



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15TH MAY, 2019

ANNUAL REPORTS 2018/19

JOINT REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Council with the Annual Reports of the following Committees for the Municipal Year 2018/19:
- Standards Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1 Note the Annual Reports for the Standards Committee, Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny (which are attached as Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively to the report).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to provide Council with an update in respect of the work of the Committees during the Municipal Year.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 **Standards Committee**

4.1.1 The Annual Report of the Standards Committee, provides a summary of the role and work of the Committee undertaken in the 2018 / 2019 Municipal Year.

4.1.2 On 22nd March, 2019, the Standards Committee approved the Annual Report and this is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 **Audit Committee**

4.2.1 The Annual Report of the Audit Committee was presented to its committee meeting on the [25th March, 2019](#), providing a summary of the work undertaken over the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

4.2.2 The report is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

4.3 **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

4.3.1 The Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which provides a summary of the role and work of the Committee and the thematic Committees undertaken in the 2018/19 Municipal Year. The report is attached as Appendix 3.

4.3.2 The report was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the [8th April, 2019](#) and was agreed subject to minor amendments.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. **CONSULTATION**

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report. Consultation on the report was undertaken at each of the Committee meetings referenced.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's constitution.

9. **LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

9.1 The work of all Committees of the Council encompasses all of the Councils priorities and provision of an Annual report allows the Committee to highlight the work undertaken and items for future consideration in line with the corporate priorities.

9.2 The work of the Committees also take forward the principals and wellbeing goals of the Well-being and Future Generations Act, linked to each of the Committees Terms of Reference.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Annual reports outlines the work of the Committee in the 2018/2019 Municipal Year.

APPENDIX 1

Standards Committee

Annual Report 2018-19



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

As the Chairman of the Standards Committee, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Standards Committee which provides an overview of the Committee's work during the 2018-2019 Municipal Year in continuing to promote high standards of conduct within the Council. It is essential that such standards are being communicated, understood and practised across the Council both by Members and Officers.

Firstly, I would like to welcome our new members to the Committee who joined us during the Municipal Year; Independent Member Mr D. Bowen, reserve Independent Member Mr C. Pallant and reserve Community Councillor Member, Ms C. Willis. All bring with them a wealth of personal experience and knowledge and I look forward to them providing their expertise and adding another perspective as we undertake the Committee's work. It is pleasing that we now have a full complement of Committee Members and going forward I think it is important that our reserve Independent and Community Council Members attend all meetings of the Committee to ensure that they are aware of its work and discussions that take place. This approach will allow a consistent and resilient approach to the work of the Standards Committee going forward, benefiting the Committee Members themselves and those that it serves.

The Committee's Work Programme during the Municipal Year reflects full Committee meetings with the addition of a Standards Committee hearing arising from a complaint made by a Member under the Council's 'Local Protocol – Standards of Conduct expected by Members'.

At the 2018 Standards Conference Wales event, run by Ceredigion County Council and hosted by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Members were able to participate in a variety of workshops on relevant topics such as; sharing best practice in the role of the Standards Committee, personal and prejudicial interests and dispensations; the practical aspects of holding a Standards Hearing and Social Media and Bullying. Members were also addressed by Nick Bennett, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and Claire Sharp, the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales on current issues relevant to their offices. It was pleasing to hear at one of the workshops the Council's Standards Committee referenced and acknowledged as being a standard of good practice for the work we have done in previous years to promote ethical standards.

Indeed, the Conference recognised the need for Standards Committees to incorporate the good practices of other Standards Committees across Wales.

In this regard, the Council hosted a joint training session for both RCT and Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Standards Committee Members. The session, which centred on an interactive mock standards hearing, was found to be hugely beneficial by all who attended. It was also my privilege to welcome colleagues from Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Standards Committee to observe our meetings and for us as a Committee to share our good practices and experiences with them. This way of collaborative working allows for a more cohesive and resilient approach to Standards across local authorities and we welcome the opportunity to further engage, share and learn from our peers across Standards Committees in Wales.

In respect of 'good practices' the Committee has also resolved to follow the Council's decision to take forward a 'paper light' approach to Committee meetings, as we look to embrace technology and adopt a more environmentally friendly approach to Committee meetings as we all try to reduce our carbon footprint.

It is important that as a Committee we also take forward the principles and ways of working outlined within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act thinking more about the long-term, ensuring that our decisions provide for opportunities for better working arrangements between the Council and the people it serves, ensuring that we act in a preventative manner looking to prevent problems rather than react to them and to take a more joined-up approach to our work.

As ever the Committee's work relies heavily on the support it receives from officers and I wish to place on record our thanks to them and to send the Committee's best wishes to the Council's Monitoring Officer, Mr Chris Jones, following his retirement during the Municipal Year.

MEL JEHU
CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Mr Mel Jehu



Cllr Butler



Cllr Forey



Cllr Webster



Mr J. Thomas



Mr D. Bowen

Chairman (and Independent Member): Mr. Mel Jehu

Independent Member: Mr. D. Bowen

Independent Member: Mr. J. Thomas

Reserve Independent Member: Mr. C. Pallant

County Borough Councillor: M. Forey

County Borough Councillor: E. Webster

Community Councillor: Mr R Butler

Reserve Community Councillor: Ms. C. Willis

Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee

The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives;
- (b) assisting the Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) advising, training or arranging to train Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (f) granting dispensations to Councillors , co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (g) dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that Officer by the Public Services Ombudsman For Wales;
- (h) overview of the Council's whistleblowing policy;
- (i) overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations;
- (j) oversight of the Members' protocols adopted by the Council;
- (k) oversight of the register of personal interests maintained under Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- (l) oversight of the gifts and hospitality register;
- (m) monitor adherence to the Council's Management of Unreasonably Persistent Customers Policy by Group and Service Directors; and
- (n) the Committee will exercise the functions set out in (a) - (g) above in relation to Community Councils and Members of Community Councils.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE DURING THE 2018 – 2019 MUNICIPAL YEAR

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AND COMMUNITY COUCILLOR MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

In February 2018, the Council, following a recommendation from the Standards Committee Appointments Panel appointed Mr David J.J Bowen as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a four year term of office The Council also appointed Ms. C. Willis as reserve Community Councillor Member representative.

In November 2018, the Council appointed Mr. C. Pallant as the Committee's reserve Independent Member for a 4 year term.

The Standards Committee Appointments Panel welcomed all the applications received although acknowledged its disappointment that no applications had been received from females for the position of Independent Member. Going forward it is important that the Standards Committee looks to actively engage and promote its work to widen its audience for any future vacancies and create more diversity across its membership.

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Committee acknowledges that the primary role of monitoring Members' training and development falls on the Council's Democratic Services Committee. However the Committee does have a specific role in overseeing Code of Conduct training. Some aspects of Member's training outside of the Code of Conduct specifically does impinge on standards issues, such as the use of Social Media and therefore the Committee does consider this relevant to their work from a Standards perspective.

- Monitoring the delivery and attendance at "Code of Conduct" training sessions provided for both County Borough and Community/Town Councillors.
- Monitoring the delivery of electronic and social media training for elected Members

ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES - REVISED SANCTIONS GUIDANCE

The Committee considered the Adjudication Panel for Wales' revised sanctions guidance for when a Councillor has been found to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct by a case tribunal, or an appeal tribunal. The Committee considered the guidance would be a useful reference point when they may be required to consider sanction in relation to any complaint it may be required to adjudicate on.

LOCAL PROTOCOL – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT EXPECTED BY MEMBERS

Dealing with a complaint from a Member under the Local Protocol – Standards of Conduct Expected by Members. Following consideration of all the evidence presented the Committee resolved that whilst there was a basis to the complaint against the Member no further action was required. Full details can be found in the relevant minutes of the Committee meeting held in October 2018.

During the meeting Members referenced the good practice and importance of being provided with all available and relevant evidence to assist them in their deliberations particularly if it was going to be referred too during any hearing.

LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS - ONE VOICE WALES

Following endorsement by the Standards Committee on the 18th September in respect of good practice the One Voice Wales Local Resolution process for Town and Community Councils was presented to RCTs Community Liaison Committee for adoption by each Town / Community Council.

At the meeting of the [Community Liaison Committee](#) on the 25th September the protocol was well received by its Members, however it would be a decision for each Town / Community Council to take forward, acknowledging not all Community and Town Councils were members of One Voice Wales. The Committee agreed to receive a further update during the next Municipal Year about the adoption of local resolution protocols by Community and Town Councils. Such adoption was being heavily recommended by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales due to the number of complaints his office receives that he considers could be dealt with under such a protocol.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Members received the following two publications which provided a comprehensive guide on how to deal with the challenges presented by the use of social media:

- Welsh Local Government Association - Social Media Handbook
- Handling online Abuse for Councillors
-

STANDARDS REPORTING

- Public Services Ombudsman For Wales – Received a summary of Complaints Against Members – 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018
- Public Services Ombudsman For Wales’ Annual Report and Letter (2017 – 2018)
- Public Services Ombudsman For Wales – Code of Conduct Casebooks
- Local Government Ethical Standards – Consideration of the review undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

STANDARDS CONFERENCE – ABERYSTWYTH 14th SEPTEMBER 2018.

- Attendance at the Conference and associated workshops.

APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

- Determining several applications for dispensations under the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 in accordance with the Council’s agreed procedures

REVIEW OF UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT CUSTOMER POLICY

The Standards Committee monitored adherence to the ‘Unreasonably Persistent Customers’ Policy by Group and Service Directors.

