

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-16**

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY,
COMMUNITIES AND PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

15th February 2016

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL &
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Agenda Item No. 3

**PRE SCRUTINY OF THE
COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed approach for the pre-scrutiny of progress against the Council's 2015/16 priorities and the 2016/17 actions to deliver the priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Form a view on the adequacy of the pre-scrutiny arrangements proposed and where relevant make recommendations for improvement;
- 2.2 Subject to Member recommendations, endorse a way forward to enable pre-scrutiny of the Council's 2015/16 priorities and 2016/17 priority actions to begin in March 2016;
- 2.3 Nominate elected Member representatives to become members of relevant Scrutiny Working Groups.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The principle of all local authorities in Wales making arrangements for the 'pre-scrutiny' of key business has been recommended by the WAO in recent years and is an area that the Council is developing, for example, as part of its corporate performance reporting and planning arrangements.
- 3.2 More specifically, the latest WAO Annual Improvement Report presented to Council on 28th October 2015, recognised the pre-scrutiny arrangements currently in place and concluded that there were opportunities for improvement.

3.3 With the above in mind, it is recommended that the practice of 'pre-scrutiny' continues for the Council's corporate performance reporting and planning. This will require Members to form a view on the impact made by delivering the six priorities agreed for 2015/16 and also form a view on the adequacy of the actions that are proposed to deliver the Council's priorities for 2016/17, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 (subject to consideration by full Council).

3.4 Lastly, the Council has a legal duty to publicly set out:

- An assessment of its priorities each year, by no later than 31st October after the end of the financial year to which the priorities relate; and
- Its priorities for the year ahead, to be published no later than 30th June.

4. **PROPOSED APPROACH**

4.1 Throughout 2015/16, progress in each of the priority plans has been reported to Cabinet and thereafter scrutinised by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. This is in line with revised scrutiny arrangements agreed at the Council's AGM in May 2015.

4.2 Much of the Council's work in its priority areas involves a number of services working together. As such it is considered that the 'review and challenge' of progress made and future plans would benefit from a cross cutting approach as well as seeking to bring elected Members together from a number of different scrutiny committees. To achieve this, a proposed approach is set out at Appendix 1 and is summarised below:

- Three Scrutiny Working Groups be created, the membership of which comprises a cross-section of elected Members from the Council's existing Scrutiny Committee and co-opted Members. The designated Cabinet Portfolio holder(s) will be invited to attend.
- The Scrutiny Working Groups be designated the following areas:

Summary of proposed approach to Work Programme for Corporate Performance Report		
	Pre-scrutiny of 2015/16 progress against priorities Meeting 1 (March)	Pre-scrutiny of 2016/17 proposed priority plans Meeting 2 (April)
Scrutiny Working Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect people from harm and tackle anti social behaviour • Streetcare Services and the Natural Environment 	Place - <i>Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live</i>
Scrutiny Working Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a Top Quality Education – Every School a great school • Improving our Communities 	Economy - <i>Building a strong Economy</i>
Scrutiny Working Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping all Children and Young People safe • Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently 	People - <i>Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone</i>

- Each working group to meet on two occasions so that the information arising from the first meeting can inform the second as set out below:
 - Meeting 1 - to consider the 2015/16 progress; and
 - Meeting 2 - to consider the actions to deliver 2016/17 priorities.
- The outcome of the Scrutiny Working Groups meetings will be taken into account in compiling a user friendly draft Corporate Performance Report for 2016/17 and this to be reported to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee for review prior to a final draft version reported to Council.

The roles of members of Scrutiny Working Groups

4.3 The following roles are proposed to enable objective review and challenge of 2015/16 progress and 2016/17 proposed priority actions:

- Scrutiny Member
 - To review and challenge the information presented and ask questions of the designated officers and Cabinet Member(s); and
 - Form a view on the extent of progress / planned progress of the Council and make recommendations for improvement.
- Cabinet Member - to be accountable for the information presented and provide feedback, alongside the designated officer, on questions raised by Scrutiny Members.
- Designated officers – to present information to the Scrutiny Working Group and provide feedback, alongside the Cabinet Member, on questions raised by Scrutiny Members.

