

Draft Minutes

Liaison Meeting with Community Councillors

Date: 24th March 2022

Time: 6:00pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present: G. Price (Head of Law and Regulation (Chair), Pamela Tasker (Governance Support Officer), Chris Roberts (Marshfield), Julie Foster (Wentlooge), Cath Davies (Marshfield), John Davies (Bishton), Councillor Yvonne Forsey (Rogerstone)

Emma Wakeham (Senior Policy & Partnership Officer)

1. Apologies

Brian Miles Wentlooge Community Council
Paul Gregory Graig Community Council
Mandy George Llanwern Community Council

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting: 9 December 2021

Agreed:

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting of the 9 December 2021 were a true record.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Climate Change

This agenda item on Climate Change was presented to the meeting by Emma Wakeham (Senior Policy & Partnership Officer).

Main points:

The Senior Policy & Partnership Officer stated that they had lead on developing the Climate Change Plan for Newport City Council which was published earlier this month.

- The first thing that was considered was what kind of scope was needed for the plan. Two areas were decided which was reaching net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030 and to review the services we provide to ensure they supported the city's journey to net zero and adaptation to climate change.

- Welsh Government has set out reporting guidance on working on carbon emissions as an organisation, so this was used to baseline carbon emissions.
- A graph showed the councils Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions- Scope 1 emissions were from sources owned by the Council. Scope 2 emissions from purchased electricity and heating.
- Scope 3 were substantial but not directly owned or controlled by Newport City Council which was the supply chain, goods we've purchased, water we consume and business travel.
- When baselining was completed, it showed how emissions were split up.
- Once we knew the organisations emissions the areas of focus were then considered, and the Welsh Government framework was used- A Route Map to Public Sector to help decide this.
- From this framework 6 different themes were selected –

Theme 1: Organisational Culture & Leadership

Theme 2: Our Buildings

Theme 3: Our Land

Theme 4: Transport & Mobility

Theme 5: The Goods & Services we Procure

Theme 6: Our Wider Role

-Theme 2-5 were directly related to carbon emissions and theme 1 and 6 considered the wider role of the Council and the impact on the city as a whole.

- Under theme 1 training and guidance for staff and elected members was considered.

-Theme 2 thought about renewable heat and reducing natural gas, theme 3 considered how land was managed, meadow planting using nature-based solutions.

- Theme 4 considered business commuting and fleet with active travel being encouraged.

-Theme 5 considered how the Council needed to get a better understanding of carbon emissions while making decisions on purchasing goods and services.

- Theme 6 considered energy planning across the city and working with partners and communities.

Copies of the plan could be found in the links on the presentation and each theme was explored with time scales etc and how they will be delivered.

The Welsh Government Energy Service provide a dedicated development manager and they support public sector and community enterprises to reduce carbon emissions and energy. They were happy to provide advice in procurement advice and were looking for the most impactful projects on energy and carbon emissions.

There were also opportunities around funding and there was an event on the 31 March 2022- Meet the Funders Climate Change Event where community councils could meet funders.

Questions:

The Wentlooge representative enquired about House Warm schemes and whether they come under this topic where government grants were given to make homes more energy efficient and in some areas some people have had their houses improved as their houses were older e.g., older farmhouses. These were visible on some other Councils websites, but they did not see anything similar for Newport as there was nothing on the website.

The Senior Policy & Partnership Officer confirmed that Welsh Government did have a Warm Homes Programme which was a national scheme but there were certain eligibility criteria such as receiving certain benefits or being on a low income. The other scheme that was being developed was a Local Area Energy Plan looking at renewable energy across the city such as fuel poverty, but this was still in development and would take a few months.

The Wentlooge representative commented that the other schemes they had seen in terms of eligibility were not means tested and the eligibility was the age of the property.

The Senior Policy & Partnership Officer confirmed that there were more funding streams coming up as the Cardiff Capital Region were looking to bring a scheme in for the whole of the Cardiff Capital Region and those details would then be sent on to the community councils. The Wentlooge representative also agreed to send the Senior Policy & Partnership Officer details of the schemes she had seen.

The Bishton representative stated that they had completed their carbon literacy training and they stated that most properties were not suitable due to the lack of insulation so would not suit ground force heat pumps and commented as to whether building regulations would change so they would be suitable and would future houses be built with solar panels.

The Senior Policy & Partnership Officer stated that in relation to air source ground pumps a rating of C and above was needed to be effective. Some houses were now being built with air source heat pumps already installed but this was not in the Newport area. Some houses were already in the right regulation, but a lot of older properties would need a lot of retro fitting to have heat pumps installed. The Senior Policy & Partnership Officer stated that they did not know the answer as to whether solar panels would be installed on all new builds as this would be a planning matter, but this was not known at the moment.

5. Newport City Councils Community Trigger

The Wentlooge representative asked was there an officer in post and what was the officers name.

The Chair stated that there was no designated officer in post, and this was why their details were not published on the website. Community Councils were advised to log onto the Council website under the Community Protection Team part of the website for the generic number.

It was advised that at the moment there was a senior management structure change, and the services were being realigned so could move between service areas.

The Chair confirmed that this information came under the Public Protection Team under the neighbourhood team under Michelle Tett. On the website was a generic email address and contact number and there was a form online to fill in for a trigger request. It was a Multi-disciplinary team involved so there was no one point of contact.