The Monitoring Officer presented an annual report to Standards Committee summarising all decisions made and action taken in respect of unreasonably persistent customers. The Standards Committee will review cases in order to gain assurance that the Policy has been administered appropriately.

MEMBER ATTENDANCE

The Committee received an update on the recording and publication of Member attendance, following recent amendments to the system brought forward by the [Democratic Services Committee](#) (and subsequently endorsed by Council) with the inclusion of recording categories of absence. The Chair met with the Democratic Services Committee Chair during the Municipal Year and noted the excellent work that had been undertaken in relation to Members attendance and how the Committee would monitor attendance going forward.



APPENDIX 2

Audit Committee

Annual Report 2018-19



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A key component of good governance for all organisations is to have in place an Audit Committee. The Council's Audit Committee is in place and its Terms of Reference incorporates the requirements of the Local Government Measure 2011, as follows:

Chapter 2, section 81 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Local authorities to appoint audit committees

1. A local authority must appoint a committee (an "Audit Committee") to—
 - a) review and scrutinise the authority's financial affairs,
 - b) make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs,
 - c) review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the authority,
 - d) make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements,
 - e) oversee the authority's internal and external audit arrangements, and
 - f) review the financial statements prepared by the authority.
2. A local authority may confer on its Audit Committee such other functions as the authority considers suitable to be exercised by such a committee.
3. It is for an Audit Committee to determine how to exercise its functions.

- 1.2 The purpose of our Audit Committee is set out with its Terms of Reference as follows:

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of the Audit Committee is to monitor the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment; provide independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and to oversee the financial reporting process.

Terms of Reference *As a key element of new arrangements for corporate governance, designed to ensure openness, integrity and accountability, the Committee will assist the Authority in discharging its responsibility for ensuring financial probity, without taking any action which might prejudice it.*

- 1.3 In order to discharge the responsibilities placed upon us, a detailed work-plan is compiled for each Municipal Year. For 2018/19, I worked with the Council's Head of Internal Audit to compile a work-plan that I felt could help us to discharge our responsibilities as members of the Audit Committee. Importantly I was keen to ensure that the work-plan for this year helped us to expand our knowledge and understanding of key areas that we, as members of the Committee, are required to possess in order to scrutinise the Council's governance, risk management and internal control environment.

1.4 Sections 2 and 3 of this report summarise the work that we have delivered during 2018/19 and Section 4 presents the outcome of the self-assessment against the CIPFA Practical Guidance for Local Authorities & Police 2018 Edition.

2. Work delivered during 2018/19

2.1 The CIPFA Practical Guidance for Local Authorities & Police 2018 Edition identifies 'Core Functions' of an Audit Committee along with what it refers to as possible 'wider functions' of an Audit Committee.

2.2 The Core Functions are set out below (in bold text), and the work that we have delivered in support of these core functions is summarised under the relevant section.

2.3 **Be satisfied that the authority's assurance statements, including the annual governance statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it, and demonstrate how governance supports the achievement of the authority's objectives**

2.3.1 Legislation requires the Council to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Draft AGS 2017/18 was presented to Audit Committee at our meeting held on [30th April 2018](#). The document described the governance arrangements in place, challenged their effectiveness and where necessary provided recommendations for improvement. Following receipt of the report, we resolved to:

- *Recommend its certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive in readiness for inclusion within the Council's draft 2017/18 Statement of Accounts; and*
- *Authorise the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services to include reference within the Annual Governance Statement should any relevant reports from External Inspectors be received by the Council before the Statement of Accounts are certified.*

2.3.2 Furthermore, at our meeting held on [17th December 2018](#), Officers provided an update on the status of each recommendation. Details of each recommendation, along with a summary of the action taken to progress implementation was reported. Following consideration of that report, we resolved:

- *That the progress made to implement the recommendations was satisfactory.*

2.3.3 The Draft AGS for 2018/19 is due to be presented to Audit Committee at our meeting scheduled for 29th April 2019. I have requested that Officers provide a further update on the status of the recommendations noted in paragraph 2.3.2 within the Draft AGS for 2018/19.

2.4 In relation to the authority's internal audit functions:

- **oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and professionalism**
- **support the effectiveness of the internal audit process**
- **promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework**

2.4.1. A key part of our role is to support the Council's Internal Audit Service to remain independent, assess whether it has adequate resources available to it and, to monitor the performance and quality of work delivered throughout the year.

2.4.2. We received the following key reports from Internal Audit during 2018/19:

2.4.3. **Internal Audit Charter** is a formal document that establishes the Internal Audit Service's position within the organisation, including the nature of the Head of Internal Audit & Procurement Development Programmes' functional reporting relationship with the Board (i.e. the Council's Audit Committee). This document provided us with the information we required in order to assess the independence of our Internal Audit Service. We approved the Internal Audit Charter at our meeting held on [30th April 2018](#).

2.4.4. The **Draft Annual Audit Plan 2018/19** was presented to us on the 30th April 2018. The Head of Internal Audit outlined the resources available to the Service, and illustrated how those resources had been targeted at the areas identified as being the highest risk/priority to the Council. We were able to see why each assignment has been included within the Draft Audit Plan, and were pleased to see the inclusion of thematic reviews within the schools sector, which was an area that we requested further assurance on during 2017/18. Following discussion, the draft plan was approved.

2.4.5. In addition to the reports noted above, Internal Audit also presented a standard item on the agenda for each Audit Committee in respect of **Performance**. This report provides Audit Committee with detailed information with which the performance of the Service was reviewed and scrutinised.

2.5 **Monitor the effectiveness of the control environment, including arrangements for ensuring value for money, supporting standards and ethics and for managing the authority's exposure to the risks of fraud and corruption.**

2.5.1 The regular provision of all **summarised audit assignments** to Audit Committee throughout the year is aimed at assisting us when evaluating the effectiveness of Internal Audit's work across all Council systems and services. It also enables us to form an opinion on the overall control environment of the Council at the end of the financial year.

- Over respective Municipal Years we have had the opportunity to refine the level of information that is reported to us in respect of finalised audit assignments.

- We are now able to fully utilise the information that is presented to us in order for it to be used to inform our view of the overall system of internal control which is in place across the Council.
- A relatively small number of Internal Audit reports caused us concern during 2018/19. On these occasions we debated the issues in detail, and collectively recommended outcomes that were appropriate and in accordance with our Terms of Reference.

2.5.2 The **Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion** for 2017/18 was presented to us at our meeting held on [30th April 2018](#). The Annual Report for 2018/19 is scheduled to be presented to us at our meeting which is scheduled for 25th March 2019.

2.5.3 In addition to the reports presented to us by the Internal Audit Service, the following reports were also presented throughout the year all aimed at providing additional sources of assurance on the Council's internal control environment:

- An overview of the National Fraud Initiative, along with an update on the work delivered by the Corporate Fraud Team.
- An overview of the Public Services Network (PSN) audit, along with the reported outcomes.
- Received the outcomes of the staff survey, specifically in relation to awareness of the Council's Whistleblowing & Anti-Fraud Arrangements.

2.5.4 The wider information that was presented to us during 2018/19 in respect of the arrangements in place to tackle potential fraud and receiving assurance from an external assessment such as the PSN Accreditation process all helped our understanding of the arrangements in place.

2.6 Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements and the control environment, reviewing the risk profile of the organisation and assurances that action is being taken on risk-related issues, including partnerships and collaborations with other organisations.

2.6.1. The work-plan for 2018/19 included a wider range of items in respect of risk management and internal control than previous years. When compiling the draft work-plan, we discussed the requirement for a wider range of Officers to attend Audit Committee, to present information and to respond to questions. As a result, the following items were included in the work-plan and presented to the Committee:

- An overview of the Council's Insurance Function, in particular how it supports the Council's Risk Management arrangements.
- An overview of Risk Management arrangements in place in respect of 'Projects'.

- An overview of the term 'Internal Control Environment' incorporating a case study – Agile Working.

2.6.2. Following the receipt of the three reports noted above, my opinion is that they were all well received by Members. Whilst helping to aide our broader understanding of the theory that sits behind the terms of risk management and internal control, the ability to ask specific questions to Officers from the relevant disciplines allowed us to dig deeper into the areas presented.

2.6.3. We also received and endorsed the Council's updated Risk Management Strategy during the year.

2.6.4. Receiving and scrutinising information in respect of the risk management arrangements in place when the Council enters into Partnerships and/or wider collaboration arrangements will be an area that will need to be part of the Committee's work-plan for 2019/20.

2.7 Review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.

Consider the reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control.

2.7.1 At our meeting held on 12th July 2018, we received the draft statements of account for the financial year ended 31st March 2018. Following consideration of the report, we endorsed the draft accounts.

2.7.2 On the 17th December 2018, we received the following reports in respect of the Wales Audit Office:

- Annual Audit Letter 2017/18.
 - We were pleased with the detailed report and noted the recommendations from the 2017/18 audit work together with the actions the Council planned to take in order to address the recommendations.
- A summary of all reports issued by the Wales Audit Office in respect of their Performance work.
 - We were pleased with the content of the report, and the Action Plan detailed at Appendix 1. We **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the steps taken by the Council to monitor the implementation of 'proposals for improvement' made within the Wales Audit Office 'Annual Improvement Report 2017/18'

3. Wider Functions of the Audit Committee

3.1 In addition to the core functions, the Guidance identifies the possible wider functions of an Audit Committee, as follows:

- *An Audit Committee can also support its authority by undertaking a wider role in other areas including:*
 - *considering governance, risk or control matters at the request of other committees or statutory officers*
 - *working with local standards and ethics committees to support ethical values; and*
 - *reviewing and monitoring treasury management arrangements in accordance with Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (CIPFA, 2017)*

3.2 At our meeting held on [5th November 2018](#), we received an overview of the governance arrangements in place in respect of the Council's core financial system of Treasury Management.

