

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at the Council Headquarters, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on
Monday, 15th February 2016, at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

J. Bonetto	P. Howe
S. A Bradwick	L. Langford
J. Bunnage	(Mrs) S. Pickering
S. Carter	(Mrs) M. Weaver
(Mrs) A. Davies	T. Williams
(Mrs) L. De Vet	R. Yeo
J. Elliott	

Officers

Mrs W. Edwards – Head of Community Learning

Mr S. Lock – Head of Operational Procurement

Mr P. Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement

Mr A. Wilkins – Head of Legal, Corporate & Democratic Services

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors G. Holmes and D. Weeks

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no personal declarations of interests made, pertaining to the agenda

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on the 15th December 2015.

30. PRE SCRUTINY OF THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The Service Director Performance & Improvement presented his report in relation to the Council's proposed approach for the pre-scrutiny of progress against the Council's 2015/16 priorities and the 2016/17 actions to deliver the priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Committee was provided with background information relating to the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report, presented to Full Council last year, that highlighted there was scope to further develop the Council's scrutiny arrangements. The Service Director Performance & Improvement added that the Council has pre-scrutinised a number of key documents in recent months such as the draft Corporate Plan and draft Leisure Strategy, and recommend that the practice of pre-scrutiny continues for the Council's corporate performance reporting and planning.

The Service Director Performance & Improvement explained that Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees would be asked to form a view on the assessment of the six priorities agreed for 2015/16 and to form a view on the priorities for the year ahead. The proposed approach was explained which would see three Scrutiny Working Groups established, the membership of which would comprise of Members from existing Scrutiny Committees. It was recommended that each Scrutiny Working Group would meet on two occasions: firstly to consider 2015/16 progress and secondly to consider actions to deliver 2016/17 priorities. The Service Director Performance & Improvement added that the outcomes from each Scrutiny Working Group would be used to inform the compilation of a user friendly draft Corporate Performance Report for 2016/17 and reported to the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee for review, and following this, a final draft version would be presented to Full Council in June 2016.

The roles of the Scrutiny Members (including co-opted Members), Cabinet Members and Designated Officers were outlined and the timescales for the work were proposed. Following presentation of the report the Service Director Performance & Improvement requested that nominations be sought from this Committee to form the cross cutting membership of each Scrutiny Working Group.

Following consideration of the report Members of the Committee expressed a view that their experience and knowledge would be best suited to Scrutiny Working Group 1-'Protect people from harm and tackle anti social behaviour' and 'Streetcare Services and the Natural Environment'. It was **RESOLVED:-**

1. To endorse the way forward as proposed in the report to enable pre-scrutiny of the Council's 2015/16 priorities and 2016/17 priority actions to begin in March 2016; and
2. That all Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee sit on Scrutiny Working Group 1 (the membership of which will also be opened up to Members from other Scrutiny Committees)

31. POSITIONAL UPDATE STATEMENT – BIDS & TENDERS

The Head of Operational Procurement presented his interim report with the purpose of providing an update to Members of the Committee regarding details of the Quarter 3 performance in respect of the number of bids and tenders submitted for Council contracts by local businesses which serves to demonstrate the variations between the quarterly reporting periods. It was confirmed that the Quarterly performance for Quarter 3 (July-September 2015) stood at 89.06% against a target set at 75% bringing

the cumulative performance of this indicator to 77.51%. This demonstrates an increasing trend which exceeds the annual target set of 75%. The officer suggested that the Quarter 4 results should mirror those for Quarter 3.

Members were reminded that the target setting for this performance indicator is difficult due to performance variations which relate to the nature of contract opportunities being advertised from one reporting period to the next.

An update was provided in respect of the recent Meet the Buyer event which was held in Llantrisant Leisure Centre on Monday 7th February 2016 and attracted over 200 attendees to meet the Authority's Procurement team as well as other organisations such as Network Rail and the Ministry of Defence Procurement Agency. The Head of Operational Procurement agreed to circulate the information/hand outs which were available at the event. It was explained that in the main the event attracts companies from the South Wales area and questions were posed by Members of the Committee in respect of limiting the Council's procurement contracts to the local areas which although is financially beneficial to the locality can prove more costly than procuring outside the area and even outside Wales. The Head of Operational Procurement confirmed that there are limitations to procuring outside Wales according to EU Directives and that the Council is a member of various collaborative groups including the Welsh Purchasing Consortium which coordinates many of the collaborative arrangements (now moving to the National Procurement Service (NPS)).

Following consideration of the report Committee **RESOLVED:-**

1) To invite representatives from two local businesses (one small and one large business) in addition to representatives from Business Wales to the next Committee to understand the extent to which the current provision of support provided by the Council for local businesses and approaches available are deployed and their relative effectiveness; and

2) To receive copies of the hand outs/information which were available to all attendees at the meet the Buyer event on the 7th February 2016.

32. RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

The Head of Community Learning provided Members of the Scrutiny Committee with a report outlining the performance of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Mobile Library Service.

Members were provided with information regarding the mobile library stops, how the routes are assessed regularly and what steps are followed when the mobile routes are altered, the current restrictions on the libraries in terms of ICT provision and details of the Housebound and Deposit Collection Services.

The Head of Community Learning explained in more detail that analysis of usage is difficult to capture on board the mobile libraries as there is currently no provision for a people counter, currently a feature of the static libraries. However, records from book and audio book loans do provide a certain level of analysis and in order to illustrate the comparison of visitor numbers to the mobile libraries over the periods 2013-15 a table was provided within the report. Members were also directed to the table which records

the monthly mobile book issues so that the individual routes can be monitored closely and those most popular can be identified. From this analysis it has been identified that weekend and evening services do not perform as well as the day-time services which could inform the provision of some of the stopping points.

Committee was also provided with the financial performance of the library service 2014/15 and 2015/16 (taking into account the £800,000 budget saving required from the agreed service change implemented in June 2014). It was clarified that the service change in 2014 did not comprise any budget savings in respect of the mobile library service.

The Head of Community Learning apprised Committee of the recent proposed service changes 2015/16 regarding the mobile library service and the feedback from the consultation events regarding the proposals. Reference was also made to the service change consultation report which had been prepared by the Council's Consultation team.

Following consideration of the report the Chairman expressed a view that an opportunity had been missed for this committee to pre scrutinise the proposed 2015/16 service changes to the mobile library service.

The Chairman read aloud from a letter he had received from County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J. Rosser, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Libraries & Heritage, in response to the comments submitted on behalf of this Committee as part of the Council's Service Change Consultation process. The letter acknowledged that this Committee's concerns in relation to the reduction in the Book Fund and to the potential for single staffed libraries at 5 branches had been considered as part of the decision-making process. The Committee agreed that the feedback and outcome as a result of its comments had been positive.

During the discussions it was agreed that the Head of Community Learning would circulate the mobile library timetables and the mobile library routes to members of the Committee. Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED**;

- 1) That the mobile library timetable and routes would be circulated to Members of the Committee via email; and
- 2) To receive data relating to the individual mobile library stops at the next meeting.

Following consideration of the report of the Head of Community Learning the Senior Democratic Services Officer requested that Members of the Committee formally approve the draft Terms of Reference for the Mobile Library Review subject to any amendments. Having considered the document which had been previously circulated, the Terms of Reference and Scope of the Committee's work in relation to the mobile library review was **RESOLVED** as:

Terms of Reference -Mobile Library Service Review

As a way of mitigating some of the adverse effects of the previous Medium Term Service Planning Review the existing mobile library service within RCT was enhanced and the number of mobile libraries was increased to 4. This enhancement served to

ensure that residents *'of all backgrounds and characteristics have equal access to core library provision'*.

At its meeting on the 14th September 2015 the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee resolved to undertake a review of the mobile library service following the service change in 2014. Furthermore at its meeting on the 7th October 2015, the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee requested that the review should be widened to include the 'financial dimension' of the service change to the mobile library service i.e. *'to establish whether or not the savings identified as part of the service change implemented from June 2014 have been realised'*

Terms of Reference:-

'To review the take up of the mobile Library Service to better understand usage and barriers to usage following the service change in 2014'

Scope:

- To review the impact the service change has had on usage
- Understand the target groups that are currently served by mobile libraries
- Identify any barriers to usage
- Assess how well the current provision meets the needs of the residents of RCT
- Consider whether the service is accessible to all and supports the most vulnerable
- Consider how the service is currently promoted
- Assess whether the financial savings required from the 2014 service change have been delivered
- From the information gathered formulate recommendations for improvement and/or modifications to the service

Methodology:

- Receive reports/presentations from Council officers in respect of the current provision since the service change in 2014
- Feedback from service users to obtain their views
- To understand how the local position compares with the regional and national picture
- Data collection to measure current performance

33. TRAINING NEEDS

The Chairman asked Members of the Committee to consider whether they had any specific training needs they felt would enhance their ability to carry out their role as a Member of the Scrutiny Committee. Several suggestions were forthcoming such as holding a future meeting in Bryn Pica to coincide with Members of the Committee having a tour of the facilities as well as arranging a visit to the Viridor site in Cardiff. Another Member requested training/information on the Council's process for issuing fixed penalty notices and understanding the rationale behind those areas which generate the most fixed penalty notices.

A discussion ensued in respect of concerns regarding how RCT Homes engage with the Council's recycling initiatives with a view to inviting a response from them in respect of this issue.

It was **RESOLVED** that the training needs would be noted and incorporated into the future work programme of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at 6.05pm

G. R. Davies
Chairman