The Marshfield representative commented on anti-social behaviour officers and what their role was.

The Chair explained that within the Community Safety Team there were Community Safety Wardens and then as part of that there were Environmental Officers and two Antisocial Behaviour Officers, and they liaised with Police and other agencies. Michelle Tett was the current manager in Environmental Health.

The Wentlooge asked that in terms of personal protection for council officers in doing their job as sometimes Councillors got involved in certain situations e.g., intimidation, does the community trigger offer any protection for this.

The Chair clarified that this was anti-social and not criminal behaviour, so the Community Trigger was about antisocial behaviour so noise and disturbance, and general anti-social behaviour. In relation to intimidation and personal safety then these issues should be reported to the Police.

The Chair explained that the lower-level anti-social behaviour could be dealt with by a range of measures such as fixed penalty notices, but these were not criminal.

The Marshfield representative asked about reporting noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour on an industrial site, was this an issue something a trigger can be used for.

The Chair stated that statutory noise nuisance was dealt with separately and if it was a noise nuisance that this should be reported to the environmental health side of that section as Community triggers were for low level. Statutory noise nuisance was of a much higher level where expert environmental health officers were needed to assess the level of noise.

If there was a noise nuisance this needed to be reported to the contact centre who would pass this on to environmental health it gets passed to that team and so this needed to be investigated under statutory rules.

The Marshfield representative stated that they had received an email from Brian Miles of Wentlooge Community Council stating that because National Resources Wales permit this site this was not something Newport City Council got involved with.

The Marshfield Representative explained that there were complaints about the site for a number of years.

The Chair commented that he did not know this particular case so could not comment.

The Wentlooge representative mentioned the authorities view of process which they feel they have been misadvised as they were advised that the situation would be covered by community trigger.

The Chair commented on whether these were qualifying complaints as the complaints had to be anti-social behaviour and it was not a way of reviewing the inaction of police and it was a collective way of dealing with behaviour e.g., lower-level noise.

The Wentlooge representative asked about protection for community council members in the community.

The Chair confirmed that this would be a police matter and not a community trigger as other agencies involved in the community trigger cannot deal with criminal complaints.

The Marshfield Representative asked about the Community trigger being used under circumstances of inaction.

The Chair stated that it was a last resort and the complaints had to relate to the correct type of anti-social behaviour.

The Marshfield representative commented on the lack of action on lots of complaints about noise and noise pollution.

The Chair stated that the criminal behaviour went to Police, the lower-level anti-social behaviour complaints went to Community Wardens and what the Marshfield representative referred to -Statutory Noise Nuisance was a case for the Environmental Health Internal Complaints procedure. A senior manager would have to review this as a corporate complaint.

6. Training for new Councillors post-Election

The Wentlooge representative asked whether Newport City Council had anything in the next election for new councillors?

The Chair confirmed that there was an intensive package for new city Councillors including the Code of Conduct training. One Voice Wales provide training and Standards Committee was keen for Community Councillors to receive training if there was an interest. Community Councils would be able to have training around June and July time after city councillors have received their training. It was important for Community Councils to have tailor made training.

The Governance Support Officer would get in contact with Community Councils in due course to arrange this.

The Chair explained that Code of Conduct training would be put in place so would have workshop sessions for this. The online e-learning module that we could offer to members from Welsh Government that Members could complete but the final module was not available yet.

Welsh Government were not changing anything in the Code of Conduct.

The Marshfield representative stated that any training available was a good thing to do but it was difficult to get community councillors to do the training.

The Chair stated the training was mandatory for city Councillors.

Action: The Governance Support Officer would get in contact with Community Councils in due course to arrange training.

7. Planning Enforcement

The Wentlooge representative stated that they would like to have a better understanding of this and how it worked as they had a lot of sites in this area under enforcement and was asked lots of questions as to why it was taking so long etc. The Wentlooge representative asked whether this could be looked at in training again and if there were certain cases then they could be taken up with management.

The Wentlooge representative stated that it was difficult to make a complaint as officers work hard but they wanted to understand the process more so it would be good to go through situations as if cases were slow then there might be a reason for this.

The Marshfield representative stated that she supported everything that had been said and that last December, officers Matthew Sharpe and Neil Gunther hosted training on Enforcement previously and the outcome of the meeting was that the community council wanted a relationship going forward with the exchange of information between Community Councils and the Planning team. The Marshfield representative stated that they wanted better cooperation between the department and community councils. It was felt that the local community was an important aspect of planning and when information was shared then officers could be kept in the loop.

The Chair stated that Planning applications were fine and easier to keep people updated but Enforcement was time consuming and a different process. The communication issue was a Charter issue.

The Marshfield representative stated that Councils had a session with Neil and Matthew and the big thing was building up a relationship as there was none now.

The Chair agreed that the planning officers could attend a future meeting which would be beneficial if they could give a general presentation on the subject.

The Wentlooge representative stated that a planning enforcement presentation was needed, and a meeting was needed with officers face to face at another time to help build up a relationship between officers and community councils.

Agreed: For a session to be held with Community Councils on Planning Enforcement at a future meeting.

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Date of the Next Meeting

23 June 2022 @ 6pm