4. Self-Assessment Against the CIPFA Practical Guidance for local Authorities & Police 2018 Edition

4.1 In consultation with the Vice Chair, I have completed the self-assessment checklist, the outcome of which is summarised in **Appendix 1A**. I believe that the Council's Audit Committee addressed the majority of good practice questions that are included within the checklist.

4.2 The self-assessment has identified a small number of proposals for improvement and these have been summarised in the following Action plan:

Good practice questions	Yes	Partly	No	Response & Proposal for Improvement
Functions of the committee				
7	Does the Committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance • assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements • internal audit • external audit • financial reporting • risk management • value for money or best value • counter fraud and corruption • supporting the ethical framework 		✓	Overall, the responsibilities that are set out within our current Terms of Reference are consistent with the Position Statement issued by CIPFA. However, the level of detail between the two documents differs. The suggested Terms of Reference provided at Appendix B of the Guidance document splits out specific areas into more detail. RECOMMENDATION:

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No	Response & Proposal for Improvement
					Whilst the current Terms of Reference is compliant with the responsibilities placed upon the Committee, it is recommended that the level of detail as set out within the Guidance is replicated into the Terms of Reference for Audit Committee.
Membership and support					
12b.	<p>Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership 		✓		<p>The level of debate at Audit Committee broadly supports a conclusion that Members have a good understanding of their role on this Committee. However, a formal skills assessment has not been completed that supports this conclusion.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: An assessment of the mix of skills for all Members will be undertaken. If required, the outcome of this will be utilised to put in place appropriate training and development opportunities for relevant Members.</p>
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?			✓	<p>A formal assessment against the skills framework contained within the CIPFA Practical Guidance document has not been completed.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION Undertake an assessment against the core knowledge and skills framework for each Member of the Audit Committee.</p>
Effectiveness of the committee					
19	Has the Committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the Committee or relying on its work?			✓	<p>RECOMMENDATION: As part of incorporating the Audit Committee Annual Report into the Annual Governance Statement, opportunity will be available</p>

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No	Response & Proposal for Improvement
					for feedback to be received from full Council and the Wales Audit Office.
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		✓		Some of the Committee's work clearly demonstrates impact e.g. approving and monitoring 'follow-up reviews' that show improvement in the standards of internal control. Further work is however required to broaden this and explore other impacts / value added as a result of the Committee's work / involvement / influence.

4.3 Subject to Audit Committee agreeing its Annual Report for 2018/19, a progress update will be reported to Audit Committee during 2019/20.

5. Concluding Comments

5.1 Our work-plan for this financial year has been balanced and the change in approach in respect of widening the items on each agenda has enabled the scope of information that is reported to us to be broadened. In addition to this, a wider range of Officers have presented reports to us during the year and this has helped us to deliver our Terms of Reference in a more robust way through gaining a better understanding and assurance by asking more detailed questions to Officers with specific areas of expertise.

5.2 I believe that we have discharged the responsibilities placed upon us, the recommendations that have arisen from the self-assessment will help further improve our arrangements and effectiveness. If any skills gaps are identified, then we will need to consider how these can be addressed in a pragmatic way that best improves the overall work of the Committee.

5.3 Finally, I would like to thank all Members of the Audit Committee for their work and support during 2018/19.

Appendix 1A - Self-assessment of good practice

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No
Audit committee purpose and governance				
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	✓		
2	Does the audit committee report directly to Full Council?	✓		
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?	✓		
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	✓		
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	✓		
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	✓		
Functions of the committee				
7	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance • assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements • internal audit • external audit • financial reporting • risk management • value for money or best value • counter fraud and corruption • supporting the ethical framework 		✓	
8	Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	✓		
9	Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	✓		
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	N/A		
11	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	✓		
Membership and support				
12	Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include:			
a.	separation from the executive	✓		
b.	an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership		✓	
c.	a size of committee that is not unwieldy	✓		
d.	consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement)	✓		

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the Full Council?	✓		
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	✓		
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	✓		
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?			✓
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the Chief Finance Officer?	✓		
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	✓		
Effectiveness of the committee				
19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?			✓
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	✓		
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	✓		
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	✓		
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		✓	
24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	✓		
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	✓		



APPENDIX 3

Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report 2018-19



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



L.M.Adams

Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee



S.Rees-Owen

*Chair of Children & Young
People Scrutiny Committee*



R.Yeo

*Chair of Health & Well-Being
Scrutiny Committee*



S.Bradwick

*Chair of Public Service
Delivery, Communities &
Prosperity Scrutiny Committee*



J. Williams

*Chair of Finance &
Performance Scrutiny
Committee*

FOREWORD

As Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee it gives me great pleasure to introduce the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018/19.

This report will demonstrate what we have achieved over the past year, the priorities for each of the themed Scrutiny Committees and whether they have delivered the outcomes for their individual key areas of work. Last year I reported on the improvements we made to strengthen ownership of the Scrutiny forward work programmes and the steps we started to take to engage with our residents and wholly inform them of our processes. This year, I believe we have worked harder to promote public engagement in Scrutiny and we have delivered the following:-

- A dedicated [Scrutiny](#) webpage (which includes detailed information in respect of the role of Scrutiny, Scrutiny Work Programmes, Scrutiny related news articles and a 'Scrutiny Chairs' Blog' which adds a personal touch to the Scrutiny work undertaken by the Scrutiny Chairs themselves); and
- A [Public Speaking Protocol](#) which sets out clear and concise advice on what our residents can expect should they wish to become involved and speak at any of our Scrutiny Committees;

Other areas where we continue to develop include a more formal reporting mechanism in place for the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs which enables us all to receive updates, share information and exchange ideas. Regular meetings continue to take place between the Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs and their respective Cabinet Members to ensure the two way communication continues to drive policy developments across Council services. We still try and reach out to our residents by taking Scrutiny out and about and have continued to hold Scrutiny meetings in venues other than in the Council Chamber such as Abercynon Sports Centre and Bryn Pica site. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this in the future and consider if this is the most effective mechanism to improve participation.

During 2017/18 the Wales Audit Office undertook a national review of scrutiny with fieldwork in all local authority areas. The purpose of the review was to explore how 'fit for the future' our scrutiny arrangements are and how well placed we are to respond to future challenges. I was encouraged that the Wales Audit Office found Scrutiny within RCT to have strengthened but I am by no means willing to rest on our laurels as some of the areas that need improvement include;

- strengthening support for the Scrutiny function;
- better planning of Scrutiny activity; and
- improvements to demonstrate the impact of scrutiny.

We have put together an action plan which responds to the improvements required in these areas and that together with the original WAO report can be found [here](#).

We have worked hard to improve and maintain our collaboration with key partners over the last year and this can be measured by our involvement and active engagement in the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (in total 10 local authorities who scrutinise the developments of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal) and the Cwm Taf Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to undertake scrutiny of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board (PSB). RCT will lead on this work in 2019/2020). We also have a joint scrutiny working group arrangement in place to scrutinise the school improvement function in the Central South Wales Consortium which has strengthened our regional working in this area.

Following initial training in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as part of the Member induction in 2017, I am privileged to have the opportunity to Chair a Scrutiny Working Group which has been established to develop the Scrutiny arrangements

in RCT whilst undertaking a review the development of infrastructure to support low carbon vehicles in RCT. This exciting piece of work, which is still in its infancy will, I believe demonstrate important role the Council's Scrutiny have to play in ensuring the Council approach the future through the lenses of this act . This work is referenced in greater detail in the Overview & Scrutiny Committee section.

I believe any comparison between my first years as Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and now will demonstrate that we have made improvements in terms of content, workload and impact, however we need to work harder next year to implement the changes that the Wales Audit office have suggested we make. An integral part of these improvements and our capacity to deliver further change has been supported by the changes in Officer support through the Council Business Unit which have been implemented over the last twelve months.

I would like to reflect my thanks to my Vice Chair, Councillor Sheryl Evans as well as the other Chairs and Vice Chairs who have contributed fully and positively once again this year.

County Borough Councillor L M Adams
Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Executive Summary	5-14
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15-19
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee	20-23
Health & Well-being Scrutiny Committee	24-27
Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee	28-32
Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee	33-36

Executive Summary

As the full Annual Report is detailed the following summary is intended to be accessible to a wider audience and aims to enable readers to better understand the impact that the Council's Scrutiny Committees have contributed to during 2018/19, and also where improvements are needed.

