

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Monday, 26th September, 2016 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

W.J.David	B.Morgan
(Mrs.)M.E.Davies	G.Smith
A.S.Fox	P.Wasley
P.Jarman	R.Yeo
(Mrs.)S.Jones	

Non-Committee Member in Attendance

County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J.Bonetto, S.Pickering, S.Powderhill and S.Rees-Owen.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – to note that there were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda. However, personal declarations were made during the meeting as part of the discussion in respect of Agenda Item 3(a), Minute No.9 below refers.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as accurate records the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the following dates:-

- 5th July, 2016; and
- 2nd August, 2016 (copies circulated at the meeting).

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

9. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT, 2015 – SCRUTINY OF THE CWM TAF PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

In accordance with Minute Nos.9.6(3) and (4) of the Council's Annual Meeting held on the 25th May, 2016, the Director, Legal and Democratic Services reported on meetings that had been held with colleagues of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to investigate the possibility of creating a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Cwm Taf Public Services Board in the future.

In the absence of any statutory guidance being established for joint scrutiny arrangements for scrutinising the Public Services Boards, the draft terms of reference as attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the proposed Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were based on the requirements of the Future Generations Act, 2015, the Local Government (Wales) Measure, 2011, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny regulations and subsequent joint scrutiny statutory guidance.

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services further reported that the proposed membership of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were in accordance with paragraphs 3.5 – 3.7 of the statutory guidance of the Measure i.e. being on the basis that an equal number of Committee seats be allocated to each of the participating Councils which would mean larger authorities agreeing to have the same membership as smaller ones and that each Authority would need to make attempts to ensure that Member representation on the Joint Committee reflects the political balance represented in the relevant Scrutiny Committee (so far as practicable).

Members were informed that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee could also co-opt members who would be in addition to the allocations from each Council as well as appointing co-opted Statutory members (non-executive) from the University Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Natural Resources Wales (as detailed in paragraph 9 of the draft terms of reference – Appendix 2 to the report).

In conclusion, the Director, Legal and Democratic Services informed the Committee that this was a new joint approach and would need time to embed; however, effective joint scrutiny can measure maturity of partnership arrangements more generally and speed up integrated working across the region. This proposed function of democratic scrutiny would help achieve shared responsibility for improved outcomes across partner organisations and avoid duplication of time and resources of the individual authorities Scrutiny Committees.

The contents of the report of the Director, Legal and Democratic Services was also to be presented to Members of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's

respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council in September to establish the joint arrangements.

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

1. To agree to the creation of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising elected Members of both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils to scrutinise the Cwm Taf Public Services Board;
2. To agree that in the absence of any statutory guidance for Scrutiny of Public Service Boards, the establishment of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee be in accordance with the requirements of Section 58 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure, 2011, regulations and guidance;
3. To agree the draft terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2 and that the Director, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be given delegated authority to finalise/amend the terms of reference in accordance with the parameters set out in the report;
4. That the report of the Director, Legal and Democratic Services as presented to this meeting together with the resolutions as set out in 1 – 3 above, be endorsed by full Council; and
5. That when this Authority is to be nominated the position of Chair of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the remuneration of such post, if any, will be for the decision of full Council.

Note: County Borough Councillors B.Morgan and (Mrs.)S.J.Jones declared personal interests in the above matter as they are both members of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, which will be one of the statutory bodies where non-executive members could be co-opted to sit on the JOSOC.

10. WALES AUDIT OFFICE CORPORATE REPORTS

The Director, Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that at the 23rd June 2016 Cabinet meeting, four Wales Audit Office (WAO) reports were considered in respect of the Council's arrangements for: Financial Resilience Assessment; Review of the Council's arrangements for managing improvement; Review of decision making arrangements in relation to service change; and Rhondda Cynon Taf's Annual Improvement Report 2015-16.

The Director added that at the above mentioned Cabinet meeting it was agreed – *“to refer the reports and associated action plans to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that all non Executive Members be invited to*

attend” as it was felt that by receiving feedback from Scrutiny Members, Cabinet would have assurance that the recommendations of the WAO were being addressed.

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services reported that overall the four reports of the Wales Audit Office were positive and reflected the robust financial, service change and performance management arrangements in place within the Council. The Group Director acknowledged that there were opportunities to further improve current arrangements and the WAO had made seven proposals for improvement across three of the reports. The Group Director went on to indicate that the fourth report i.e. ‘Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Annual Improvement Report 2015-16’ was presented to full Council on the 20th July, 2016 and was included for information as Members would have had opportunity to provide feedback previously.

The Members views were sought on the progress made in response to the recommendations arising from the following reports of the Wales Audit Office and thereafter to provide feedback to the Cabinet:-

- Financial Resilience Assessment (3 recommendations);
- Review of the Council’s arrangements for managing improvement (2 recommendations); and
- Review of decision making arrangements in relation to service change (2 recommendations).

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services provided further context for Members in that the above mentioned three reports were part of a national thematic review across other Councils, as well as this Authority, and were based on activity / information relating to the 2015/16 financial year. The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services also referred Members to the action plans included at Appendix 4 to the report which set out the progress the Council was making toward implementing the seven WAO recommendations. The Group Director indicated that good progress had been made to date and this would help the Council to further improve the current arrangements in these areas.

Following consideration of the three reports of the WAO together with the associated action plans, Members formed the view that positive progress was being made by this Authority in addressing the recommendations. However, one Member raised a specific point in respect of the Council’s arrangements that linked to the WAO Report ‘Review of decision making arrangements in relation to service change’ (i.e. P2 – the Council develop an approach to systematically capture the impact of service changes and use this intelligence to inform future decision making in relation to service change). The Member

considered that the system for dealing with requests for bulky waste collections was far from adequate as in some cases there is a waiting time of five weeks.

RESOLVED – that the Cabinet be informed that following consideration of the three reports of the Wales Audit Office and the associated action plans by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (and to note that all non-executive Members were invited to this meeting), the Overview and Scrutiny Committee formed the view that positive progress was being made and all areas were being addressed, and therefore they did not require further information.

L.M.ADAMS

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 5.37 p.m.