

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS**

Minutes of the meeting of the Chairs & Vice Chairs meeting held on Wednesday, 1 May 2019 at 4.15 pm at the Committee Room 1, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale.

### **County Borough Councillors - Chairs & Vice Chairs Members in attendance:-**

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Evans
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor S. Rees-Owen
Councillor G Thomas	Councillor J Williams
Councillor T Williams	Councillor R Yeo

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

#### **12 Apologies**

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors G. Holmes and Bradwick.

#### **13 Chair's Announcement**

The Chair, Councillor L. M. Adams welcomed everyone to this the last meeting of the Chairs & Vice Chairs for the Municipal Year 2018/19. He thanked the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs for their commitment and hard work over the last year which had been evidenced in the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report to be presented at the AGM.

The Chair also took the opportunity to thank the Scrutiny Officers for their continued support.

#### **14 Review - Overview & Scrutiny 'Fit for the Future'**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs which outlined the proposals to review the Council Scrutiny arrangements and to update Members on progress since the WAO report published its findings in respect of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements.

The Service Director advised the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs that the first opportunity would be afforded to them to agree the proposed scrutiny structure as set out in the report in advance of the proposals being presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> May at 5.15pm.

The Service Director alluded to the WAO Review and its subsequent findings in respect of the Council's scrutiny arrangements and suggested that the proposals would progress the recommendations set out in the review for improvements to the Council's scrutiny arrangements. He reported that in addition to the original review, a recent national 'Discussion paper 'Six themes to help make scrutiny 'Fit

for the Future' had been published which reiterated the common themes identified in the review.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs were reminded of some of the positive changes to Scrutiny that have taken place, namely, more pre scrutiny which informs policy development, a better flow of information through the one-to-one engagement sessions and more opportunities to scrutinise at the consultation stage such as the 21st Century Schools. The Service Director reported that there were still areas in need of improvement as referred to in the WAO report, the need for more outcome based scrutiny, better evaluation of the effectiveness of scrutiny and fewer monitoring reports which note progress. It was stated that in general terms more outcomes derive from the Scrutiny Working Groups which is something that the new proposals want to embrace through focussing on more in depth reviews.

The Service Director set out the proposals to consider amendments to the following aspects of scrutiny arrangements:-

Proposal 1 -

- Review the current terms of reference of each scrutiny committee;
- The Corporate Plan theme Economy to sit under the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee;
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee to agree the terms of reference going forward;
- Allocate specific themes from the Corporate Plan to the respective scrutiny committee

Proposal 2 -

- Streamline work programmes and agendas;
- Work towards a 'select committee' approach;
- Develop a new forward work programme template

Proposal 3 -

- Formalise the process for scrutiny to facilitate Council motions;
- Summons the mover and seconder of a notice of motion to a scrutiny meeting to progress the matter.

Proposal 4 -

- Enhance the public engagement section of the Council website;
- Better use of social media to highlight the work of scrutiny and improve public engagement at every opportunity.

The Chair thanked the Service Director for his overview going forward and proposed that prior to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreeing the revised terms of reference and allocation of themes from the Corporate Plan, at its first meeting following the AGM, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs should have the opportunity to consider these matters and comment as a collective.

Members agreed with the proposals and considered that agendas being more succinct with fewer agenda items would be more productive. In response to how Scrutiny Working Groups would operate in the future, the Chair stated that it is important to get the balance and transition right with regard to pre scrutiny and Scrutiny Working Groups and for them to follow a Select Committee approach and that perhaps a visit to Welsh Government would allow for a better understanding of how they operate. Members also commented on the added

value of the Cabinet Member engagement sessions and the Cabinet Member attending a Scrutiny Committee by invitation only.

The Vice Chair of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee commented that the past year had been challenging for the Joint Scrutiny Committee which had found itself dealing with very heavy agendas and a forward Work Programme which needed to be more outcome and focussed based. The Vice Chair stated that it had been disappointing that there had been no outcomes to report during the first year and she considered that there was a real need for more discussion with stakeholders and work which involved smaller groups to review specific pieces of work.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs:-

1. Acknowledge and agree the proposed amendments to the scrutiny structures as set out in the report subject to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs having the opportunity to discuss and comment on the revised Terms of Reference, forward work programmes and allocation of themes from the Corporate Plan prior to consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting following the Council AGM; and
2. Instruct the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications to verbally relay the findings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> May at 5.15pm;

## **15 Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19**

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 and drew Members' attention to the Executive Summary at the front of the report which acts as a quick reference to the work undertaken by the respective Scrutiny Committees. The Chair referred to this section, which contains links to all the reports, as an aide memoir for Members. He also stated that as the Executive Summary contains details of Scrutiny outcomes it has responded in part to the requirements of the Wales Audit Office Review.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs were asked to consider their own individual sections and confirm whether the report represents a fair and balanced view of the work undertaken during the Municipal Year, being mindful of the minor amendments as requested by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to endorse the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 subject to a typo on page 23 of the report and the incorrect name against a Member's photos within the report both of which would require amending prior to its presentation at the Council AGM.

## **16 Members' Training Update**

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised that Scrutiny members would be asked if they have any specific training needs and

that this would be done at the first meeting of the Municipal Year.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs considered this to be an appropriate time to make the request in respect of training.

A request was made in respect of Members having sight of a Scrutiny flowchart which would set out the functions of the Scrutiny Committees and act as a handy tool for Members.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs **RESOLVED** to encourage their respective Scrutiny members to be forthcoming with their training requests.

#### **17 Scrutiny Chairs/Vice Chairs Updates**

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the oral updates from each Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair in respect of their Scrutiny work programmes until the next Municipal Year.

**This meeting closed at 5.00 pm**

**Cllr M Adams  
Chairman.**