response to the recent request for consideration submitted by Councillor R.F. Curtis in relation to the allocation of disabled parking bays (which Councillor Curtis believed should be allocated on a basis of greatest need), Mr. Gay proposed that this would be a topic well suited to consideration by this Task and Finish Group. A Scope would be drawn up which would clearly define the remit of the Task and Finish Group, and would include the fact that the views of the Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety) would be welcomed.

Following further discussion on the above and related issues, it was

AGREED - T H A T the topic to be considered by this Task and Finish Group be "provision of disabled parking bays."

Councillor Wiliam, who had chaired the above meeting, referred to the fact that the tight timescales within which the Task and Finish Group had been mandated to conclude its deliberations, had had a bearing on the single-issue topic selected. At this juncture, attention was drawn to the similar time constraints imposed on the Town Centre Task and Finish Group and to the fact that issues pertaining to traffic would likely form part of that Group's deliberations.

RECOMMENDED – THAT the report be accepted.

(Note: Councillor A.J. Readman spoke on the above matter with the consent of the Committee).

560 RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP -

The following report of a meeting held on 14th November, 2006 was submitted:

Present: Councillor S.T. Wiliam (Chairman); Councillors R.F. Curtis, G. John, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe and E.T. Williams.

(a) Apology for absence -

This was received from Councillor N.J. Gibbs.

(b) Collaborative Arrangements - Waste Management Procurement -

The Task and Finish Group were advised that, when considering a report on future waste management procurement options in January, 2006, Cabinet had resolved that the Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration be authorised to enter into formal negotiations with potential local authority and private sector partners (Minute No. C2261). Attention was also drawn to the fact that there was now a requirement to work in partnership with others as part of the "Making the Connections" agenda. Cardiff and Newport Councils had been in discussions since 2005 concerning the possibility of a partnership for residual waste treatment and disposal. Discussions had also recently taken place involving officers from Monmouthshire. Cardiff and Newport already had an existing formal arrangement where both their respective Scrutiny Committee's met jointly to consider future waste management options.

This Council and Monmouthshire had now been formally invited to join that Newport and Cardiff partnership and the terms of reference in respect of Member involvement in a Joint Scrutiny Committee was appended to the report. It was noted that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had no decision-making powers, its work involving the exploration of governance and related partnership matters over the forthcoming three to four month period, providing a joint report for the consideration of each Council's respective Executive during 2007.

A decision had been required from Cabinet to permit work to be undertaken with a view to establishing a formal partnership with Cardiff, Newport and Monmouthshire for future waste management procurement; the final written details of such a partnership agreement would be the subject of a further report to Cabinet. At the same time, nominations for membership of the Joint Scrutiny Committee were required. Approximately seven Member nominations would be required and, as this Council's Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) had already established a politically balanced Task and Finish Group to examine a range of Waste Management issues, it was considered this could be an appropriate basis for the Council's Scrutiny representation on the collaborative Group. In order to assess the available market for waste solutions that would satisfy all partner Councils, authority was also sought to advertise jointly for expressions of interest for future waste solutions in accordance with the EU Procurement Regulations.

WAG had approved a grant of £35k. towards the cost of the initial setting up of the partnership. WAG had also identified £18m. across Wales for collaborative working between Authorities and an application would be made to access that funding at a later date.

Cabinet, on 8th November, 2006 had

RESOLVED -

(1) *T H A T the setting up of a formal partnership with Cardiff, Newport and Monmouthshire Councils for future waste management procurement be endorsed, subject to agreement of the formal partnership terms.*

(2) *T H A T the Members of the Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) Recycling and Waste Management Task and Finish Group be nominated to represent this Council in the partnership at this initial stage.*

(3) *T H A T support for the joint advertisement for expressions of interest for future waste solutions in accordance with the EU Procurement Regulations be agreed.*

(4) *T H A T a further report be submitted to Cabinet for consideration on the formal terms of the partnership agreement.*

Mr. Martin Hamilton of Cardiff Council attended the Task and Finish Group and provided Members with an insight into what Cardiff and Newport Councils Scrutiny Committees had done, how the review would be conducted and an indication of the level of commitment that would be required from Members should they agree to take part in the review.

