

## COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Vice-Chair in the Chair); Councillors A. Asbrey, R.M. Birch, S. Campbell, S.J. Haines, N.P. Hodges, S.D. Perkes and R.R. Thomas.

Representing Town and Community Councils: S. Hodges (Barry Town Council), G. Thomas (Llantwit Major Town Council), R. Cox (Substitute) (Penarth Town Council), J. Radcliffe (Ewenny Community Council), H. Osbourne (Llancafán Community Council), Dr. M. Misra (Substitute) (Llandough Community Council), J. Shaw (Llandow Community Council), S. Bonnar (Llanfair Community Council), M. Narusberg (Llanmaes Community Council), P. Summers (Penllyn Community Council), S.M. Toker (Substitute) (St Athan Community Council), T. Partridge (St. Donats Community Council), I. Perry (St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council), N. Parry (Sully and Lavernock Community Council), C. Hawkins (Wick Community Council).

Also present: Councillor E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### 1019 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Vice-Chair read the following statements:

1) “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

2) “I suspect all Members of the Committee will by now have seen the report published on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> April by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales into the review of the Vale of Glamorgan. Given the timescales, it has clearly not been possible to bring a report to this Committee meeting as the papers were produced and circulated well in advance of the publication of the Boundary Commission report.

I do know that the Vale Council will be reporting the matter to the Vale’s Full Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April and the Chief Executive assures me that one of the recommendations will be that all Town and Community Council Clerks have sight of that report.

I am also aware that there will be significant interest in the matter so what I propose is that we seek to hold a special meeting of this Committee as soon as possible so that all Members can have an opportunity to consider and debate it.

I am mindful that any additional representations should be submitted by no later than six weeks from Tuesday (the publication of the report) and hence time is of the essence, so what I would do is encourage any Town or Community Council that wishes to make additional representations to do so, directly to Welsh Government, as the matter is now in the hands of the relevant Minister – Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning. Details can be found in the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission report or via the Welsh government website.”

#### 1020 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors S.M. Hanks (Chair), W. Gilligan and J. Lynch-Wilson, H.M. Payne, and M. Cuddy (Penarth Town Council), B. Morris (Colwinston Community Council), C. Hadley (Substitute) Colwinston Community Council), P. Carreyett (Llandough Community Council) and A. Thomas (Welsh St. Donats Community Council).

#### 1021 MINUTES –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

#### 1022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 1023 SOUTH WALES POLICE SERVICE -

Inspector Childs apprised the Committee on the following community initiatives and policing matters for the Vale of Glamorgan area since their last update provided to the Committee in January 2024 as follows:

- Several Individuals had been arrested in relation to: breaching a criminal behaviour order for keeping horses, recruitment of juveniles to carry out drug trafficking, cannabis possession, repeated street robbery offences resulting in the application of a criminal behaviour order, dangerous driving, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence, knife crime incidents, intimidation, robbery and for the supply of class A drugs.
- In relation to the ‘What-Three-Word’ initiative along the Vale of Glamorgan coastline, signage had now been implemented that had proven particularly useful in guiding emergency services to exact locations of individuals in distress.

- South Wales Police were monitoring and gathering intelligence on a daily basis in relation to a planned protest at East Camp in St. Athan on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 following an original social media post by Patriotic Wales, a pro military organisation, that had since been taken down but gained traction with far right groups.
- Relatively peaceful protests had also taken place at the office of MP Alun Cairns and officers were investigating graffiti which had recently appeared outside the office which was seemingly related to the ongoing political landscape and conflict taking place in Gaza at present.

Following the Inspector's presentation, Councillor Asbrey began debate on the matter by informing the Inspector that Dinas Powys Community Council had had difficulty obtaining access to CCTV camera footage of the playground on Caerleon Road following regular acts of vandalism and queried whether there were any additional efforts that the Community Council could take to access footage to prevent further acts of vandalism. To which, Inspector Childs advised that they would liaise with the Penarth Neighbourhood Policing team, headed by Inspector Abbie Biddle, to investigate the matter further and respond directly to the Community Council.

