RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 5 February 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypandy, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor H. Boggis   Councillor M. Griffiths
Councillor J. Brencher   Councillor P Jarman
Councillor G. Caple   Councillor D. Macey
Councillor A. Cox   Councillor S. Morgans
Councillor S Evans   Councillor L. Walker
Councillor E. George

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Lee – Group Director Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr T. Jones – Head of ICT
Mr C. Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

33.   Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors J. Bonetto, J. Harries and E. Stephens

34   Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

35.   Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th January 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

36. Local Authority Arrangements to Safeguard Children & Adults at Risk

An overview of the arrangements in place and those planned to support the Council's Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities was provided by the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services in his joint report with the Group Director, Community & Children's Services, joint lead officers of the Strategic Group.

Members were reminded that a Power Point presentation had previously been delivered to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2017 which had provided an overview Corporate Safeguarding arrangements in place and the policy approved by Cabinet in March 2016. Members were appraised of the governance and scrutiny arrangements in place at that time.

From a Council perspective the Group Director explained that the Corporate Safeguarding Policy reflected the high priority the Council gave to this area and the need to keep staff, Councillors and volunteers safe and for them to play their part in protecting the wider community.

Committee was provided with an update on the current position in terms of training for staff and Elected Members via face to face engagement sessions and e-learning on the RCT Source, implementation of 'branding' and an internal communications campaign. Early feedback from the staff survey which had been undertaken towards the end of 2018 was shared with Members which indicated a positive response towards the current Council's safeguarding arrangements. It was reported that final analysis of the staff survey, to which all staff were invited to respond, would shortly be undertaken.

The Group Director concluded that next steps would include measuring the outcomes following implementation of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy and training to assess the effectiveness of the recent activity, also to track referral numbers (both Children and Adult) in those areas where, previously, it has not been possible. It was considered appropriate that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would continue to receive an annual update in respect of the Corporate Safeguarding arrangements for its consideration and challenge.

Following his presentation, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services responded to the following queries.

The Group Director clarified that despite there being appropriate standards in place, as with any third party agreements, consideration would be given to the most appropriate safeguarding training for the Council's contracted services. It was requested that information in respect of the process of receiving updates in progress following an initial referral to MASH should be provided to members.

The Chair reminded Committee that the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (CTSB) annual reports are considered by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee as well as the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee as appropriate and in line with the remit of both Scrutiny Committees' work programmes but added that it would be

useful for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to continue to have sight of the report when the matter is next considered.

With a view to improving training and awareness it was suggested that priority should be given to those less traditional service areas when considering safeguarding and it was added that the branding to date has been simple and informative together with information available on the Council website and every opportunity has been taken to reinforce the corporate message.

A breakdown of all referrals to MASH for the period April to September 2018 was provided as well as details of where the referrals have derived such as Elected Members, GP's, Landlords and hospitals amongst many others and it was confirmed that at present work is being undertaken to track the changes and patterns in referrals to MASH and data collated for Committee (although taking care to avoid double counting) which may be available for Members' consideration earlier than the anticipated delivery to Committee within 12 months.

The suggestion that safeguarding training is delivered to outside bodies such as Community Councils and staff was welcomed by the Group Director

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED**

1. That Committee acknowledges the progress made against planned actions to support Corporate Safeguarding requirements;
2. That further consideration and challenge by this Committee be made to the Annual Safeguarding Report within twelve months or earlier dependent on the availability of the data for MASH as referred; and
3. That Overview & Scrutiny receive the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (CTSB) Annual report in conjunction with its annual update on the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements

37. Digital Update

The Head of ICT presented the joint report in respect of the Council's Digital Work Programme and outlined its progress to date and the governance arrangements in place to support the ongoing delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy 2020.

Members were reminded that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered, a report in relation to the Digital Workplace reviewing progress of the Council's Agile Working pathfinder projects in January 2018 and subsequently resolved to acknowledge the progress made to date in relation to the Agile Working pathfinder project which formed part of the workplace strand within the Council's Digital Strategy.

Following consideration of progress reported during the last seven months which included the implementation of Phase 1 actions in line with the Council's Digital Strategy and establishing the groundwork for future progress, the Head of ICT responded to questions from Committee.

Further to a query, it was confirmed that within the next few weeks Wi-Fi and internet access will be available in the Municipal Building in Pontypridd together with notification to members on how to access the Wi-Fi facility. Scrutiny considered it important that assistance is available for those residents who are unfamiliar with the digital processes so they can access the Council's online services, as with the Council's libraries and One for All. It was noted that business processes are changing in line with the public's expectations; when considering that the take up of on-line transactions has risen from 36% (in 2016/17) to 62% during 2018, the process is allowing users access to all services yet retaining all other traditional channels of communication open.

Assurances were given that the Digital Strategy will not dilute opportunities for the use of the Welsh Language and is very much part of the Strategy going forward. The Council's Welsh Language Service has played its part in the digitalisation process and it was reported that Microsoft champion opportunities to develop the Welsh Language.

A query was raised in respect of whether dissatisfaction levels are also measured in respect of the progress made with the Councils Website element of the Digital Work Programme and its impact on our residents or whether the questions within the surveys are generic. It was reported that this information would be sought and reported back to the individual Member.

With regards to the Digital Business, a process of data consolidation and a matching exercise had been undertaken to establish a more accurate set of data which will allow for business engagement to understand their digital needs. It was explained that the process for data consolidation has been difficult and involved the combination of more than one data system.

The Chair pointed out that an online service to register deaths would be useful, one that could link into existing facilities at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital. The Head of ICT acknowledged this and advised that the progress update related to a specific period relating to an initial phase of improvement and that future phases would see further areas considered.

A Member raised a query in respect of the Digital Skills Work which includes supporting schools through the progress of the 21st Century Schools programme of work but raised a concern as to whether pupils were being encouraged to make use of their own IPhones in the classroom. In response the Head of ICT commented that policies for local use were set by each school, however it was recognised that there was an opportunity to work with Schools, the Central South Consortium and Education Service to develop a more cohesive approach and consider these areas..

It was confirmed that discussions are underway with the appropriate service area in respect of the Webcasting facility in the Council Chamber. The Head of ICT reminded Scrutiny that the Council is deploying the Office365 productivity tool suite Council wide following an initial extended pilot scheme, which will support progress towards the digital workplace. The Office365 will enable better document sharing, file storage and also video conferencing facilities.

In conclusion, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services clarified that the delivery of Agile Working which is aligned to the Council's accommodation strategy, is not a job reduction exercise but about better productivity and delivery of more efficient services. The accommodation strategy has seen the reduction in the Council accommodation portfolio and has reduced operating and revenue costs and utilised existing office space more efficiently.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED**:-

1. That Scrutiny acknowledges the progress against the work programme actions and governance arrangements in place to support the Digital Work Programme; and

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives further information on the Council's Agile Working pathfinder projects to review the progress made on the planned way forward.