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## ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.

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

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor B.E. Brooks (Chair); Councillor S. Sivagnanam (Vice-Chair); Councillors V.J. Bailey, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, G. John, MJ.G. Morgan, A.R. Robertson, L.O. Rowlands and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration), P.G. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services).

### 749 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair read the following statement: “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”.

### 750 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 751 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### 752 RURAL ROADS POLICY –

The Operational Manager for Engineering (Neighbourhood Services and Transport) provided a PowerPoint presentation setting out the current arrangements for managing the local road network in accordance with the Council’s statutory duties which were as follows:

- To maintain highway to ensure safe passage as far as reasonably practicable,
- To ensure traffic moves freely and reduce congestion where practicable, and
- Take steps to prevent accidents occurring.

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The Operational Manager referred to the relevant legislation used by the Council to set standards of highway maintenance and to determine investment in highway infrastructure as well as the reviews process for prioritising funding for future safety improvement schemes.

In summary to the presentation, the Operational Manager advised that the management of individual roads within the Vale of Glamorgan was undertaken based on the Council's statutory duties and that the current procedures in place already considered the nature and character of each road. That ensured that the limited capital monies available were allocated appropriately to both the urban and rural networks.

Councillor M. Morgan stated that this matter came out of a meeting of the Community Liaison Committee last year where a Community Council raised the need for a Rural Roads Policy in the Vale. This was referred to Cabinet, who decided that there was no need for a separate Rural Roads Policy because all roads were the same. Councillor Morgan added that pedestrian health and safety on the roads was a common concern raised by Community Councils, so he wanted the Committee to look at what could be done in the future to devise or improve the specific policy for the rural roads so that it's safer for people and road users.

In being asked to respond, the Operational Manager advised that it was fully accept that all roads were different. For example, there were different types of rural lanes and there were different types of urban roads. These all had slightly different characteristics and quirks. Therefore, the Council would try to assess issues on a case-by-case basis. He added that issues on the roads were common to many roads in the Vale, whether that be rural or urban. For example, speeding was an issue in both rural and urban areas, but the residential areas were where most of the issues and concerns were. The Council therefore had measures in place to address these, such as by working with the Police.

In terms of collisions and accidents, the Operational Manager advised that data was collated and assessed, but the Council also look at concerns raised separately with issues dealt with as best the Council could within the limited budget available.

Councillor G. John raised the issue of large quantities of mud on roads, which could in the main be attributed to farming activities and tractors. He also referred to farm trailers not being properly covered when carrying material. This would often lead to large deposits onto roads. In addition, Councillor John raised the issue of the poor condition of rural roads which meant that they were prone to flooding. This also meant that it could be easy for vehicles to aquaplane. These issues needed to be addressed.

In reply, the Operational Manager accepted Councillor John's points as these were health and safety concerns. These represented difficult challenges for the Council, for which there were limited resources available. The drainage of rural roads was a specific issue as the infrastructure was limited to provide positive

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drainage and at many locations fields adjoining the highway were at a higher level and discharged surface water onto the highway compounding the situation.

In being invited to comment, Councillor P. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport) referred to the piloting of 20mph zones in 3 locations in the Vale. These were aimed at changing the behaviours of motorists, and the pilots were appearing to be having a positive impact. The Cabinet Member added that most of the concerns raised by the Committee Members existed in towns as well as rural villages, which was why he stood by the comments of the Operational Manager. He stated that he believed that the Vale's Road Policy was the best that could be offered, which was based on the resources available.

Councillor Morgan commented that people who lived in the rural communities felt that there was a need for a different policy. He recommended for this matter to be referred to Cabinet to ask if it could be considered again as the issues would only become worse.

The Chair, Councillor Brooks, in closing the debate, seconded the recommendation of Councillor Morgan, and she commented that if a separate Policy was not possible, then perhaps the current Policy could be reviewed, based on the concerns of communities in the rural Vale. This was accepted by the Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently, it was

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** Cabinet be requested to revisit their decision not to implement a separate Rural Roads Policy or for the current Policy to be reviewed to reflect road safety concerns raised by residents in the rural Vale.