The representatives for St. Athan Community Council and Llanfair Community Council then advised that there had been a lack of PCSO attendance at recent Community Council meetings and, although a short-written report had been provided, there had been no physical officer attendance as preferred. In response, Inspector Childs advised that given the large amount of Community Council meetings taking place across the Vale of Glamorgan, it would not be possible for officers to attend every meeting however, it was appreciated when Community Councils informed the Force of their upcoming meetings so best efforts could be made for officers to attend. The Inspector also offered to inform the relevant PCSOs for the Community Council areas of the comments raised by the Committee.

As a supplementary comment, the representative for Llanfair Community Council then added that, in relation to the protest highlighted by the Inspector in the St. Athan area, the Llantwit Major community had responded extremely well in response to historical protests in the Llantwit Major area as part of the "love Llantwit" community initiative and therefore recruiting the support of the local community could be very effective to dissipate any unwelcomed protests. The Inspector agreed with the representative's suggestion and advised that the Force would engage with the St. Athan community to ensure that the local community had a voice on the matter. The Force would also engage and continue partnership working within the local schools to maintain channels of communication with the local community.

The representative for St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council then advised that there had been a lot of unreported crimes within the St. Nicholas with Bonvilston area and therefore queried what the consequences were if crimes were not reported. To which, Inspector Childs advised that it was not uncommon for lower level crimes to not be reported by members of the public as individuals felt that it was not worth reporting. However, the Inspector encouraged all residents of

the Vale of Glamorgan to sign up to the South Wales Listens initiative which provided members of the public with the opportunity to tell South Wales Police of matters in their local community if not formally reported. This would help the Force to highlight any patterns within the area.

In response, the representative for St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council thanked the Inspector for informing the Committee about the South Wales Listens initiative and added that within their Community Council area there had been issues experienced with rogue traders involving threats and also noise disturbance due to late night working. To which, Inspector Childs advised that rogue trading was taken very seriously by South Wales Police and the Force worked closely in partnership with Trading Standards. Members of the public were strongly encouraged to report any incidences of rogue trading to the Police via the use of 101 or South Wales Listens, however for more serious or physical threats via 999. The Force continued to look and develop other ways of engaging with members of the public.

Councillor Campbell then reiterated a point previously made that the Rhoose area did not have a Community Council and therefore would be grateful to receive monthly reports from South Wales Police as per other Community Councils. To which, the Inspector advised that meetings with the Rhoose Community Councillors did take place where necessary but no formal reports were provided and that the Rhoose area was covered by the Llantwit Policing Team who the Inspector would liaise with following the meeting. The Force was aware of the area not having a Community Council but would continue to work with Elected Members in the area to maintain channels of communication and facilitate any community work taking place.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Inspector Childs for his comprehensive presentation and suggested that information in relation to the South Wales Listens initiative be circulated to all Committee Members via the Democratic Services Officer to help further promote the initiative.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

AGREED – T H A T Inspector Childs be thanked for their time and verbal update.

#### 1024 SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE –

Mr. Treherne, Group Manager, apprised the Committee on the following matters in relation to the Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan areas since their last update was provided to the Committee (via email post the January 2024 meeting) as follows:

- There had been a 37% decrease, 239 – 149 (-90) in the total number of fires for the Vale of Glamorgan area for the same quarter January – April in comparison to 2023.
- Out of the 37% decrease, accidental fires had accounted for 44% of all fires that the Service attended and 56% were deliberate.

