

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, on Tuesday, 8th July 2014 at 4.00 pm.

Present:

County Borough Councillor G Stacey – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

H Boggis	S Carter	J David
P Griffiths	S Lloyd	M A Norris
(Mrs) M Tegg	(Mrs) J S Ward	E Webster
D W Weeks	C Willis	R A Yeo

Officers:

Mr P J Lucas – Director of Legal & Democratic Services
Mr V Hanly – Service Director, Procurement
Ms Ann Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H Boggis, (Mrs) J Cass, (Mrs) M E Davies, S Rees-Owen and P Wasley.

2. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Hanly.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interest in relation to the agenda.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 10th April 2014 be approved as a correct record;
- (ii) that the minutes of the special meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 29th April 2014 be approved as a correct record;

- (iii) that the minutes of the meeting of the special Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 4th June 2014 be approved as a correct record;

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

5. PRESENTATION: THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S PROCUREMENT FITNESS TEST

The Service Director for Procurement provided the Committee with a presentation in respect of the Welsh Government's Procurement Fitness Test providing the background and overview of the process. It was explained that the process had originated from a review commissioned by the Minister for Finance in March 2012 into 'Maximising the Impact of Welsh Procurement Policy'. The objective of the work was to determine whether organisational procurement capability is adequate and also enable organisations to identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

The Service Director explained that local authorities were asked to consider their procurement processes against an assessment model and were then rated upon according to their maturity and categorised into four bands, non-conforming, developing toward conforming, developing toward advanced and advanced. It was reported that Rhondda Cynon Taf's assessment had been 'developing toward advanced'. For information he also provided Members with a copy of the assessment findings and the Council's Procurement Strategy for 2013-2016.

The Service Director summarised the findings and explained that a series of actions had been identified based on the identified areas for improvement which have now been incorporated into a strategic business plan and procurement strategy. He also reported that a cross departmental procurement delivery group had been established and additional guidance is being provided to directorates via the Mercury project. The service's 5 key performance indicators have been reviewed and 25 local indicators established. It was also explained how the service had strong links to both the Medium Term Service Planning Action Plan and the Physical Regeneration Action Plan.

Following the presentation, the Service Director responded to Members' questions.

The Committee welcomed the positive outcome of the fitness check and congratulated the Service Director and his team for the ongoing work in driving forward the procurement strategy. However, it was also pointed out that whilst the procurement service was doing its utmost to reduce energy costs through the contract management process, there should be a focus on reducing energy consumption. Members also questioned whether service managers were fully collaborating with the procurement service.

The Service Director acknowledged these comments and explained that work was underway to identify those key people in the service directorates who needed to be provided with additional contract awareness skills. The Service Director also reported on the systems in place to encourage the local small and medium enterprises to tender for contracts with the Council.

A Member suggested that the presentation slides should be circulated to all scrutiny committee Members to highlight the importance of good procurement across all service areas. The Service Director added that the procurement strategy was available on the Council's website.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to note the outcome of the Welsh Government's Fitness Check;
- (ii) to provide all scrutiny Members with a copy of today's presentation slides.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6. PREPARATION OF A WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2014/15

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services presented Members with a report setting out the issues for consideration when preparing the work programme for the Committee.

The Director also drew Members' attention to the attached report of the Wales Audit Office "Good Scrutiny? Good Question!" and explained that a working group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had been formed to take forward the issues identified.

Members discussed the work programme and it was pointed out that in the current financial situation there was perhaps a need to focus on service costs analysis. The Director explained that there would be a series of meetings between scrutiny chairs and cabinet portfolio holders which would be an opportunity to discuss such areas of work.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to note the content of the report;
- (ii) to agree the draft work programme as set out at appendix 1, subject to noting Members comments.

G Stacy
Chairman

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm.

