

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-2018

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22nd January 2018

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
THE DIRECTOR OF CABINET & PR
(SECRETARY TO THE CABINET)**

| |
|--|
| Agenda Item No. 4 |
| CABINET WORK PROGRAMME - ENGAGEMENT |

Author: CHRISTIAN HANAGAN (01443 424005)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to outline further enhancements to the process which provides Overview & Scrutiny Committee with details of the work programme and policy developments considered by both the Council's Executive and its Officer Senior Leadership Team.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny Committee:-

- 2.1 Consider the content of this report and progress the inclusion of Cabinet Engagement Sessions within future work programmes;
- 2.2 Agree the presentation of this information on a quarterly basis;
- 2.3 Authorise the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Cabinet & Public Relations to assist in the co-ordination of the responsibilities of Cabinet Members and SLT Members in-line with the terms of reference for each Scrutiny Committee, in consultation with Scrutiny Chairpersons.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Access to Information Procedure Rules and the Council's Constitution require the publication of a Cabinet Work Programme outlining consideration of Key decisions coming forward over a 3 month period. It is recognised that publication of an accurate Work Programme continues to strengthen the Councils governance arrangements.
- 3.2 The Cabinet Work Programme is a 'Living' document to allow it to be constantly updated to reflect urgent business coming forward.

- 3.3 Over the last two years, a number of enhancements have been made to the Cabinet Work Programme to assist the level of detail provided both to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the public in respect of the future work programme of the Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.
- 3.4 Such enhancements include listing of key decisions at the start of the Municipal Year for the year ahead. The work programme is regularly updated to reflect business coming forward with presentation to Cabinet every 3 months, for information. The work programme is also updated continuously on the [Cabinet's Internet Page](#)
- 3.5 Cabinet Key Decisions and Delegated Key Decisions will also be captured within the forward Work programme.
- 3.6 Along with the proposed titles of the 'Key Decisions' a brief narrative outlining the purpose of the report' is also included. The following headline information is also captured on the Work Programme:
- **Title** - The proposed title of the report (Key Decision)-although the title may change once formally presented.
 - **Brief Outline** - A brief 'purpose of the report' is provided to allow Members and the public a better understanding of the decision to be considered.
 - **Decision Maker** – The framework in which the decision will be potentially taken i.e. Cabinet or Delegated Decision.(although this can be subject to change)
 - **Proposed Date** - A proposed calendar month in which the decision will be taken is provided although it should be appreciated that the item may not hit the timeframe originally proposed. If this is the case the item will be considered the following month, unless a specific new timescale is provided.
 - **Report Status** – This will indicate the current status of the report – whether it's complete, at drafting stage, discussions with SLT etc.
 - **Responsible Officer / Member** – To assist Members and the Public further the Work Programme will record the appropriate Cabinet Member and officer to ensure accountability.
 - **Report Classification** – Report classification is provided
 - **Consultation** – The Work Programme will also display information as to whether any consultation needs to be undertaken in advance of the decision being considered..
- 3.7 It is anticipated that reporting of the Work Programme in this manner with the further detail (as detailed above) enables the Work Programme to be more accessible to members of the public, will improve transparency as well as further facilitating opportunities for pre-scrutiny.

4. **PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 To enhance the level of dialogue and information currently provided, it is proposed that arrangements be established for Cabinet Members and their respective Chief Officers to attend Scrutiny and present relevant information.

- 4.2 Similar to the structure and format utilised at other levels of government, (such as Parliament and the Senedd), Cabinet Members and Directors would attend meetings to present a verbal report on key issues relating to their portfolio areas.
- 4.3 These could include outlining challenges facing the services, or opportunities and policy changes currently being considered. The oral report would allow each Cabinet Member the opportunity to update Scrutiny Members on the delivery of their respective areas of the Corporate Plan. These presentations could also include reference to Key Performance Indicators and important details of policies being considered for future decisions, which are referenced for future business, or those which have been developed since the last publicised Work Programme.
- 4.4 These sessions will provide a further opportunity for Scrutiny to challenge Cabinet Members and Members of SLT in respect of the reports provided.
- 4.5 A number of changes to the Cabinet Work Programme in recent years have sought to ensure that timely information is reported in respect of future developments. In such a large organisation which is accountable for managing a huge range of service responsibilities, it is not always possible to report all matters currently being considered or developed without impacting on the operational aspect of the Council's business.
- 4.6 The delivery of these reports by Cabinet Members and Directors will provide another opportunity, in addition to the detailed reported in the Cabinet Work Programme, for Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider pre-scrutiny of future Executive or Chief Officer Decisions.
- 4.7 In recent months, one-to-one engagement sessions have been re-established between Cabinet Members, responsible Officers and the relevant Scrutiny Chairs to further enhance dialogue and the flow of information in terms of the work programmes of both Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- 4.8 Discussions already undertaken in these meetings have proposed the presentation of oral reports by Cabinet Members and Directors on a quarterly basis. Where portfolio responsibilities cut across or do not wholly align with Scrutiny Committee subject areas it is proposed that the appropriate Officers, in consultation with Scrutiny Chairs, direct the arrangements for reporting.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This report seeks to provide further enhancement to the communication of information and the level of dialogue provided to members in respect of key decision making, and seeks to ensure that the maximum opportunities are provided for scrutiny to continue adding value to the decision making processes of the Council.

