

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY SERVICE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
12TH SEPTEMBER, 2019**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors M.J. Cook
L. Elias
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
G. Paulsen
B. Summers
L.C. Winnett

AND: Managing Director
Corporate Director Community Services &
Regeneration
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Community Services
Service Manager Public Protection
Specialist Environmental Health Officer
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Scrutiny Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received for Councillors C. Meredith, H. McCarthy, P. Baldwin, J.P. Morgan.	

No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins declared an interest in Item No. 10 – Service Review.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 27th June, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>Councillor B. Summers reported that his attendance had been omitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 18TH MARCH, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 27th June, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Waste & Recycling Performance</u> – In response to a question raised by a Member, the Service Manager Community Services confirmed that organisations of CAT facilities had been informed that they were able to request a green waste collection.</p> <p><u>Civil Parking Enforcement: Parking Enforcement Policy</u> – In response to concerns raised by a Member, the Service Manager Public Protection confirmed that the information provided on the Council's website was up to date and explained the procedures for dealing with abandoned vehicles. However, he undertook to provide Members with an update-to-date copy of the Policy.</p> <p>A Member asked whether reports on progress and actions would be submitted to Scrutiny, and the Corporate Director confirmed that monitoring reports would be received.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	<p>Dave Thompson</p>

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISIONS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet in respect of recommendations made by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 27th June, 2019.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>WALES AUDIT OFFICE (WAO) REVIEW – PHASE 1 OF LEISURE SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Commercial which provided feedback on the review undertaken by WAO between June and December 2018 of the Council's approach to the review of Leisure and Culture Services.</p> <p>The WAO representative presented the report and highlighted points contained therein. The review concluded that the Council faced significant challenges to ensure that leisure services are delivered in a sustainable way to meet its residents' needs. The following proposals for improvement were also made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the learning from the current Trust arrangement is considered when establishing a new leisure services arrangement. • Ensuring the Council's programme of service reviews work to realistic project scope and timescales. • Put plans in place to ensure continuity of leisure services and smooth transition and efficient alternative delivery model(s). <p>A Member said he understood that when leisure services transferred to Aneurin Leisure Trust, the assets were retained by the Council, and as a result the Trust found difficulty in accessing external funding.</p> <p>In response the Managing Director said when the Trust was established it was agreed that the buildings property assets required to deliver services would be leased to the Trust to enable them to deliver services, but ownership of the</p>	

buildings remained with the Council.

In response to a question raised by a Member the WAO representative referred to paragraphs 15 & 16 of the report and explained that WAO sought further clarification on the figures detailed in 2 reports submitted to the Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team. Following discussions with colleagues in Resources, the Council clarified that the actual savings/cost avoidance since the establishment of the Trust was £4,211,962, which showed that the financial data provided during the review had been inaccurate.

The Managing Director said it was not unusual for reports to be changed following consideration by the Corporate Leadership Team, and the fact that 2 reports came through in such a short time scale suggested that there had been some change. She said it was important to challenge reports, and in this instance both Resources and the Service Area were content and able to clarify to WAO the savings achieved for the transfer of services to the Trust.

In response to question raised by the Chair, the Chief Officer Commercial went through the current phase of the Leisure and Culture Review as outlined in section 6.1.2 of the report.

A discussion ensued when the Officer confirmed that advice was being sought around the financial and management arrangements of the Trust, and the Authority was working very closely with the Trust and to supporting them with development opportunities. In terms of making decisions, the Officer said this was a significant review, but it was intended to make proposals by the end of the year. However, it was likely that any changes would take a 12 month period to implement.

In terms of the budget issues the Managing Director said since the one-off payment put into the Trust by the Council, the Trust had taken action to reduce costs and the Council had assisted them in that process to ensure a strong financial position moving forward. The Chief Officer Resources was also working closely with the Trust and had gained an improved oversight of their financial performance,

	<p>and this was reported to Committee twice a year, and work had also been undertaken to strengthen contract management arrangements to reduce the risk of a budget pressure on the Council.</p> <p>A Member suggested that the financial performance information be reported on a quarterly basis, and the Managing Director undertook to discuss this with the Chief Officer Resources and the Trust.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the WAO representatives for their attendance.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members scrutinise, support and make comments on the report and attached appendix (Option 1).</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>RENEWAL OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS FOR DOG CONTRL OFFENCES – RESULTS OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Public Protection which provided the findings of the public consultation on the proposed new Public Space Protection Order for dog control offences and the process for their renewal by November 2019.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein. During the public consultation which started on the 6th June, 2019 and ended on the 5th July, 2019, 20 written responses were received from members of the public, The Dogs Trust and Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council. Responses were supportive of the dog fouling aspect of the PSPO, and requests for additional dog fouling bins were also made, and the possibility of providing free dog fouling bags.</p> <p>The Officer said following consideration of the public consultation responses a number of amendments were proposed and these were detailed at section 2.7 of the report. If supported by the Scrutiny Committee, the new PSPO for dog controls would be presented to Council in October.</p>	

	<p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding Brynmawr Welfare Ground and the CAT, the Officer confirmed that no objections had been received from the organisation, other than to request additional signage. He also confirmed that the play area formed part of the site, and this was still subject to a dog exclusion order.</p> <p>A Member welcomed the report, but expressed concern regarding enforcement of dog fouling.</p> <p>The Officer said enforcement was operated on the general principle of problem areas, and he urged Members to contact Officers to report issues and patrols could be arranged. However, he said enforcement of dog fouling was very difficult as the majority of people know it is an offence and were on the 'look-out' for Enforcement Officers. He also reported that there was a high turnover of staff in this area of work and recruitment was challenging.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when Officers clarified points raised by Members.</p> <p>A Member asked whether there was guidance available for reporting incidents, and the Officer explained that they could contact the office and identify an offender, however, the majority of people were reluctant to provide a statement.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members considered and provided comment on the outcome of the public consultation, prior to approval by Council.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 24TH OCTOBER, 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 24th October, 2019.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection reported a delay in the Housing Allocations Policy, and said this would now be submitted at a later date.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the</p>	

	report be accepted as presented.	
No. 10	<p><u>SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Commercial which provided an update on the review of Leisure and Culture Services, and outlined next steps.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members.</p> <p>The Officer also referred to the Member Working Group, and confirmed that visits were being undertaken to understand what works well, and arrangements that may need to be put in place moving forward.</p> <p>In response to question raised by the Chair in relation to feedback from the Working Group, the Officer confirmed that a Member's Briefing Session would be arranged at an appropriate time and this would include feedback from the Member Working Group.</p> <p>In terms of next steps, the Officer referred to section 6.1.2 which outlined actions to be undertaken during Autumn 2019.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority</p>	

	be accepted and Members scrutinised and supported the report and attached appendix.	
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