

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2014**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No 3**

**SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

Author: Mrs A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Tel No: 01443 424102

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update in relation to scrutiny developments.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the information provided.
- (ii) appoint a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to fill the vacant position on the LSB Scrutiny Working Group.

**3. WALES AUDIT OFFICE (WAO) REPORT “GOOD SCRUTINY? GOOD QUESTION!” – SCRUTINY REVIEW**

3.1 As agreed at the last meeting of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014, a working group has been formed to consider the findings and recommendations of the Wales Audit Office’s Scrutiny Improvement Study and this group met for the first time earlier today.

3.2 Amongst its findings, the WAO study points to the benefits of holding pre-meetings for all committee members to prepare for the scrutiny committee meetings. Their research identified that the operation of these pre meetings varies across authorities. In order to inform the work of the scrutiny review, a small group of Members visited Bridgend County Borough Council on 8<sup>th</sup> July to observe a pre-meeting in action.

3.3 In addition, the Community and Children’s Scrutiny Committee piloted this way of working, prior to their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 and feedback will be provided at the meeting.

#### **4 LSB SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**

- 4.1 In line with Welsh Government guidance, the Local Service Board (LSB) is responsible for delivery of the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) and has met quarterly to review progress. Each quarterly meeting has been centred on one of the key outcome themes, namely, Safety, Health and Prosperity with the fourth quarter meeting reviewing the SIP.
- 4.2 On this basis, the LSB Scrutiny Working Group has also met quarterly, following the LSB meetings, to receive the performance management information in relation to the designated theme and also receive the LSB's response to the information. In turn, scrutiny's comments have been fed back to the LSB at their next meeting.
- 4.3 It was agreed at the start of this process, that the first year would be viewed as a pilot process, both the for LSB itself and the LSB Scrutiny Working Group. The LSB met on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to consider the draft SIP annual report and review the approach for the future and the LSB Scrutiny Working Group is meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 to similarly reflect on the first year of the pilot process.
- 4.4 The LSB Scrutiny Working Group comprises of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and co-opted members from Health and the voluntary sector. The membership from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprises County Borough Councillors R K Turner, P Jarman, (Mrs) C Leyshon, (Mrs) S Rees and also included County Borough Councillor G Hopkins. As the Committee is aware, County Borough Councillor G Hopkins has now been appointed to the Cabinet and is no longer a member of this Committee. The Committee is therefore asked to consider a replacement for this vacant position.

#### **5. SCRUTINY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, requires scrutiny committees to take account of the views of the public. However, the findings of the Wales Audit Office Scrutiny Improvement Study point to this being a weakness for authorities across Wales.
- 5.2 Earlier in the year, Scrutiny Officers were approached by Welsh Government representatives with a view to undertaking a project which would explore the use of performance information to support the accountability and scrutiny of public services by citizens and by elected Members.
- 5.3 As the Council's scrutiny committees had already made a commitment to establish scrutiny working groups to consider the improvement priority action plans which feed into the Corporate Plan and to utilise these working groups again as part of the process feeding into the

Council's Annual Delivery Report in the autumn, it was felt that this process could offer an opportunity to undertake a pilot study in engaging with the public.

- 5.4 Two of the seven priority action plans have been chosen to test the pilot process, namely, Streetcare and Managing People's Independence. With the assistance of the Consultation team, focus groups will be held to obtain the views of the citizen and their comments will be fed into the scrutiny working groups. In addition, two or three citizen representatives will be invited to attend the working group meetings in the autumn.
- 5.5 In order for this process to work there has to be careful preparation to ensure that those citizen representatives have an understanding of scrutiny and similarly, that elected members are sufficiently prepared for public participation in scrutiny. To this end, a half day development session has been arranged for 24<sup>th</sup> July 2014 for Members of all the improvement action plan working groups and this will be delivered by Participation Cymru.
- 5.6 From a Council perspective it is hoped that this way forward will lead to a better understanding of how citizen engagement can be used in scrutiny and also inform future work programming. It is the Welsh Government's intention that the learning from this project will be used as a case study/ model of best practice.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**as amended by**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16 JULY 2014**

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SERVICES**

Item - Scrutiny Developments

**Wales Audit Office 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!': Auditor General  
for Wales improvement study: Scrutiny in Local Government',  
May 2014**

Min No 35 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Proposed Scrutiny of the  
Corporate Plan 2014/15

(Officer to Contact: Ann Edwards, Committee Services Officer – Telephone  
No. 01443 424102