

Minutes



Liaison Meeting with Community Councils

Date: 20 June 2019

Time: 6:00pm

Venue: Committee Room 1

Present: G. Price (Head of Law and Regulation) (Chair), Pamela Tasker (Governance Officer), Tracey Brooks (Development and Regeneration Manager)

Together with the following representatives from Community Councils:

B. Miles (Wentlooge), J. Davies (Bishton), J. Wagstaff (Penhow), N. Tarr (Graig), A. Whitfield (Graig), P. Gregory (Graig), H. Brown (Langstone)

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2019

It was stated that a representative from Graig Community Council was present and did not give apologies. The Chair confirmed that apologies were given in advance and on the day from representatives. Representatives were also required to sign the attendance sheet at the meeting.

Agreed:

That the minutes were a true record.

3. Matters Arising

A representative requested some feedback on the success of the Newport Marathon held on the 5 May 2019. The Chair confirmed that media coverage of the event was very positive for the marathon but there was no information yet on numbers and what it brought to the local economy. Plans for next year's marathon were already underway. Road closures were always an issue, but nothing was reported as such and it was shared how the organisation of the event went off without any hitches.

Declaration of Interest

The Chair clarified the Declaration of Interest for all Community Clerks and it was agreed that it was a very grey area. The Chair confirmed that it was good practice to complete it but that if someone objected to signing the declaration of interest then that person could not be forced to sign it.

The Chair clarified that this form was to be filled in at meetings and to be recorded in the meeting minutes. City Councillors also had a register to be signed in advance within 28 days of being elected as well as declaring it at the meeting. This was a separate form to be filled in also.

The Chair confirmed that the only difference between City and Community Councillors was that City Councillors had to sign the register.

The Chair stated that it was regular practice to declare an interest and then leave the room, but a form would still need to be filled in e.g. for a planning application. The Chair also confirmed that it also needed to be recorded that the person had left the room.

-It was discussed how in relation to the declaration of interest a form was filled in and published or the meeting could wait until the item came up and then the person could then put their hand up and declare it that way.

-The Councillor could declare an interest but there was no need to declare exactly what the interest was, but the details were on the form and it also goes on the register and there was no need to repeat it in the minutes. However, the person had to leave the room completely.

-It was stated how not all interests were prejudicial, sometimes a person could remain in the meeting if it didn't affect their judgment and were not biased against it.

-If the interest was prejudicial, then physically leaving the room was needed and that person could not go and sit in the public gallery.

-The Chair confirmed that not declaring an interest and staying in the meeting was where the concerns would start.

Agreed:

For refresher training to be looked at and the Code of Conduct and the Declaration of Interest forms to be resent again to all Council Community clerks.

A representative questioned whether Run4 Wales contacted The Farmers Arms? It was not known as to whether this occurred as no feedback had been received as yet. Councillor Jacqui Ford from Langstone Community Council was nominated and accepted on the PSB's engagement group and the Third Sector Partnership on behalf of all Community Councils.

Newport Boundary

It was discussed how the Newport Boundary would change and that it was agreed on format as the electoral review had given draft proposals to the Boundary Commission. In relation to the Electoral wards that the councils have agreed, were now with the Boundary Commission.

Newport City Councils view has also been given and the Community Councils can give ideas to the Commission on the proposals.

A representative asked whether the proposals could be thrown out by the Commission and the Chair assured that this could not happen, it could go down one less but there

was a margin of one or two either way. The Commission may disregard what the Council had presented. However there were four areas of under and over representation. The Commission would consider and publish the proposals and Community Councils would then be able to comment.

Shared Charter

It was discussed how maybe it was needed to change the wording of how often the Charter was reviewed. The Community Councils were asked to come back to the Liaison meeting about the Charter and inform whether it needed to be reworded and reviewed so a consultation was discussed with all Community Councils to find out what they would like to see in the Charter. What was in the Charter was standard, but the wording could be changed in certain areas.

It was mentioned by a representative that it was good to have the Charter in writing but it was questioned as to whether the Council always adhered to it. It was discussed that an action plan was needed to change this.

The Charter was challenged due to the lack of concurrent spending, money was getting less and less and a representative stated that it was felt that a decision was made and then announced to the Community Councils and that the Community Councils only found out about these plans after they had been put in place.

The Chair noted that the concerns would be noted but maybe the action plan going forward was for those issues to be dealt with in a different way. It may be pertinent for Community Councils to get together to decide what goes into the Charter. Issues could then be identified, and Newport City Council could be informed.

It was noted that the Charter was a framework and it is how both the Council and Community Councils work together, if the framework was satisfactory then we could look at the concerns.

It was discussed how information and communication were important and that although the city contact centre was the first point of contact, one of the representatives stated that they have spent a lot of time trying to get responses from the contact centre in relation to different issues.

The representative described how they wanted to report bad service of a road, so they had phoned the contact centre and used a reference given but was given another reference as the first one was not chased up. The representative felt that responses were not given in an agreed time scale and that Community Councils should be given a timescale of when they will be responded to.

The Clerk was requested to put the issue in writing and the Meeting would take it further. It was discussed how the customer service manager could attend a future Liaison meeting to discuss the process of reporting a complaint.