Mr. Hamilton explained that Newport Council had approached Cardiff Council a year ago to ascertain Cardiff Council's interest in a collaborative approach to scrutiny of waste management and it was agreed that there was indeed an opportunity for some joint work. The joint Newport and Cardiff Scrutiny Committee had met twice on an informal basis.

WAG had taken the view that the partnership to waste management approach offered a possibility for a significant piece of work. If there was collaboration by four authorities, this would represent a venture on a scale never seen before in Wales. For this reason it was felt that the partnership should comprise as broad a range of representatives as possible.

It had been agreed that at this stage it would be most useful if the joint Scrutiny Committee looked at not the technology of waste management but investigated the way in which partnerships elsewhere in the country had been formed. Accordingly, four study visits were in the process of being arranged with public and private sector partnerships, in order that a balanced view could be formed.

Study visits were being considered as follows:

- *Project integra, Hampshire*
- *Partnership in Shropshire*
- *Partnership in Reading*
- *North East London Waste Partnership.*

Some study visits may be of two days duration and in order to spread the workload it would be proposed that two Members from each Council would be involved in each study visit. The timeframe for completion of the visits would be two to three months.

At the conclusion of the study visits, all of the Members would meet to share experiences. This would lead to the production of a report which would be presented to each authority's Cabinet.

The outcome of the study visits would be to identify whether it was possible for four authorities to form a partnership to procure a solution to waste management.

Members were advised that, whilst the bulk of the administrative support would be provided by staff of Cardiff Council, some support would be required of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Improvement and Development Team and Democratic Services Section.

Members were aware that, in considering the approach from Cardiff Council, the timescale of Cardiff's initiative was similar to the review that the Task and Finish Group had been charged with undertaking, namely

- *recycling and composting targets*
- *waste minimisation*
- *education and awareness raising (including schools)*

and it was recognised that it would not be possible to undertake both reviews at the same time.

Discussions ensued on the proposal of Cardiff Council, whereupon it was

RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T the invitation of Cardiff and Newport Councils for this Council to join the Joint Scrutiny Committee investigating the possibility of a partnership for residual waste treatment and disposal be accepted.

(2) T H A T the Task and Finish Group review of

- *recycling and composting targets*
- *waste minimisation*
- *education and awareness raising (including schools)*

be deferred.

(c) Overview of Waste Awareness Work -

Members received an overview of the waste awareness work undertaken by the Council, including

- *the team*
- *what we do*
- *how we do it.*

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the overview be noted and that Members of the Task and Finish Group complete a waste diary for 3 weeks.

RECOMMENDED – THAT the report be accepted, and that the deferral of the recycling and waste management scrutiny review to allow full participation in the more time-sensitive joint working arrangement on future waste management procurement be approved.

561 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT MONITORING – SECOND QUARTER (DEER) –

Each Head of Service presented the second quarter (April – September, 2006) statistics relating to his respective service area. The report contained details of PI performance and, where performance had not reached target, the corrective action required to meet that target was accepted in each instance. The report relating to Economic Development and Leisure also contained details as to those PIs removed from the original Service Plan and due for deletion. Each Head of Service outlined matters of particular interest, during the course of which further information / reports / presentations were requested on various matters including the following:

Building and Vehicle Services

- IT system and interactive website;
- response time to alarm activations at Council buildings.

Economic Development and Leisure

- breakdown of customer type/use at Leisure Centres;
- number of actual enquiries as opposed to web hits in respect of tourist information;
- information on retail vacancy rates based on the geographical area within the Vale and the type of retail unit available;
- cost of undertaking pedestrian footfall survey in town centres other than Barry.

Planning and Transportation

- breakdown of data collected in respect of PLA/006 and PLA/007 (housing units).

Congratulations were offered to the Heads of Building and Vehicle Services and Economic Development and Leisure and their staff for their recent achievements in terms of awards and/or accreditations. All Heads of Service were then notified that the Improvement and Development Team would be undertaking random sampling of the information contained within the 3rd Quarter Performance Management report to ensure all relevant information was included.

Following further consideration of the above and related matters, it was

RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the position in respect of second quarter monitoring for the Directorate of Environmental and Economic Regeneration be noted.
- (2) T H A T, once collection had begun, consideration of the information to be extrapolated from PLA/006 and PLA/007 be referred to the Housing Sub-Committee.

