



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 3 September 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor S Evans	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor J Harries
Councillor H Boggis	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor D Macey	Councillor L Walker
Councillor G Caple	Councillor M Griffiths
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor W Jones

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services & Communications
Mrs L Davies, Service Director Public Protection Services
Ms J Thomas, Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager
Mr G Black, Community Safety and Strategic Partnerships Service Manager

9 Apology

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillor E. Stephens

10 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

11 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the following Overview & Scrutiny Committees as an accurate record :-

- Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 1st July 2019;
- Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 22nd July 2019; and
- Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 31st July 2019

12 Matters Arising

Matters Arising:-

Minute 22nd July 2019

Review of the Council's Electoral arrangements by the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales

A Member asked whether there was a requirement for the Rhondda Fach

Members to further register their objections following their comments at the meeting held on the 22nd July 2019.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications replied that the representations submitted by Members at the meeting had formed part of the consultation feedback and will be presented to Full Council in September 2019 where an overall Council position will be established.

13 The Council's Customer Feedback Scheme

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications presented the joint report in respect of the Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) – Comments, Compliments and Complaints inaugural annual report 2018/19. The Service Director added that the report seeks Scrutiny's recommendations and suggested areas for improvement in respect of the contents and publication of future CFS annual reports.

The Service Director referred Members to section 5 within the report which set out scrutiny's involvement and he added that this was an opportunity for Members to identify trends and themes as well as agreeing an appropriate future level of reporting.

The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager stated that this was the first time for the CFS report to be presented to Scrutiny. Despite there being no statutory requirement for the local authority to produce an annual report, it was considered important for scrutiny to be appraised of the nature of the feedback from customers and how the Council captures comments, complaints and compliments of residents and visitors to the County Borough. The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager highlighted some of the improvements made to the CFS since January 2019, more accurate recording of feedback, the introduction of quarterly CFS coordinators meetings and improvements to the customer facing web and social media information about the CFS.

It was reported that legislative changes to the powers of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) came into force on the 1st May 2019. This means greater investigative powers and a monitoring role of standards, trends and patterns across local authorities in Wales. The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager explained that it was timely that reports will now be presented to Scrutiny as in the future, reports could also include outcomes as recorded by the PSOW and comparative data from other local authorities.

In conclusion, Members were referred to Appendix 1 which set out an overview of the customer feedback scheme and a brief analysis for 2018/19.

A Member asked whether enquiries/comments registered via Twitter and other forms of social media communications are being monitored. The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications confirmed that they are recorded and any communication via social media is being directed to the customer care team and reported to the senior leadership team as appropriate.

A Member sought the definition of a complaint and asked how, over the telephone the query can be identified as a complaint or a request for a service. It was clarified that complaint information is provided to the public during the

telephone conversation and in general terms, if the matter is being recorded for the first time it is considered a service request. It was emphasised that it is for members of the public themselves to determine whether their query is a complaint or a comment.

Following concern raised as to how Schools report their complaints, it was clarified that all Schools in RCT have their own complaints policy which are established by the governing bodies. The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager indicated that she is working alongside the Senior Management Team within the Education Department to identify areas where the CFS can be improved.

It was pointed out that, as stated within the report, there is a high percentage of fully and partly upheld complaints and Members were keen to know how this was informing the agenda going forward and how the Council is using the data. It was confirmed that the local authority is making the connection between high volumes of complaints and service areas in need of investment which is evidenced by Cabinet decisions.

A Member suggested that the Complaints Service should be called 'Professional Standards' and he commented on how, generally, the compliments receive less attention.

The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager confirmed that there is no information available as to whether all Wales data will be published by the PSOW but she commented that the new powers available to the PSOW mean they can undertake an investigation into a local authority based on an emerging trend.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED**:-

- That a progress report regarding the Council's corporate Customer Feedback Scheme is presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a bi-annual basis (to include the CFS Annual Report); and
- That the next report to Scrutiny incorporates a detailed explanation of the two stage Complaints process, with the inclusion of case studies.

14 Scrutiny Toolkit (Wellbeing Of Future Generations (Wales) Act) Working Group Recommendations

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented his report in respect of the findings and ten recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group established to consider the low carbon vehicle infrastructure to support low carbon vehicle ownership in RCT. The Service Director added that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to use the subject matter to test the use of the Future Generations Scrutiny Toolkit in order to support the Council to meet its requirements in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

In undertaking its work the Scrutiny Working Group held wide ranging discussions on the project, called for evidence from a number of sources such as Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, research on global, UK wide, national and local policies and plans. During this time Welsh Government published its report 'Prosperity for all: A low Carbon Wales 2019' and the local

authority published its response to Net Zero: the Committee on Climate Change.

The Service Director commented that the recommendations acknowledge that Wales is behind the curve and they centre on the preparations for the local authority going forward, taking a strategic leadership role and consideration of resident's engagement. He acknowledged that many of the improvements can be delivered through the City Deal.

The Service Director commented that with regards to the price and range of vehicles, the working group felt that some of the available information underestimated the future take-up of low carbon vehicles as habits are likely to change in the future. He added that the working group considered that the Council should call upon Welsh Government to provide more of a lead in terms of EV infrastructure across Wales and urge the UK Government put forward the incentives and infrastructure needed to encourage drivers into electric cars.

In conclusion, the Service Director confirmed that the findings would be reported to Council following the original Notice of Motion and the recommendations would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 24th September 2019.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee referred Members to the table set out in the report which demonstrated what the plug-in car uptake in RCT is likely to be by 2030. He also reminded Committee that grants for plug-in hybrid cars have been cut in the UK which will have an impact on the sales of electric cars and significantly reduce the incentive of achieving the environmental goals. In addition the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications commented that the Working Group had been advised of the commercially led option whereby Welsh Government would take the lead in the process of establishing EV infrastructure which could be an option and a better model for the local authority to follow.

In response to a query regarding whether a suitable mapping exercise had been undertaken to identify the locations of the current charging facilities across RCT, the Chair confirmed that it had been considered and the charging points were found to be limited although the emphasis is on an infrastructure which will support longer journeys via leisure and tourist attractions.

Scrutiny members, and also members of the Working Group, agreed that the recommendations are appropriate and had been pitched at the right level, focussing on distance travelling. Some of the Scrutiny Working Group members shared their experiences of the process and commented that the work had been a huge undertaking and technically challenging and there had been lots of debate around the timing for the local authority to progress the development for the infrastructure for low carbon vehicles.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To endorse the recommendations (subject to a minor amendment to recommendation 9);and
2. Request that the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presents the findings and recommendations to Cabinet on the 24th September 2019 and to a future meeting of Full Council.

Crime & Disorder Committee (Sitting in its role as the designated Crime & Disorder Committee (Under Sections 19 & 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006))

The Service Director, Public Protection Services presented the report of the Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services and provided an overview of the Cwm Taf Community Safety Delivery Plan 2018-21 to the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Committee (Under sections 19 & 20 of the Police Justice Act 2006).

The Service Director explained the structure of the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership Board (CSP Board), as set out in Figure 1 within the report, which is made up of responsible authorities who work together in partnership as part of the CSP Board and report to the Public Services Board. Scrutiny was informed that currently, Bridgend is not part of the CSP Board and has its own, separate Community Safety arrangements, but this may be subject to change in the future following the outcome of a review of South Wales Police boundaries.

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) requires the CSP Board to develop a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area. Further, the community safety assessment 2017 was produced in order to inform that strategy and focussed on six priority areas. It identified the key recommendations for the Community Safety Board to develop into a Community Safety Partnership Action Plan for 2018-21. The Service Director reported that the purpose of the Plan is to ensure the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership is accountable for the delivery of actions in response to the priorities identified by the Cwm Taf Community Safety Needs Assessment 2017.

In conclusion, the Service Director sought Scrutiny's comments in respect of which topics from Cwm Taf Community Safety Delivery Plan 2018-21 they would like to scrutinise in greater depth at a future meeting of the Crime & Disorder Committee.

In response to a query as to whether the Cwm Taf Safety Partnership has the power to progress any recommendations, the Service Director Public Protection Services confirmed the reporting mechanism; a recommendation from the CSP Board to the Public Service Board would enable progress a higher level corporate commitment and deliver on actions as part of a binding multi agency decision.

Another Member of the Committee sought clarification on the governance of the Crime & Disorder Committee and suggested that it is the role of the Public Service Board to monitor the Cwm Taf Community Safety Delivery Plan 2018/21 leaving the Crime & Disorder Committee to deal with more local issues such as anti-social behaviour, community safety and mental health issues. The Member pointed out that the terms of reference for the Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee excludes matters which can be considered by the local authority's Crime & Disorder committee and further the Joint Committee has not yet met to set its forward work programme.

In response, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications referenced the Central South Consortium, the joint education service for the five local authorities which is looking to develop a school improvement service that challenges, monitors and supports schools to raise standards. He added that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, within its remit can also consider

the same issues in developing the school improvements. The Service Director confirmed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee sitting as the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Committee is able to consider the six strategic priorities within the Delivery Plan and determine whether they are addressing the needs of our communities and delivering the correct services through improved partnership working. He added that the Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will convene on the 27th September 2019 when it will formulate its forward work programme.

A Member commented that she would like to see evidence of the impact that the six strategic priorities are having on communities in the form of qualitative data. She asked what are the impacts as a direct result of the actions taken within each of the priorities; are residents experiencing less noise and witnessing less drug related activity in their communities as a result of the actions and do residents feel safer. She felt that qualitative data would provide Members with the relevant information.

The Chair referred to the principle set out at 3.5 (iv) of the report which states that the Community Safety Board monitors progress of the Delivery Plan and underpins the Plan development which he considered appropriate to the concern raised by Committee.

In conclusion, the Service Director, Public Protection Services reported that an annual town survey is undertaken asking residents if they feel safe in their communities, which is an effective way of measuring the success of the actions taken. The Service Director commented that the Delivery Plan is very diverse and recognised that not all the information and measures have been included in this Committee report but assured Scrutiny that following selection of a specific theme by Members, the relevant performance measures would be provided.

It was **RESOLVED** that qualitative data in respect of the impact the actions within the six strategic priorities is having on our communities is brought to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (7th October 2019) to enable Members to select appropriate strands of the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan to review in greater depth.

**This meeting closed at
6.30pm**

**Cllr M Adams
Chairman**