



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
RHONDDA CYNON TAF  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE SUMMONS**

C Hanagan  
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
The Pavilions  
Cambrian Park  
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Ms J Nicholls - Democratic Services (01443 424098)

**YOU ARE SUMMONED** to a virtual meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **MONDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2021** at **5.00 PM.**

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Thursday, 14 January 2021 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

**AGENDA**

**Page  
No's**

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

**2. MINUTES**

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the following virtual Overview & Scrutiny Committees:-

- 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS**

**3. CABINET & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES 2020-21**

To consider the forward plans of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year

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**OFFICER REPORTS**

**4. THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE FEEDBACK SCHEME**

To receive an overview of the Council's Corporate Feedback Scheme with a view to identifying themes, trends and improvements for future review.

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**5. CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE**

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

**6. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

**Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication**

**Circulation:-**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(County Borough Councillor M Adams and County Borough Councillor W Lewis respectively)

**County Borough Councillors:** Councillor J Bonetto, Councillor P Jarman, Councillor H Boggis, Councillor J Brencher, Councillor E Stephens, Councillor L Walker, Councillor G Caple, Councillor M Griffiths, Councillor W Jones, Councillor A Cox, Councillor G Hughes and Councillor M Forey

Non Committee Member -Councillor M Webber

Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

**Education Co-Opted Members for information:-**

Mr M Cleverley  
Ms A Jones, Representing UNITE

Mr C Jones, Representing GMB

Mrs C Jones, Representing the National Union of Teachers and Teachers' Panel

Mr D Price, Representing UNISON

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Mr A Rickett, Voting Diocesan Authorities' Representative

Mrs R Nicholls, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Mr L Patterson, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr G Davies

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## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday,  
1 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 L Walker	Councillor G Caple
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor W Jones
Councillor A Cox	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor M Forey	

### **Cabinet Member in attendance**

County Borough Councillor G Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language

### **Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members**

County Borough Councillor R Yeo, Chair  
County Borough Councillor G Stacey  
County Borough Councillor A Roberts

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr Gio Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services

Mr Neil Elliott, Director Adult Services

### **Older People's Advisory Board (OPAG)**

Ms A Tritchler (Chair of OPAG)  
Ms L Corre (Secretary of OPAG)

## **4 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as well as members of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

He welcomed representatives of the Older Persons Advisory Group, Ms A Tritchler (Chair of OPAG) and Ms L Corre (Secretary of OPAG) as well as the Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language.

## **5 Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interests were made pertaining to the agenda:-

- County Borough Councillor W Lewis – “I worked on the Extra Care Provision in Ty Heulog”
- County Borough Councillor J Brencher – “I am a ward member where the Extra Care provision is being developed in the Graig”
- County Borough Councillor S Evans – “I am a ward member where the Extra Care provision Maes Y Ffynnon is located”
- County Borough Councillor A Cox – “Dan Y Mynydd is situated just outside my ward”
- County Borough Councillor G Caple – “Dan Y Mynydd is within the Cymmer ward and Bronwydd House is in the Porth Ward”

## **6 Pre Scrutiny - Modernisation of the Council's Residential Care Home Services for Older People**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that the purpose of the report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options for the future of the Council's eleven residential care homes for older people and to pre-scrutinise the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

He added that members of this committee have had opportunities to contribute to these discussions throughout the process during previous consultations both in 2018 and 2019 on the future direction of the Council's Residential Care Home Services for Older People. The Service Director alluded to the presence of the Group Director Community & Children's Services and the Director of Adult Services at the meeting to answer any queries.

The Group Director Community & Children's Services referred to the report which requests that Cabinet considers the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options for the future of the Council's eleven residential care homes for older people and to make further recommendations that, if agreed, will increase the number of retained Council residential care homes to **nine**, including Garth Olwg and Ystradfechan and redevelop Danymynydd and Bronllwyn to meet identified need for additional accommodation with care and support, including extra care housing. It was confirmed that a further report will be presented in due course which will set out the refurbishment requirements for those facilities. The Group Director also acknowledged the opportunity for scrutiny to respond to the outcomes of the consultation in advance of Cabinet considering the recommendations.

Following his presentation of the report the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and the Welsh Language advised that he was in attendance to listen to the comments of scrutiny and reflect on their feedback in advance of the Cabinet meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

Both Ms Tritschler and Ms Corre from the Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG) were provided the opportunity to address Committee with a number of comments such as how can the provision of learning disability/autism day services and older people day services currently being delivered at these sites

continue and how to distinguish between complex and standard needs?

They acknowledged the hard work that had been invested into the consultation processes and reports to date and eagerly anticipated the development of the Extra Care Housing in Pontypridd.

In response to the queries regarding day services at Danymynydd and Bronllwyn and as set out within the report it was confirmed that the redevelopment of both sites would require the re-provision of learning disability/autism day services and older people day services currently being delivered at these sites respectively and the Cabinet would receive further reports setting out proposals for revised day service offers as reflected in the recommendations.

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and raise queries as follows:-.

A Member asked whether the proposed Extra Care developments in Bronwydd House and Mountain Ash were part of the forward planning on the Council's agenda and a query was also raised in respect of the date on the plans within the appendices attached to the report showing February 2020 and whether the failure to develop Bronwydd House had determined the future of Bronllwyn. Both the Group Director and Director of Adult Services responded to the query and explained that initially a number of sites were identified in 2017 looking at facilities near town centres although other options were also to be considered based on costing models. Danymynydd had presented the Council with the opportunity to create a facility in the Porth area and a more appropriate site to develop than Bronwydd House.

The Director of Adult Services confirmed that a response regarding the date on the afore-mentioned plans would be provided to the committee member.