562 VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) –
ADOPTION OF DELIVERY AGREEMENT AND COMMENCEMENT OF
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING EXERCISE (DEER) -

Cabinet had, on 8th November, 2006 resolved, inter alia, that the adoption and publication of the Delivery Agreement be noted and made available on request free of charge (Min. No. C2745). The Planning Committee had subsequently supported those resolutions (Min. No. 522).

Having regard to the previous discussions on the matter, and to the contents of the report and subsequent discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the report be noted and the recommendations of Cabinet upheld.

563 INITIAL REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2007/08 (DFICTP) –

The Council's budget was determined largely by the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) set by the WAG, the provisional settlement having been announced in late October, 2006. SSA (Standing Spending Assessment) represented WAG's view of the resources needed and its primary use was to allocate RSG to local authorities. For 2007/08, this Council's provisional SSA had been notified as £181,045,000, a headline increase of 5.8% over the unadjusted 2006/07 figure. The Council had been provisionally advised that, for 2007/08, it would receive from RSG of £107,041,000 and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) of £29,117,000. Together, those sums constituted the Council's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) and represented an increase of 5.2% over that received for 2006/07 and was net of an assumed 1% efficiency saving. WAG had also announced that the Council could provisionally continue to receive a Deprivation Grant of only £167,000 and a Performance Grant of £1,239,000. Confirmation of the continuation and/or amounts receivable in the form of other specific and special grants had yet to be received.

As regards the revised estimates for 2006/07, details were submitted of the necessary amendments to the original estimate – which related to asset rents and recharges – it being noted that there would be no overall effect on the net budget of the Council. It was also noted that the anticipated deficit on Leisure

Management of £150,000 and on Building Maintenance Trading Account) of £150,000 would be offset by an underspend within the Directorate.

Cabinet had approved the Budget Strategy and Timetable for 2007/08 in July, 2006 as part of the 2006/07 – 2009/10 Medium Term Financial Plan (Min. No. C2575). In brief, that strategy required services to establish a baseline by preparing initial revenue budgets for next year based on the cost of providing the current level of service and approved policy decisions. Attention was also drawn therein to the potential impact of increases to budgets on the Council's freedom to allocate resources to priorities during the following budget cycle. Further, since the eventual level of RSG settlement would be influenced by WAG expectations for efficiency savings, services had been asked to identify any burgeoning revenue cost pressures. A summary of the overall base budget for 2007/08 was appended to the report.

It was reported that inflation amounted to £0.869m. of which £244,000 related to pay awards and £625,000 for general price increases. Committed growth was £0.257m. made up as follows:

- Economic Development and Leisure – loss of income to the Council resulting from the sale of Vale Workshops (£102,000) and the cost of accommodation at the Town Hall/Library (£5,000)
- Visible Services - £150,000 for landfill tax costs.

A list of 2007/08 cost pressures as identified by Services amounting to almost £1.6m. was appended to the report. The view was expressed that it would be useful to know the views of the Director in relation to those cost pressures if any prioritisation of need was to be undertaken. Reference was made, nevertheless, to the desirability of ensuring funding for the following matters within the Planning and Transportation Division:

- £73k. - staffing costs required as part of the Development Control restructure and lost income;
- £60k. - to ensure compliance with statutory obligations (schools transport) and the procurement of better buses;
- £5k. - to facilitate the appointment of consultants to undertake a survey of Old Place, Llantwit Major to secure 80% grant from CADW.

Further reports were requested in respect of the following matters identified in the analysis of reserves, namely the Vale of Glamorgan Business Club and the EER Events Fund.

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the initial revenue budget proposals be noted and the above comments referred to the Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) and thence, where deemed appropriate, to Cabinet.

564 INITIAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2007/08 (DFICTP) -

Committee was made aware of the progress on the 2006/07 Capital Programme for the period ended 31st October, 2006 and received the initial capital proposals for 2007/08. As regards the 2006/07 Capital Programme, it was proposed that no reduction be made to the budget in respect of the Marcross cesspits scheme (which currently remained contractually uncommitted).

