RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 8 July 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Committee Room 1, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypandy, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor M. Powell (Chair)

Councillor G. Holmes   Councillor G. Thomas
Councillor R. Yeo   Councillor S. Bradwick
Councillor T. Williams   Councillor W. Lewis
Councillor G. Caple   Councillor J. Cullwick
Councillor M. Diamond

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr G. Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N. Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr C. Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications
Mr P. Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Miss L. Lawson, Performance Manager
Mr P. Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services

County Borough Councillors in attendance

Mr M. Adams, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Mr. M. Norris, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr J. Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors A. Davies-Jones, S. Rees-Owen, J. Williams and A. Fox.

3 THE DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20

The Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications began by explaining that the meeting had been called as a 'special meeting' to provide Members with the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the draft Corporate Performance Report 2019/20. The Service Director also advised Members that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Work Programme would be reviewed at its next meeting on 23rd of July 2019.

The Service Director- Finance and Improvement Services reported on the purpose of the meeting, which was to provide Members with the opportunity to review, challenge and propose amendments to the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2019/20 in respect of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of 'Economy', 'People', and 'Place'.

The Service Director explained that Members of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee were being asked to form a view on the extent to which the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2019/20 sets out a balanced and evidenced based assessment of the Council's 2018/19 performance in its Corporate Plan priorities and whether the Council's ambitions for 2019/20 were understandable and will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised.

It was pointed out that an updated draft version of the Corporate Performance Report 2019/20 would be presented to Cabinet on 18th July 2019, incorporating any amendments deemed necessary by the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The Service Director also advised that Members will have an opportunity to ask questions to the Corporate Plan priority lead officers as part of the meeting.

Discussions ensued and Councillor Caple queried whether public funds have been allocated for services toward the north of the County Borough in particular for town centre regeneration. The Chief Executive confirmed that public funds are available for this purpose and referenced the Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and transport hub, consideration of cross-valley links and extracare developments. The Chief Executive added that as work progresses to consider proposals, the Council will continue to be proactive in seeking funding from other sources to support developments / projects. Members acknowledged the work currently underway to support town centre regeneration.

Councillor W. Lewis highlighted the positive Key Stage 4 results referenced on page 27 of the CPR and queried how the Council intended to continue to support this positive trend. The Chief Executive reinforced the significant investment made in schools across the County Borough and the improving academic attainment results achieved. The Chief Executive indicated that there would be continued focus on supporting good leadership and good quality teaching, underpinned by a range of training and support for headteachers and teachers in Rhondda Cynon Taf schools, to help ensure this positive trend continues.

Discussions continued and Councillor Yeo referenced page 33 of the CPR and in particular the increased pressures on Delayed Transfers of Care and queried what the Council was doing to manage the release of people from hospital back to their homes and alleviate the pressures on this service. The Group Director – Community & Children's Services indicated that the Council's priority is to respond to the individual needs of residents and is committed to a transformational change in the way it meets the increasing demand for care for people leaving hospital. The Group Director added that there are pressures arising from difficulties in recruiting care staff in some areas of the County Borough and the Council is working collaboratively with partners to address this. The Group Director also brought to Members attention the good progress being made on the Council's second Extra Care Housing facility in Maesyffynnon in Aberaman and the Council's 'Stay well@ home' service dedicated to support vulnerable residents.

Mr Fish, the Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative referred to page 22 of the CPR which referenced the report by Welsh Government on the Well-being of Children across Wales. It was highlighted that the information appeared to give mixed messages in respect of the health and well-being of children and emphasised that there are differences locally in terms of how well children are doing and that the Welsh Government report does not acknowledge this. The Chief Executive indicated that inclusion of extracts from the national report is intended to provide contextual information and added that he would ensure that the work of the Council is given more prominence within the CPR.

Councillor Adams queried how the CPR is being utilised for scrutiny purposes. The Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications fed back that going forward the Council will be advocating a 'Scrutiny and Challenge' approach with Corporate Plan progress updates being a key part of this.

