



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 at 5.00 pm.

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

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor W Lewis	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor H Boggis
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor G Caple	Councillor M Griffiths
Councillor W Jones	Councillor A Cox
Councillor G Hughes	Councillor M Forey

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr M Murphy, Health & Safety Advisor
Mr R Waters, Service Director Frontline Services

7 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration was made later in the meeting (Minute No.13 refers) Agenda Item 6 - Welsh Government Consultation: Draft Regulations to Establish Corporate Joint Committees

County Borough Councillor M Griffiths- "My husband has been working on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill"

8 Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillor L Walker.

9 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 14th October 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

10 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The Council's Health & Safety Advisor presented the report of the Director of Human Resources which provided an update on the Council's Fire Safety Risk Assessment process, as requested at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12th November 2019. Members were reminded that scrutiny had previously resolved that the following points would be implemented:-

- To build the newly developed E-Learning modules into all new

employees induction courses;

- That 'spot checks' are carried out on schools and Council owned buildings, in addition to the regular pre-arranged fire safety assessments, to ensure full compliance;
- That the Council's fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking fire risk assessments on schools and Council buildings on a rotational basis to prevent complacency; and
- That a further report is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in four months to ensure implementation of the actions raised by Scrutiny Members.

The Health & Safety Advisor confirmed that as instructed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the afore mentioned issues have been implemented and as of 3rd November 2020, 364 employees have completed the e-learning fire safety awareness course and 67 completed the e-learning Fire Safety for Site Managers course. A deadline for completion of the e-learning modules for site managers was now in place for the 31st March 2021 and would be monitored via the relevant Directors.

In response to a query from the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding targeting the e-learning modules at deputy managers, the Health and Safety Advisor confirmed that both site managers and deputies will access the programme.

Committee was advised that spot checks are now carried out on schools and other Council owned buildings in addition to pre-arranged fire safety assessments / audits and Fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking FRA's on a rotational basis to avoid any potential complacency which was of concern to Members.

Through its discussions with the Health and Safety Advisor committee asked whether the Council's Fire Safety Risk Assessments could also include unoccupied council buildings to ensure they are protected and whether any additional controls are required.

Members learned that the Trade Unions are met with separately, currently every six weeks and provided with an update on the progress of the Fire Safety Working Group. Committee queried whether the Trade Unions could be invited to form part of the Fire Safety Working Group, whose role is to receive fire risk assessment compliance reports and monitor performance, ensuring suitable action is taken where necessary. The group also considers all other fire safety matters including, for example, training needs, emerging trends and concerns.

The Health & Safety Advisor confirmed that desk top audits have been devised to limit the physical contact where possible and measure compliance with the management of 3 safety critical areas, Coronavirus, Fire Safety and Legionella. The desktop auditing programme was undertaken the week commencing 23rd November with 12 premises targeted however physical visits have been prioritised and carried out where necessary.

In conclusion and following discussion of the report and updated actions it was **RESOLVED:-**

1. That a further update on the Council's Fire Safety Risk Assessment process is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in another six months (or when deemed appropriate);
2. To request that an invitation is extended to the Trade Unions to form part of the Fire Safety Group; and
3. To request that the Health & Safety Advisor makes enquiries as to whether the Council's Fire Risk Assessments can include unoccupied Council buildings so that the council's assets are protected and monitored in the same way as its occupied buildings and schools.

11 **CONSULTATION LINKS**

Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information provided through the consultation links in respect of open consultations, Welsh Government consultations and those matters being consulted upon by the local authority.

12 **Position Statement - Scrutiny of the Council's response to flooding during 2020**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report which served to provide members with the opportunity to receive information relating to the severe flooding which took place across the County Borough during 2020 which has been delivered and captured through the course of previous meetings to Scrutiny and Full Council as set out below:-

- Written submissions by individual ward members or party groups;
- Verbal evidence from local members;
- Report to Full Council and Power point presentation (25th November 2020);
- Enclosed summary of information gathered over the last two months.

The Service Director advised Committee that the evidence and information considered from local members, through the scrutiny inquiry session and the written submissions received, will inform the findings of the Council's internal review which would be presented to Cabinet for its consideration later this month. He also confirmed that committee would have the opportunity to scrutinise how the council will respond to the Section 19 statutory report the Council is required to undertake in respect of the February floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood And Water Management Act 2010 (FAWMA 2010).

The following changes to the original verbal submissions were recorded as follows:-

Councillor Jarman

"Mountain Ash – all the sediment and debris emanating from Nant Ffrwd culvert meant that Mountain Ash was inaccessible for days. Was there ever any

intention of notifying residents that consultants have been employed by the local authority regarding Caegarw flooding? Why wasn't I notified so that I could co-ordinate and encourage residents to engage?"

Councillor S Rees-Owen

"Following the NRW report residents don't have faith in organisations investigating themselves that is the reason for calling for an Independent Enquiry"

Councillor E Webster

"There was a major flooding in Dumfries Street that flowed down from Callum Street when the culvert failed because of debris from the water course. There may be a case for litigation as there have been reports of illegal structures being built in the water course upstream. The culvert isn't suitable to deal with the excess debris. There are serious problems and we are asking the council to get an additional backup drainage system to give residents confidence.

There was flooding from Dumfries Street up to the main street to Stag Square, residents were still unblocking one of the culverts late into the morning.

I would like to thank Owen Griffiths for looking at measures on the mountainside to divert the watercourse to go behind the cemetery so in future less water will come down into the system and into the residential area.

Swn-Yr-Afon – The river wall eroded and a sink hole opened up and took the ground away. Natural Resources Wales are denying responsibility for the wall as is the council, meanwhile the hole is getting bigger.

High Street – This has been flooded three times in the past 7 years and after the flash flooding in June, Welsh Water assessed the pump house which functioned within limits but the RCT drainage system couldn't cope on the highway. No-one has accepted responsibility and residents need to know what needs to be done to prevent this happening again.

There are private landowners who have land on the mountainside and often lanes aren't adopted but the council won't take responsibility. I have cleared drains myself but responsibility needs to be taken for these assets. Mountain water runoff is a major problem for many of our residents and we need to find ways of forcing these landowners to ensure the safety and integrity of adjacent properties.

The Members Services line is great but isn't effective under these circumstances. Is the line fit for purpose?"

The Chair advised that the corrections would be reflected in the detailed accounts (attached to the Minutes) and before they are submitted as evidence to Cabinet. The Chair also confirmed that any further written contributions would need to be submitted before the agreed deadline.

In response to concerns raised by some Committee Members that the time afforded to the Scrutiny Inquiry Session was insufficient to justify the scale of the work and wider considerations, the Chair advised that the Scrutiny Inquiry session had been held over three and a half hours in addition to other scrutiny

committees where the issues had been discussed. The Chair added that each individual member of the council had also been afforded the opportunity to contribute to the future response of the Council through its Section 19 report by submitting a written submission.

Some members spoke of the support they and their residents had received from meeting with partner organisations such as Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water to discuss the floods and analyse potential causes since the events in February 2020 and cited the partnership working alongside the council as the most effective way of managing future risks and putting actions in place to minimise the harm caused by flooding as far as possible.

A number of Members raised concerns regarding the lack of public engagement in the scrutiny process to date and calls for the council to acknowledge the public and victims of the floods. On that basis Councillor Jarman called for an amendment to the motion (as set out below).

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications responded to concerns regarding the lack of public participation by stating that the opportunities to address scrutiny are widely available via the Council Business Unit, via the Chair and the full public participation procedures are published on the council website. The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stressed that the public would have an opportunity to engage following publication of the Council's Section 19 report in its entirety.

Some Members viewed the scrutiny process to date as transparent and honest which had seen residents represented fairly by their local Members. Others acknowledged that significant progress and improvements have already been made by the council, in a short period of time, in consultation with NRW and Welsh Water and much has been achieved following the floods to repair the infrastructure across the county borough. Other Members shared the view that members of the public deserved to have all the information and evidence before them which would be provided by means of the Council's Section 19 report

The Co-opted member present contributed to the discussions and observed that as this is the start of the scrutiny process and should there be any elements of the emerging themes, as referred to in point 2.2 and 2.3 of the report, that have been missed, they can be added to during the process. He added that committee would be afforded the opportunity to undertake an active scrutiny role following publication of the Council's Section 19 report.

In conclusion and in response to a concern regarding the remit of scrutiny with regards to the council response to the Section 19 statutory report, the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised that the Council is required to undertake the investigations and record the matters which contributed to the events in February and confirmed that the opportunity is available for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the outcomes and to undertake future scrutiny of the matter.

Following consideration of the reports and evidence before them it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Consider the information considered to-date from partners, Council Officers and local members;

2. Support the emerging themes identified within this report and request for this information and the comments of members, including written submissions received through the scrutiny inquiry process, to be presented to the Chief Executive and Cabinet, for consideration as part of the internal review. In doing so consider any recommendations or comments committee may wish to make at this point in the scrutiny process;
3. Scrutinise how the Council will respond to the Section 19 statutory report that the Council is required to undertake in respect of the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA);

Note: The following lost motion was moved by County Borough Councillor P. Jarman and seconded by County Borough Councillor E Stephens:

“The next step should be that we consult key stakeholders, businesses and householders who were the victim of flood. In the absence of this Committee’s support for an Independent Inquiry, we extend our Scrutiny Inquiry Session to take evidence from those who were the victim of floods as key stakeholders in this process”

Note: County Borough Councillors P Jarman and E Stephens wished to have their names recorded as having voted in favour of the amendment.

Updated Verbal Accounts

Councillor T Williams (Aberaman South)

“The two villages Abercwmboi and Cwmaman, the whole place was flooded and patches were coming off the mountain. We had sandbag issues. Money has been spent since and we are waiting for more work to be done”

Councillor R Lewis (Abercynon)

“There were 3 principal areas of Abercynon were affected by the flooding, Wood Road, the top of Nant Y Fedw were overflowing and there was some river flooding in River Row. The culvert worked because the local authority has spent money on flood prevention measures. When residents refer to 1975, there is a perception that there has been little action taken since 1975, that we have known about this for the last two decades and Storm Dennis has been a wakeup call, but should we have been more investment in the culverts and rivers. Ten years of austerity has been difficult.

We set up an Emergency Centre, helped by residents and supported by local businesses. Residents put calls to us but we were overwhelmed by the event. Myself and Councillor E George have written to Council Officers regarding the Abercynon flooding and have had a speedy response. The issue of dredging has been raised”

Councillor E George (Abercynon)

“Opposite River Row there is a natural flood plain, would the banking levels of the river opposite reduce the natural flood plain?”

Councillor G Caple (Cymmer)

“Pumping Stations – The Rhondda ward flooded, one did work in Trehafod, one didn’t in Britannia. Welsh Water indicated that some highways maintained drains were blocked and the culvert was over flowing. The collapse of the river wall caused flooding. There are a whole range of questions.

On the 16th February 2020 there was constant communication with NRW and WW – At 2am the alarms went off in Trehafod and Britannia pumping stations. Are there lessons to be learned from the performance of the pumping stations?

Going forward it is vital that, with regards to the infrastructure around the pumping stations, all parties work together and explain to residents what actions are going to be taken to mitigate the risks. The river walls were smashed away, no help, no explanation, residents need to know.

Dredging – The river was dredged to quicken the flow. Three parties need to get together to inform local councillors and residents and find a strategy.”

Councillor K Morgan (Hirwaun)

“This represents residents and my own feedback during and since.

We feel unsupported by RCT, frustrations with calls to the Call Centre on the night. This meeting has been a long time coming and as local member I echo the residents’ frustrations. I had to chase the Highways van for sand bags. In the Major Incident Recovery Board it mentions the impact on hundreds of properties which were flooded, the damage to a number of culverts and NRW mention the River Cynon culvert which was “deemed a risk to public safety but on private land”.

In Rhigos there was flooding on Rhigos Road, which took the impact of the water coming over the sides of the river embankment from the River Cynon.

I feel unsupported as I am having to chase all organisations.

The NRW report didn’t give the events justice and the Chief Executive of NRW stated that “The challenge is bigger than any one organisation can tackle alone.”

We need an Independent Inquiry to scrutinise the reports from all those responsible”

Councillor P Jarman (Mountain Ash East)

“NRW have said that the floods in February 2020 were a once in a generation event and yet the maps of the flooding issued by the Environment Agency Wales 40 years ago are the same maps. The infrastructure in Mountain Ash has had very little attention. Why the similarities in 1979 and 2020?

Planning Development in a flood plain- I thank Mr Evans for his presentation – What authority does NRW hold in objecting to proposed developments in flood plains? NRW always say it’s up to the local authority whether they grant or not, can you (NRW) formally object?

So much misery could have been relieved if you had displayed the skills to give evacuation warnings. With regards to the forward plans for Treorchy, Rhondda and Treherbert, have any local members been involved?

Mountain Ash – all the sediment and debris emanating from Nant Ffrwd culvert meant that Mountain Ash was inaccessible for days. Was there ever any intention of notifying residents that consultants have been employed by the local authority regarding Caegarw flooding? Why wasn't I notified so that I could coordinate and encourage residents to engage?

What is the process after this? Will we be debating the issue?

I have grave concerns regarding the lack of emergency plan for those Members newly elected in 2017. The plan on the website dates from 2011 which has been reviewed, on the 7th March, the new plan had been with SLT one week before. There is no emergency plan to rely on. No-one told me there was a flooding event in Mountain Ash, so how best are we to support our communities?"

Councillor A Morgan (Mountain Ash West)

"The response – the culverts became overwhelmed in the ward and the river was running through the centre. It was on a huge scale but thankfully no-one lost their life. Officers rang me and were with me from 10pm until 2.30am. Cars were being swept down the river in Pontypridd. At 2.24am I and the Council's Emergency Planning Officer were ringing staff to make sure they were all aware of the situation. By 6am, or before, most of the SLT and Emergency Planning Officers were already on hand and dealing with the emergency.

I went around the ward to meet with residents. No officers would have time to ring or email when it happened in the early hours but SLT responded by 6.30am. The Council quickly established the Major Incident Recovery Board.

Calls did get through to make the council aware of the flooding across the county borough. Sandbags did arrive but it was only then that staff realised that they were dealing with a major incident. Details of the Resilient Road funds to repair and future-proof key transport routes across RCT are available to read in the Cabinet reports.

I organised and held a public meeting in my ward and updated residents myself. Afterwards I made the decision to leave my ward and drive the 4x4 jeep, it took over an hour to get to Abercynon and we failed to get through the B4275. We were flagged down by a Fire Engine asking for assistance, a 7.5 tonne vehicle was lost in deep water on the A4059 and the Emergency Services couldn't get through. With the best intentions, some locations just couldn't be reached.

We need to look at events but we can't respond to a natural disaster, which needs local plans, understanding and partnership working.

Welsh Government is funding everything that the council submits but it will take a sustained approach. Staff did all they could on the day."

Councillor S Rees-Owen (Pentre)

"I saw the devastation. I was awoken at 3.30am and saw the videos.

The NRW report talks about better communication, Pentre was never vulnerable to flooding until the felling of the trees. Both residents and volunteers helped out.

Communications & Support – Local residents look to their local members for

help and support. It's difficult to be able to support them without the information they need e.g. Facebook posts about people being awarded £500 grants and sessions for filling in forms but soon only Covid-19 related matters were reported, I had to chase up these matters and officers responses on behalf of residents.

Sandbags were lacking and we were told by the Council that properties could only have sandbags if they had already been flooded (not as a precaution). That was when the local builders yard stepped in to provide sand and sandbags in the community.

I wasn't aware that the council had made the decision to stop the collection of household goods, I was told it had been withdrawn, although Mr Wheeler did collect the furniture.

We have had flooding since and things have improved. Mr Daniel Hitchings has gone above and beyond. When there is a forecast for bad weather I ask questions and I can communicate to residents.

Could Mr Owen Griffiths spend some time with us to go through his power point presentation he delivered in the meeting?

Following the NRW report residents don't have faith in organisations investigating themselves that is the reason for calling for an Independent Enquiry as there are many, many lessons to learn. Communication and Support need to be improved."

Councillor Weaver (Pentre)

"There was a blocked culvert.

I regularly contact residents to ask how they are, they are frightened of another flood. Work is still being carried out and residents need to be put at ease, to know that their homes will be safer, flood doors are a good idea.

Communication needs to be improved, it wasn't very good. I walked the streets with sandwiches. The Salvation Army helped and other religious groups in the main.

We need to feedback to our residents. They need support and Councillors need support to ease the stress, we are out on a limb. There is no-one to support me to support others."

Councillor H Fychan (Pontypridd Town)

"Every resident and business deserves to have their say.

The key recommendation this committee should make is that there should be an Independent Enquiry into the floods. In 5 minutes I can't do justice to the evidence of all the businesses and residents affected in my ward, and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee doesn't have the capacity to fully investigate and compile all the evidence. And even if we were able to as a Council, are we best placed to investigate ourselves?

As referenced by Councillor Jarman, we haven't looked at why the Emergency

Plan was outdated which was a failing. We have received no training since the floods nor before. Neither was the plan implemented as it should have been. There has been no scrutiny of this.

Also, I have never received an answer it why was there an IT upgrade that weekend when officers knew that a serious event was likely? We couldn't access the contact numbers and emails etc, nor information about what support the Council would provide for residents. Also, why was there no communication with all Councillors? There are lessons to be learned such as a text alert to Members which would provide them quickly with the relevant links. It could be one message to everyone. Communication was not good enough.

Mr Owen Griffiths mentioned the volunteers and coordinators. I'm still not sure the Cabinet understand how important a role the volunteers played, and that this wasn't coordinated by the Council but rather by themselves with support from us as Councillors. I contacted the Leader on the 16th February offering to coordinate support; I was asked not to do anything for 24hrs and that I would receive more information on the Wednesday, and that I was not to contact Council officers. So I was out helping flood victims, and yet had no support or information from the Council and felt like I was being treated as a nuisance, rather than part of the response. There must be someone to communicate with us. We set up a Community Centre with Councillor Powell and Councillor Eleri Griffiths, had it not been for that there would have not been no coordinated support for those affected.

I must be able to explain to residents and businesses how we are going to protect them in the future and what lessons we have learnt in order to do so. We need an Independent Inquiry."

Councillor T Leyshon (Rhondda Ward)

"In lower Trehafod there was up to 4ft of water in homes. The pumps have been replaced but residents are not confident. The warnings and alarm systems came after the floods, this needs to be looked at. The height of the river is a concern, it came within inches of the top of the Trehafod wall. Natural Resources Wales always used to dredge the river, I would like to see that resumed.

Residents were the saviours of the day as was the community centre who opened their doors. We had IT connected to the community centre which was great. It worked well and we got Ipads out to residents."

Councillor E Griffiths (Rhondda Ward)

On the first day of the flooding I was unable to reach Trehafod so I took the opportunity to support Pontypridd and Trallwn. I came across a Council Housing Officer there and noted her contact details. This turned out to be a blessing and a source of invaluable support when I later managed to get to Trehafod.

What I got there volunteers from the community hall had already set up a respite centre and had been helping residents. They were serving food and providing sanctuary to people. Volunteers ran the entire support effort.

I found myself expected to answer questions about council services and needing to advise people who both wanted to stay in their homes and others who needed emergency accommodation.

Luckily I had the number of the housing officer who I had met earlier in

Pontypridd. I had no training to deal with such a situation and both myself and other councillors faced considerable anger from local people.

In my naivety I expected that council services would be available shortly and that welfare checks would be made to check people in their homes. This not happen in Trehafod over the following days.

One recommendation I think for the future is look at communication so that information is passed on. I did expect there to be a council community hub set up quickly to share information in the area flooded. This was not to be. Myself and fellow councillors knocked on doors to check on residents, which was something as thought should have been part of the Emergency Plan - but it isn't.

I raised at the time with the council and asked for advice about cleaning homes that had dirty water contamination and received advice verbally. As the days went on I participated in meetings at the support hub that developed in Trallwng with Cllr Fychan and Cllr Powell. The issue of hygiene was a concern to us all and we were reliant on volunteers organised by Cllr Powell to help clean homes and parks.

I did receive communication from Welsh Water about the pumping station and they were accessible to residents throughout the flood and afterwards.

I must praise the volunteers. I have since studied the Emergency plan now, and saw that it does say that the authority would coordinate volunteers. This is not what happened at the time, as the volunteers and community members organised themselves with councillors helping without official recognition and support from the authority.

There is a strong case for an Independent Inquiry, to look at the role of the three large organisations and how everyone works together including the voluntary sector. We need an overall picture of the situation.

Councillor Webber (Rhydyfelin Central & Ilan Ward)

"With regards to Councillor Fychan's comments about Cabinet and not being aware, please don't assume we're not aware.

My ward has been flooded many times in a year. Lots of families are from Newydd Housing who are responsible for some of the houses following the floods. Many homes need to have flood doors put onto their properties. The water took away a retaining wall in the ward.

Councillor Powderhill called and by 9am the community centre was open for families to safely bring their children. No one could expect to get through to the call centre.

The amount of culverts that are there, the ward below gets flooded which affects the cottages in Upper Boat as there's an area in the river where its course changes but I am not an expert in this area.

We represent our communities to the best of our abilities but there are lessons to be learned. My ward is a lucky recipient of a Flood Prevention Scheme. I bought myself a megaphone with a siren to prepare for such events. I do suggest that

NRW give people advance warnings as a number of individuals in my ward have been flooded.

I have to pay tribute to the staff, they worked themselves to the bone and they did their best.”

Councillor Bonetto (Taffs Well Ward)

“By the time Nantgarw got the warnings it was under water, the basement flats on Cardiff Road were flooded.

The community was fantastic, they set up sites for clothes and food distribution and thanks to Griffith’s construction (Taffs Well Metro Depot)

On Sunday we couldn’t access Nantgarw, the only exit was on a dinghy. This has left the residents nervous and when it rains they live on their nerves. If higher defence walls are built it will only shift the flooding further down.

How can I reassure my residents? Every drop of rain that falls they start to panic. I thank everyone who worked so hard.”

Councillor M Powell (Trallwn Ward)

“I was elected as a local member to Trallwn in 1999 and I know that lots of places are built on flood plains with pluvial flooding as an additional problem.

On Sunday, 16th February I was standing in Zion Street next to a senior council officer of the Council. I diverted the Housing Officer to Coedpenmaen Community Church to help. I was organising a 4x4 to help get people out. I asked for the Fire Brigade to come and rescue an elderly couple. One resident collapsed with a heart attack and died. I couldn’t get the emergency services to come in and help.

This needs to be resolved.

I asked for a leaflet to be provided and laminated so residents would know how to contact the relevant services and officers. Vehicles were left outside and without warnings were left in the wrong place and couldn’t be moved. The River Taff was swelling 800 cubic metres per second.

I’ll be supporting the call for an Independent Inquiry. This local authority has done nothing to protect the bridge which is our heritage.

I opened the Community Centre in Trallwn with little support from the local authority, initially until the end of the week, we used it for three and a half weeks supplying food to Pentre and the Rhondda ward. I note that Ynysybwl have not been included on the list today. Our communities helped each other.”

Councillor S Powderhill (Treforest Ward)

“Treforest had three different types of flooding. Officers were amazing and the culverts were cleared quickly. The blocking of the Castle Inn Bridge was caused by debris and objects and caused the flooding in Cardiff Road. Niagra Street and surrounding streets were flooded up to the first floor of the properties.

Our Officers were amazing, this was a National disaster. I knew where to go and what to do from day one. I set up the Community Centre that morning and there were many other councillors like me. These were unprecedented times.

How can we alleviate the flooding to Niagra Street, Egypt Street, Nile Street? If we build up the flood walls it will push the problem to Rhydyfelin and Hawthorn.

I look forward to the section 19 report. I thank the community, they are angry but all things in place we did an amazing job.”

Councillor E Webster (Treorchy Ward)

“There was a major flooding in Dumfries Street that flowed down from Callum Street when the culvert failed because of debris from the water course. There may be a case for litigation as there have been reports of illegal structures being built in the water course upstream. The culvert isn’t suitable to deal with the excess debris. There are serious problems and we are asking the council to get an additional backup drainage system to give residents confidence.

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I would like to thank Owen Griffiths for looking at measures on the mountainside to divert the watercourse to go behind the cemetery so in future less water will come down into the system and into the residential area.

Swn-Yr-Afon – The river wall eroded and a sink hole opened up and took the ground away. Natural Resources Wales are denying responsibility for the wall as is the council, meanwhile the hole is getting bigger.

High Street – This has been flooded three times in the past 7 years and after the flash flooding in June, Welsh Water assessed the pump house which functioned within limits but the RCT drainage system couldn’t cope on the highway. No-one has accepted responsibility and residents need to know what needs to be done to prevent this happening again.

There are private landowners who have land on the mountainside and often lanes aren’t adopted but the council won’t take responsibility. I have cleared drains myself but responsibility needs to be taken for these assets. Mountain water runoff is a major problem for many of our residents and we need to find ways of forcing these landowners to ensure the safety and integrity of adjacent properties.

The Members Services line is great but isn’t effective under these circumstances. Is the line fit for purpose?”

Councillor W Jones (Treherbert)

“We didn’t experience anything like everyone else but the response from the Council was very quick. I have issues with NRW. We live at the top of the valley. The river wall is in terrible condition and the force of the water pulled the trees and rubble away and took it down the valley. I hope NRW will take responsibility.”

Joint Committees

The Service Director - Democratic Services and Communications presented his joint report with the Chief Executive and Director of Legal Services which sought to update Members on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which is currently awaiting Royal Assent (anticipated to be granted in early 2021); consider draft regulations which would be made under that legislation in respect of the establishment and operation of CJCs; and request that Members feedback on the consultation initiated by Welsh Government in respect of those draft regulations.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications provided Members with background to the Welsh Government consultation document, attached to the report which welcomed input from members and officers to help shape the proposals by the deadline of the 4th January 20221.

The Service Director advised that the Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's) are separate corporate bodies and legal entities to their constituent councils which will be able to directly employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and be directly responsible for exercising functions. CJCs will have functions that cover economic well-being, strategic planning (LDPs will remain with LAs) and transport.

The membership of a CJC will be the Leaders of the constituent local authorities and will be able to co-opt additional members (either cabinet members or other partners) to it or any of its sub committees (if it has chosen to establish any) as it sees fit and should it wish to do so.

The Service Director referred to section 5.30 to 5.34 which sets out the need for the CJC's to set up an Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He added that Members have an opportunity to influence the need for clear joint scrutiny arrangements from the beginning via their feedback.

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee shared their concerns and misgivings about some elements of the CJC's such as the lack of scrutiny, lack of accountability and democratic deficit they may create. They discussed the proposed approach of 'One Member One Vote' and deemed it unfair given the different sizes of authorities which would undermine accountability. They acknowledged the potential benefits in terms of collaboration and influence for local government on key levers

In conclusion committee **RESOLVED** to authorise the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to convey the comments and responses of committee members to the WG prior to the consultation closing.

14 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee summarised the key points to have arisen from the meeting and recommendations to be take forward including an update in respect of the F

The Chair thanked all Members for their attendance and reminded them of the

date for the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 18th January 2021.

This meeting closed at 6.53 pm

**Cllr M Adams
Chairman**