The Charter sets out what we expect from the Council and how we should respond to the Community Councils. It was discussed how specific timescales could be agreed and then the action plan could then be reviewed.

Another representative mentioned that when they contacted the contact centre, they were treated the same as a member of the public and it was agreed that unfortunately this did happen. It was stated that if a Councillor rang in then there was a specific number that they could ring but the Chair said that this was not the case. The Community Councils were encouraged to report issues online more.

Another representative stated that they had rang the contact centre regarding a pothole and this was rectified very quickly.

It was also discussed whether Service Areas in Newport City Council had read the Charter? This could be an issue as a person in the contact centre may not know what's in the Charter.

4. National Planning Framework (NDF)

The Committee was delivered a presentation on National Development Framework by the Development and Regeneration Manager.

The Meeting was given an overview on NDF.

Main Points

- National Development Framework was written by Welsh Government. Newport City Council can feed into the document but are not responsible for its outcome. It also covered the whole of Wales.
- Strategic Development Plan is at a leader's level and there was an endorsement to go back to councils to agree the plan to cover 10 authorities. Newport would need to start work on a strategic plan and would need to look at planning at a local level and could liaise with another authority to do a joint plan.
- Place Plans are what the Community Councils lead on and NDF is first in the Development plan tier. This meant that planners do not ask councils whether they agree or not. They could assist with the place plans but Councils were the lead on this.
- In relation to the Boundaries Issue the boundary did not represent properties in a village and the boundary change was refused and this would change. Plans were subject to consultation. The local Development plan was 4 years into adoption. The Council spent two years to develop it but the boundaries were abolished and so Community Councils were not involved in making decisions but could only raise objections.
- Place Plans were Community Council decisions.
- What was a Place Plan? It was known as supplementary planning guidance and was more at a local level. It was aligned with a plan for rural areas etc so for example 10,000 house could not be built in a certain rural area. Infill planning would be supported however, so a field full of houses would not be appropriate but maybe they could be built around the edges. It was land used based and not person based.

A representative stated that this was difficult for Newport to control and that Community Councils needed to be told of plans. There was a concern that maybe plans needed to be changed, was there a need for ring fencing, more houses for local people were needed. There was also concerns expressed that villages were dying as they were not allowed to expand. Bus Services were also being removed.

National Development Framework

The Welsh Government vision was to meet the wellbeing goals for current and future generations and everything needed to align with this vision. There was a consultation on the draft at present and everyone was encouraged to engage with it. The draft could then be commented on by the Community Councils.

The draft when available would then be circulated by the Governance Officer.

- The NDF will include regional housing targets; 10,000 homes to be built by 2026 and it is what the region could provide rather than what each authority say that they want.
- The Strategic transport links were very important as people could not get in and out of the area. It was hoped that people could get away from using their car and use sustainable transport instead. It was commented how the M4 relief road was now off the table.
- There was also comments on major growth areas, in Monmouth there were 3 new settlements. In relation to Energy Projects, tidal lagoons around Newport and Cardiff were being planned.
- In relation to climate change it was planned to have no fossil fuel cars by 2050.

There was an email address on the presentation ndf@gov.wales and it was also possible to sign up to the Welsh Government newsletter to be kept informed.

Final Thoughts

It was mentioned that NDF was a very high level strategic document and it was not obvious how it affected individual communities. However shaping the NDF now could help shape communities in the future.

A short video by Welsh Government on NDF was shown to members of the meeting.

Questions:

It was confirmed that 2040 plus was the term of the plan.

In relation to the plan for 10,000 new homes to be built it was asked whether this process had started. It was confirmed that 4,000 had already been built and that the housing projection was based on housing need. In 2026 it was imagined what Newport would look like, people now lived longer, there were also single parent families, more people may own a second home in the future and so it was based on this data. The relief road was shelved and it was not adequate anyway, the infrastructure should be in place before houses were built.

A representative commented that a motorway could not compare with the 10,000 houses being built.

It was stated that the housing need was always there so accommodation needed to be provided and infrastructure needed to catch up.

There was a Cardiff development in the pipeline which was a major development, and this would hit junctions 30, 31 and 32 compared to just 10,000 houses.

A representative enquired about natural places and how they didn't want the green around the city to be destroyed. It was confirmed that 99% of houses are on brown field first. Llanwern has provided a lot of this in the protection of the existing development plan. It was commented that Llanwern was needed in addition to the brown field sites and some green sites have been built on eg Llanwern green field site.

A representative commented that the place plans were very useful as they had been on the training.

Members of the meeting were informed that the Local Development Plan was on the council website to view.

A representative asked about the demise of the city centre and was anything being done to develop the city centre, as there was a lot of empty buildings.

It was commented that Newport was focused on regeneration and there was a lot of outside investors now showing interest in the city and its property. Absent landlords were a problem however, and can sometimes have little interest in the property and just want the return but don't want to improve on the interest they had.

Grants were limited and the Welsh Government was relied on and also the heritage lottery fund to give incentive to outside investors. The more that retailers leave then the more empty properties were left.

Agreed:

For the NDF draft to be circulated to Community Councils when available.

Date of next meeting

19th Of September 2019