- Through data mapping profiles, data in relation to demographics of instances was as follows:
  - 13 deliberate fires were responded to in the Barry area with 4 of those relating to vehicle fires.
  - 20 accidental fires had taken place in the Barry area and 9 of those were related to cooking in residential dwellings and 1 in a non-residential dwelling, cause unknown.
  - 11 deliberate fires were responded to in the Ogmore Vale area, 2 of which were caused by refuse and 9 fly-tipping refuse.
  - 2 deliberate fires in Llantwit Major, 1 related to an outdoor structure i.e. post box and 1 was due to fly-tipping.
  - 7 dwelling fires in Llantwit Major.
  - 4 deliberate fires in the Penarth area, 1 vehicle fire, 2 refuse and 1 grass.
  - 5 accidental fires in the Penarth area.
  - 3 deliberate fires in Cowbridge, all related to grass fires.
  - 4 accidental fires in the Cowbridge area.
- The number of false alarms across the whole of the Vale of Glamorgan area had increased for the quarter from 410 in 2023 to 439 in 2024.
- Fire crews were being encouraged to report instances of fly-tipping as soon as waste was identified, via an app that identified location co-ordinates and photographs, that automatically reported the instances of fly-tipping to the Local Authority for removal. This limited opportunity for individuals to set fire to fly-tipping waste, to avoid prosecution, which was accounting for a rise in fly-tipping fires for the service.
- Due to poor weather for the time of year, the service had seen an ease in grass fires but efforts were being made to prepare for a spike in grass fires in the May academic Half-Term period.
- There had been 4 water rescues involving the service for the quarter which was the same as 2023 but the service was focusing on water awareness safety because it had more water fatalities in the last 12 months than it had fire fatalities.

Following the Group Manager's presentation, the Chair thanked the officer for their comprehensive presentation and noted, with interest, the varying areas of work the Fire Service supported and that the Service was not just tackling fires.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

AGREED – T H A T Group Manager Treherne be thanked for their time and verbal update.

## 1025 LOCAL TRANSPORT PROVISION (REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION) –

The Operational Manager for Transport Services presented the response report, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the past, present, and future aspects of local bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan following a request for consideration received from Penarth Town Council.

Due to the uncertain situation of the bus network and funding it was recommended a report be compiled on the bus network situation in the Vale of Glamorgan area as a whole which could form part of further discussion around public transport.

Through a series of supporting PowerPoint slides, the Officer apprised the Committee on the following aspects:

- past historical aspects such as the deregulation of bus services under Transport Act 1985;
- the role the Council had in supporting and monitoring the overall commercial network;
- a summary of current services provided and the recent regional tender exercise under Welsh Government's 'Bus Network Fund,' and information on future developments and plans of Welsh Government.

The same information had also been presented to the Vale of Glamorgan Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee with comprehensive detail set out with in the Committee papers.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Chair invited the substitute representative for Penarth Town Council to address the Committee in the first instance. To which, the representative began by advising that although Penarth Town Council had submitted the Request for Consideration, the Town Council was well aware that the change in bus services affected the Vale of Glamorgan area as a whole and was well aware of the current economic climate that the Vale of Glamorgan Council was responding to.

That being said, Penarth Town Council was of the opinion that funds needed to be used wisely following community consultation and added that Penarth Town Council had written to the Managing Director of Cardiff Bus but had yet to receive a response. There was a call for additional co-ordination and stability for bus services going forward that met the criteria set out within the Equalities Act that the Local Authority was obligated to adhere to.

The representative then requested that a caption be displayed from the UK Government's leaflet in relation to the economic duty clause which required the Council to ensure that those individuals who were less well-off were not disadvantaged compared to others. The point about the Equality Act came in two parts, first of all there was a requirement for organisations such as the Vale of Glamorgan Council to undertake an impact assessment for making or allowing changes to services and secondly, meeting the clause called the Socio-Economic Duty. The caption demonstrated the exact situation the Vale of Glamorgan area was facing when it lost the No. 7 bus service route and the majority of bus services to Llandough Hospital and Cardiff shopping areas. There were also difficulties for individuals getting to and from Barry Hospital and, if there had been more community consultation, the effect of the recent changes may have been spotted and dealt with differently.

There used to be a free bus service from Cardiff Bay to Llandough Hospital funded by the University Health Board, however that service had now ceased and

was originally instated to support with parking problems at Llandough Hospital. The service should be reinstated via Penarth with the cost shared which would then become affordable for individuals to use on a half hourly basis. Waiting six months to resolve that particular service would do a lot of harm and individuals would start to change their habits which would then be very difficult to revert back from as well as a lot of future revenue to the bus companies being lost which would then result in a higher demand for funding from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

In conclusion, the representative proposed that public meetings be arranged in various locations across the Vale of Glamorgan area for residents, bus companies, the Health Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Council to come together and have an amicable discussion about the current bus service problems.

In response, the Operational Manager for Transport Services advised that it was previously agreed across the South East Wales region that Councils would tender bus services as they originally were and the service 7 route, as mentioned by the representative of Penarth Town Council, was tendered by the Cardiff Council Authority. Unfortunately, the Cardiff Authority did not continue to tender the service and therefore the Vale of Glamorgan Council was currently in talks with Cardiff Council following discussions with both the Health Board and Cardiff Bus Company to try and get the service 7 reintroduced. A meeting was scheduled in the near future to look at how the service could be reinstated and also how quickly the service could be back up and running.

The Officer then addressed the matter of consultation on bus services and advised that, due to the uncertainty around funding of the services, changes had taken place extremely quickly and often on a last-minute basis. Therefore, there had not been enough time to try and arrange a comprehensive public consultation. Ultimately, the end goal through Welsh Government instruction would be the franchising model and consultation would be required to take place at that time. However, the Vale of Glamorgan transport section was open to additional consultation above the feedback already recorded via the Vale public opinion survey.

The representative for St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council then asked what role the Town and Community Councils could play to increase the use of buses and to ensure that Town and Community Councils were considered as partners and not just being informed at the end of a decision process. In response, the Officer advised that Town and Community Councils were considered as stakeholders on the matter and would be included in future consultation engagement. The quicker the Vale of Glamorgan was able to implement the franchise in the future, the more control it would have over the services, and the Vale of Glamorgan Council was currently considering where the Welsh Government reform would take future works.

In response to Councillor Campbell's supplementary question as to who was now answerable for the bus services, the Officer advised that the Vale of Glamorgan's

transport team was now currently answerable as the majority of services in the Vale of Glamorgan were fully contracted.

In response to a question raised by the representative from Llandow Community Council, in relation to any impacts on the 321 bus service, the Operational Manager advised that the 321 service was the same and was expected to run as it had previously.

Picking up on comments raised by the Penarth Town Council representative in relation to consultation, the Chair asked the officer for further information in relation to the next steps for franchising. To which, the Officer advised that the timeline currently provided by Welsh Government was for franchising to take place by 2026-28 however the more immediate issue for the Vale of Glamorgan Council was currently ascertaining how services would be funded for the next financial year. Therefore, the Vale of Glamorgan Council was not currently able to confirm how services would be funded past March 2025.

Councillor Campbell then advised that she was in attendance at the recent Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, when the report was also considered, and that a report was requested to be returned to the Scrutiny Committee in six months' time and suggested that the same be made for the Community Liaison Committee. To which, the Chair seconded the Councillor's suggestion and added that the Chief Executive from Cardiff Bus Services also be requested to attend the meeting in six months' time.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T the response report be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further update report on bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan be presented to Committee in six months' time, with an invitation extended to the Chief Executive of Cardiff Bus Services to attend the same Committee meeting.

Reason for decision

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the response report on the past, present, and future aspects of local bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan following a request for consideration from Penarth Town Council.
- (2) To provide further information and context for bus services available within the Vale of Glamorgan at that time.

1026 RESHAPING: THE NEXT PHASE FOR TRANSFORMATION (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 was presented by the Director of Corporate Resources.



The Cabinet report set out proposals for the next phase of the Council's transformation programme, Reshaping. Reshaping Services was the transformational change programme launched in 2015 and which enabled the Council to mitigate the impact of austerity whilst delivering significant financial savings.

The Director advised that with a significant financial challenge facing the Council in the medium-term, it was now time for Reshaping to be refocused and the report set out a framework and early ideas for progressing transformational change under five themes of Target Operating Model, Service Transformation, Strengthening Communities, Digital Innovation and Economic Resilience.

The report had been referred to Committee as part of a process of engagement with various Council Committees, Forums and Networks and to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the development of the Programme.

