



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 12 May 2021 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 G Caple
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor W Jones
Councillor A Cox	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor M Forey	

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 & Improvement

County Borough Councillors in attendance: -

Councillor R Yeo, Chair, Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Councillor G Thomas, Vice Chair, Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor T Williams, Vice Chair, Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

40 Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors E Stephens and L Walker.

41 Welcome

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee extended a welcome to those members present at the meeting and officers including the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications and the Service Director, Performance & Improvement.

42 Scrutiny Research Facility

The Chair advised Members of the Committee that the scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny

responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Any requests should be directed to the scrutiny inbox.

43 Declaration of Interest

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

44 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 17th March 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

45 Consultation Links

Members acknowledged 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.

46 Wales Audit Office: Annual Audit Summary 2020

In his report, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications outlined the Audit Wales 'Annual Audit Summary 2020' which had previously been presented to Council on the 10th March 2021 and Audit Committee on 26th April 2021.

Members were asked to consider the progress made by Council Services to date in implementing proposals for improvement and recommendations made by Audit Wales and whether there were any matters that required referral to the Council's Audit Committee. The Service Director also asked Members to consider whether there are any matters for further scrutiny and inclusion in the Overview & Scrutiny forward Work Programme for 2021/22.

In the section relating to Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' (VAWDASV services) a Member asked if there was any evidence that men, as victims of domestic abuse, are treated equally. The Chair requested that this query is raised at the forthcoming meeting of the Crime & Disorder Committee on the 17th May, when the relevant Officers and South Wales Police would be in attendance.

It was also highlighted that on page 24, under the agreed section that it should read 'It is worth **noting** that the Audit Report....'

The Co-opted Member referred to the National Fraud Initiative in Wales 2018-20 and queried whether reports relating to emerging fraud risks due to Covid-19 would be referred to the Audit Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement confirmed that during the 2020-21 Municipal Year, resources were allocated to the Covid-19 related risks such as Business Support Grants and Free School Meals (FSM's) fee payments. He added that these reports will be open reports and published to the Council website in advance of reporting to the Council's Audit Committee. Any request to scrutinise the reports by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, would be undertaken as appropriate.

A progress update was sought on the development of the new regional service model in the medium term for the VAWDASV services, which will address concerns regarding the possible overlap and duplication of work that could arise from different approaches within the authority and with partners. The Service Director Performance & Improvement advised that feedback would be provided to committee on the service model and the work ongoing in Merthyr Tydfil CBC.

With regards to a query raised relating to the section 'Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone's Problem; No One's Responsibility,' the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee advised that his committee had recently scrutinised the progress made by the Housing Service in relation to the RCTCBC Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and the Action Plan supporting that Strategy.

In the section 'Review of the Public Service Boards' a query was raised concerning the weaknesses identified throughout Wales as to how the Public Service Boards (PSB's) are scrutinised and what the local authority can do to help improve the scrutiny of the PSB's. The Chair agreed that there is a lack of scrutiny and accountability regarding scrutiny of the PSB's and a change to legislation was needed to support this.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications reminded committee that the Chair and other members of the PSB Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee were present. He pointed out that at the last meeting of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC), the lay member challenged the Chair of the PSB with regard to measuring the success and progress of the PSB well-being plan.

The Service Director advised that in a recent meeting of the PSB the public sector partners/organisations agreed that they had collaborated and worked closely together and added value in their response to the pandemic. The PSB acknowledged the need to demonstrate how it can measure its success, and this is an area that the Welsh Government may need to reflect upon in any future review of strategic partnerships going forward.

The Chair of the JOSC agreed that scrutiny of the PSB has been challenging but during the 2020/21 Municipal Year, the JOSC had concentrated on one strand of the PSB wellbeing plan to produce more robust outcomes.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the progress made by Council Services to date in implementing proposals for improvement/recommendations made by Audit Wales; and
2. Receive further information where requested to the next appropriate Committee.

47 Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for the municipal year 2020/21 which represents an overview of all the Council's scrutiny functions. The Service Director advised that subject to Committee's endorsement of the annual report,

he would engage with the Chairs of the thematic scrutiny committees to confirm the content of their respective sections (with the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and Vice Chairs of the Finance & Performance and Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committees in attendance at the meeting and able to contribute their comments).

Before requesting Members' comments and feedback, the Chair suggested that the information at Appendix 1 is incorporated under each individual section of the annual report for consistency.

Other Members (Including the Co-Opted Member) requested the following amendments be made to the report:

1. Inclusion of the Call-In which adds value
2. Typos to be addressed on page 46
3. Reference to the Employment & Skills Strategy (Finance & Performance Scrutiny) to reflect the remit of 'Economy'
4. Footnote to acknowledge that the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN's) scrutiny working group will be finalised in the next municipal year

Other comments:

- In response to a query regarding flooding and category of tips - It was confirmed that there would be an opportunity for pre scrutiny of the Section 19 report before reporting to Cabinet in June 2021. The date reflects the time required to gather the volume of evidence, technical information, contributions from key partners, interviews from residents and supporting information;
- PSB Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) Annual Report 2020/21- This would be a stand-alone report which will be presented to the AGM of the JOSC in June/July 2021
- The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs had discussed the format/themes of the Scrutiny Annual report at its meeting held in February 2021;
- The Council's Residential Care Home Service for Older People, as outlined within the report, represents an exciting and positive development for older people, an excellent report.

Members acknowledged the streamlined format of the scrutiny annual report reflected the influence of Covid-19 yet demonstrated the volume of work maintained by Scrutiny during the 2020/21 Municipal Year. Members agreed there was no complacency and agreed that a good job was undertaken by all the scrutiny committees with effective support from Scrutiny Chairs and Officers.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 to the Annual General meeting of the Council on the 26th May 2021, as amended; and
2. Authorise the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications to consult with the Chairs of the respective thematic scrutiny committees, not in attendance at the meeting, to confirm the content of their individual Annual Report.

The Chair thanked members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their attendance and valuable contribution. He also thanked them for their hard work and for supporting each other throughout the municipal year.
The Chair reminded Members of the Crime & Disorder Committee which would be held on the 17th May 2021 at 5pm.

This meeting closed at 6.05 pm

**CLLR M. ADAMS
CHAIR.**