#### Reason for recommendation

Following views expressed to the Scrutiny Committee regarding road safety in rural parts of Vale relating to the poor condition of parts of the network, the need for better road signage and the importance of addressing high speeds and the impact of heavy vehicles.

#### 753 ACTIVE TRAVEL – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION FOR THE ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK MAP UPDATE 2021 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 was presented by the Group Manager Transport Services. This was to inform of the results of the public consultation on the Council's proposed Active Travel maps, which were submitted to Welsh Government for approval, and a 12-week public consultation on the proposals that took place between the 2<sup>nd</sup> August and 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021, from which 143 responses were received.

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As part of that consultation, the Scrutiny Committee was presented with the proposals on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2021. The Committee had provided a number of viewpoints which were noted by Cabinet (Minute number C703 refers.)

Appendix B was a report compiled by Commonplace on the responses received through their portal. The platform was split across the designated localities, each containing a comment form. The areas with the greatest contributions were Penarth, Barry and Cowbridge. The areas with the lowest engagement were Llantwit Major, Rhoose and Sully. Officer comments to each individual and group were contained within Appendix B.

The Group Manager advised that following the public consultation, 3 amendments had been made to the maps since the Committee saw them last on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2021. These included:

- the addition of the route down to Llantwit Major Beach East;
- Aberthaw had now been included;
- Dingle Park in Penarth added.

It was outlined that these maps were basically a comprehensive plan for the future of Active Travel in the Vale, and only routes on these maps would be eligible for future Welsh Government Active Travel funding.

Welsh Government had been fully briefed throughout the process and had given positive feedback during their consultation. The maps had been submitted to Welsh Government just before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 deadline. However, there was a caveat with the submission relating to the need for the maps to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee before they were given final sign off.

Councillor Robertson commented that a lot of people had experienced issues when attempting to access the maps on the consultation portal. In reply, the Group Manager stated that the issues had been identified and flagged up with Welsh Government and PDF copies of the maps had been made available as an alternative.

Councillor Robertson also stated that he and residents of Dinas Powys were extremely keen and supportive for the progression of the Active Travel route between Dinas Powys and Barry.

Councillor Morgan raised a concern relating to the relatively low response rate when compared to the overall size of the population in the Vale. Councillor Morgan asked how this could be improved and called for the Council to find more ways to engage with the public, such as the sending out of leaflets as one alternative method. In reply, the Group Manager referred to engagement with schools and a message going out via mail to parents. This appeared successful, so maybe there were similar methods with alternative groups and organisations that could be utilised in the future.

Councillor Sivagnanam echoed the points made by Councillor Morgan regarding consultation, and she noted the comments received from the Tourist Board that it

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would have been helpful if they had been communicated with as a way to share and raise awareness of the consultation exercise.

Councillor Sivagnanam referred to concerns raised by residents of the Marina in Penarth stating that these had been looked at. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport advised that they had been out on a number of occasions around the Marina and met a number of residents and a number of people that had interests in the area. The main issue was down to the success of the two cycle routes and the sheer number of people using them, particularly during Covid-19 but also during other times as part of leisure activities. Both of those routes had been flagged under this Active Travel network, but it was recognised that improvement work was needed. To satisfy the residents, the Council had erected signs asking cyclists to dismount where they shouldn't be traveling and to be respectful and courteous to pedestrians.

Councillor John commented on his support for an Active Travel route between Boverton and St. Athan, which could be possible in the future if further funding was available.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport, Councillor King, was then invited to speak and commented on the following:

- He too had some issues when initially accessing the maps, but these appeared to have been resolved after 3 or 4 days.
- In terms of the response rate to consultations, he highlighted that there possibly was a role for Councillors in advising their constituents that they were able to comment on a particular consultation being carried out.
- The success of projects to receive funding was based on the level of public support received during the consultation process.
- The Cardiff City Deal Region had been considering proposals for an Active Travel route from Newport, through Cardiff and linking into Dinas Powys. Therefore, this would be something that the Scrutiny Committee would be asked to consider in the future.
- Network Rail owned a considerable amount of land, which could be utilised for Active Travel.

