

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 20th July, 2016 at 3.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts – Chair

County Borough Councillors

S.Evans	S.Rees	(Mrs.)J.S.Ward
P.Griffiths	R.W.Smith	C.J.Willis
(Mrs.)C.Leyshon	B.Stephens	R.Yeo

Education Co-opted Member(s)

Mr.C.Jones – GMB

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.B.Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.B.Davies – Director of Financial Services
Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Service

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S.Bradwick, G.R.Davies, E.Webster, P.Wasley and Mr.R.Hull (Chair of the Audit Committee).

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct there were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th June, 2016.

11. CHANGE OF ORDER OF THE AGENDA

With the permission of the Chair, the report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services was brought forward, as shown below.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

12. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – OFFICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

The Director, Legal and Democratic Services attached to his report the findings of the Scrutiny Working Group, which was established at the meeting of this Committee held on the 4th November, 2015 (Minute No.33(i) refers) to review in more detail the use of office accommodation.

At the meeting the Director, Legal and Democratic Services reported that the Scrutiny Working Group undertook a detailed review of the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy over the course of four meetings and he highlighted some of the pertinent points that Members of the Working Group wished to draw to this Committee's and the Cabinet's attention

Following consideration of the report of the Scrutiny Working Group, Members raised concern on agile working and assurances were provided to the Committee that this area had been addressed by the Working Group.

RESOLVED – That the report of the Scrutiny Working Group be forwarded to the Cabinet with the recommendation that Cabinet approve the implementation of the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy.

13. PRESENTATION – THE COUNCIL'S YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

Members received Mr.B.Davies, Director of Financial Services and Mr.P.Griffiths, Service Director, Performance and Improvement who with the aid of PowerPoint slides provided a detailed overview of the Year End Council Performance Report for 2015/16, which had been reported to Cabinet at its meeting held on the 19th July, 2016.

The Officers apprised the Committee under the following key headings of the report:-

- Revenue Budget
- Treasury and Prudential Indicators
- Capital Budget
- WPI Action Plans (including Council Risks)
- Performance Indicators
- Health Checks

In respect of the Revenue Budget, Members were advised that at year end there was an underspend of £0.219M after taking account of investment, approved during the year, in the following areas:-

- Street Lighting Investment - £1.130M;
- Living Wage - £0.201M; and
- Corporate Plan Investment Priorities - £2.374M.

In response to a question raised by one of the Members as to whether any of the service cuts previously made could have been avoided as a result of the underspend situation, the Director of Financial Services indicated the Council set a balanced and deliverable revenue budget based on robust assessments of expenditure requirements and funding levels, and took into account the financial impact of service changes. The Director added that actual expenditure will sometimes differ to that budgeted for due to the demand led nature of many of the Council services, for example, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the impact of the Social Services Well-Being Act; however, the robustness of the Council's budget monitoring arrangements enabled early identification of in-year under-spends during 2015/16 to support a targeted programme of investment. The Director went on to say that the assessment of future years expenditure requirements is an on-going process within the Council that aims to protect frontline services, as far as is practicable, at a time of continued reductions in funding levels.

The Chair of the Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee highlighted the need for close monitoring around the implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being Act to enable the Council to gauge its impact and ensure the continued delivery of effective social care services.

A discussion ensued in respect of the performance indicators where it was noted that of a total of 171 indicators with targets set, 130 (76%) either achieved target or were within 5% of the target set and 41 indicators (24%) did not achieve the targets set by more than 5%.

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement also provided contextual information around how stretching the Council's 2015/16 targets were compared to 2014/15 actual performance levels. He noted that:

- 107 targets represented improvement (63%)
- 19 targets were set at the same level (11%)
- 41 targets represented a decline (24%)
- 4 targets whereby no comparison was available (2%)

Members queried the 41 performance indicators that had not achieved target by more than 5% and the Director of Financial Services indicated that there were underlying reasons for each and these were set out in the Performance Report and the PowerPoint presentation. This included higher than anticipated demand that had an adverse effect on a number of Children's Services performance indicators and factors external to the Council that influenced performance such as the number of pupils excluded from primary and secondary schools. Members also raised concerns / requested further information around performance in the following areas:

- Contact Centre average queue time – 105 seconds actual queue time against a target of 90 seconds – an up date on performance requested to be provided in 2016/17;

- The percentage of clients that reported feeling safer as a result of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor intervention (82% against a target of 85%) - to what extent is the provision delivered in partnership with the Police?;
- Estyn School inspections outcomes - further information on what support is being provided to the 11 schools out of 19 inspected in 2015/16 that require further monitoring and how this compares across Wales; and
- Evaluation of performance of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub being undertaken by the Police Service – further information on the scope of the evaluation and what is being evaluated.

Officers confirmed that an up date on these areas would be provided at the next meeting.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To receive the information;
2. That the PowerPoint slides be circulated to Members of the Committee and that copies of future presentations be circulated to Members in advance of the meetings of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

**M.J.WATTS
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting closed at 4.47 p.m.