

## **MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup>. APRIL 2015**

**Present :** Councillor G Erasmus ( Chair )  
Councillors D Davies & J Criddle  
Councillor B Baber as an observer

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor A Farina-Childs

### **2. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup>. January 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

### **4. Applications for Financial Assistance**

The Clerk presented his report on the applications received, and after some discussion it was *unanimously agreed* the following grants be awarded –

Blackwood Musical Theatre Society	£250
Mynyddislwyn Male Choir	£250
Blackwood & District Crime Prevention Panel	£250

### **5. To Consider response /feedback to C.C.B.C. Consultation on Leisure Facilities in the Borough**

The Clerk reported that he had forwarded the Consultation document for members perusal prior to the meeting

He then outlined the main issues of the document in relation to Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre.

One of the key recommendations is identified as the rationalisation of facilities in the Northern Connections Corridor to two multifunctional leisure centres offering a wide variety of provision. One of these centres should be located in the eastern part of the NCC at Newbridge and the other located in the Northwest of the NCC at northern Bargoed or Aberbargoed to assist in serving the Heads of the Valley Regeneration area as well.

Whilst Cefn Fforest has a fitness suite, health spa and swimming pool, it is one of only two centres within the borough that does not have a sports pitch adjoining, the other being Caerphilly.

Of the other centres within the NCC -

Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has a dance studio, fitness suite, sports hall, squash court and 3G pitches

Sue Noakes Leisure Centre ( Ystrad Mynach ) has a sports hall and artificial turf pitch

Centre of Excellence ( Ystrad Mynach ) has 3G pitches

Newbridge Leisure Centre has a fitness suite, health spa, sports hall, squash court, swimming pool and 3G pitches

Further within the document it is identified that Cefn Fforest had 102,836 visitors at a cost of £2.61 per visitor, whilst Newbridge had 272,703 visitors at a cost of £1.41 per visitor

Within a SWOT analysis for Cefn Fforest, its

Strengths are identified as being in good condition, having been recently refurbished

It is generally fit for purpose

Has a dedicated learner pool

On a bus route, with a bus every 20 minutes

Weaknesses are it being a constrained site

Small fitness suite with shared changing facilities

Relatively expensive to run

Opportunities are planned improvements to the learner pool

Threats are costs of continued maintenance

Site not able to expand to meet future demands

Much discussion followed, and Councillors Davies & Baber informed members they had contacted all local schools who used the swimming pool, and had been dismayed to hear that none had been consulted on the proposals, which would undoubtedly mean the closure of the facility, and that they had grave concerns regarding their future usage at Newbridge, given the certain increased demand not withstanding the increased travel costs. Letters from some of the schools were passed to the Clerk.

Members were also concerned that there is little provision for leisure activities in the Pontllanfraith/Blackwood area for children and the community at large, and that the closures at Pontllanfraith & Cefn Fforest will have a negative effect on the community. Will Newbridge be able to accommodate the potential 190,000 visitors as a result of these closures alone ?

Whilst understanding this review must be driven by the need for financial savings, nowhere in the document are costings of the proposals or savings identified. Neither, however, is how the building of the proposed new centre is to be funded.

The Clerk informed members the consultation period ended later in the week, and so it was **unanimously agreed** the Clerk write to C.C.B.C. identifying the issues highlighted in the discussions but also pointing out how disappointed we are that local schools had not been contacted as part of the consultation exercise.

## **6. To Consider response/ feedback to C.C.B.C. Consultation on Recycling**

The Clerk explained that he had forwarded a copy of what he had received from C.C.B.C. as reported at the last Town Council meeting, and when visiting the website to try and collate further information saw that the consultation period had already finished.

It was **unanimously agreed**, however, that the Clerk inform C.C.B.C. that Town Council had concerns regarding the proposal of the issuing of plastic sacks, as if these are left at the kerbside for collection, we worry about dogs ripping open same and the potential for significant litter.

## **7. To Consider response/feedback to C.C.B.C. Consultation on Anti Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 – Proposed Public Space Protection Orders – Bus Station & Bus Stops**

The Clerk read correspondence that identified that under Section 59 of the above Act, Caerphilly C.B.C. considers that activities in the proposed Public Space Protection Orders, set out below are having a detrimental effect on the quality of life on those in the locality and that the activities are unreasonable and of a persistent or continuing nature.

Public Space Protection Orders are proposed for –

Blackwood Bus Station

And

Bus stops/shelters at -  
Chartist Way, near Frost Place, Blackwood  
Chartist Way, Gibbs Close, Blackwood  
Twynyffald Road, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood

A brief summary of the relevant provisions are as follows –

No person shall loiter unless waiting for public transport or waiting to meet somebody.

No person shall remain if asked to leave by an authorised person

No person shall soil, damage, deface or detach any part of shelter/premises

No person shall behave in a disorderly, indecent or offensive manner

No person shall consume alcohol or be in possession of an open container of alcohol

No person shall be in possession of paraphernalia for the consumption of controlled drugs

No person shall be in possession of a potentially dangerous item – any item, which in the opinion of an authorised person may be used to harass, alarm or distress any person or damage, deface or soil any property

No person shall wilfully obstruct or impede an authorised person in execution of their duty

Any person reasonably suspected, by an authorised person, of breaching the relevant provisions shall give his/her name and address when requested to do so by an authorised person

Breach of this Public Space Protection Order is a criminal offence that may result in prosecution, or the issue of a monetary fixed penalty notice

After some discussion it was **unanimously agreed** the meeting had no particular issues with the proposals and were fully supportive of same.

