

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, 14th March 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	(Mrs) S Pickering
J Bunnage	(Mrs) A Roberts
(Mrs) A Davies	M Weaver
(Mrs) L De Vet	T Williams
J Elliott	R Yeo
G Holmes	

Officers

Mr A. Wilkins – Head of Legal, Corporate & Democratic Services
Mr N. Wheeler – Director, Highways & Streetcare Services
Mrs W Edwards – Head of Community Learning
Mr S Vaughan – Service Manager E-Procurement
Mr D Batten – Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside
Mr J Spanswick – Parks and Countryside Manager

Also in Attendance

County Borough Councillor C Willis - Scrutiny Performance Co-ordinator

Mr A Doyle – Business Wales
Mr D Watkins –Days Rental
Mr P Beer – PB Services

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillors S
Carter, L Langford, and D Weeks

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

36. 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 February 2016

37. BIDS AND TENDERS REVIEW

The Service Manager e-Procurement introduced the following representatives from the local business community who were present to provide a service user perspective on the effectiveness of the Council's current provision of support for local businesses when submitting bids for Council contracts:-

Mr A Doyle representing Business Wales,
Mr D Watkins representing Days Rental and,
Mr P Beer from P.B. Services.

Mr Doyle provided Committee with an overview of the role of Business Wales, a service run by Welsh Government which provides businesses of all sizes with information, advice and support. Committee was also informed that it also offers contract and tender support specifically for small and medium sized enterprises (SME's). The two local businesses also outlined their purpose of their businesses, the services they provide and their needs in terms of the level of support they require from the Council when tendering for contracts.

All acknowledged the 'Meet the Buyer' is a useful tool in enabling suppliers with information on contract opportunities and the chance to network and establish contact with main contractors.

Members of the Committee asked several questions in respect of the level of support that is offered by this Council to local businesses and whether it compares favourably with that offered by other Local Authorities. Business Wales informed Committee that the tendering process has been simplified since new European directives have been introduced and added that the processes used by RCT are user friendly and clear. These comments were reiterated by the representatives from the two local businesses in attendance who also referred to the clear vehicle specifications which assist the tendering process, especially in the case of Days Rental. The suppliers added that in their opinion there are no improvements that could be made to enhance their experience of dealing with RCT and the tendering process.

The Service Manager e-Procurement responded to the positive feedback from the service users and explained that the Council is continually looking to improve the process for local businesses. He assured Committee that equally 'non local' firms do have opportunity in a fair and transparent process when

bidding to secure business with the authority. It was explained that the tenders are advertised via the 'Sell2Wales' website, the Welsh Government supported portal and also via RCT's own tendering system (e Tender Wales) which is used to advertise all opportunities. He confirmed that he would provide members of the Committee with comparison data to demonstrate the number of local companies who compete for tenders with those companies from outside the locality.

Following the question and answer session the Chair thanked the representatives for attending and providing their valuable feedback regarding their experiences. As a result of the opportunity to receive local businesses to the meeting, Committee members were satisfied that local suppliers were receiving adequate support and opportunities through the Council's current procurement arrangements. They felt that the underperforming Key Performance Indicator did not reflect the Council's commitment to deliver sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for local suppliers.

However, Committee identified that there is a fluctuation in results between the quarterly reporting periods. Members were informed that the Council's Quarter 3 performance for this Key Performance Indicator (PI) demonstrated that the cumulative performance to date currently positively exceeds the annual target (77.51% compared to the target of 75%). Committee recognised that the variation between the quarterly reporting periods was so significant whilst the end of year reporting demonstrated a result which had exceeded the annual target set that they felt that an appropriate recommendation would address any future fluctuation in results.

With this in mind Members of the Committee discussed the way forward and **RESOLVED** that the following recommendation is put forward to the Executive:-

"The reporting timescale for this Key Performance Indicator (LPRO107 % of bids/tenders submitted by local businesses) is revised to an annual reporting frequency (rather than quarterly) which will reflect a more meaningful end of year aggregation".

38. MOBILE LIBRARY REVIEW

Committee received the Head of Community Learning who outlined the proposals taking the work in relation to the mobile library review forward. Members received copies of the current mobile library 'stops' by ward which detailed how many items were issued at each mobile library stop for the six month period from 1st August 2015 until the 1st February 2016.

The Head of Community Learning reported that the information circulated represents the baseline data for the existing current mobile library stops for Members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider. Members were advised of the proposed planning process for the consideration and implementation of the new mobile library routes across the County Borough as follows:-

- Baseline data for Scrutiny – March 2016
- Development of draft mobile routes – March-April 2016
- Distribution of draft routes to all Elected Members – May 2016
- Amendments to the draft routes – May 2016
- Implementation of the new routes – June 2016
- Customer Survey – August/September 2016
- Report back to Scrutiny Committee – September 2016

The Scrutiny Members acknowledged the information before them and there were a number of queries in relation to the current mobile library stops. The Head of Community Learning confirmed that more detailed information in respect of certain wards would be emailed to the relevant Scrutiny Member following the meeting.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the mobile library service routes to ensure that the Council is delivering a service that meets the needs of the residents of RCT. The review was considered as an example of how scrutiny can inform service delivery.

Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the proposed planning process for the mobile library review and to receive a report back to the Committee in September 2016 with the relevant data.

39. **PRESENTATION IN RESPECT OF PARKS**

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside provided the committee with a presentation in respect of the County Borough's parks which set out:-

- The Community Plan
- Statistics
- Details of the organisation – staff and depots
- Sport pitches
- Playgrounds
- Grass cutting
- Events
- Private Sector Partnerships
- Wicked Issues
- A park of the future
- Modern Facilities

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside provided details around each topic area and he introduced Mr John Spanswick as the new Parks & Countryside Manager following a period of restructuring within the division.

Following the presentation the Head of Leisure, Parks and Countryside responded to a number of queries in respect of his presentation and Committee **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the contents of the presentation.

40. RECYCLING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Director, Highways & Streetcare Services presented his report in relation to the key headline results following the awareness campaign in Cilfynydd which had been undertaken by members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

The Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee was reminded of the reasons why the issue of improving performance in the municipal recycling rates had been included on the Committee's work programme. Committee had been aware of the initiatives to improve performance it realised that improving participation among the residents of RCT whilst maintaining the same level of service was crucial to meeting the 2015/2016 target set by Welsh Government of 58% and avoid financial penalties from Welsh Government. The Committee learnt that by identifying an area with low recycling rates and raising awareness to encourage residents to participate in reuse and recycling initiatives the Council could influence behaviours towards recycling and improve the recycling figures within that area. Following evaluation of the proposals an area was identified in which to undertake a specific participation campaign (Cilfynydd) based on its recycling figures and a previous Recycling Participation Campaign which was undertaken there in 2014.

The Committee Members undertook a door knocking exercise in Cilfynydd the week commencing 30th November 2015 alongside the Council's participation team and the results of the exercise were presented by the Director, Highways & Streetcare Services.

Dry recycling participation increased from 60.6% in week 1 to 69.0% in week 4 83.7% of residents recycled at least once in the four week period.

Food waste participation increased from 33.2% in week 1 to 37.0% in week 4 51.6% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the four week period.

In response to the headline results Committee acknowledged that a high level of participation and the method adopted by the service, including the contamination training undertaken by members of the committee in advance of the door knocking exercise are crucial to improve awareness. As a result of the awareness campaign Committee formulated two recommendations which it believes will assist the Council in its efforts to raise the level of participation across the County Borough, further improve the municipal recycling rate and avoid financial penalties from the Welsh Government.

The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** that the following 2 recommendations are put forward to the Executive, namely:

1. That all Elected Members of the Council undertake training on the recycling targets, contamination and the recycling collection system so that they can fully understand the service

2. That the project to increase and maintain a high level of participation in both dry and food recycling is rolled out to other areas across Rhondda Cynon Taf to support the Council meet its legislative targets.

41. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the Committee with proposals for the composition of the draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2015/16. Members were referred to the section which outlined the work undertaken by the Committee during the year and explained the intention to set out the positive outcomes from the work of the scrutiny committees during the year. Members were informed that the draft annual report would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 20th April 2016 for consideration before presentation to the Council's AGM in May 2016 and that the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be inviting the scrutiny chairs and vice chairs of the thematic scrutiny committees to attend and participate in the discussion.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to endorse the proposed content of the draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual report.

42. RCT HOMES

Members of the Scrutiny Committee discussed the way forward in respect of the issues previously raised concerning RCT Homes and in particular how it engages with its residents on recycling matters. In conclusion, it was agreed that a letter is sent to the interim Chief Executive asking for a response to these concerns.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

G. R. Davies
Chairman