



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 20 January 2020 at 4.30 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 H Boggis
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor W Jones	

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director - Performance and Improvement
Mr N Griffiths, Head Of Financial Services - Community & Children's Services
Mr M Hughes, Head Of Finance - Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services And Chief Executive's Group

34 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made in respect of the agenda:-

County Borough Councillor P Jarman referred to her dispensation granted by the Standards Committee on the 29th November 2019 providing the member. "Dispensation to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2020-21 Budget process" in her capacity as leader of the Opposition.

35 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 12th November 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

36 Chair's Remarks

It was agreed to consider the agenda out of sequence and for the item on the Cabinet Work Programme to be brought forward in advance of the training on the 'Understanding the Council's 2019/20 Budget'.

37 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presented the Cabinet Work Programme with the purpose of identifying any items for scrutiny in greater detail particularly those items for pre scrutiny (the Overview & Scrutiny forward Work Programme was also attached for ease of reference).

It was confirmed that the ISOS independent review would be presented to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee in advance of Cabinet to allow Scrutiny the opportunity to consider the ISOS review of Central South Consortium and feedback its comments.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications confirmed that as previously discussed, a special Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be arranged to receive the feedback from the consultation for the 'Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People'. All Members would be invited with a special acknowledgement to those Members of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to participate.

Members considered the Cabinet Work Programme and acknowledged the forward Work Programme for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee between January and April 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the arrangements in place for the specified items of business (i.e. ISOS independent review report and the consultation results for the 'Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People')
2. Acknowledge the forward work programme for Cabinet for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

38 Understanding the Council's 2019/20 Budget

Through a Power Point Presentation, Members were provided with an overview of the Council's 2019/20 Revenue Budget and 3-year Capital Programme to assist their understanding of the Council's revenue and capital budgets. The presentation would soon be rolled out to all the Scrutiny Committees over the coming months and tailored to the individual themed Scrutiny Committees.

Members received an overview of the Education & Inclusion Services revenue budget detailing the individual school budgets and a breakdown of the budget per service area for the non-schools part of the Group. Details were provided of the potential financial pressures for schools, such as costs of supply teachers and increased teachers' pension costs.

In response to a query as to whether there is adequate budget provision for this local authority's funding for the Central South Consortium, the Service Director Performance & Improvement confirmed that the non-schools budget has provision for these costs. Clarification was also provided in relation to the funding for Free School Meals (FSM) provision for families which is available until the end of the pupils' Primary and/or Secondary sector, from the additional budget which is available to cover the costs.

Following discussion, Members received a presentation from the Head of

Finance – Community & Children’s Services. Members were provided with a budget breakdown in respect of Adult Services, Children’s Services, Leisure, Public Health and Protection & Housing and Transformation. The officer confirmed that the Adult Services provision is available for young people from the age of 18 years but after care is available and provided and continues up to the age of 25 years.

The Head of Finance - Community & Children’s Services highlighted other key points in respect of the revenue budget including demographic pressures and challenges. He provided an explanation in respect of the ‘fairer fee model’ relating to residential care which ensures that the local authority is paying a fair fee to its providers within the County Borough.

The Head of Finance - Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services presented revenue budget information for this service area for 2019/20 for Prosperity & Development (£2.912 million), Frontline Services (£53.897 million), Chief Executive’s (£25.812 million) and corporate budgets (£67.852 million).

In conclusion, the Head of Finance - Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services outlined the Council’s Capital Programme 2019/20-2021/22 which is a three year rolling programme. He referred to the key schemes within the Capital Programme such as the Robertstown & Coed Ely Business Units, Pontypridd YMCA and the Fleet Replacement Programme. Within Education & Inclusion Services it was noted that this year’s figures do not include Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme which are being submitted as individual business cases to Welsh Government.

Following further discussion and the concluding comments relating to the challenging outlook of the Medium term Financial plan, Members were reminded of the consistent and robust Council wide planning and scrutiny of the budgets and processes in place. The Chair thanked officers for providing an in depth overview of the Council’s budgets.

Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information provided in respect of the Council’s 2019/20 Revenue Budget and 3-year Capital Programme.

39 Wales Audit Office - Annual Improvement Report - Council Progress Update

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2018/19 which had been considered by Council on the 18th September 2019. Members were asked to consider the progress made by the Council to date in implementing the proposals for improvement.

Members were reminded that it is within the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider reports of the Wales Audit Office and to evaluate the council’s progress against the agreed actions.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications requested that Members determine whether, after consideration of the proposals, any further action is required and/or whether any referrals to the Council’s Audit Committee are necessary.

Following further discussion, the Chair reminded Members that the Overview &

Scrutiny Committee, acting in its role as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee, would soon be scrutinising the following 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' as topics within the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan. He proposed that Committee refer the Council's compliance with regard to domestic abuse issues to the Audit Committee for review.

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

1. That members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agree the contents of the Annual Improvement report; and
2. To refer the Council's Domestic Abuse compliance issues to the Audit Committee for review.

40 Involvement Strategy Report

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report which provided the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny on a proposed new Involvement and Engagement Framework (2020-2024).

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that the Council's consultation events are led by the Corporate Policy team with robust arrangements now in place to strengthen the activity. Reference was made to the draft Involvement & Engagement Framework, available to Members and attached as Appendix 1, which sets out how the Council will build on its current arrangements to engage, consult and involve its residents and stakeholders in its consultation processes.

In producing the framework the Council is aligning with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and although challenging will be following a consistent approach with its consultations, seeking views and strengthening the culture of involvement. A number of groups are already part of the wider stakeholder engagement process such as the Youth Forum and Community Councils.

Through discussions, members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed the framework and acknowledged that involvement needs to encompass innovative approaches in order to reach all groups such as the use of social media, opinion polls and Twitter. Members welcomed the concept of 'Co-producing' and agreed that the text should be included in the draft framework so as to make the process inclusive and encourage residents to feel that they are an integral part of the process and key to developing the solutions.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the contents of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Involvement & Engagement Framework 2020-2024 including the use of the Scrutiny function to validate involvement; and
2. Include the term 'Co-producing' in the framework to evidence that residents and stakeholders are a fundamental part of the involvement process

41 Consultation Links

Consideration was given to the recent consultation links as previously circulated to all Members of the Council. Specific reference was made to the Welsh Government consultation proposing changes to principal council (local authorities) executive governance arrangements with the closing date of the 27th February 2020.

Following consideration, Members **RESOLVED** to submit a response to the consultation based on the Council's current arrangements.

42 Chairs Review & Close

The Chair's concluded the meeting by extending his thanks to all Members for their prompt arrival at 4.30pm to receive the training in respect of 'Understanding the Council's 2019/20 Revenue Budget and 3 year Capital Programme'.

He reminded Members that the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be held on the 10th February 2020 to review the following reports, the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) and to receive an update on the GDPR Handbook for Members.

This meeting closed at 5.50 pm

**CLLR M. ADAMS
CHAIR.**