



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13th DECEMBER 2018

PROMOTING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SCRUTINY

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERIM HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress made in respect of promoting public participation in Scrutiny

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the content of the report; and
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any further matters contained in the report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 14th November, 2018, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a power point presentation from the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services regarding the promotion of public participation in Scrutiny going forward.
- 3.2 At the meeting Members agreed to receive a further report at a future meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the proposals in place to enhance the arrangements to promote public participation in Scrutiny.
- 3.3 At the time of reporting to the Committee work was underway to develop the dedicated scrutiny webpage and social media presence by means of a monthly Scrutiny Chair's blog which would serve to report regularly on the work of scrutiny and the latest matters which may be of interest to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It was also proposed to publish the Scrutiny

Committee's forward work programmes to provide the public with a clear understanding of what was being considered and discussed at each meeting.

4. **DEDICATED SCRUTINY WEBPAGE**

- 4.1 In keeping with the Council's commitment to promote public participation in scrutiny, the dedicated scrutiny web pages have been developed and are visible on the Council's [Website](#). A banner has also been established on the Council's Homepage which provides direct access to the dedicated Scrutiny [web pages](#). The pages contain detailed information on the role of scrutiny, previous as well as up and coming scrutiny committees, Scrutiny forward work programmes and Scrutiny Chairs blogs.
- 4.2 Currently there are two blogs on the website pages, from the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny and the Chair of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that the next Chair's blog will feature the Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee who will outline the work of the Committee in line with its work programme to include its recent review of the Notice of Motion as referred, in respect of the Voluntary Snow Wardens and the establishment of a Working Group to consider Recycling in Communal Areas.
- 4.3 The inclusion of user friendly Scrutiny Work Programmes forms an essential element of the dedicated scrutiny webpage. The work programme reflects the committees' aims and objectives and adds value to the work of the council. They are live documents and reflect the flexible nature of scrutiny in RCT and therefore will be updated as and when required to accommodate any referrals and any Notices of Motions should they arise from Full Council. Importantly, they will provide our residents with clarity as to what each Scrutiny Committee is looking to consider, review and those issues requiring further investigation.
- 4.4 In the future, we propose to also include information about our Scrutiny Working Groups which are an integral part of the Scrutiny Work Programmes. It is important that we improve the arrangements in place to evaluate the impact of Scrutiny (as referred to in the Wales Audit Office report Fit for the Future) and by publishing details of the policies, which have been influenced and developed by the Scrutiny Committees through their respective Working Groups, we can demonstrate our commitment to measuring the success of our scrutiny process. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recently discussed the importance of evaluating the impact of Scrutiny and agreed that following up any recommendations to have been implemented by the Executive could be done in the form of an annual report to the respective Scrutiny Committee, which will evidence progress made and will measure whether the outcomes have impacted on the lives of our residents.

5. **DEDICATED SCRUTINY WEB PAGE VISITS**

- 5.1 Attached to the report as Appendix 1 is information regarding the number of visits the dedicated Scrutiny web pages have received, to both the English and Welsh sides of the web pages, for a 12 month period November 2017-November 2018. In total the dedicated Scrutiny web pages received 933 visits for the period.
- 5.2 There is also a further breakdown of the web pages which shows the monthly activity from which we can determine the number of page views in greater detail.
- 5.3 By focussing on maintaining and refreshing our Scrutiny web pages we will be looking to improve our residents' participation and understanding of our Scrutiny process and further develop the platform from which we can continue to promote the exciting work of Scrutiny.

6. **PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL**

- 6.1 At its meeting on the 22nd October 2018, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Protocol for Public Engagement subject to it reflecting the comments of the Committee to include a section to ensure that people can access the service; in particular to support people with hearing difficulties should they wish to engage in the Scrutiny process. The policy has been updated to mirror these comments and currently, the Council's Constitution is being amended to incorporate the protocol. The Policy will establish clear guidelines and represents another important step in driving forward the Council's commitment to engaging with the residents of RCT.

7. **ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS**

- 7.1 As a means of establishing best practice and improving the decision-making arrangements within the Authority, the 1-1 engagement sessions between the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny and their respective Cabinet Members have continued with regularity. Further to this, Cabinet Members have attended their first round of Scrutiny Committees to deliver information relating to their portfolio areas with further meetings to be arranged early in the New Year. Likewise, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs will continue to meet to reflect on progress within each of the themed scrutiny Committees. It represents an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and discussions around their respective work programmes and for updates to be reported to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Council continues to make progress with its use of social media and electronic channels to increase public engagement, both internally and externally. The increased promotion of Scrutiny will only serve to improve the

decision-making process and provide a transparency to our residents, through the establishment of the dedicated social media channel and monthly blog updates.

9. **EQUALITY OR DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no Equality or Diversity implications aligned to this report

10. **CONSULTATION**

10.1 Members were originally presented with a report in respect of Promoting Public Engagement in Scrutiny at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 14th November 2017.

11. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. The improvements seek to strengthen the engagement with the public in the Council's scrutiny process using existing resources.

12. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

As amended by

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13th November 2018

PROMOTING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SCRUTINY

**Report of the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic
Services**

Mr Christian Hanagan – 01443 424045



Pages

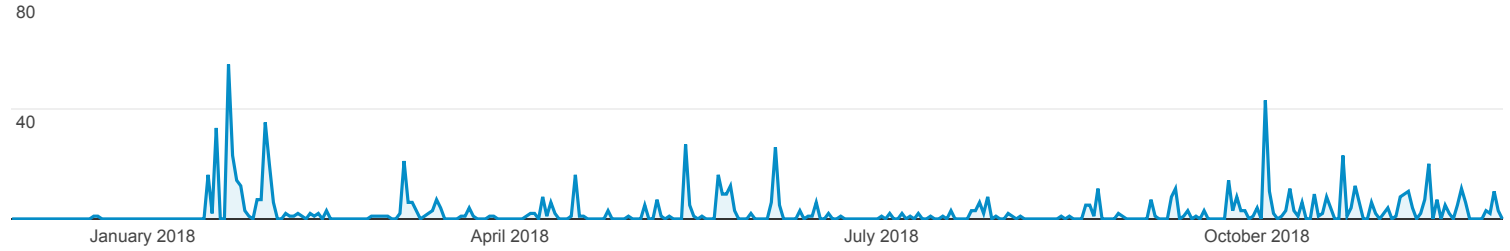


All Users
100.00% Page Views

30 Nov 2017 - 30 Nov 2018

Explorer

Page Views



This data was filtered with the following filter expression: **Council/Scrutiny/Scrutiny.aspx**

Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	933 % of Total: 0.01% (8,895,413)	435 % of Total: 0.01% (5,927,103)	00:01:18 Avg for View: 00:01:14 (5.60%)	152 % of Total: 0.01% (2,525,307)	24.34% Avg for View: 41.53% (-41.39%)	13.40% Avg for View: 28.39% (-52.81%)	£0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (£0.02)
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2. /cy/council/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx	81 (8.68%)	29 (6.67%)	00:02:14	8 (5.26%)	12.50%	13.58%	£0.00 (0.00%)

Rows 1 - 2 of 2