1. Scrutiny Reviews Completed/Ongoing

Table 1 sets out completed reviews undertaken by Scrutiny Committees and recommendations made, (the implementation of which will be monitored in 2019/20) and those reviews undertaken in this Municipal Year with reported outcomes in 2019/20

Area Reviewed & by which Committee	Reason for Review	Output from the Review	Performance/Outcome Information
Voluntary Snow Warden Scheme – Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee	Concern that more needed to be done to support the Council's Emergency Planning responsibilities by the introduction of a Voluntary Snow Wardens scheme.	In total four recommendations were agreed by Cabinet – Click here to view the response in full together with the recommendations	The launch of the 'Your Neighbours Need You' campaign, on the Council website to support the wider work of the Council to prepare for the potential of severe weather during the winter period. Click here to view the full campaign.
Electoral Arrangements by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – Overview & Scrutiny Committee	To ensure that the views of local members and stakeholders were comprehensively recorded and communicated to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommended to Full Council that the proposals be subject to a period of stakeholder engagement to properly reflect the views of local Members and stakeholders prior to further consideration by Full Council.	A final Council proposal to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales was submitted by 26 th October 2018. Click here to view the final proposals.
Elderly Mental & Infirm (EMI) Beds Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	The lack of EMI nursing care home beds (both respite and long term care provision) and impact the loss of older people with dementia hospital beds and closure of wards at Ysbyty George	Two recommendations submitted to Cabinet in February 2019 for its consideration which will be responded to in the next Municipal Year. Click here to view the final report	Scrutiny wanted to ensure that the actions and recommendations in the Cwm Taf Market Position Statement are being delivered in particular those aimed at the more specialised provision and need for more provision linked to complex care i.e. dementia and nursing

	Thomas in Treorchy had on EMI nursing care home provision availability and choice.		dementia. Scrutiny acknowledged that this work reflects the medium to long term nature of the programme of the work in this area and as such, supports the requirement for continued Scrutiny oversight to help ensure the necessary improvements are made.
--	--	--	---

Current and Ongoing Reviews with reported outcomes in 2019/20

Area Reviewed & by which Committee	Reason for Review	Key Areas of Current Work	Performance/Outcome Information
Recycling in Communal Areas -Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee	A Scrutiny Working Group established to identify where improvements to the recycling rates in areas of low recycling participation in communal areas can be made.	Two key areas of work were identified:- Enforcement and Communal recycling through the perspective of the role of the Social Housing Landlords.	It is anticipated that, when completed, improvements to collection methods and bulky waste can be achieved in communal areas so that the Council's results in recyclable material can be improved.
Register of Food Businesses in RCT – Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee	The item was referred to the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee by Full Council for its consideration. Click here to view the detail of the Notice of Motion 24 th October 2018	The first meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group will take place in April 2019 and will review the current food register and how the Council supports and promotes local food production companies through collaboration with local food businesses.	The Scrutiny Working Group will inform the development of the existing food register by working with local food businesses to identify any further development for improvement. It will report its recommendations to Cabinet when the work has concluded.
Scrutiny Toolkit Working Group –Development of Infrastructure to support low	The Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny has been created to support decision-making in the	Consider the Council's Scrutiny requirements for the Well-being of Future Generations Act and consider the	The Working Group will apply the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, namely, Integration, Collaboration,

<p>carbon vehicles – Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.”</p> <p>Notice of Motion – 28th February 2018 – Click here to view the detail of the Notice of Motion.</p>	<p>development of the infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicles that will improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>	<p>Long term thinking, Involvement and Prevention.</p>
<p>Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance – Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Improving school attendance is a priority for the Council and its schools and Scrutiny will undertake its review of the current use of Fixed Penalty Notices to assess its effectiveness.</p>	<p>Scrutiny will consider how the Council currently uses Fixed Penalty Notices and whether it is a contributing factor for any increases in school attendance.</p>	<p>The first meeting of this working group will be held over the coming weeks with recommendations reported in the next Municipal Year.</p>

2. Pre Scrutiny is the process by which Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee become involved with decisions at a stage before the decision is formally taken. This approach proves beneficial as it involves Non-Executive Members at the pre decision stage and adds value to reports through wider consultation.

The following table sets out all the Pre Scrutiny work and Consultations undertaken by all the Scrutiny Committees, which has been undertaken in 2018/19 and evidences how we have influenced the decisions:-

Consultation/Pre-Scrutiny	Reason for the Consultation/Pre Scrutiny	Added Value/Impact	Evidence
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
<u>Consultation</u> Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)- Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee	The creation of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee is required to be considered by each of the constituent authorities' appropriate Scrutiny Committee, before being endorsed by full Council.	Scrutiny agreed the creation of a Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the work of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) in collaboration with the other nine constituent authorities. It also endorsed the creation of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.	The report and Minutes formally agreeing the proposal to agree the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee can be viewed here .
<u>Consultation</u> Modernisation of Residential Care & Day Care for Older People.	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee was involved in the Council's formal consultation process.	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will undertake Pre Scrutiny on the consultation feedback Included the matter on its future work programme as a priority; Call on the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to jointly assess the matter.	The Modernisation of Residential Care & Day Care for Older People report can be viewed here
<u>Consultation</u> Public Engagement Protocol	Opportunity for Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to influence and	Scrutiny took a pivotal role in shaping the evolving Protocol through constructive input which has been	The adopted protocol can be accessed on the dedicated Scrutiny web page here

	formally adopt the Protocol advising members of the public how to engage in the Council's Scrutiny process.	published on the Scrutiny dedicated web page to increase public participation and engagement.	
FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> Draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) 2018/19. A copy of the draft Corporate Performance Report can be viewed here ;	In line with its Terms of Reference the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee is requested to analyse and review the draft Corporate Performance Report.	Scrutiny made a number of valuable observations as part of the pre scrutiny exercise and where possible those have been captured in the updated Corporate Performance Report 2018/19.	Feedback included in the updated report to:- Cabinet -17 th July 2018 here Council – 25 th July 2018
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> 2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy- a copy of the 2019/20 report can be accessed here	In line with its Terms of Reference the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee is requested to review the 2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy.	Scrutiny worked hard to challenge the Council's 2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy and expressed its views to Cabinet in respect of budget strategy proposals.	Feedback included in the updated report to Cabinet – 14 th February 2019 here
<u>Consultation</u> 2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation Can be viewed here	The Finance & Performance Terms of Reference includes the annual Revenue Budget Consultation process.	Scrutiny provided feedback to Cabinet along with other consultees so that Cabinet can agree a proposed Budget Strategy 2019/20	Feedback to Cabinet included in the updated report to Cabinet – 14 th February 2019 here
PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> Out & About Two– The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for RCT 2019-2019	Scrutiny shaped the Improvement Plan which would inform this important document going forward.	Scrutiny endorsed the ROWIP to Cabinet and requested that all links on social media relating to interactive maps are bilingual.	Scrutiny endorsed the adoption of the ROWIP for RCT 2019-2029.
<u>Consultation</u> South Wales Police National	Sitting in its role as the Council's Crime	Following the consultation process	Next year Scrutiny will assess the

review of Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.	& Disorder Committee, Scrutiny was consulted on the role of PACT to assess its effectiveness.	a comprehensive report will be delivered to the Crime & Disorder Committee in the next Municipal Year.	outcome of the National review and continue its focus on the impact of the changes made to these community meetings.
<u>Consultation</u> Assess the impact of the Council's Planning & Development Committee	Scrutiny assessed the effectiveness of the current arrangements in place for the Council's Planning & Development Committee.	Some of the Scrutiny recommendations included:- Training for all Members on the planning process with an invitation to the Director of Wales Planning Inspectorate.	The Planning Inspectorate delivered training on his role on 24th January 2019 ; Pre Consultation training was delivered on 18th October 2018 ; 'Plot Shop' Initiative training was received on 8th November 2018 .
<u>PRE SCRUTINY TO BOTH THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u>			
Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2017/2018	The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report on 31st July each year, to demonstrate its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.	Both Scrutiny Committees endorsed the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2017/2018 although a number of requests for follow-up information and reports came out of this review so that Scrutiny can continue to monitor and challenge the work of the Board.	The final Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2017/2018 can be viewed here
Draft Director Of Social Services Annual Report 2017/18	Part 8 of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act a Code of Practice requires the Director of Social Services to produce an annual report. The report is presented to both Committees for a pre scrutiny exercise.	Following a challenging session the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2017/18 was agreed by both Scrutiny Committees.	The final report was considered by Cabinet here

Representations & Complaints Procedures Annual Report	It is a requirement of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014 that the Local Authority produce an annual report and that the report is considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.	Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee & Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Acknowledged the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team and implementation of the service model going forward.	The final report can be viewed here .
HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> Rhondda Cynon Taf Homelessness Strategy 2018-22	To examine the suitability of the draft Homelessness Strategy for 2018-2022	Agreed that the strategic objectives and actions proposed in the strategy are implemented with a commitment to further review in the coming year.	The final report can be viewed here
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> 2014 Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) New Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs from April 2019, in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004.	To assess the effectiveness of the 2014 Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and, subject to those findings, to scrutinise the proposal to declare a New Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs from April 2019, in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004	Scrutiny agreed that licensing conditions should be placed on all HMO licences granted by the Council under both the Mandatory Licensing Scheme and the proposed new Additional Licensing Scheme from April 2019.	The report can be accessed here .
<u>Consultation</u> Community Day Centres	Scrutiny played its part in the Council's formal consultation process with service users and local communities on the future of the remaining four	Scrutiny provided robust feedback to ensure that the current service provision is cost effective and is meeting the Council's commitment to deliver	The report can be accessed here .

