

Mae'r cofnodion hyn yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth yng nghyfarfod priodol nesaf y Pwyllgor.

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next appropriate meeting of the Committee.

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017 at 5 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies – Chair

#### **County Borough Councillors**

S.Bradwick

J.Cullwick

J. Elliott

G. Holmes

W.Lewis

S. Rees-Owen

C.J.Willis

R.Yeo

#### **Non Committee Member(s) in Attendance**

Mr.R.Hull – Chair and Lay Member of the Audit Committee

R.W. Smith – County Borough Councillor

R.Lewis – Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Wellbeing

L.M.Adams – Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

#### **Co-opted/Ex Officio Member in Attendance**

Mr.J.Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative (Education)

#### **Officers in Attendance**

B.Davies- Director of Financial Services

Mr.P.Griffiths, Service Director - Performance & Improvement

Ms. S. Davies - Head Of Finance: Education and Financial Reporting

Mr P. Mee – Service Director - Public Health & Protection

Mr P. Nicholls - Head of Legal – Litigation, Planning & Environment, Community and Children's Services

Ms J. Lewis – Bereavement Services Manager

Ms M. Warburton – HR Advisor, Equality & Diversity Team

## **13. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors M. Diamond and T. Williams.

#### **14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED** – to note that in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct, the following County Borough Councillors declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Notice of Motion:-

1. County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen - Personal interest – “My father is a Veteran”.
2. County Borough Councillor L. M. Adams – Personal Interest - “My children are serving members of the Royal Navy”.
3. County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis – Personal interest – “A member of my family is a veteran”.

#### **15. TRAINING – TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

With the aid of PowerPoint slides, Mr. D. Blake and Mr. M. Swallow of Arlingclose Ltd. (the Council’s appointed treasury advisors) provided Members with training in respect of Local Authority Treasury Management and gave their observations under the following headings:

- Local Context;
- Regulatory Framework & Role of Members;
- Risk Themes;
- External Context – Economic Outlook;
- Investments;
- Borrowing; and
- Key Scrutiny Questions for Members.

Members posed a number of questions, including from the Chair, who sought clarification in respect of the roles of Scrutiny and Audit. He asked what items a scrutiny committee should be considering in respect of Treasury Management issues. Mr Blake referred Committee to the last two slides of the presentation which set out key questions on Treasury Management (investments and borrowing) which should be considered by members of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Following the responses made by Mr .D. Blake and Mr. M. Swallow, the Chair thanked them for attending and for answering the questions raised by Members, and they left the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that key information from the PowerPoint slides used in the training session be emailed to Members of the Committee.

## 16. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** - to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 subject to it being noted that the following Members had submitted their apologies: County Borough Councillors S. Rees-Owen, T. Williams and G. Holmes.

## 17. NOTICE OF MOTION – BEREAVEMENT FEES AND CHARGES FOR WAR VETERANS AND SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

The Service Director - Public Health & Protection presented his report in respect of the Notice of Motion which was considered by Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. It was subsequently agreed to refer the matter to the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

The Service Director - Public Health & Protection asked Committee to consider a number of key points such as the criteria applied when identifying war veterans within RCT, whether to waive all or some of the fees and charges and whether the proposal should apply to residents only or include non residents. The Service Director - Public Health & Protection also asked Committee to consider whether a pilot approach, which would be County wide, set for a limited timescale and reviewed after twelve months, would be the way forward.

There followed a lengthy discussion whereby Committee acknowledged that the report had raised many difficult questions. The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Service Director - Public Health & Protection for bringing his report before Committee but felt that it required further research, in particular, with regard to identifying the war veterans within RCT. Members of the Committee provided suggestions of organisations which may prove supportive when seeking to identify war veterans within RCT such as the MOD, the Association of Funeral Directors, Veteran Record Card, Office for National Statistics and the Royal British Legion (RBL) (the HR Advisor, Equality & Diversity Team reported that there is information that can be obtained from the RBL – Veterans Wales, through its networks but added that information would not be available for those veterans who served in the 1960's and 1970's in Northern Ireland).

In conclusion it was **RESOLVED** that the Service Director - Public Health & Protection make further enquiries, report back to the next meeting of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee with a proposal for Members of the Committee to consider, if appropriate, and for the Service Director - Public Health & Protection to then report the recommendations of the Committee to Cabinet.

## 18. COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 1)

The Director of Financial Services provided Members with details of the Council's Performance Report to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in relation to revenue and capital budget performance; Treasury Management prudential indicators; Organisational Health information including staff turnover, sickness and Council strategic risks; Corporate Plan priority action plan updates; and other national indicators.