In being asked to comment, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport referred to the Metro Project which was looking at all modes of transport in the South Wales area, including the Vale of Glamorgan. Therefore, the Active Travel project from Newport would be part of this study. This would be the subject of a future report to the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Brooks, in closing the debate stated that the Committee had raised several good points and suggested for these to be referred to Cabinet. This was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently it was

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee made at the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022, prior to

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Cabinet approving final submission to Welsh Government. The comments of the Scrutiny Committee being:

- For further consideration to be given around how consultation exercises are conducted by the Council in order to attract the views of more members of the public. For example, by asking organisations such as the Tourist Board to help share consultations or by requesting the help and assistance of local Councillors to raise awareness.
- For future consideration to be given for an Active Travel route between Boverton and St. Athan.
- To highlight the Scrutiny Committee's and public support for the Active Travel route proposed between Dinas Powys and Barry.

#### Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

#### 754 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021(DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to advise Committee of the progress relating to revenue and capital expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.

It was reported that the revenue position for 2021/22 would be challenging with the continuing pressure for services both operationally and financially as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. This would impact both as a result of incurring additional expenditure but also from a loss of income. Funding had been provided by Welsh Government to cover some of the issues. It was reported that the Neighbourhood Services and Transport department was currently projected to have an adverse variance of £1.5m against the 2021/22 budget and that this overspend was funded via the Neighbourhood Services and Transport Reserve. An efficiency target for the year had been set at £162k., the capital budget had been set at £24.79m this financial year and the 2021/22 budget had been amended for internal transfers and technical adjustments.

Councillor A. Robertson queried the £141k for the Dinas Powys Flood Resilience Project and queried whether that money was for the survey work on properties affected by flooding. The Operational Manager Engineering (Neighbourhood Services and Transport) confirmed that it was. He added that this would enable the Council to undertake a survey of properties that were expressing an interest. This would then lead to a business case being submitted to Welsh government for funding of implementing the measures on the properties that were interested. At present, letters had been sent out to all or the majority of properties and so far, interest had come back from approximately 80. As it was still early in the process, it was hoped that more people would make contact.

Councillor S. Wiliam queried a capital bid for the Eastern Shelter roof resurfacing on Barry Island. In reply, the Operational Manager advised that there was some concern with the concrete, so some investigatory and exploratory work had been

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carried out. Safety works had been undertaken to remove any loose concrete as far as reasonably practicable and the structure was being monitored but more detailed and permanent concrete repair works were required for which a capital bid had been submitted. It was not yet known whether the capital bid was successful, however monitoring would continue to maintain safety the structure as far as reasonably practicable

Councillor S. Wiliam queried a capital bid for the Eastern Shelter roof resurfacing on Barry Island. In reply, the Operational Manager advised that there was some concern with the concrete, so some investigatory and exploratory work had been carried out. Safety works had been undertaken but more detailed investigation was required. It was planned for this and further repairs to be carried out over the next 6 to 12 months.

There being no further queries, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

755 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING 2021/22 AND UPDATED COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2021/22 (MD) –

The purpose of the report was to report progress on Scrutiny recommendations and to consider the updated Forward Work Programme together with any slippage for 2021/22.

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2021/22 for the Committee's consideration:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Recommendation Tracking October to December 2021 (Appendix A);
- 2nd Quarter Recommendation Tracking July to September 2021 (Appendix B);
- 2020-21 Uncompleted Recommendations (Appendix C);
- 2019-20 Uncompleted Recommendations (Appendix D);
- 2018-19 Uncompleted Recommendations (Appendix E); and
- Updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2021/22 (Appendix F).

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the status of the actions listed in Appendices A to E to the report be agreed.

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(2) T H A T the updated Committee Forward Work Programme Schedule attached at Appendix F be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (2) For consideration and information.