Attention then focused on the 2007/08 Capital Programme. WAG had announced the provisional allocation for 2007/08 as £8,175,000 which represented a 3.77% increase over the current year. In addition to WAG funding, the Council would finance part of the Capital programme from its own resources – further details of which were contained in the report. The indicative 2007/08 Economy and Environment Capital Programme was shown as Appendix B to the report. An indicative asset renewal budget of £800,000 had been included for Visible Services and £150,000 for Leisure Services, which constituted an un-earmarked general provision. It was noted that the current budget of £41,000 included in the current year's budget for ventilation works at Barry Leisure Centre was insufficient for the purpose and that it was proposed, therefore, that £49,000 be allocated in 2007/08 from the Leisure Asset Renewal budget.

Due to the shortage of capital funding, only those schemes identified as priority 1 and 2 schemes by the Corporate Asset Management Group had been included in the indicative capital programme. Included in the new bids were works that were required of previous planning applications. To avoid committing the Council to future expenditure, it was proposed that bids for all schemes include all costs. It was proposed that those bids which referred to schemes which would be 100% grant funded (namely, Central Station Land Purchase - £ 1,400,000 and Safety Cameras - £50,000) be not included in the programme at this stage. It was further proposed that the following two bids which related to the required match funding for applications submitted to WAG for Physical Regeneration Fund (PRF) grant be included in the programme if the bids were successful, namely £757,000 for the Chapter Arts Centre 2: Enveloping of the Hydraulic Pumphouse scheme and £104,000 for the Penarth Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan scheme.

Consideration then focused on the indicative Capital Programme (Appendix B) and discussion ensued on the "unsuccessful" capital bids as listed in Appendix C. Particular reference was made to the

- Priority 6 awarded to
 - (i) the pedestrian access works at Cwm Colhuw, Llantwit Major; and
 - (ii) the installation of a customer information screen at Dingle Road Station, Penarth;

- Priority 4 awarded to
 - (i) highways works at Llantwit Major;
 - (ii) the refurbishment of public conveniences (in respect of the need to make them DDA compliant); and
 - (iii) the Cross Common Road bridge replacement;
- Priority 3 awarded to
 - (i) the installation of Pay & Display machines at Barry Island car park; and
 - (ii) the erection of either a large or medium size wind turbine at the Alps.

In respect of the Pay & Display machines, attention was drawn to the estimated pay back time of just two years and, in respect of the wind turbine scheme, the estimated revenue savings that would accrue following the initial capital outlay. As regards the highways work scheme at Llantwit Major, it was noted that this Committee had requested its re-prioritisation to Priority 1 in the previous year's budget round on the grounds of health and safety (Minute No. 609); the Committee, once again, considered that this scheme should be afforded Priority 1. Attention was drawn to the potential high risk to the Council of failure to undertake the scheme to refurbish public conveniences to make them DDA compliant. Disappointment was expressed that the Cross Common Road bridge replacement scheme would not be progressed in the current year given the unsatisfactory state of the structure. In order to expedite the installation of a customer information screen at the Dingle Road Station, it was agreed that Arriva Trains Wales should be urged to indicate the level of their financial contribution towards the scheme in order that consideration could be given at a later stage to the allocation required to be made by the Council. Consideration was then given to ways of achieving the pedestrian access works at Cwm Colhuw given the level of local concern and the potential benefits of the scheme to encouraging tourism. It was accepted that the costs as put forward in the bid had been difficult to quantify since it would first be necessary to undertake investigative works in order to identify the most effective solution. The suggestion that funding be found initially for just the investigative works was subsequently accepted.

After further discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the Capital Monitoring report for the period ended 31st October, 2006, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the highways work scheme at Llantwit Major be re-prioritised to Priority 1 on the grounds of health and safety.
- (3) T H A T the Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration ascertain the level of funding to be contributed by Arriva Trains Wales towards the installation of a customer information screen at Dingle Road Station in

order that further consideration could be given at a later date to the level of funding required by this Council to ensure the implementation of the scheme.

(4) T H A T a further report relating to the schemes in respect of the installation of a wind turbine at the Alps, and the cost effectiveness of the proposals, be submitted to a future meeting.

(5) T H A T funding to commission consultants with the necessary experience to undertake an investigation into the pedestrian access works scheme at Cwm Colhuw be made available from the Asset Renewal Budget.

(6) T H A T the above recommendations be referred to the Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) and thence, where deemed appropriate, to Cabinet.

(Note: Councillor A.J. Readman spoke on the above matter with the consent of the Committee).