The Director discussed in detail the Executive Summary of the report which included financial data and progress against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. Members were also provided with information regarding exceptions highlighted within each of the detailed sections and in conclusion the Director of Financial Services reported that out of 32 Corporate Plan performance indicators measured and reported during quarter 1, seventeen were on target, 4 were within 5% of target and 11 were not within target.

A discussion ensued and the following questions were raised by Members:-

- Can further information be provided to clarify the reasons for the below target performance in respect of Measure 21 SSOF21 – 'The average length of time older people (aged over 65 or over) are supported in residential care homes (Days)'. The Service Director Performance and Improvement confirmed that further information will be requested from the service area and provided to Members.
- Can further information be provided around Strategic Risk Register Reference 14 in respect of Schools and in particular the reference to '*...protection from the reduction in funding will not continue in the future*'. The Director of Financial Services provided background information for the Committee and confirmed that Schools budgets had increased at a level above other Council services and above the level of the Council's own settlement from Welsh Government for a number of years. The Director went on to refer Members to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (2017/18 to 2020/21) that was approved by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and highlighted that within this forecasted position, an additional £1M cash uplift per year had been built in for schools to contribute to funding areas such as pay progression, pension costs and pupil number growth.
- Sickness absence within Children's Services is comparatively high; are there any underlying pressures within the Service? The Director of Financial Services referred Members to page 25 of the report which provided a summary of sickness absence information and highlighted that overall for the Community and Children's Services Group the sickness absence level is improving: 6.90% as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and 6.25% as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The Director added that the Council's Sickness Absence Policy had been up dated to, amongst other things, provide more timely interventions to help employees return to work more quickly and reaffirmed that improving employee attendance levels continued to be high priority for the Council.

- Can other local authority sickness absence figures be provided so that the Committee can consider the national picture? The Service Director – Performance and Improvement confirmed that this information will be obtained and provided to the Committee.
- Is the Council’s Occupational Health Service well resourced to deal with sickness absence? The Service Director - Performance and Improvement fed back that capacity and expertise of the Council’s Occupational Health Service had been developed, over time, in line with the Policy and the needs of the workforce. The Service Director added that in line with this, the Occupational Health Service is able to deal with accelerated referrals and offer a range of support in areas such as mental health / counselling, trauma support and injection therapy to help with muscular skeletal conditions.
- Can further information be provided for performance indicator ‘% of children and young people requiring intervention from statutory services’ due to performance being below target for quarter 1 and in particular what range of services are in place to support children and their families. The Service Director - Performance and Improvement indicated that an update would be obtained from the service and provided to Members.

The Committee also collectively requested for the appropriate electronic devices to be provided to Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Members to enable more interactive scrutiny of reports by, for example, using the electronic links to more detailed information that are included in reports. The Service Director – Performance and Improvement confirmed that this request would be fed back to the ICT Service for prioritisation as part of the roll out programme.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the Council’s financial and operational performance position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (Quarter 1).

## **19. REVIEW OF 2017/18 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TARGETS**

The Service Director - Performance and Improvement presented the report of the Chief Executive in respect of the performance indicator targets set by the Council for the 2017/18 financial year and requested the Committee to scrutinise and form a view on the targeted performance levels.

The Service Director referred Members to Appendix A which set out 110 performance indicators that are reported within the Council’s quarterly Performance Report.

The Committee considered the targets set out at Appendix A and asked for further information around the performance indicator 'Number of library visits per 1,000 population'. A Member indicated that whilst it is recognised that the reduction in opening hours was an influencing factor for the lower target (i.e. 2016/17 actual performance of 3,950 and 2017/18 target of 3,285), what action was the Council taking to pick up those residents who are not anticipated to visit libraries and was there any correlation with footfall in town centres.

A Member also suggested that a performance indicator be formulated around dog fouling.

For both areas raised by Members, the Service Director – Performance and Improvement indicated that information would be obtained from the relevant services and fed back to the Committee,

The Committee also collectively fed back the difficulty experienced in viewing the 2017/18 target information included within the 'hard copy' Committee report papers and requested that officers bear this in mind when producing future reports. The Service Director - Performance and Improvement apologised for this and indicated that it would be addressed for future reports.

**RESOLVED** to receive and note the performance indicator targets set by the Council for the 2017/18 financial year.

**G. R. DAVIES  
CHAIR**

**The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.**