

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, 6th March, 2017 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

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

Non Committee Member(s) in Attendance

County Borough Councillor M.A.Norris – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis – Scrutiny Performance Management Co-ordinator

Education Co-opted Member(s) in Attendance

Mr.J.Fish – Elected Parent/Governor

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.B.Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services
Ms.J.Ellis – Housing Strategy & Standards Manager
Mr.P.Howells – Head of Community Housing

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – to note that there were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

21 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6th February, 2017.

22 PRESENTATION – FUEL POVERTY

Following the report that was presented to the Council meeting on the 29th June, 2016 (Minute No.30 refers) and as agreed by Minute No.17 of the meeting of this Committee held on the 6th February, 2017, Members received Ms.J.Ellis and Mr.P.Howells who with the aid of PowerPoint slides gave a position update on Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Housing Strategy & Standards Manager gave her observations on each of the slides presented to Members as shown below under the following headings:-

- Fuel Poverty
There had been a decrease since 2012 from 29% to 23%. However, still 1 in 4 households in Wales are in fuel poverty which has an impact on hospital admissions and delayed discharges.
- Energy Marketplace
The energy marketplace had changed dramatically over the past 10 years from there being very little assistance for energy advice or investment opportunities for energy measures to there now being lots of energy advice services, schemes, bespoke projects but the gap is with householders not knowing how to access such schemes as, for example, ECO and NEST changing and some householders not aware of this.
- Fuel Poverty Considerations
There are currently over 50 energy suppliers and therefore customers need to check that they are on the cheapest tariff.

Residents need help and advice to navigate the right deal and find eligible grant assistance.

Smart metre rollout by 2020

- Policy Drivers
Bonfield Review July 2015 – The review led Welsh Government to look at issues about quality installations and failures of measures in the marketplace.
Hills Review 2015 – challenging the current methods for assessing fuel poverty (10% of income spent on energy)
NICE March 2015 – recommendations Health and Wellbeing Boards to create a strategy to address health consequences of cold homes, to create health and wellbeing single point of contact referral service and provide tailored solutions, identifying people at risk of living in a cold home.
Ending Wales Cold Homes Crisis Report – Fuel Poverty Coalition

- Scheme Update in RCT
Vibrant & Viable Places `Heat and Save Ponty` - grant funding for new boiler
Warm Homes (WG Arbed) Glyncoch & Tylorstown – external wall insulation – free of charge to residents
Warm Zones Tylorstown – boiler replacements and loft insulation, if needed
Cyd Cymru Collective Switching Scheme – evaluation showed that 53% of people registered would have actually switched had they been given further support and advice.
Little by Little Project – RCT lead with other four local authorities to assist households to try and save money by switching energy suppliers.

- Energy Advice/Services in RCT
Providing Community Champion Training
Change your Tariff Surgeries – Community First
Established a Vulnerable Adults Team jointly with NEST
150 Home Visits to be targeted - ongoing
Debt write-off assistance
Trusted source of independent advice
Behavioural advice within the home and over the phone

- Next Steps
 - Develop a new Energy Delivery Plan from April, 2017
 - Collect and analyse data for evidence based decision making – identifying households in fuel poverty – “hitting the target”
 - Branded delivery of existing tariff switching service `RCT Switch` use what we got more effectively
 - Continue to work with partners i.e. Smartmeter projects
 - Continue to seek external funding opportunities (albeit funding more limited at the moment) but redefine focus on energy advice
 - More active marketing and social media – targeting client groups
 - Target the next generation – managing energy and bills projects for school leavers

Following the detailed presentation made by the Housing Strategy & Standards Manager and her response to many queries raised by Members, it was **RESOLVED** – to receive the position update.

**L.M.ADAMS
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.

These minutes are subject to approval at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee