

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, 5th September 2016, 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

S Bradwick	(Mrs) S. Pickering
S Carter	M. Weaver
(Mrs) A Davies	T. Williams
J Elliott	R. Yeo
G Holmes	

Officers

Mr P Nicholls – Head of Legal – Litigation & Education

Mr R Evans – Head of Human Resources

Mrs W Edwards – Head of Community Learning

J Nicholls – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) M Webber – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Council Business & Human Resources

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) A Crimmings – Cabinet Member for Environment,
Leisure & Culture

County Borough Councillor C Willis - Scrutiny Performance Management

Co-ordinator

County Borough Councillor G Smith – Vice Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny
Committee

12. WELCOME

The Chair extended a welcome to County Borough Councillor (Mrs) M Webber, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business & Human Resources, County Borough Councillor (Mrs) A Crimmings, Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Culture, County Borough Councillor C. Willis, Scrutiny Performance Co-ordinator and County Borough Councillor G Smith, Vice Chairman Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) J Bonetto, (Mrs) L De Vet, P Howe, L Langford and P Baccara (ex officio member)

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

15. 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 4th July 2016.

Matters Arising – Minute No. 8

Further to a response received from the Head of Neighbourhoods, RCT Homes, now known as Trivallis, which was read out by the Chair, Committee requested that an invitation is extended to the Chief Executive, Trivallis to attend a future meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee to further discuss the Council's recycling initiatives.

It was confirmed by the Senior Democratic Services Officer that a representative from the office of the PCC will be in attendance at the next meeting of the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee scheduled for January 2017 which will be held in Aberdare Community School.

16. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Committee wished to pass on their best wishes to the Leader of the Council upon hearing of his recent illness.

17. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

With the permission of the Chair the report of the Head of Human Resources in respect of Human Resource Policies set out at Agenda Item 7 was brought forward.

18. PRE SCRUTINY – HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

The Committee's comments were sought on the content of the Council's Human Resource Policies following their proposal to undertake pre scrutiny of HR Policies and the Maximising Attendance initiative.

The Head of Human Resources advised that in respect of the Maximising Attendance initiative, the Council introduced a revised Absence Management Policy in 2015, which is currently undergoing review by the Council's Internal Audit Section. It was suggested that the outcome of the review would be presented to the relevant committee as appropriate.

Committee was advised that as a consequence of the Welsh Language measures the majority of Human Resource policies have been updated and will be implemented during September 2016. However, the Council's Dignity at Work and Grievance policies, which are in need of formal review, were presented before Members for their consideration.

The Head of Human Resources referred members to the initial thoughts of the review group, set out at 5.2 of the report, who have provided their very early response to both policies but emphasised that the views and feedback of this Committee are sought in respect of the two policies, a sentiment which was echoed by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business & Human Resources.

A Member stated that the Grievance Policy and Dignity at Work Policy are separate policies and should remain so. In response to another query, it was reported that the Human Resource Policies are adopted by the schools and the views of the teaching unions are sought as part of the review process. Further to another query by a Member of the Committee in respect of agency staff, it was confirmed that all staff are treated equally by the Council; however, as they are employed by a private agency they are covered by the Human Resource policies adopted by their respective employer.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Head of Human Resources incorporates the comments of Members into the review and that any further suggestions to arise in respect of actions for improvement are passed to the Senior Democratic Services Officer or to the Head of Human Resources directly.

19. UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME

In his report, the Director, Legal and Democratic Services provided Members with a draft 2016/17 work programme for the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting the Senior Democratic Services Officer outlined the proposed work programme which

has identified potential work topics following discussions with the Chair and the Vice Chair together with the appropriate officers.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting consideration had been given to the Cabinet Work Programme, particularly those topics within the remit of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and Members proposed to undertake pre scrutiny of the HR Policies (as already undertaken at the meeting and as Minute No.18 refers).

Members were reminded that requests could be forthcoming from Cabinet or other committees e.g. Council, Overview & Scrutiny to consider a particular issue and therefore an element of flexibility should be applied to the work programme.

In conclusion it was **RESOLVED** to agree the work programme subject to it being amended as necessary during the year to reflect the demands of the work.

20. EXECUTIVE RESPONSES

I. Participation Rates in Recycling Across RCT

In his report the Director, Legal & Democratic Services set out the response to the findings and recommendations of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee whole committee review in respect of the Participation Rates in Recycling across RCT.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the report and referred Members to the two recommendations which had been proposed by the committee and formally considered by Cabinet at its meeting on the 19th July 2016 namely;

a) 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;

b) 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

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Culture who was present at the meeting, formally thanked members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for their report and recommendations which she considered would positively impact upon service delivery in this area.

II. Number of Local Businesses Submitting Bids/Tenders for Council Contracts

In his report the Director, Legal & Democratic Services set out the response to the findings and recommendations of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee whole committee, short review, in respect of the Number of Local Businesses Submitting Bids/Tenders for Council Contracts.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reminded Members of the one recommendation which had been agreed by Committee and passed to the Cabinet for formal consideration on the 19th July 2016 as follows:-

a) The reporting timescale for this Key Performance Indicator (LPR107 % 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.

Members were informed that the recommendation had been agreed by the Executive and following discussions with the relevant officers the KPI will now be amended to an annual reporting basis beginning with the current financial year 2016/17.

Committee agreed that it should have the opportunity to monitor progress in respect of the amended KPI as reflected in the Work Programme.

With regard to bids and tenders for council contracts a Member queried whether the sub-contracting of RCT contracts was common practice within the County Borough Council. The Legal Officer advised that a response to the query would be provided to Members following the meeting.

The Committee **RESOLVED:-**

- a) To note the written responses received from the Executive (and from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Culture, in person at the meeting);
- b) That the revised reporting frequency for the KPI (LPR107% of bids/tenders submitted by local businesses) is monitored by Committee as reflected in the Work Programme.

21. MALADMINISTRATION COMPLAINTS 2015/16

In his report the Director, Legal & Democratic Services set out information in respect of complaints of maladministration made to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales during 2015/16.

At the meeting the Head of Legal – Litigation & Education, explained the two-tier structure for reporting formally on investigations which relate to two sections within the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, namely, Section 16 and Section 21. It was reported that the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman in respect of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for 2015/16 was 40, the same number as in 2014/15 of

which the highest number of cases (6) relating to the Environment and Environmental Health. It was also noted that there was a 3% decrease in the complaints about county councils in 2015/16 compared with the previous year.

Members of the Committee were referred to the Annual Letter, attached at Appendix 1, which set out the individual annual summary of complaints for each authority as well as providing a comparison of complaints by subject category with Local Authority average.

Members of the Committee were informed that should they wish to view the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales' reports and associated annual letter in their entirety, they could do so via a link in the report.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Maladministration Complaints Report for 2015/16 and associated appendices overall provides a fair and balanced assessment of performance for Rhondda Cynon Taf for the period.

22. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

The Head of Community Learning presented her report to provide the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee with the results of the survey undertaken with users of the Mobile Libraries.

Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee were reminded that in February 2016 they requested that the views of the mobile library customers be sought in order to assess whether the Council's mobile service was meeting the needs of its customers in light of the changes to the mobile library provision, i.e. the reduction from 4 to 3 mobile vehicles and a reduction in the number of mobile stops from 490 to 413.

The customer satisfaction survey of mobile library customers was conducted between 4th July and 30th July 2016 and the results of the survey were attached for Members' information as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Head of Community Learning outlined some of the key points to have arisen from the surveys completed by 180 customers and reported that overall satisfaction rates with the service are very good and staff who deliver the service were highly praised. This was emphasised by the customer comments which referred to the 'excellent' service provided by the mobile librarians.

Committee was informed that some customers indicated that areas of concern included the length of stop, rated as poor by 2% of customers and the choice of books rating as poor by 1% of respondents. However, as pointed out by the Head of Community Learning, this needs to be balanced by the 87% of respondents who considered the choice of books was very good or good and 90% who were happy with the length of stop.

The Head of Community Learning outlined the proposed actions for improvement following consideration of the customer satisfaction survey under the following headings:-

- Further promotion of the mobile library service through existing partnerships such as Communities First, Housing Associations and by local Elected Members;
- To further promote the online facilities available to customers so that they can order books and/or CD's ready for collection from the mobile library;
- To retain the length of stops as to alter them would have an impact on the number of stops which would have a potential adverse affect on more customers;
- That posters are displayed on the door of each mobile library vehicle to inform customers that all mobile libraries have disabled access.

Committee praised the mobile library service for the positive response arising from the library satisfaction survey 2016 and agreed that as Elected Members they have a role to play in further promoting the service amongst its residents, particularly its elderly residents. Committee were in agreement with the proposed actions for improvement subject to including that provision is made available on the mobile library, in the form of a checklist, for customers to be able to pre order books/CD's in advance of their next visit. This suggestion was welcomed by the Head of Community Learning who agreed that the pre-ordering could be done by back office staff on behalf of the customer.

Committee also requested a breakdown in the age groups of customers using the mobile library service particularly the numbers of children using the service. The Head of Community Learning agreed that this information would be available for Committee at its next meeting in October. In addition, Committee was informed that as part of the current School Library Service, 58 schools are signed up to the Local Authority's Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Following discussion Committee **RESOLVED:-**

1) To endorse the findings of the customer feedback in respect of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Mobile Library Service and;

2) That the following proposed actions for improvement, which include the comments of Committee, are reported to Cabinet for consideration:-

- Further promotion of the mobile library service through existing partnerships such as Communities First, Housing Associations and local Elected Members;
- To further promote the online facilities available to customers so that they can order books and/or CD's ready for collection from the mobile library;
- To retain the length of stops (as to alter them would have an impact on the number of stops which would have a potential adverse affect on more customers);

- That posters are displayed on the door of each mobile library vehicle to inform customers that all mobile libraries have disabled access;
- That provision is made available on the mobile library, in the form of a checklist, for customers to be able to pre order books/CD's in advance of their next visit

3) To receive further information in respect of the breakdown of the age groups of customers using the mobile library service, in particular the numbers of children using the service at its next meeting in October.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm

Chairman
G. R. Davies