Cabinet had recently considered, and approved work being undertaken to strengthen Vale of Glamorgan communities in response to a series of national Audit Wales reports on tackling poverty and a local report on how the Council worked with the third sector. The Council had engaged Cwmpas to work collaboratively on a programme of engagement with Council officers, Elected Members, the Third Sector, Town and Community Councils and social enterprises to address the recommendations in the reports but also to assist in the development of the new Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan for 2025-2030, a revised Town and Community Council Charter and a new Voluntary Sector Compact.

The Director then took the opportunity to thank those Town and Community Councils that had engaged with Cwmpas work to date and advised that the work would not only help with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis but would inform work across all of the Council's critical challenges as set out in its Annual Delivery Plan. A report on the Strengthening Communities theme work undertaken with Cwmpas would be brought back to the Committee in the future.

Following the Director's presentation, Councillor Campbell began debate on the matter by noting that community transfers had previously taken place in relation to bowls clubs and libraries and queried whether future community transfers would be following a similar example going forward. To which, the Director advised that the Council would be looking to do more around community transfers in terms of single use sports facilities, as well as the operation of those kinds of assets via community groups who had a single interest in the asset. The Council would also be looking at replicating asset transfers in terms of other single use sports facilities, for example playing facilities, as well as including the potential around community centres and other localised assets. There were facilities that, as a Local Authority, the Vale of Glamorgan would want to see continuing to be operated but would not be in a position to do so directly and therefore would look to work with other smaller organisations to do so, with the Council being a facilitator and an enabler.

The representative for Barry Town Council then advised that the Town Council had had previous experience with regards to community asset transfers, as well as with other Reshaping Services projects, and noted the Town Council's frustrations over the length of time it had taken to resolve paperwork and legal aspects in relation to asset transfers. Therefore, the representative questioned that, if Community Councils were to take on more Vale of Glamorgan services, would the process be streamlined to support the transfer process? In response, the Director advised that the representative's comments were consistent with what the Vale Council had heard from other Town and Community Council colleagues in terms of the length of time it had taken to follow the community asset transfer process. The matter was something that Councillor Wilson, as Cabinet portfolio holder, had asked officers to look into to ensure that a balance was achieved between the deal taking place and the continued operation of the service. The process had to be one that was reasonable and viable but not to the detriment of spending too much time on the deal that it detracted from delivering on the Council's commitments.

The representative for St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council then advised that their Community Council was one of the Councils that had tried to engage enthusiastically with community asset transfers previously back in 2018/19, however was disappointed by the lack of opportunity the Community Council had to bid to cut its own grass on the village green and also that there were different parts of the Vale of Glamorgan organisation moving at different speeds. Therefore, the representative asked whether there would be a central officer who could push efforts along and ensure that Town and Community Councils could be more involved and deliver more services to encourage local improvement. In response, the Director advised that when community asset transfers were discussed prior to the Covid 19 national pandemic, discussions were being had on the basis of the Local Authority handing over services to the Town and Community Councils and working on a relationship of equals where Town and Community Councils approached the Local Authority with examples of assets they wished to take on. However, it was fair to say that the financial situation that the Vale of Glamorgan Council now faced had significantly changed since 2018/19 and it was therefore timely to have conversations around the difficult decisions that the Council would inevitably have to take and therefore was in a better position to talk with Town and Community Councils about the level of services the Vale of Glamorgan Council was in a position to provide. This would give Town and Community Councils a better and stronger indication of the type of assets that the Town and Community Council might want to consider working collaboratively with or indeed supplement in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Moving forward, the Director was working very closely with the Council's Strategic Leadership Team to assess how the Leadership Team would collectively ensure that the Council delivered on the reshaping framework and continue to engage with Town and Community Councils to understand the best way to approach discussions going forward.

In conclusion, the Chair of the Committee, who was also the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services, kindly asked if the representative of

St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council could email them regarding grass cutting contracts in the St. Nicholas with Bonvilston area so that the matter may be looked in to further.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T both the Cabinet reference and appended report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the comments of the Committee, as set out within the meeting minute, be referred back to Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for decision

- (1) Having regard to the contents of both the reference and appended report on the next phase of the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping.
- (2) Having regard to discussion held at the meeting.