

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, 7th October 2014 at 4.00 pm.

Present:

County Borough Councillor G Stacey – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

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| S Carter | (Mrs) J Cass | J David |
| P Griffiths | S Lloyd | M A Norris |
| (Mrs) M Tegg | P Wasley | E Webster |
| C Willis | R Yeo | |

Officers:

Mr P J Lucas – Director of Legal & Democratic Services
Ms J Cook – Director of Regeneration & Planning
Mr C Atyeo – Director of Corporate Estates
Mr P Griffiths – Service Director, Performance and Improvement
Ms Ann Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H Boggis, (Mrs) M E Davies, S Rees-Owen, (Mrs) J S Ward and D W Weeks.

18. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced officers.

19. 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.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held on 9th September 2014 be approved as a correct record.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

21. THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORPORATE ESTATES

The Director of Corporate Estates presented his report to the Committee providing an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Corporate Estates

Service which includes Strategic Asset Management, the Estate Management Service, Energy Management & Carbon Reduction, Corporate Design and Corporate Property Maintenance.

Following the presentation of his report the Director was questioned on the Property Management System and the sale of assets and the influencing factors which determine the method of sale. He also responded to questions in relation to the project management of the major programmes of work such as delivery of the 21st Century Schools Programme. With regard to the new Sobell Leisure Centre he explained that whilst there had been additional costs associated with the project, these had been subject to an approval process, for example, fine tuning aspects of the design to improve energy efficiency.

In conclusion, the Director responded to queries in relation to the staff structure and with regard to the number of Support Service posts he explained that many also had a technical element to them. It was agreed that the Director would provide more details of the Support Services Team structure to Members.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

22. **EXCEPTION REPORT – COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th JUNE 2014 (QUARTER 1)**

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement presented Members with the Exception Report which provided financial and performance management information for the Corporate Services Group and the Chief Executive's Division. The report provided the position at the end of the first quarter in respect of revenue budgets, capital budgets and treasury management as well as outlining operational performance in relation to the Wales Programme for Improvement action plan for Improving Our Communities (Social and Physical Regeneration). He also outlined the overall performance indicator results within the remit of the Committee and highlighted the key 'Health Check' measures for the service areas along with sickness absence trends.

Members were asked to consider the key issues as presented in the exception report which had been taken from the main report that had been presented to the Cabinet Performance and Resources Committee on the 23rd September 2014.

A Member raised concern regarding the failure to meet the indicator in relation to the percentage of self service/advisor booked appointments at the Council's One4All Centres.

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement reported that the provision to book appointments through the Council's Contact Centre became available in June 2014 with its introduction having a positive effect in its first month (improving performance from 7% in both April and May to 11% in June). The Director also indicated that the service would continue to raise awareness of

the appointment service to customers and would feedback the concern raised by the Committee to the Director of Customer Care & ICT.

With regard to the indicator measuring the percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks, a Member questioned whether the move to a smaller Development Control Committee had made any difference.

The Director of Regeneration & Planning explained that when dealing with major applications the procedure could be very complex with a large amount of paperwork and consultations to be undertaken which made the 8 week target unrealistic. She explained that with the introduction of the Planning (Wales) Bill it is expected that the Welsh Government will take the opportunity to review this indicator. She added that for these major applications, the changes to the Development Control Committee would not have a significant an impact on timeliness, due to the small number of complex applications.

A Member asked whether the figures setting out the physical visits to Museums could be broken down to identify those visiting the collections as opposed to those only using the coffee shops.

The Director of Performance and Improvement indicated that the specific performance measure within the Council's Healthcheck aimed to capture the number of physical visits to heritage venues across the County Borough rather than the reason(s) for visits.

A Member welcomed the positive performance of the homelessness service given the challenges of welfare reform and asked whether an explanation of how this was achieved could be provided. He also queried the reduction in the number of young people claiming Job Seekers Allowance and asked whether more information could be provided to demonstrate whether these young people had found employment, joined training schemes etc., or been de-registered.

The Director of Performance and Improvement reported that he would pass this request on to the relevant officers and a response provided to Members. The Director of Regeneration & Planning also added that the figures reflected a downward trend that was also being seen nationally.

With reference to the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a Member referred to guidance which suggested that where there are community councils in place, they are best placed to receive that portion of the levy which should be paid back into the community. He questioned whether his understanding of the guidance was correct and what progress was being made in this respect.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning confirmed that this was correct and explained that a report would be presented to the Cabinet and then Council in the coming months. The Director also explained that work was

underway to develop the procedures which would need to be put in place with regard to the CIL.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

G Stacey
Chairman

The meeting closed at 17.05 pm.