	Community Day centres.	the best possible services.	
<u>Consultation</u> Draft Toilet Strategy	Scrutiny informed the development of the Council's local Toilet Strategy which had been the focus of a consultation process with providers and residents around their needs.	Scrutiny fed into the consultation process with the aim of improving access and provision of toilet facilities county wide.	The consultation report can be accessed here .
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
<u>Consultation</u> 21 st Century Schools Modernisation Proposal	Opportunity to engage in the formal consultation process in respect of the 21 st Century Schools Programme – Proposals to improve Education in Pontypridd and in the Cynon Valley.	Scrutiny provided significant contributions to the 21 st Century Schools Modernisation proposal which enabled the Committee to contribute to the service change at an early stage.	The 21 st Century Schools Programme Proposals to improve Education Provision in the Cynon Valley can be viewed here
<u>Consultation</u> Accommodation Strategy for Young People 16+	The draft strategy outlines how Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council will in the future approach supporting young people 16+ years of age who will leave care and need accommodation and support.	Scrutiny endorsed the draft accommodation strategy for Young People aged 16+ years of age Leaving Care and will monitor the implementation and delivery of the Strategy.	The draft Accommodation Strategy for Young people aged 16+ years can be found here .
<u>Pre Scrutiny</u> School Attendance Strategy 2018-2021	Scrutiny highlighted the need to raise awareness of good school attendance and improve the current rates across Rhondda Cynon Taf.	Scrutiny recommended :- The establishment of Truancy Watch and Truancy Free Zones initiatives and getting School Governors involved early on in any future school	The final report can be viewed here .

		attendance discussions.	
Pre Scrutiny Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019/2020	Scrutiny wanted the opportunity to approve the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and action plan before its submission to Welsh Government by 31 st March 2019.	Scrutiny contributed to and endorsed the PSA and action plan and agreed for it to be submitted to Welsh Government	The Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019/2020 can be accessed here .

3. Scrutiny also provided constructive challenge and positive criticism in the following areas to help the process of driving improvements across the Council.

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

- Street Care Enforcement in RCT
- Taff Vale Redevelopment
- Improving Recycling in RCT
- Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) - Dog Control
- Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2017/2018
- Maladministration Complaints to the Public Ombudsman for Wales 2017/2018
- Transformation of the Mobile Library Service in RCT
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)
- Statutory Process for the removal of Caravans and other Obstructions from the Highway
- Civil Parking Enforcement

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (Crime & Disorder)

- DIVERT 18-25 Project
- Wales Integrated Serious & Dangerous Offender Management (WISDOM) Project
- Cwm Taf Community Safety Delivery Plan 2018-2021
- Anti-Social Behaviour in Partnership

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- Local Authority Arrangements to Safeguard Children and Adults at Risk
- RCT's Digital Work Programme
- Information Management (to include General Data Protection Review (GDPR))
- Fire Risk Assessment - A Review of Procedures for Council Owned/Occupied Buildings
- Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report
- Annual Report of the Leader of the Council

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

- Development & Delivery of 3G Pitches throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Empty Homes Strategy 2018-2021
- Stay Well at Home Service
- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Evaluating the Impact of Transferring the Kennelling Facility to Hope Rescue
- Delayed Transfers Of Care
- Mental Health Awareness

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee (Education)

- Outcomes of Children Looked After in RCT 2016/17
- Fixed Penalty Notice Review for Regular Non School Attendance
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Monitoring of all the Key Stages
- Additional Learning Needs & Education Tribunal (ALN ET)
- SEREN Hub
- Outcomes for Children Accessing Education Other than at School (EOTAS) 2017/2018
- Impact of the Work of the Central South Consortium Business Plan on RCT

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services)

- RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel Work Plan 2018/19
- Corporate Parenting Annual Report
- Regional Adoption Annual Report
- Resilient Families Service in RCT
- Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
- Placements of RCT Children Looked After
- School Based Counselling Service 2017/18
- RCT Young Carer's Service

Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee

- Council Corporate & Service Self-Assessment
- Treasury Management Strategy Report 2019/20
- Mid-Year Treasury Management Activity Report
- Capital Strategy Report 2019/20
- Community Meal Central Production
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Review of 2018/19 Performance Indicator Targets
- Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018/19

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



L. M. Adams - Chair



S. Evans - Vice Chair



H. Boggis



J. Bonetto



J. Brencher



G. Caple



A. Cox



E. George



M. Griffiths



J. Harries



P. Jarman



D. Macey



S. Morgans



E. Stephens



L. Walker

Terms of Reference

To co-ordinate the work of the four thematic scrutiny committees and ensure that the work of each of these committees is effective. The Committee is responsible for approving the work programmes developed by the four themed scrutiny committees to ensure deliverable, co-ordinated and outcome focused programmes of work. To fulfil the overview and scrutiny role in relation to “all Council” cross cutting themes which cut across the terms of reference of the four thematic scrutiny committees. The Committee is also responsible for dealing with all ‘Call-ins’ (under the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

Since the 2017 Local Government Election, changes have taken place to the Political Balance of the Council which resulted in the current membership of all the Council’s Scrutiny Committees increasing from 11 to 15 seats. County Borough Councillor J. James was a Member of this Committee up until 28th November, 2018 when further changes in the Political Balance were made as a result of the reduction in membership of the Plaid Cymru and Conservative political groups. County Borough Councillor J. James was replaced by County Borough Councillor M. Griffiths following these changes.

The earlier part of this report demonstrates how varied and extensive the work of the Council’s Scrutiny function has been this year so with that in mind I would like to reference only a few key areas of work that have been undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

‘Fit for the Future’

During the latter part of last year, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) conducted a ‘light touch’ Scrutiny review which would focus on how ‘fit for the future’ the scrutiny functions are within the Welsh Councils. This included, how we are all responding to current challenges such as scrutiny of the Public Services Board. They also followed up on the thematic review that was undertaken in 2016/17 – “Good Governance Arrangements for Determining Significant Service Changes”. In order to inform their work, the Wales Audit Office based their methodology on document reviews, interviews of a selection of Cabinet and Scrutiny Members and key Officers as well as observing some Scrutiny Committee meetings. On the 22nd October 2018 the results of the review were reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and we were asked to evaluate the action plan which set out the Council’s response to the proposals for improvement.

This is what the Wales Audit Office said we need to do more of:-

- *Strengthen support for the Scrutiny function;*
- *Better planning of Scrutiny activity; and*
- *Demonstrate the impact of scrutiny.*

These are some of the arrangements we have put in place:-

- *Created a new ‘Council Business Unit’ which combines the support previously offered independently by Democratic & Member Services and the Executive and Regulatory Business Unit;*
- *Employed a Graduate Scrutiny Officer to undertake specific scrutiny research;*
- *Continue to develop and promote the Scrutiny /Cabinet engagement sessions and Cabinet attendance at our Scrutiny Committees by invitation (to date we have received 6 Cabinet Members and their reports outlining their individual portfolios);*
- *Continue our refreshed approach to Scrutiny work programming and engagement with the Cabinet work programme to identify areas for pre scrutiny at every opportunity; and*
- *Drive evidence of the impact of scrutiny forward through the policy development from recommendations implemented from the Scrutiny Working Groups;*

Public Engagement - We are still looking at innovative ways to improve public engagement in our Scrutiny arrangement, it continues to challenge us but the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is very involved in identifying where progress still needs to be made. We have developed a public speaking protocol which will enable members of the public to be able to attend our scrutiny meetings should they wish, with guidelines and support on how to join us. This has now been published on the dedicated Scrutiny web pages which will make it accessible and easier to find as the banner to this page can be seen on the web landing page (the first thing we all see when we access the Council's website). We have included 'Scrutiny Chairs 'blog' written by our Scrutiny Chairs which bring a human touch to our scrutiny activity. We were encouraged by the number of visits to these pages over a 12 month period but we will continue to monitor this activity so we can track progress. In the future, we propose to also include information about our scrutiny working groups which form an integral part of the scrutiny work programmes. By focussing on maintaining and refreshing our Scrutiny web pages we will look to improve our residents' participation and their understanding of our Scrutiny process and further develop the platform from which we can continue to promote the work of our scrutiny function.

The importance of evaluation – members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have already acknowledged the need for effective evaluation mechanisms so that we can reflect on the value of our Scrutiny activities, what has worked, and what lesson we can learn as this will provide clarity about the impact of and outcomes from our work. We discussed the best way of doing this and decided that following up any recommendations to have been implemented by the Executive could be done in the form of an annual report to the respective Scrutiny Committee, which will evidence progress made and will measure whether the outcomes have impacted on the lives of our residents. We will continue to monitor this next year.

These initial responses have established the groundwork for our local scrutiny improvement journey, which is of course ongoing. We have instructed the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services to report to us with his findings on the current scrutiny arrangements so that we can remain proactive with our responses to the WAO. We asked that any new arrangements are reported to us in April 2019 and are in place by the Council's AGM 2019.

Well-being of Future Generations Act - Framework for Scrutiny

I mentioned in my foreword that the Scrutiny Framework developed by the Future Generations Commissioner will shape the way we conduct Scrutiny in the years ahead. At its meeting held on the 3rd September 2018, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to work alongside the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to pilot a new Scrutiny toolkit. The latest Scrutiny template issued by the Commissioner was in late [February](#) 2019. The Scrutiny Working Group established to undertake this piece of work is made up of a cross section of Scrutiny Members so that they can test the Commissioner's approach, establish a potential RCT scrutiny model for WFG and that upon completion of the work they will return to their respective Scrutiny Committees and lead the way as champions in their field. It is also anticipated that my Scrutiny co-Chairs and Vice Chairs will undertake the training in the future so they can ensure that our approach to scrutiny is as focussed on outcomes as it should be.

