

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/16

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

18th November 2015

AGENDA ITEM 4
ACTION PLAN UP DATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To set out an up dated draft Action Plan to support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in taking steps to further improve the Council's scrutiny arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Form a view on the adequacy of the up dated draft Action Plan to support improvements to the Council's existing scrutiny arrangements and the progress made to date around implementation;
- 2.2 Subject to review and amendment of the draft Action Plan by the Committee, approve an agreed version for implementation; and
- 2.3 Instruct the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to keep the agreed Action Plan under on-going review and to report quarterly up dates of progress, and where deemed appropriate further amendments, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will be aware that at the 29th July 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an Action Plan was agreed to support the Committee's work having key regard to the publication issued by the Auditor General for Wales "Good Scrutiny? Good Question!".
- 3.2 Since this time, Officers have begun to implement the actions set out within the plan, for example, establishing a rationale or criteria for topic selection and

determining, on a topic by topic basis, the most appropriate method(s) to scrutinise agreed areas. As part of this work, further actions have been identified for inclusion within the Action Plan to help ensure the Committee is provided with an up to date position.

4. UP DATED DRAFT ACTION PLAN

4.1 Set out at Appendix 1 is an up dated draft Action Plan for consideration by Members. Subject to review and amendment of the Action Plan by the Overview and Scrutiny it is proposed that:

4.1.1 The Director of Legal and Democratic Services reports quarterly up dates of progress to the Committee; and

4.1.2 Where further suggested amendments are deemed necessary, for example, from lessons learned, these are included within quarterly progress up dates and marked accordingly for Members' consideration.

4.2 Members will note that progress up dates have also been incorporated into Appendix 1 setting out the work undertaken since July 2015.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved an Action Plan to support improvement in the Council's scrutiny arrangements in July 2015.

5.2 As part of taking steps to implement the Action Plan, further areas have been identified that are considered to be worthy of inclusion within the plan to ensure the Committee is provided with an up date position moving forward.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome	Strengthened Governance through improved Scrutiny Work Planning, Project Delivery and Evaluation
Why we need to do it:	A review of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements identified opportunities to enhance the impact that scrutiny work has on this Council’s Services. This will be conducted through more clear planning, topic selection, review work and evaluation. This approach will enable the Council to clearly demonstrate this a response to the Wales Audit Office national report Good Scrutiny? Good Question!

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
OS1	Clarify the requirements and implications of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, on the Council	<p>Members provided with a brief oral update of the Act at its meeting held on the 23rd September, 2015.</p> <p>Members and Officers attended a national consultation seminar on the 23rd October, 2015 to provide feedback on the Act and to establish the potential implications</p>	Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny to receive a report and presentation on the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	18/11/15	Head of Democratic Services/ Partnerships Manager
OS2	Prepare the Scrutiny Annual Report	In addition to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all of the Scrutiny Committees will be responsible for producing their individual information on what they have achieved throughout the year and also setting their goals for 2016/17.	<p>Review the extent to which the Scrutiny Committees have delivered on their individual intents for the year and establish any changes required</p> <p>Present report to Council’s Annual Meeting</p>	<p>April 2016</p> <p>25/05/16</p>	All Scrutiny Chairs, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Support Officers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
OS3	Ensure processes are in place to monitor Scrutiny Work Programmes are fit for purpose in the light of experience	Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs attended the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 23 rd September, 2015 to provide their views on their respective Work Programmes.	<p>Quarterly meetings to be held between Chairs and Vice-Chairs to provide updates on their respective Work Programmes.</p> <p>Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to be invited to meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as and when felt appropriate.</p> <p>Put in place formal review of Work Programme 12 months following implementation</p>	<p>December 2015 March 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2016 onwards</p>	All Scrutiny Chairs, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Support Officers
OS4	To enable opportunities to undertake pre-scrutiny when appropriate	Consideration given to the Cabinet Work Programme at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 21 st October, 2015. Subject to the Cabinet wishing to place the following two potential topics on their future Work Programme (1) Leisure Strategy and (2) Draft Corporate Plan, pre-scrutiny to be undertaken in these areas.	<p>Undertake pre scrutiny on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Leisure Strategy *Draft Corporate Plan *Subject to Cabinet Work Programme. <p>Other topics to be considered for pre-scrutiny as and when appropriate</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Members of the O&S Committee/ Head of Democratic Services

