



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : REGENERATION, PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE MEETING

TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor G Jones (In the Chair)

Councillors B Carter, H Barrett, S P Brown, E Galsworthy,
K Moran and M O'Neill

Councillor C Barry – Cabinet

Officers:

Alyn Owen (Chief Officer (Community Regeneration)), Julian Pike (Group Leader - Housing Renewal), Sarah Mee (European and External Funding Officer) and Richard Parry (Consultant for School Improvement)

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Mair Morgan (Scrutiny / Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
654	Apologies for Absence	No Declarations of Interest were made as all Members were present.
655	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	Councillor H Barrett advised that in relation to Item Three – Disabled Facility Grants he was a Board Member for Merthyr Valleys Homes but had Dispensation to Speak and Vote.

Agenda Items

The Chair advised that Item 4 - Economic Growth would be taken before Item 3 – Disabled Facilities Grants

656	Disabled Facility Grants - Does the current approach to DFG's provide Value for Money	<p>The Chair welcomed Julian Pike to the Meeting.</p> <p>Julian Pike referred the Committee to the 'Disabled Facilities Grants – Does the Current Approach to DFGS Provide Value For Money' report.</p> <p>Councillor B Carter and Councillor E C Galsworthy left the Meeting at 3.25 pm.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised by the Committee and were responded to by Councillor C Barry and Julian Pike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Challenges• Progress Policy – What needs to be done• Number of different areas – Communication• The Council provides all adaptations over a value of £5,000 in Merthyr Valleys Homes Properties at no cost to Merthyr Valleys Homes and all adaptations costing under £5,000 are funded by Merthyr Valleys Homes. Is there provision in the Stock Transfer Contract to review this figure• Who sets the Capital Budget• Assessment of Need Policy – Discussion with the COT Team• Invitation for Occupational Health to attend a Committee or a joint exercise with Social Services Scrutiny• Link with Disabled Facility Grants and how it works with the COT's Team• Value for Money• Recommendations from the COT's Team• Allocation of Work• Cross checks to ensure value for money• Audit of Spend• Timetable for Audit• Local Contractors – Accountability- Rotation of Work• Difficult to find information on the Council's Website regarding Disabled Facilities Grants• What fees are brought in on an annual basis• Conflict of Interest• Slippage• External Audit – Ensuring Value for Money• Are house owners able to pay towards works• Variations after works commence• Is there a graph illustrating for example for the past five years outlining the number of grants, the exceptions and the variations• How large was the grant – how much variance – length of time of the grant – Request for update on
-----	---	---

		<p>this</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(a) The report be accepted (b) A degree of challenge to the information contained in the report be provided</p> <p>The Chair then thanked Julian Pike for the update to the Committee.</p>
657	Economic Growth	<p>The Chair welcomed Councillor C Barry, Alyn Owen and Sarah Mee to the Meeting.</p> <p>Councillor C Barry referred to the 'Economic Growth' report and the link with Corporate Priorities.</p> <p>Alyn Owen referred to the development of an Economic Growth Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil and the three separate but linked phases.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised by the Committee and were responded to in detail by Councillor Barry and Alyn Owen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where we are now • Where we want to be • Can we confirm who are our partners and have they been engaged already • Merthyr College • Economic Growth Plan – NEETS • Monies spent – Success in the past – Lessons learned • Spend throughout the County Borough • Effect on each Ward • Statistics to track spend • How many jobs created from e.g 2012 to now • Upskilling • Staffing levels • Horizon 2020 • Parks for People 2 • Capital Projects throughout the County Borough • Future projects- Advertising and Promotion • Small Medium Enterprises – How will support be publicised – How offered in the future • Transport Links – How to get to jobs • Infrastructure • How to get the Message out – Come to Merthyr Tydfil – Set up Business • What we need to do next • Is everything in place to make the journey <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny support the three key phases outlined in the report to implement the Council's vision and ambition to foster economic growth in Merthyr Tydfil and support the future</p>

		<p>strategy for the delivery of grant funded programmes to support the implementation of the Economic Growth Strategy.</p> <p>The Chair then thanked Councillor Barry and Alyn Owen for the update to the Committee.</p>
658	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow Up Actions	The Chair advised that there was no update on this item.
659	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair, Committee and Richard Parry reflected in detail on the issues that had been considered at the Meeting.</p> <p>The Committee also referred to cross cutting issues that could be considered at the Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Councillor H Barrett left the Meeting at 4.15 pm.</p>
660	Forward Work Programme	<p>The Committee considered and agreed the Forward Work Programme.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed that questions to be raised on an agenda at future Committee Meetings be submitted prior to the Meeting.</p>
661	Any Other Business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent.