

Mae'r cofnodion hyn yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth yng nghyfarfod priodol nesaf y Pwyllgor

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next appropriate meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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, 22nd October, 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

H. Boggis	E. George
J. Bonetto	P. Jarman
J. Brencher	D. Macey
G. Caple	E. Stephens
A. Cox	L. Walker
S. Evans	

Non Committee/ Education Co-Opted Members in Attendance

Mr J Fish – Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Officers in Attendance

Mr C. Hanagan – Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services

Mr P. Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement

Mr G. Isingrini – Group Director Community & Children's Services

Mr D. James – Head of Regeneration & Prosperity

Mrs L. Davies – Head of Public Protection

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Committee Members - County Borough Councillors J. James, S. Morgans and J. Harries.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

17. INTRODUCTIONS

Due to the number of officers present, introductions were made for the benefit of the members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees held on the following dates:-

- **10th April 2018**
- **25th June 2018** – subject to County Borough Councillor J. Brencher being named as in attendance and removed from ‘Apologies for Absence’;
- **12th July 2018** – subject to County Borough Councillor J. Brencher being named as in attendance at the meeting and not having submitted her apology;
- **3rd September 2018** – subject to it being noted that the Local Member for Ynyshir felt that the minute did not accurately reflect the discussions which centred on the proposals for Tylorstown and Ynyshir merging to create a single two Member ward. The Local Member for Ynyshir pointed out that both Ynyshir and Maerdy were very close to fulfilling the requirements of the Boundary Commission at 1% under and 1% over the County average of 2,300 with Ferndale and Tylorstown both at 35% under (1500 residents per councillor). The Local Member suggested that Ynyshir and Maerdy should remain as they are with Ferndale and Tylorstown merging to give the Fach 5 councillors at the required electoral ratio.

19. WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017/18

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services presented the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18 which had been considered by Council on the 19th September 2018. Members were provided with the opportunity to consider the progress made in respect of the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18.

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services advised Committee of the importance of the forward looking annual improvement report and the role of both Scrutiny and the Audit Committee in overseeing arrangements and monitoring progress was outlined. Committee was asked to form a view on the adequacy of progress made by the Council in response to the recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office.

It was agreed that the RCT specific report, ‘Scrutiny: Fit for the future’ would be considered under Agenda Item 4 on the agenda and that National Report

recommendations 2017-18 'Public Procurement in Wales' would be referred to the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Following a discussion whereby a number of queries relating to the Annual Improvement Report were responded to by the Officers present such as when the 'Care & Repair' SLA had been increased in recent years and clarification provided by the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services in respect of the City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee and funding to manage the scrutiny role, it was **RESOLVED** that subject to the further information, where requested, being provided to Members of the Committee, the contents of the report be agreed by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

20. WALES AUDIT OFFICE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY: FIT FOR THE FUTURE

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services presented the Wales Audit Office report 'Fit for the Future' in respect of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements. Committee was asked to form a view on whether the action plans in place to support the recommended improvements to scrutiny within the local authority are adequate.

It was reported that since the last WAO scrutiny report was received in 2015, scrutiny in RCT has been strengthened by means of increased pre scrutiny arrangements which has developed a more focussed approach and produced more tangible outcomes. To enhance the level of dialogue and information currently provided, a series of engagement sessions with the Chairs of Scrutiny has been undertaken and there has been significant improvement in the way that the Cabinet Work Programme is reported more timely in respect of future developments.

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services commented that overall, the report is positive but there are areas where further improvements need to be made. It was also identified that there would be greater support for Members with the establishment of a research post which would enhance the level of information provided in advance of meetings, to better equip Members in their understanding of topics. This would be explained by means of a sufficiency of resources report to the next Democratic Services Committee. It was reported that the introduction of the Business Unit had helped form a better connection of Democratic Services and provided greater capacity to support members. The Director also highlighted how process improvements were providing greater transparency for the residents of RCT which has also seen dedicated scrutiny website and enhanced scrutiny pages developed.

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the reports and suggested that the wording within the action plan (page 37) under the heading, 'Improve the arrangements in place to evaluate the impact of scrutiny' could be amended to read as follows "to introduce the provision of sanitary products and improve menstrual education in schools". It was felt that this would serve to clarify the recommendation to have arisen from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Working Group.

It was pointed out that evaluating the impact of scrutiny is the most productive outcome and could be measured by means of an annual report. In the case of the Sanitary Provision Scrutiny Working Group, it was suggested that the outcomes could be measured by increased school attendance amongst female learners or by measuring the impact on their school experiences after twelve months.

In response to a query regarding the advantages of taking scrutiny to locations across RCT to encourage greater public engagement, in particular to the town of Pontypridd which was considered a central location with access to good transport links, the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services agreed that although more does need to be done to promote public engagement in scrutiny, consideration needs to be given to accessibility of venues. He added that more could be done via social media and Members may wish to consider revisiting webcasting of council meetings, to provide members of the public access to an open and visible decision-making process. It was agreed that the dedicated scrutiny website traffic statistics would be recorded and presented to the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Following a query, the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services provided an explanation of the effectiveness of pre scrutiny in RCT and how it provides Scrutiny Members the opportunity to influence decisions before they are considered by Cabinet. The Chair referred to the opportunity afforded by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the Cabinet Work Programme and select topics it wishes to pre scrutinise.

The Chair reminded Members of the current scrutiny arrangements in RCT which are based on the principle of thematic scrutiny and suggested that, should Members agree, an additional recommendation be considered, to instruct the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services to undertake a review of the current scrutiny arrangements in RCT to ascertain whether this is the best 'fit' for the local authority.

RESOLVED:-

1. That Committee instructs the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services to implement and monitor the agreed Action Plan, subject to the amendments being reflected in the plan;
2. That members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates of progress relating to the Action Plan;
3. That the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services be instructed to undertake a review of the current scrutiny arrangements in RCT and report back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
4. That Committee receives the dedicated scrutiny website traffic statistics to its next meeting;
5. That the title of the Director of Communication and Interim Head of Democratic Services be amended to reflect the correct designation; and

6. That a wider report outlining the use of Welsh/British steel in the authority's current/future developments is brought before members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

21. INCREASING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SCRUTINY

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services presented his report which sought Committee's approval of the protocol in respect of enabling members of the public to speak at meetings of the Scrutiny Committees.

Pursuant to the meeting held on the 25th June 2018 when it was resolved that the protocol be amended to reflect the comments made by Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that in the interim should a member(s) of the public wish to speak at a meeting of any of the Council's Scrutiny Committees then the protocol would be used as a guide, until such time as the amendments have been agreed and adopted.

Members considered the updated version of the protocol and wished to have included a separate provision which would outline how those members of the public with hearing difficulties can be supported to engage with the Council. Members also wished to have amended the wording at section 6 "What can I speak on at the meeting?" as agreed at the meeting

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services be instructed to amend the protocol as shown at Appendix 1 to the report to reflect the comments made by Members prior to its adoption; and
2. That the Director, Legal & Democratic Services (as Monitoring Officer) amend the Council's Constitution to reflect the inclusion of the protocol.

**L.M.ADAMS
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 6:05 p.m.