At its inaugural meeting held on the 22nd January 2019, the Scrutiny working group members were provided with information on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 not only to test their understanding of the Act, but to support them in their preparations to consider and test the principles of the Act by considering the development of low carbon vehicle (LCV) infrastructure across RCT (derived originally from a Notice of Motion at Full Council on the [28 February 2018](#) and subsequently referred to Scrutiny for review).

The Group's agreed purpose is to consider the development of the infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicles that will improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. In its considerations the Scrutiny Working Group is applying the Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny, in particular, the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, i.e. Integration, Collaboration, Long term thinking, Involvement and Prevention.

As part of its considerations, the Group will analyse and evaluate the development of infrastructure for LCVs throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf which will inform the development of the Council's own fleet efficiency through the adoption of LCV technologies. This approach is enabling the Group to establish a wider view of the challenges and opportunities that LCVs will offer for the people that live, work and visit RCT.

I am excited by this piece of work and anticipate that the recommendations will draw on best practice and evaluations whilst considering the needs of the residents and workforce within RCT by demonstrating that we are working more sustainably towards the seven national Well-being goals.

Fire Safety Arrangements for Social Housing, Supported Housing, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Council Owned Buildings.

The tragedy of the Grenfell Tower disaster was a stark reminder of the paramount importance of the safety of our staff and residents and the need to ensure that our buildings meet requisite safety standards. Following the disaster this Local Authority undertook an audit in respect of Fire Safety Arrangements for Social Housing, Supported Housing, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Council Owned Buildings and it was decided that in view of the cross cutting issues the matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In early 2018 this Committee conducted an in depth inquiry into this matter and as a result of our interventions a number of important practices have been implemented, such as:-

- The re-establishment of a Fire Safety Working Group to identify key corporate health and safety priorities;
- The provision of specific instructions to reinforce 'Responsible Persons' `site level` duties;
- A review of the list of 'Responsible Persons' for each property; and
- The health & safety team to continue to undertake a rolling programme of fire safety audits which are prioritised on a risk basis.

We also requested to be kept updated with progress reports at regular intervals so we could identify where progress is still needed.

At our meeting in December 2018 discussion focused on the evacuation/fire procedures practiced in residential care homes and schools across the County Borough. Members reported on the need for an additional check to be implemented to ensure that all staff with responsibility for overseeing fire/health & safety procedures understand the processes and responsibilities. Members recommended that an e-learning course with tests to complete is available as an additional level of assurance. We will continue to receive regular progress reports with a view to strengthening the arrangements going forward.

Call-In

In accordance with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, this Committee is responsible for dealing with all Call-Ins. A special meeting of the Committee was held on [3rd April 2019](#) to deal with two valid Call-In's which were submitted in respect of a decision taken by the Cabinet relating to the 21st Century Schools proposals.

The reason for the Call-In's concerned a number of issues such as the consultation methodology which had been undertaken with relevant stakeholders and interested parties,

Welsh Medium Education and concerns that the Cabinet failed to adequately discharge its duties under the provision of the Welfare of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The meeting was attended by the Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong learning as well as the Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and Welsh Language. We also welcomed three public speakers to our committee who were able to voice their views and concerns to Committee (this was testament to our newly published public participation guide which had been formally been agreed by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and published to the dedicated Scrutiny webpage). Following much discussion and debate of the issues relating to the proposals to reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form provision in the greater Pontypridd area it was resolved that both Call-In's were unsuccessful i.e. not referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

Conclusion

I hope we have demonstrated a refreshed approach to work programming this year, addressing how O&S prioritises work in line with member and council objectives and demonstrated how we are responding to the proposals for improvement to our Scrutiny arrangements. I believe we have provided objectivity, logicity, constructive challenge and produced many thoughtful and balanced recommendations that deliver change but we will continue to work hard to improve further on these next year.

I would like to acknowledge my Vice Chair, County Borough Councillor S. Evans who has supported me in my role as Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Between us we regularly attend meetings of the other four themed Scrutiny Committees to show support for our Scrutiny Chairs. I am grateful to members of the various scrutiny panels for their hard work and contributions throughout the year. I am also grateful to all the local groups, national organisations and individuals who have attended, made presentations and provided evidence at scrutiny meetings, and to Council officers and Cabinet Members for their attendance.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



S.Rees-Owen-Chair



W.Lewis -Vice-Chair



H.Boggis



J.Brencher



A. Calvert



J. Davies



A. Davies-Jones



S. Evans



H. Fychan



M. Griffiths



J. Harries



G. Jones



M. Powell



S. Powell



G. Stacey

Terms of Reference

The overview & scrutiny role in connection with scrutinising all education provision from 3 - 19 years and Children's Services.

It is with great pleasure that I report on another productive year as Scrutiny Chair for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee along with my Vice Chair Councillor Wendy Lewis who has supported me through a very busy year.

We welcomed County Borough Councillor Alexander Davies-Jones to our Committee following changes to the Political Balance in November 2018 in place of County Borough Councillor Lewis Hooper. We would also like to thank Councillor Hooper for all his hard work whilst being a part of the Committee.

Once again, we have had a very busy year considering both Educational and Children's Services matters, where we consider all the key elements, required to support and safeguard the children and young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf in helping them to reach their potential. I feel along with my fellow Committee Members that we have had a very productive 12 months considering topics of great importance which have and will produce valuable recommendations and outcomes for both this Municipal Year and next.

It would be remiss of me not to mention and thank the Education Co-opted Members who are a valuable part of this Scrutiny Committee. These representatives are not elected members of the Council, and are appointed because of their level of knowledge and experience and they make a very useful contribution to discussions and help make the correct decisions in relation to important matters.

The following topics will provide an overview of the work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

21st Century Schools Modernisation

I am pleased that as a Committee we have had the opportunity to contribute and comment on a number 21st Century Schools proposals which are being considered by the Council. As Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, I am pleased to announce that we are one of the first Scrutiny Committees to take part in this type of process and will have the opportunity in the future to contribute to any further consultations.

On the 19th December 2018, we welcomed the opportunity to engage in the formal consultation process in respect of the 21st Century School Programmes – Proposals to Improve Education in the Greater Pontypridd Area and Proposals to Improve Education in Cynon Valley. The Director of Education and Inclusion along with Education Officers took Members through the formal Consultation Process where we put forward our view and comments which fed into the main Consultation Document that was presented to Cabinet on the following dates:

- Cynon Valley Proposal 24th January Cabinet Meeting.
- Greater Pontypridd Proposal 21st March 2018.

We have also taken the opportunity to look at the recent developments that were part of the Band A process of the 21st Century Schools Provision. A group of Members from our

Committee have recently visited four of the new schools that had been developed through the Band A Process. The schools are as follows:

- Ysgol Nant Gwyn,
- Porth Community School,
- Tonyrefail Community School, and
- Cwmaman Primary School

Whilst visiting the above schools we were pleased to see the brand new facilities that were on offer to the Children and Young People of the County Borough. We also had the opportunity to speak to Head teachers, Staff and pupils and get their views on the new provisions. Feedback from our visit was positive however, it was brought to our attention that the transition process to the three to sixteen schools needed greater support. As a Committee, we have agreed to carry out a piece of work in twelve months' time to see how the Band A proposal is progressing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Head Teachers for allowing us to visit their schools and look forward to having them attend a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in the future to talk about their experiences and consider future data.

We will continue to monitor the progress of these schools along with any other proposals that are brought to our attention for the greater good of our children and young people.

Sanitary Provision in Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

During the Municipal year 2017/18 Members of the Children and Young People Committee formed a working group to deal with the Notice of Motion which was presented to Council in July 2017. The Notice of Motion stated:

“ That this Council will research the availability of free sanitary products, such as tampons and towels, in all Secondary Schools in the County Borough as an acknowledgement that they are as essential as toilet paper for the personal hygiene of female pupils”.

As a Committee, we were happy to see that full Council supported the move in February 2018 which required all schools in RCT with pupils aged nine and above to provide free sanitary products for female learners to access independently. Cabinet gave final approval at its April Meeting, which saw a six-month trial commencing in the autumn term.

The Committee requested a report from officers six months on to see what progress had been made against the recommendations. The scheme appears to have been implemented across most schools within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The vast majority of responses from schools were positive, which suggests that the local authority's lead on this was well received and needed.

We considered the report in great detail and agreed that the Working Group will undertake a further review of the scheme in another six months and for this to be brought back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in preparation for Cabinet's consideration of additional funding from April 2020 upon the cessation of the Welsh Government Grant.

There were so many other reports and topics within education which we have considered over the course of the last year but the above topics have highlight the work we have

undertaken to contribute to a better future for our children and young people's education. We will continue to scrutinise the service as best we can in the future to ensure the best results possible.

Within the remit of the Children's Services portfolio of our Committee, we have continued to address the challenges from the last Municipal year along with new and relevant subjects.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS)

As a Committee, we were concerned with the wellbeing of our younger members of the Community and so we felt that we needed to consider what support was available to improve the mental health of children and young people across the County Borough. In October 2018, we invited the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to the Committee where we had robust discussion. Members felt passionately there needed to be more collaboration between Health, Children's Services, Education and Third Party Organisations to ensure waiting times are lowered, the needs of this vulnerable cohort are taken seriously and actions are put in place to address the issues of great concern. We fully intend to monitor this area to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our young people.

Accommodation for 16+years of age Leaving Care

After receiving a report from the Service Director of Children's Services and the Head of the Youth Offending Service in respect of accommodation for vulnerable children in RCT, we agreed that there was a need for the Committee to have input into the Accommodation Strategy. In January this year the draft report was brought before Committee so we were able to form part of the final Strategy that was presented to Cabinet. As a Committee, we will continue to monitor the progress of the Accommodation Strategy for 16+ as the level of complexity that some children within the system have in respect of their physical and mental health needs. The transition from childhood to adulthood needs to be as smooth and easy as possible, and as a Committee going forward we will receive updating reports to ensure the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our youth across the authority is a priority.

Conclusion

Once again we have worked closely with the relevant officers on very important subjects and I am confident that our work has made a difference. With many big changes facing both education and children's services over the coming months I believe we have contributed in a positive way and will continue to scrutinise education and children's services to ensure that the outcomes for the children of Rhondda Cynon Taf are the very best they can be.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



R. Yeo-Chair



G. Holmes-Vice Chair



A. Chapman



J. Davies



L. De Vet



M. Forey



P. Howe



G. Hughes



L. Jones



D. Owen-Jones



A. Roberts



G. Stacey



M. Tegg



J. Williams



C. Willis

Terms of Reference

The overview & scrutiny role in connection with scrutinising services which support the Health & Wellbeing of our communities. The Committee considers adult social services as well as other factors which contribute to the health & wellbeing of the County Borough such as Leisure Services, Housing and Public Health & Wellbeing.

Once again it has been a very busy year for Members and before presenting the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19 , I would like to place on record my thanks to County Borough Councillor Glynne Holmes for all his work as Vice Chair of this Committee.

I feel that as a Committee we have become more robust in tackling what are very important issues for the health and wellbeing of many members of our society. As a Committee, we continue to closely monitor the services that provide support for our Adult and Elderly Population. We have scrutinised the following areas i.e.:

- Early Intervention and Prevention;
- Home Care Services;
- Delayed Transfers of Care (DTCOC);
- Stay Well at Home Service; and
- Extra Care Housing Provision.

I am pleased to announce that at the beginning of this municipal year the Vice Chair and myself attended a one-to-one engagement session with County Borough Councillor Rhys Lewis, Deputy Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Wellbeing so that we could discuss the many topics under the umbrella of the Public Health and Protection Service that could be addressed by our Committee.

We visited the new 3 G Pitch provision in Abercynon, which enabled us to see how the large investment in the leisure services would help both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of members of our Communities across the County Borough. We held our first meeting of the year in the Alby Davies Suite at Abrecynon Sport Centre so as to encourage public participation in our Scrutiny process. We have consider a great deal of topics over the year and I feel the following will show all the hard work the Committee has contributed in improve outcomes for our communities within RCT.

EMI Nursing Bed Provision

During the Municipal Year 2017/18 Members of this Committee formed a Working Group to consider the availability of EMI nursing bed provision across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The review continued into this Municipal Year where Members of the Working group met with independent providers who contributed to the discussion of the availability of these very important facilities. Following the review undertaken, the Working Group formulated recommendations for monitoring and improving the availability for these very vulnerable members of society.

I am pleased to announce that the report and the recommendations of our EMI nursing Provision Working Group were presented to Cabinet on 19th March 2019 and all the recommendations were agreed in principle:

- That Scrutiny continued to monitor delayed transfers of care performance and in particular, issues relating to the availability of EMI nursing care home provision.
- That Cabinet ensure the recommendations in the Cwm Taf Market Position Statement are being delivered in particular those aimed at the more specialist provision and need for more provision linked to complex care i.e. dementia and dementia nursing.

I would like to thank all the Members of the Working Group for all their hard work along with the Officers for a succession of very informative meetings.

Stay Well at Home Service

As a Committee, we have received a great deal of information since the Spring of 2017 in respect of collaborative work that has been carried out between Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board in the development of the Stay Well at Home Service. As this is such huge step forward in supporting independent living for everyone for as long as possible, we felt this this topic should be monitored very closely .

I am pleased to report that this new model of care is working extremely well and that the Service has received high recognition in the form of the Social Care Accolades 2018 where they were highly commended. In the NHS Wales Awards 2018, the Service was recognised for working seamlessly across organisations and became the overall winner of the best project. Along with my fellow Members, I would like to congratulate the Service for their hard work.

We were informed at our Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in February 2019 of the proposed Phase 2 of the Stay Well at Home Service (Stay Well at Home Single Point of Access and Rapid Response). As a Committee, we look forward to receiving a report after confirmation of funding from the Welsh Government. We will continue to monitor the progress of the service across the County Borough.

Community Day Centre Consultation Report

We had the opportunity to take part in the Community Day Centre Consultation process. Members acknowledged that the Community day centres provide facilities for residents over 50 years of age to access a hot meal each weekday and participate in a range of activities. However, as a Committee we also recognised the need for change and being part of this consultation allowed us to put our views forward.

We agreed that the current service is unsustainable and we acknowledged that there is a need to work in collaboration with communities and third sector organisations to deliver a more integrated service delivery for the benefit of residents across the County Borough.

Our comments will feed into the formal consultation that will be put before Cabinet and we are looking forward to receiving information in respect of the new Community Hubs along with new and exciting services, which will provide a better public service and create economies of scale in terms of staff and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new fit for purpose buildings, will enable services to be sustainable in the long term.

Conclusion

This year has been an incredibly busy year for the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee but a fulfilling one. We have undertaken a range of pre-scrutiny and consultation work as evidenced in this report and we have challenged some of the Council's most important public facing issues.

I am extremely grateful to my fellow Members for their support and dedication throughout the year and also to the very hardworking Officers of this Council who have helped us make a great contribution to scrutiny in 2018/19.

PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



S. Bradwick - Chair



T. Williams - Vice-Chair



A. Chapman



M. Fidler Jones



A. S. Fox



E. George



D. Grehan



G. Hughes



W. Owen



D. Owen-Jones



S. Pickering



G. Stacey



E. Stephens



W. Treeby



M. Weaver

Terms of Reference

'The overview and scrutiny role in connection with scrutinising public service delivery across a range of Council services. The Committee considers areas which contribute to prosperity and also community safety issues. It is the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee (pursuant to Section 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006).'

We welcomed Councillor A. S. Fox to our Committee following changes to the Political Balance in November 2018 in place of Councillor M. Diamond.

I feel once again that it has been a busy and varied year for the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee but a very enjoyable and productive 12 months. It is difficult to choose just a few areas that I consider worthy of greater detail here as there have been so many important pieces of work that we have undertaken but the following represent those areas where recommendations and outcomes can be measured during the next municipal year.

Voluntary Snow Wardens

Let me start with a matter which was referred to us from Full Council on the 19th September 2018 as part of a [Notice of Motion](#), 'Consideration of Voluntary Snow Wardens'. The Working Group we established to properly consider the matter determined that whilst we agreed with the principal of voluntary snow wardens, in reality there were many wider issues to consider such as maintaining a register of wardens who would require training and support. We recognised that the work needed to be progressed swiftly so that any decisions could be included as part of the Council's wider severe winter weather preparations.

We formulated four recommendations, all of which were accepted by Cabinet, one of which led to a county wide campaign entitled '**Your neighbours need you**'. For the Working Group this embodied the ethos of the snow warden by encouraging communities to work together during periods of severe winter weather and to support a greater community resilience. The campaign included practical and helpful advice on how the spirit of volunteering can be promoted during periods of heavy snowfall.

The Working Group also:-

- Acknowledged that Elected Member involvement is crucial in linking with local communities;
- Agreed that a dedicated Elected Member hotline, which can be accessed by all Elected Members for support, advice and up-to-date information on the local situation during periods of extreme weather, should be promoted
- Supported the Council's purchase of two 4x4 snow ploughs that would also ensure that we are even better prepared when the snow next hits.

The campaign was published on the Council's website and to the dedicated Scrutiny web pages for all our residents to read and embrace in the future.

This Scrutiny Committee covers such a wide remit and so it is essential we choose our topics carefully and those that really matter to our residents. Recycling has always been at the forefront of our Work Programme, since I have been Chair of this Committee. It represents an emotive topic for our communities but the local authority has a statutory recycling target to meet (70% target for recycling by 2024/25) and failure to meet this target will result in significant fines for every percentage not achieved.

Recycling in Communal Areas

During the earlier part of the municipal year we received a presentation outlining the opportunities and challenges that the recycling teams encounter at communal bin collection points (BCP's) across the County Borough. These are designated areas agreed by Waste Services where a number of properties leave their recycling and refuse. We decided that improvements to the waste collection arrangements at these points could further increase the overall municipal recycling rates and increase community satisfaction (where residents are satisfied with the service, there may be more engagement and a higher performance on participation). We focussed our work on two areas, communal recycling through the perspective of the social landlords and the enforcement powers available to the Council.

To give these areas due regard we split the Working Group into two sub groups with a view to devising a long term waste strategy for these areas of concern including a review of all problematic bin collection points. We have received a positive response from the Social Housing Landlords who are working closely with us to achieve an increased amount of food and waste recycled in communal areas and I am pleased to report that we have agreed that an engagement event will take place with our partners and residents in an area with poor participation levels. We will undertake door knocking and letter dropping to promote recycling in the designated area and identify if there are any barriers to recycling efficiently. The event will also be utilised to distribute free nappy waste bags and food bins. We will take the opportunity to engage with our residents in the area to ask them how we can make their recycling arrangements more accessible so that we can ensure they are satisfied with our services.

