

Minutes



Liaison Meeting with Community Councils

Date: 23 June 2016

Time: 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Bishton, Goldcliff, Graig, Langstone, Michaelstone-y-Fedw, Penhow, Rogerstone and Wentlooge

In Attendance: Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation), Tracey Brooks (Development Services Manager), Martin Coombes (Snr Operations Manager – Streetscene), Joy Howells (Democratic Services Support Officer)

1 Apologies for Absence

B Miles (Wentloog)

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 March 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2016 were submitted. There were no matters arising.

Agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2016 were approved.

3 Paper-less Planning Consultations

Graig enquired as to whether a direct link could be supplied by the Planning Department in order to view full details of a planning application, including plans. The Development Services Manager explained that by accessing the link contained within the email it did lead to plans but accepted the point that it was sometimes difficult to view plans on computer monitors. Michaelstone-y-Fedw are currently using a laptop and are able to view plans on a screen via a projector but admitted that some of the detail is lost when the plans are enlarged.

The Development Services Manager was pleased to report that IT currently have 3 monitors which they could make available to Community Councils. It was suggested that Councils in close proximity could share a monitor. Community Councils should contact A Jenkins or J Howells if they require a monitor.

Penhow had experienced problems dealing with the scale of the maps. It was agreed that instructions would be sent to them which would enable them to use the measuring tool.

Michaelstone-y-Fedw suggested that the heading of the email be tweaked to include the location of the planning application within the heading of the email. The email was generated by the new system but enquiries would be made as to whether extra details could be included.

Graig reported that a fairly large development had been granted by Monmouthshire County Council in Magor and the development bordered Bishton. There are occasions when neighbouring authorities inform Newport City Council (Newport CC) of developments which abut Newport but not if the application was merely visible from Newport. Community Councils enquired as to whether Newport CC could inform the relevant Community Council if notification of a planning application from a neighbouring authority is received.

Michaelstone-y-Fedw were aware that properties within 100 metres of an application in rural areas were consulted but did not consider this far enough as there could be occasions when an application for something as large as a wind turbine or mast could be viewed by properties further than 100 meters. It was suggested that perhaps the ruling should be re-visited. The Development Services Manager explained that this was the statutory ruling and it would be difficult to draw the line on how far to consult and there was a need to ensure consistency. The Authority were also reliant on Community Councils notifying any parties who would be affected by planning applications.

Enforcement issues were raised by Penhow who queried whether Newport had imposed any fines. This was something that had been discussed with the Head of Law & Regulation. There was the option of issuing injunctions which would be costly but might be the only avenue open if all other routes fail. Some prosecution and enforcements were presently in hand. Wentloog appreciated the problems of enforcement as Newport CC were constantly clearing areas previously occupied by the travelling community only for them to return.

Wentloog raised the issue of one recent development in the Wentloog area of which the Community Council were unaware. The Development Services Manager agreed to look into this and respond.

The Head of Law & Regulation thanked Tracey Brooks for her input into the meeting.

4 **Shared Community Charter**

Bishton enquired whether Newport City Homes were part of the Charter as the Community Council were unaware of recent works being carried out by them in the area. It was confirmed that the Shared Charter was solely between Newport City Council and the Community Councils. As Newport City Homes were not part of it they could not be compelled to engage with Community Councils. It was suggested that Community Councils approach their local ward members to request that a Newport City Homes representative be invited to ward meetings as is currently being done at some ward meetings.

Langstone queried the lines to follow when contacting Newport CC as there were occasions when there was a significant delay in responses to emails. The Head of Law & Regulation suggested that streetscene queries should be directed through the generic Streetscene@newport.gov.uk address as there was a clear audit trail via this system. Complaints should go through the contact centre. He did however suggest that Anne Jenkins & Joy Howells would pass on any queries to the relevant departments. Langstone had recently been informed of some fairly substantial works in the form of an 'aside' remark by a ward councillor. Heads of Departments had been reminded to liaise with Community Councils on relevant matters and this request should have been cascaded down. Heads of Services would once again be reminded of this.

5 **Items Raised by Community Councils**

Rogerstone:

- Had previously identified routes for the Active Travel Plan but had received no feedback on their suggestions. J Howells would take details following the meeting and contact the relevant officer.

- Enquired whether Newport CC had a zero tolerance policy on littering. The Head of Law & Regulation confirmed this was the case and an automatic £60 could be issued by the Community Safety Wardens, however the offence had to be witnessed. Fly tippers could also be prosecuted but once again evidence of the offence would be needed. He suggested that if Community Councils were experiencing a particular hotspot of littering/fly tipping they contact either the Community Safety Manager or Public Protection Manager who may be able to provide patrols by wardens of that area.

Graig:

- Enquired as to the frequency of grass cutting. It now appeared to be less often resulting in very long grass which was left in situ following cutting. This looks very unsightly and gives a negative impression of Newport. The Head of Law & Regulation confirmed that the frequency of maintenance of grass verges was as a result of budget constraints resulting in the number of cuts now reduced to 6 per season. As consultation on next year's budget should begin in around October he encouraged Community Councils to input their comments in that consultation.

Wentloog:

- Apologised for not having submitted their Standards Committee Review questionnaire but they had several queries. In answer to those queries the Head of Law & Regulation confirmed that whilst it was mandatory for elected members to complete Code of Conduct training and Register of Interest forms that was not the case for Community Councillors. Although recommended as good practice it was not imperative although it would be one of the questions asked by the Ombudsman if a community councillor fell foul of the code. It was however necessary for them to complete a form for any Declarations of Interest declared at meetings.

6 Road Maintenance in Rural Areas

Michaelstone-y-Fedw reported the lack of road maintenance in rural areas. Jet patching of potholes was a quick fix but not a permanent repair and roads soon fell back into disrepair after heavy rain. The Streetscene Manager replied that no grant funding had been forthcoming from Welsh Government this year or the previous couple of years. There had been a £1.2m reduction in the budget to Streetscene and therefore jet patching was a speedy option making roads safe and trafficable.

In reply to Michaelstone-y-Fedw's concerns about the maintenance of drains the Streetscene Manager replied that drains in rural areas were inspected annually and gullies cleansed annually. Culverts and gratings are visited more frequently.

Wentloog were concerned at the use of the coastal road by very heavy vehicles. Aldi would soon have their distribution centre in situ which would result in very heavy vehicles using the road on a regular basis and there appeared to be no traffic plan in place. Could a weight restriction be put on the road? The road is presently unclassified so no weight restriction could be imposed. However the Streetscene Manager would take this matter back to the traffic team to see if a review can be carried out.

Bishton reported a large storage yard on the outskirts of Bishton for Network Rail. This is likely to result in road use by heavy vehicles in the area. Again the question of a traffic management plan for the facility was made. In an effort to keep disruption to a minimum Network Rail do liaise with Newport CC on a regular basis. Representatives of Network Rail had also attended several ward meetings to give updates. The Streetscene Manager agreed to get an update on the position from Network Rail and forward to A Jenkins and J Howells for them to send on to the Community Council.

In answer to queries it was confirmed that Community Councils should email streetscene@newport.gov.uk to report any issues as there was then no fear of reports going

astray. Unfortunately Streetscene had lost a lot of personnel and sometimes issues reported direct to staff members could get overlooked if that person left the authority.

The Head of Law & Regulation thanked the Martin Coombes Manager for attending the meeting.

With no further business to discuss the meeting ended.

The next meeting is scheduled for 22 September 2016