



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
MERTHYR TUDFUL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
County Borough Council

## MINUTES OF MEETING

# **SCRUTINY :** **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES,** **PLANNING AND** **COUNTRYSIDE MEETING**

**MONDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D Sammon (Chair)  
D Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Colbran, J Davies, L Davies and C T Jones

**Cooptees:**

R Holdaway (Public), J McCarthy (Public), P Star (Public) and  
T Butler (Youth Forum Representative)

**Other Councillors in Attendance:**

Councillor D Hughes

**Officers:**

J Jones (Chief Officer for Planning and Neighbourhood  
Services), C Jones (Property Services), L Emerson (Asset  
Management Principal Officer), M Davies (Countryside Planning  
- Ecologist) and M Purnell (Performance and Scrutiny Officer)

M Edmunds (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
437	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received.
438	Declarations of Interest	Councillor Declan Sammon declared a personal interest in

	(including whipping declarations)	Item 5 (Community Asset Transfer) as his community group has a number of leases through Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. Councillor Sammon did not leave the meeting.
439	Update on Carbon & Energy Management Activities	<p>Chris Jones led Committee through the Update on Carbon and Energy Management Activities report.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were raised by Members and answered in detail by the officers, where officers did not have the answers to hand, written updates were to be provided:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Para. 5.5 (Smart Metres) – How much is the cost likely to be and where will you get the funding from?</li> <li>• Para. 5.7 (New Gas Supplier) – Are we one of the 29 authorities and if so, what steps are we taking to deal with the debt dispute?</li> <li>• Para. 5.8 (Afon Taf Solar Farm) – If this scheme comes about, is any of the energy going into the national grid and is the 93K savings as a result of what we would be paid back?</li> <li>• Para. 5.9 (Aberfan and Dowlais Recycling Centre) – Do we know how much money will be saved when they are installed?</li> <li>• Para. 5.1.3 (Resources) – Clarity sought on the start date of the Mechanical Compliance Officer.</li> <li>• REFIT Project – How much of 1.54M will the Council get back?</li> <li>• Energy Savings – Are we looking at other buildings?</li> <li>• When will the next report come back to Committee.</li> <li>• Installation of Water Metres – If funding is made available, how soon can they be installed?</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the Report.</p> <p><b>Resolved that:</b></p> <p>The content of the report be noted.</p>
440	Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan – First Annual Review 2020-2021	<p>Matthew Davies led Committee through the Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan – First Annual Review 2020-2021 report.</p> <p>The following comments and questions were raised by Committee and answered in detail by the Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you had a chance to meet with all Wards to discuss the grass cutting programme?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where we are now – What are the unfulfilled actions?</li> <li>• Grassland Management – What exactly what will be done at these sites and will this policy apply to roundabouts?</li> <li>• Ecological surveys – what will we see with the chosen six sites?</li> <li>• Have you looked at working with community groups?</li> <li>• Acknowledging the work that goes into wild flower planting.</li> <li>• Para. 6.2 – What actions will you do to go above and beyond? What are other Local Authorities doing and is there a local authority that you are particularly impressed with and if so, what are they doing?</li> <li>• Signs installed in the six priority areas - signs are really good, tells people what is happening and explains why grass not being cut. Suggestion that a map be added showing areas that won't be cut.</li> <li>• Looking forward to seeing this project move forward and the benefits it will bring to the community.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the report and answering the questions.</p> <p><b>Resolved that:</b></p> <p>The Committee note the contents of the document.</p>
441	Community Asset Transfer	<p>Lisa Emerson led Committee through the Community Asset Transfer Report.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were raised and answered in detail by the officers:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything that can be done to make people aware what land is available for these purposes or is an expression of interest needed?</li> <li>• Have you had any community asset transfers go wrong and if so, what can community groups do to mitigate/reduce the risk?</li> <li>• Clarity sought on the Terms (fixed term/rolling) in the Appendix.</li> <li>• Request that the matter of a list of available community asset land be looked into further.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved that:</b></p> <p>The contents of the report be noted.</p>
442	Tree Policy	<p>The Chair invited questions from the Committee.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were raised and answered in detail by the officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will there be better consideration in the future of type of trees and where they are planted?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Para. 5.4 Street lights obscured by overhanging trees – Is this being looked at proactively?</li> <li>• Have there been many complaints regarding internet interference from overhanging trees and if so, how do you manage/deal with these complaints?</li> <li>• 4.1.9 – Point of clarity when referring to ‘Merthyr Housing/Council tenants’, housing is no longer under the Local Authority.</li> <li>• 4.1.9 – Point of clarity Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council not Merthyr Council.</li> <li>• Is this a new or existing policy?</li> <li>• Is it the same operating procedures but in a policy or have the operating procedures changed?</li> <li>• Clarity sought over specific issues regarding ‘trees blocking natural light’ and ‘falling leaves’.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the report.</p> <p><b>Resolved that:</b></p> <p>The contents of the report be noted.</p>
443	Forward Work Programme 2020/21	<p>The Chair referred Committee to the Forward Work Programme 2020/21.</p> <p>The Chair requested the Scrutiny Officer contact Paul Davies to bring a report on Nappy Recycling to the next Committee. In addition, for the report to look at schemes for people who are interested in using re-usable nappies</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding ‘requests for larger bins’ and how these requests are managed.</p> <p><b>Resolved that:</b></p> <p>The Forward Work Programme be approved and to consider the questions at 3.7 in planning for the next meeting.</p>
444	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	<p>An issue regarding the Local Development Plan was raised. The matter was discussed and the Chair advised that he will send an email to the Head of Planning detailing the concerns raised.</p>
445	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected on the matters that had been considered at the Meeting.</p>
446	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	<p>No other business was deemed urgent by the Chair.</p>