5. PROPOSED TIMESCALES

5.1 Suggested timescales are set out below:

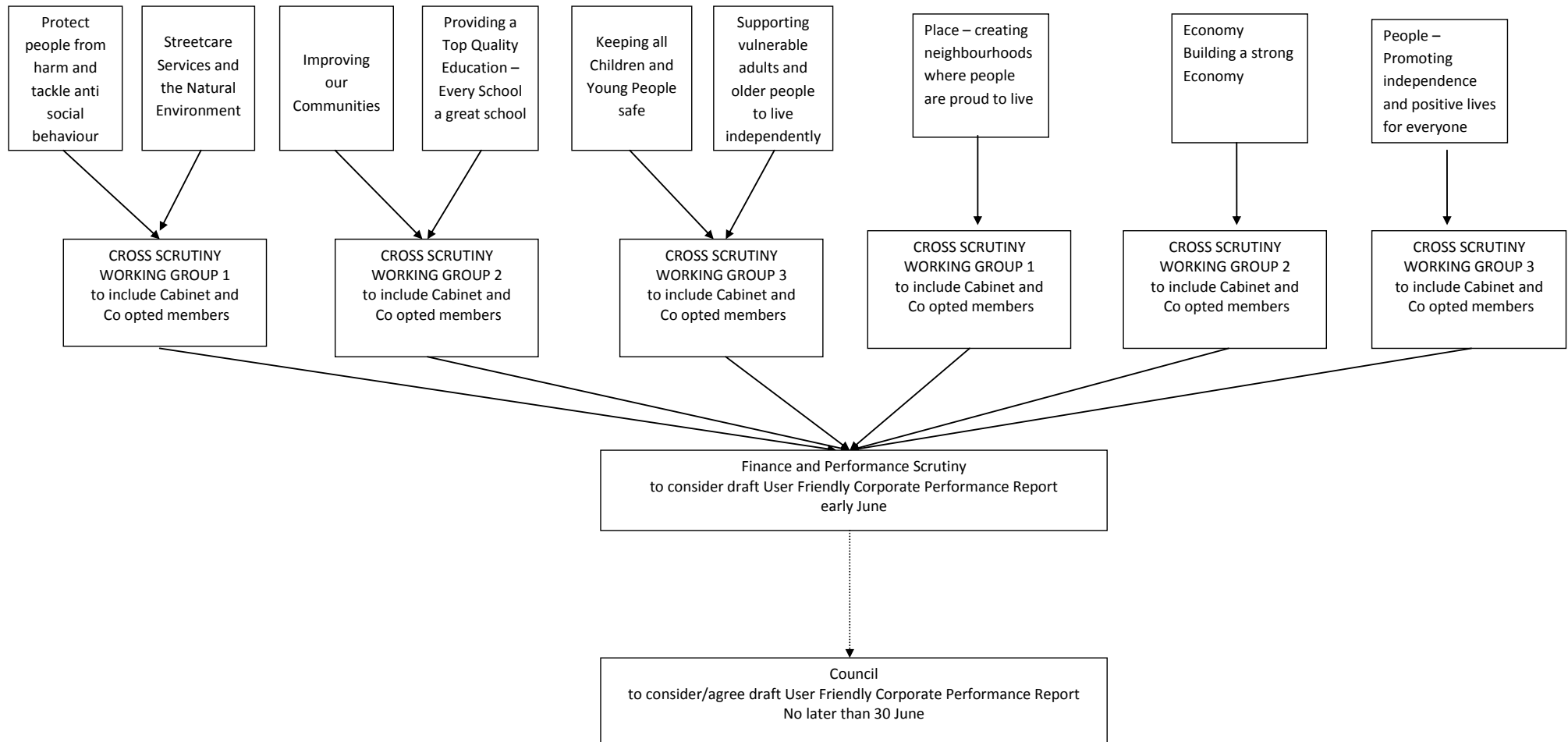
Activity	Timescale
Brief each Scrutiny Committee on the pre-scrutiny arrangements	February 2016
Complete draft evaluations of progress for each of the six 2015/16 priority plans	March 2016
Commence pre-scrutiny of evaluations in cross Scrutiny Working Groups	March 2016
Pre-scrutiny of proposed 2016/17 priority plans	April 2016
Produce user friendly draft Corporate Performance Report (taking into account Scrutiny Working Group feedback)	May 2016
Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee (to consider a draft of the user friendly Corporate Performance Report)	June 2016
Council	June 2016

Arrangements to consider progress in the Council's current priorities and agree actions to deliver 2016/17 priorities

Appendix 1

March - reviewing 2015/16 progress

April - agreeing 2016/17 actions



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