We are also investigating ways in which our Planning Department can collaborate with Waste Services on future planning developments so that the Council can better access some currently hard to reach communal areas with their Waste lorries and provision within the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for to bin collection points within communal areas. These simple changes may bring about some significant improvements to the way the Council manages its waste collections.

As I write this report, work to identify best practise and provide suggestions on ways for the local authority to improve the operation of recycling schemes from within communal areas is ongoing. We want to ensure that all opportunities to work with social housing landlords and other stakeholders are explored. Our outcomes from this review will be reported in the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 and shared on our dedicated Scrutiny web pages.

Assess the Impact of the Planning & Development Committee

At the beginning of the year we assessed the effectiveness of the Council's Planning and Development Committee as it had been many years since we had undertaken significant work in this area. During 2014/15 and as a result of a Scrutiny review, the decision was taken to move away from an all 75 Elected Member Planning Committee to the smaller Committee we have today. Other areas for concern included the then high number of Elected Member overturns of officer recommendations, speaking rights, voting procedures and public experience.

We held an extensive discussion with key officers and determined that the following recommendations should be implemented:-

- Appropriate training be given to all Members of the Council to facilitate their understanding of the planning process;

- Progress in relation to the Planning and Development Committee be tracked via an Annual Report to be presented to the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee;
- The 'Code of Good Practice' is reviewed and revised as appropriate; and
- The Director of Wales Planning Inspectorate is invited to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

I am very pleased to report that since our meeting:-

The Planning Inspectorate delivered training on his role to all Elected Members on **24th January 2019**; Pre Consultation training was delivered to all Elected members on **18th October 2018**; and the 'Plot Shop' Initiative training was received on **8th November 2018** (Plot Shop is an initiative which will help sell plots of land to those wishing to build their own home – whether from scratch or through customised design).

We will ask for the aforementioned annual report to come to the this Scrutiny Committee next year so we can evaluate progress of the Planning & Development Committee and continue our focus on the Code of Good Practice to see whether the revisions are in line with our challenges.

Crime & Disorder Committee

The Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee is the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Committee (under sections 19 & 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006) and is required to hold at least one meeting per year although I quickly identified the importance of this Committee and asked that we hold at least two every year.

That decision has proved to be of value as this year we have had full agendas to both our meetings in October 2018 and February 2019, some of which are set out as follows:-

- We looked at two very influential projects, DIVERT and WISDOM, the former has prevented re-offending by working with young first time offenders aged 18-25 through the 'DIVERT' programme - 96% of attendees did not re-offend within six months of attending the programme;
- We worked closely with the Superintendent of South Wales Police as they undertook a national review of the Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meetings and we identified areas which required further consideration and should be included in the consultation the outcomes of which we will analyse next year ;
- We have continued to play a part in the development of the Cwm Taf Community Safety Delivery Plan 2018-2021 and now we will continue to review the status of the Delivery Plan and each sub action to monitor progress against its red, amber and green targets; and
- We explored how the Community Safety Partnership, which involves the Local Authority, South Wales Police and many other agencies including Housing Associations, deals with Anti-Social Behaviour in a joint approach to reduce Crime. We found there is a strong commitment, between all the partners in Rhondda Cynon Taf, to deal effectively with perpetrators of Anti-Social Behaviour and provide support to victims of Anti-Social Behaviour.

There are many areas which we will continue to monitor in the next municipal year and I look forward to another challenging and fulfilling work programme in respect of the Crime & Disorder Committee.

As Chair, I am pleased to say that this Scrutiny Committee continues its ambition to be proactive, adding value in its ability to make a positive contribution to work throughout the County Borough.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Vice-Chair, County Borough Councillor Tina Williams for her support as well as all the Scrutiny members and officers for their important commitment and contribution over the past year. I would also like to mention the Scrutiny team who have supported me and my Committee throughout the past year.

FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



J. Williams –Chair



G. Thomas -Vice-Chair



S. Bradwick



G. Caple



J. Cullwick



G. R. Davies



A. Davies-Jones



J. Elliott



A. S. Fox



G. Holmes



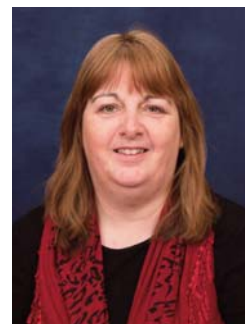
W. Lewis



M. Powell



S. Rees-Owen



T. Williams



R. Yeo

Terms of Reference

'This Committee is responsible for scrutinising financial and operational performance; treasury management arrangements; the annual revenue budget consultation process; statutory performance reporting requirements and monitoring the implementation of medium term financial planning decisions.'

As from the Council's Annual Meeting held on the 23rd May, 2018, County Borough Councillor M. Powell was the Chair of this Committee up to the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee held on the 11th December 2018 when I took the Chair. This was as a result of the Alliance Group losing its entitlement to the Scrutiny Chair position it previously had and the Plaid Cymru group gaining an additional Scrutiny Chair position. Councillor M. Diamond was also replaced by Councillor A. S. Fox as a result of changes to the political balance.

Before presenting key areas of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal year 2018/19 I would like to place on record my thanks to County Borough Councillor M. Powell for playing an integral part in taking forward the Work Programme for the first four meetings of the Municipal Year 2018/19. It was fitting therefore that he has remained on the Committee as a valuable member of Scrutiny. I am new to the Chair but have been a member of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee since the Council's AGM in May 2018. I was thrilled to be asked to chair this Committee as I appreciate the importance of monitoring the council's corporate performance against its annual targets and the quarterly financial monitoring function.

Sickness Absence

We quickly identified an additional item for our Work Programme at the beginning of the year, in respect of Sickness Absence. The item referred to the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 18th April, 2018 when it was reported that £130,000 had been identified to support the ongoing work to minimise the impact that sickness absence has on service delivery across the County Borough through initiatives such as the establishment of a dedicated Absence Management Team. We were keen to learn more about the Council's strategy which is intent on supporting individuals to stay in work and to identify and manage illnesses through a wide range of support packages.

We provided challenge on the information we received and Members required further action in respect of the following areas:-

- The lack of comparable data with other Welsh local authorities with regard to sickness absence to enable us to assess where progress was needed ;
- The lack of clarity regarding the underlying factors for the increase in sickness absence in particular service areas; and
- A breakdown of the actual costs and financial impact of the sickness levels on the Council for the years analysed.

Our concerns were addressed and we were provided with the relevant information which enabled us to follow up our earlier enquiry with satisfactory outcomes and evidence of reduced sickness absence. We have committed to further reviewing this important issue during the next municipal year by means of the Council's Quarterly Performance reports as well as specific reports to us as appropriate to ensure that all is being done to support our workforce and sustain reduced absence levels.

Council Performance Reports

In line with this Committee's Terms of Reference we have undertaken regular challenge of the

Council's budget proposals and expenditure and scrutiny of Council performance every quarter. These quarterly reports contain a wealth of information such as revenue and capital budget performance, organisational health information including staff turnover, sickness and Council strategic risks, Corporate Plan priority action plan updates and details of other national measures and target setting. With this in mind, it is crucial that we understand and ask questions of the Finance Officers to be able to carry out the most effective and robust review and challenge on elements of the Council's budget and performance.

In line with our terms of reference we have undertaken pre scrutiny of the draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) 2018/19 and the 2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy and made recommendations to Cabinet as a result of this work. We commented that the CPR's '*ambitions for 2018/19 are understandable and will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised*'.

We provided feedback on the annual Revenue Budget Consultation process. To meet this requirement we receive, on an annual basis, an overview of the current budget position for the forthcoming year and at the same time we are requested to provide feedback on a number of areas as part of the consultation process. We also undertook detailed review of the Council's performance Indicators for 2018/19 to assess whether they are on target, the process aims to help the Committee discharge this responsibility and also be fully informed when scrutinising the Council's performance during the year.

Register of Food Businesses in RCT

A [Notice of Motion](#) to Council on the 24th October was subsequently referred to us in respect of the register of food businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Notice of Motion requires us to look at ways in which all local food producers in RCT are encouraged and supported and how the marketing and consumption of local produce can be effectively promoted.

We have since established a Scrutiny Working Group, and as I write this the inaugural meeting has been set for the 3rd April 2019 to agree the Terms of Reference and consider the extent to which the current statutory Food Business Register supports the local economy. The Council has a statutory duty to maintain its current register of food businesses. The existing database is available as a public register and significant resources are required to maintain the integrity of this register as it directly informs the Council's food law enforcement activity

There are a number of areas we will consider, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Working Group, such as reviewing how the food register is being provided to food businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf and we fully intend to identify any gaps in provision to ensure that we as a Council are doing our best for the local food businesses. Our recommendations will be reported back to the Finance & Scrutiny Committee and then to the Executive for its consideration and we look forward to delivering solid and tangible outcomes. These recommendations will be reported in the next Scrutiny Overview & Scrutiny Annual report during the next Municipal Year.

We continue to respond to the varied Scrutiny Work Programme for Finance & Performance Scrutiny with robust challenge to the council's budget proposals. It is sometimes not the easiest of topics to address and credit must be given to the Finance Officers within the authority for providing clarity when it is required.

I would like to thank my Vice Chair, Councillor G. Thomas who has been supportive of me in my new role and all the members of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee who have been involved in a huge amount of work over the past year and we look forward to monitoring the future activities in the forthcoming year.

