

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 Monday, 26th March, 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor G.Holmes – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

S.Bradwick
J.Cullwick
G.R.Davies

W.Lewis
S.Rees-Owen

C.J.Willis
R.Yeo

Non Committee Members/Education Co-opted Members in Attendance

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

Mr.J.Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative

Mr.C.Jones – GMB Representative

Mr.P.Crews – Unison Representative

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.B.Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement

Ms.A.Richards – Head of 21st Century Schools

Ms.C.Hendy – Democratic Services Officer

35 CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell, the Vice-Chair, County Borough Councillor G.Holmes took the Chair.

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J.Elliott, M.J.Powell and T.Williams. An apology for absence was also received from Mr.R.Hull (lay Member and Chair of the Audit Committee).

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

38 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED - to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on the 29th January, 2018.

39 **PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE**

The Committee received Ms. A. Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools, who with the aid of PowerPoint slides updated Members on the progress to date in implementing operational changes to the Community Meals Service.

The Head of 21st Century Schools up dated the Committee on the staff consultation process, the weekend service, premises, contingency planning, meal numbers and the economic case.

Following the presentation, the Committee indicated that positive progress had been made to enable the operational changes to be implemented in line with agreed timescales and acknowledged the important and high quality role the Service provides to vulnerable people across the County Borough.

A Member requested clarity on whether the transportation of meals from Ynyshir to the Cynon Valley would cause any issues and also requested further information on the rationale for buying-in frozen meals from an external party rather than in-house production by the Council. The Head of 21st Century Schools confirmed that route reviews are being planned to minimise travel time and ensure the efficient and safe transportation of meals. The Head of 21st Century Schools went on to indicate that the purchase of frozen meals relates to the weekend service only with the majority of meals continuing to be produced by the Council.

RESOLVED – The Committee were satisfied with the information provided to Members and also wished to thank the staff concerned for working with the Authority on the changes.

40 **COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 3)**

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement presented Members with the Quarter 3 Council Performance Report to 31st December 2017 in relation to revenue and capital budget performance; Treasury Management prudential indicators; Organisational Health information including staff turnover, sickness and Council strategic risks; Corporate Plan priority action plan up dates; other national measures; and target setting.

The Service Director provided the Committee with an overview of the key information included within the report in respect of financial data and progress against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. Members were also provided with information regarding exceptions highlighted within each of the detailed sections and in conclusion the Service Director reported that out of 50

Corporate Plan performance indicators measured and reported during quarter 3, 28 were on target, 14 were within 5% of the target and 8 were not on target by more than 5%.

In response, Members raised a number of questions with the Service Director.

A Member requested up dated information around the number of empty properties brought back into use. The Service Director confirmed that this information is in the process of being compiled and would be included within the Council's Year-end Performance Report for review by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

A question was raised in respect of the high sickness rate, at quarter 3, for the Community and Children's Services Group compared to other Service Groups within the Council. The Service Director fed back that influencing factors are the nature of the work within specific areas of the Community and Children's Services Group and the age profile of the workforce, and he provided confirmation that this area is receiving prioritised attention and support. Mr.C.Jones (GMB Representative) also added that the Trade Unions and the Council's Management are working jointly together to provide targeted support and challenge to service areas with high sickness rates.

A further question was raised in respect of the reason for the year-on-year revenue budget underspend within Authority Wide budgets for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). The Service Director fed back that the budget set at the start of the year is informed by previous years' trend information and a forward forecast, with actual demand and caseload being lower than anticipated. The Service Director went on to confirm that the current CTRS projected underspend is feeding into the Council's overall projected revenue position and will continue to be closely monitored through to year-end. The Service Director added that 2017/18 trend information has been used to help inform the CTRS budget requirement for the forthcoming year.

A Member provided observations around school attendance and Key Stage 4 performance levels and confirmed these areas had been reviewed by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. The Member added that hopefully the position would improve moving forward following the challenges of a changing curriculum.

A Trade Union representative requested whether further information is available on the high number of staff leaving the School sector (565) compared to the total number of leavers (865). The Service Director indicated that this request would be passed to the Council's Human Resources Service for review.

A Trade Union representative also requested clarity on the projected revenue budget overspend on Commissioned Services and the projected underspend on Short Term Intervention Services. The Service Director indicated that the demand led nature of both services is a key factor in influencing in-year costs and work is underway to determine whether budget adjustments /

realignments are required for the forthcoming year as part of the budget setting process.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 31st December 2017 (Quarter 3).

**G.Holmes
Chair**

The meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.