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
OS5	To produce a Scrutiny Handbook	Following the new Scrutiny Arrangements there is a need to update/amend the current Scrutiny Handbook	To produce a Scrutiny Handbook to accord with the new arrangements	March 2016	Head of Democratic Services/ Scrutiny Support Officers

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
OS6	To continue to seek opportunities to engage with residents or their representatives	<p>The Chair and Vice Chair of the Older People’s Advisory Group (OPAG) were involved as Co-optees on one of the Scrutiny Working Groups that reviewed progress against the ‘<i>Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently</i>’ priority plan for 2014/15 as well as the forward plan for 2015/16. This was reflected in the Corporate Performance Report 2015/16 n</p> <p>At the Council’s Annual Meeting of the Council, Members were reminded that engagement with the Public was an area of weakness within the Scrutiny functions and needed to be progressed.</p> <p>Link to report to AGM 20.05.15 para 5.1 refers: http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/council/2015/05/20/reports/agendaitem6proposedscrutinyarrangements.pdf</p>	<p>To receive updates from the Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee in relation <i>Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently</i>, where it is intended that OPAG will be asked to engage in this process along with other interested parties.</p> <p>To receive feedback from Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee who accompanied the Council’s Recycling Officers on visits to areas throughout the County Borough with low and high levels of recycling participation in order to assess opportunities for further improvement.</p>	<p>February 2016</p> <p>February 2016</p>	<p>Chair of Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Support Officer</p> <p>Chair of Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Support Officer</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
OS7	Welsh Government Consultation Documents	<p>Following the Council Meeting held on the 30th September, 2015 views of the Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were given at its meeting held on the 28th October, 2015 in respect of the WG Consultation Document – Draft Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, which assisted the Council, along with the views of the Cabinet Working Group, in forming its response at the Council Meeting held on the 28th October, 2015 by the deadline of the 9th November, 2015.</p> <p>Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill</p> <p>Council response submitted to the Welsh Government on the 3rd November, 2015 following the comments of Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Working Group.</p>	<p>Views of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be sought when the Draft Bill is to be published (likely to be the end of November) as it is assumed that the document will include governance and, in particular, executive and scrutiny functions as well as the role of scrutiny (or at least internal challenge) as part of self-assessment and self-improvement.</p>	<p>December 2015/ January 2016</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p> <p>Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee/ Head of Democratic Services</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
			Ongoing	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee/ Head of Democratic Services

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer	
AIR1	<p>Clarify the role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to scrutiny.</p>	<p>The roles of Executive Members were agreed by Council at its AGM on 20 May http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/council/2015/05/20/minutes/m20.05.15.pdf and have been incorporated into the Cabinet role descriptions, which have all been signed off by individual Cabinet Members.</p> <p>Link to Council’s Constitution – Part 4 – Rules of Procedure – Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules (paragraph 15) relating to attendance at meetings by Cabinet Members and Officers viz:</p> <p>http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/legaldemocraticservices/councilconstitution/part4rulesofprocedure.pdf</p>	<p>To monitor the role of executive Members and Officers at meetings of all Scrutiny Committees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee/ Head of Democratic Services</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
	<p>15(a) The Overview & Scrutiny Committee or any thematic Scrutiny Committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or action taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny role, it may require any other Member of the Cabinet, the Head of Paid Service and or any Senior Officer to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Any particular decision or series of decision; and /or (ii) The extent to which the action is taken to implement Council policy; and/or (iii) Their performance <p>And it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.</p>			

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

<p>Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!</p>	<p>Update</p>	<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>Delivery Date</p>	<p>Responsible Member/ Officer</p>
		<p>15(b) Where any Member or Officer is required to attend the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or any themed Scrutiny Committee under this provision, the Chairman of the Committee will inform the Proper Officer. The Proper Officer shall inform the Member or Officer in writing, giving at least 5 working days notice of the meeting in which he/she is required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee. Where the account to be given to the Committee will require the production of a report, then the Member or Officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that document.</p>		

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

<p>Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!</p>	<p>Update</p>	<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>Delivery Date</p>	<p>Responsible Member/ Officer</p>
<p>AIR2 Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny.</p>	<p>Ongoing training provided to Scrutiny Members following the Annual Meeting of Council on the 20th May, 2015.</p> <p>Chairing Skills training delivered by the WLGA in June, 2015 to all Scrutiny Chairs/Vice-Chairs.</p> <p>Specific training provided to Members of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee e.g. `Understanding the Council's Budgets` - delivered in house</p>	<p>Further training for Members of the Finance & Performance Committee in respect of understanding Performance Data and Target Measures to be facilitated by an external provider.</p> <p>At the next meeting of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee, seek the views of Members in respect of additional training needs.</p> <p>Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee are to receive the same training that has been delivered to the Refuse/Recycling and Cleansing Staff in respect of contamination.</p> <p>Further training to be informed by individual Members' PDRs.</p>	<p>End of January 2016</p> <p>9th December 2015</p> <p>23.11.15</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p> <p>Service Director, Performance & Improvement</p> <p>Director, Highways & Streetcare Services</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
<p>AIR3 Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear rationale for topic selection; • be more outcome focused; • ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and • align scrutiny programmes with the council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements. 	<p>Work Programmes in line with the Council's Performance Management arrangements and agreed criteria has been applied. Following the selection of topics, Scrutiny Committees have determined the approach/method of scrutiny and these are currently being progressed</p> <p>Updates provided at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd September, 2015 by the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the four `themed` Scrutiny Committees.</p>	<p>Continuous monitoring by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Note: This section is also linked to OS3</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
AIR4	Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies.	<p>Reference to Wales Audit Office publication issued in May 2014 `Good Scrutiny? Good Question!` at the Council’s Annual Meeting held on the 20th May, 2015 with particular emphasis on the statement contained therein <i>“local government scrutiny in Wales is improving but Councils need to do more to develop consistently rigorous scrutiny to increase public accountability in decision making”</i> Prior to this, the document has been reported to all of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>Consideration given by Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 21st October, 2015 to the recommendations contained within the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report that related to the Council.</p>	<p>Updates to be provided and acted upon by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Schedule the progress updates arising from the Regulatory Reports as referenced in the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2014/15 for this Council</p>	<p>January, February and March 2016</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>Chief Executive and Group Directors/Scrutiny Chairs</p> <p>As above</p>
AIR5	Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function’s effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes.	Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2015/16 have been prepared based on outcomes sought	<p>Monitor progress of all Scrutiny Work Programmes which will be reflected in the Scrutiny Annual Report together with the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>Note: This section is linked to OS3</p>		

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

Actions taken that will also address the WAO recommendations contained in Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer	
AIR6	<p>Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network.</p>	<p>This has been reported to all of the former Scrutiny Committees and referred to in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15 which was presented to the Council's Annual Meeting on the 20th May, 2015 (page 76 and Appendix 1 refers) – link:-</p> <p>http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/council/2015/05/20/reports/agendaitem17scrutinyannualreport.pdf</p>	<p>To continue using the characteristics as developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officer Network and supported by CfPS to assist in effective scrutiny being achieved.</p> <p>Note: This section is linked to OS3</p>	Ongoing	Scrutiny Chairs/Head of Democratic Services/ Scrutiny Support Officers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Plan

AIR7	Implement scrutiny improvement action plans developed from the Wales Audit Office improvement study.	Action Plan presented to O&S in July, 2015 and updated in November, 2015	To implement and improve the Action Plan based on the lessons learnt from the Peer Learning Exchange Team (PLET) initiated by the Wales Audit Office in 2012/13.	Ongoing	Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee/ Head of Democratic Services
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