Councillor Bradwick raised a concern in respect of dog fouling. The Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services emphasised that the rate of Fixed Penalty Notices has dropped, indicating a positive picture, and is supported by the Council's approach to tackling envirocrimes. Councillor Bradwick acknowledged the progress made and wanted to also place on record his personal thanks to all the staff involved in the recent Rhydyfelin Community Recycling Event. He emphasised the success of the event and queried whether similar events could be rolled out into other communities across the County Borough. The Group Director indicated that the results of the event and its impact would be analysed to inform any further events.

Councillor Thomas referred to page 16 of the report and the ratification of the £1.2 billion City Deal for South Wales, which includes the implementation of the South Wales Metro and associated local transport schemes and sought clarification on the number of jobs to be created in

the County Borough. Councillor Thomas also noted that a more in depth focus is needed to create more private sector jobs in RCT, particularly in the manufacturing industry. The Chief Executive set out the private sector jobs coming into the County Borough and also the private sector interest in the Taff Vale redevelopment project. The Chief Executive also set out the opportunities that will be provided by the City Deal, emphasising it will open many doors for businesses in RCT, and noted that the positive relationship with Welsh Government is helping in this regard.

Councillor Thomas also referred to page 19 of the CPR and noted that the population projection will be a challenge for the Council. He also referred Committee Members to page 22 of the report and in particular the reference to data in respect of children in workless households, highlighting that there continued to be a lack of clarity around the reason(s) for statistical results varying in this area. The Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services informed Members that the information is compiled nationally and based on survey results of a sample of the population. Councillor Thomas acknowledged this and re-emphasised the need to focus statistics on RCT and the Chair concurred with this view and requested that further work be undertaken in this area during 2019/20 and reported back to the Committee.

Councillor Cullwick queried the Council's plans to support transport and movement around the valleys. The Chief Executive referred Members to the South Wales Metro project, which will replace / upgrade the existing infrastructure and support development in other areas, cross-valley link considerations and also existing bus links that are in place between Rhondda Fach/Fawr and Porth.

Further to this, Councillor Holmes raised concerns in relation to people over the age of 65 that are still working in the County Borough and the reducing number of younger people being trained Councillor Holmes went on to reference overcrowding on trains and how improved transport facilities could improve access to jobs for residents across the County Borough. The Chief Executive referred Members to: the South Wales Metro project and noted that the number of trains / frequency of service will improve over the next few years and will support and encourage residents to use their cars less; Welsh Government plans to invest in existing / new park and ride facilities; the City Deal focussing on job creation across the region including graduates; and projects such as the Energy Park in Hirwaun.

Councillor Thomas referred to page 24 of the CPR which noted the impact on jobs as a result of automation and artificial intelligence in the future. Councillor Thomas acknowledged that advances in technology can often lead to a loss of jobs, however, emphasised that this has been the case over time and there will be opportunities to create jobs in technology, machinery and manufacturing. Councillor Thomas went on to seek clarity on the meaning of 'Gateway' as referenced in the CPR (e.g. Cynon Gateway), acknowledging the investment the City Deal will bring to

communities and stated that manufacturing needed to be brought back into communities like Hirwaun, to keep residents in work. The Chief Executive indicated that by investing in the County Borough's key town centres, this would have a ripple effect, which will positively impact on smaller towns in the long term, and he made specific reference to the five strategic opportunity areas across RCT that have been identified as having the potential to create more jobs and prosperity i.e. Cynon Gateway, Wider Pontypridd, Pontypridd Town centre, the A4119 corridor and Llanilid/M4 corridor.

Linked to the above discussion, Councillor Powell (Chair) requested that information be provided to the Committee on the number and percentage of available industrial units in the County Borough and occupancy levels, together with any other associated information.

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

1. That the draft Corporate Performance Report 2019/20 represents a balanced and evidenced based assessment of the Council's 2018/19 performance in its corporate Plan priority areas;

2. That the Council's ambitions for 2019/20 are understandable and will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised;

3. That the Council is maximising its contribution to the 7 national well-being goals; and

4. To endorse the final draft version of the Corporate Performance Report 2019/20 subject to the comments and minor amendments proposed by the Committee and final data checks being undertaken by officers, for consideration by Cabinet on 18 July 2019.

This meeting closed at 5.54 pm   **Cllr M Powell**
                                                       Chair.