In response to the query as to whether the proposals, from a financial and human resources perspective are sustainable and are viable options for the future, the Group Director confirmed that the schemes are sustainable from a financial perspective and should the recommendations be agreed by Cabinet, the council would provide the care and support on site.

In respect of whether the 203 care home vacancies is a realistic number or due to family not wanting elderly relatives going into care due to Covid-19, the Group Director Community & Children's Services advised that although Covid-19 has impacted on the vacancy numbers, the trend has shown a significant number of vacancies across homes for some time so there is value in focussing on complex care, developing the Extra Care model as an alternative and making better use of the independent sector where needed.

The Group Director suggested that in terms of lowering the age limit for those with complex needs, the facilities are considered more of a provision for older people and reflect the needs of older people although there does now exist a greater flexibility with admissions to homes particularly with the Extra Care model.

The Group Director confirmed that management of the market is a regional requirement so have been working with Cwm Taf colleagues to identify where the needs are. There is a Regional Market Position Statement and a Commissioning Plan is being developed that will identify risk areas such as

those that require nursing care with dementia care which the council is unable to provide so private care colleagues are encouraged to undertake this area of care. He assured committee that the council has a good relationship with external providers to ensure the fees are reasonable and fair. The Group Director confirmed that the staffing needs for Danymynydd will be managed internally and there are already staff available and in place to transfer.

The Director of Adult Services added that the fee models are being reviewed for next year and information is being circulated to providers. Discussions are underway with Welsh Government around the provision of a Hardship Fund to support Care Homes and other providers with additional payments during the pandemic which will support staff and fund facilities. The Director confirmed that an additional £3.5m had been provided to Care Home Providers since March 2020 as a result of the Hardship Fund which provides some sustainability.

The Group Director confirmed that with the larger Extra Care facilities such as Pontypridd and Porth, the Council will be responsible for the staffing whereas in other smaller facilities, domiciliary providers would be brought in. In Maesyffynon the Council has a partnership with a Provider. The Council remain the commissioners so it has ultimate responsibility whilst ensuring a strong local authority presence in council run facilities.

The Director of Adult Services advised that the Pontypridd scheme has a dedicated Day Centre within the facility for which the Council has 100% nomination rights. The Extra Care also has the ability to integrate with the local community day schemes. Housing providers and care staff will be encouraged to support functions and activities for those living within the scheme and the local community. He added that the council is responsible for contract monitoring which is important for the quality of services provided but the Director also referred to the Council's Regional Development Workforce Unit which provides training for the independent sector and in some cases training alongside council staff and learning shared across providers. Good practice and learning is shared across all sectors.

A response was provided to a query regarding the provision at Bronllwyn and how it differs from that which was previously available.

Many members of the committee praised the report and acknowledged that the proposals are adaptable solutions to a growing aged population. Particularly as the Extra Care provision accommodates couples and can adapt to their needs as they grow older. Members also praised the consultation process which had listened to the wishes and needs of local residents and considered the forecasted challenges.

A member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stated that she had voted in favour of the lost motion on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 "...that Cabinet retains the present level of residential care provision" At the time the Cabinet's preferred choice was to retain 7 and decommission four others, today the committee is scrutinising retaining 9 homes which demonstrates the public spirit dominating the agenda, making the case for their retention. The Member added that the change in position will never be realised if the funding is not available to deliver it.

In conclusion, the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was afforded the opportunity to comment on the proposals and recommendations



and did so by welcoming the comprehensive report which promotes independent living at home for residents so that more complex needs can be catered for. He also acknowledged the value and depth of the consultation process which had resulted in a set of worthy proposals.

Following consideration of the recommendations it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Acknowledge the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny on the contents contained within the attached Cabinet Report, prior to consideration by the Cabinet;
2. Request the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications to facilitate the feedback of the comments, observations and/or recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the meeting of the Cabinet scheduled to consider this matter on the 3rd December 2020; and
3. Continue to receive regular progress updates in relation to this matter and where required provide feedback to the Cabinet to ensure that Scrutiny continues to contribute to these proposals.

**This meeting closed at 6.20 pm**

**Cllr M Adams  
Chairman**

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## 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 (25<sup>th</sup> 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 coordinate 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 co-ordinate 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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, 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

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?”

### **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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**This meeting closed at 6.53 pm**

**Cllr M Adams  
Chairman**

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## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 JANUARY 2021**

**CABINET/SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: 2020- 2021 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &  
COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to maintain its challenging but supportive approach to scrutiny during Covid-19 by considering the Cabinet Work Programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (attached at Appendix 1) and to identify any matters that Members wish to consider in greater detail.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:-

2.1 Acknowledge the contents of the attached draft Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes and determine whether the items included in the latter are relevant and in line with the terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and

2.2 To afford the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to identify any matters within the Cabinet forward work programme for pre-scrutiny; and

2.3 Consider any additional training requirements that Members consider would assist them in their role.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 In accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet Work Programme should be prepared to cover a period of three months, with an updated version provided at the end of this period.

3.2 Following the amendments to the Leaders Scheme of Delegation at the Council AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016 it was agreed that going forward a detailed Cabinet

Work Programme be published for a 6-month period, allowing sufficient notice and opportunity for consultation and / or pre scrutiny.

- 3.3 It is proposed that Members of the Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to review the next phase of its work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year from January to April 2021.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will recall that following the introduction of social distancing measures at the end of March 2020 the Council saw the suspension of formal committees as it responded to the pandemic crisis. The decision making and governance continued to operate in compliance with the Council's Constitution to discharge key decisions.
- 4.2 The Council successfully rolled out its committee meetings on a virtual basis and it has since been acknowledged that the methodical approach to virtual meetings has equipped Members with the necessary support and knowledge to overcome any technical challenges and allowed them to fully participate in the Council's democratic process. The level of engagement and [number of virtual meetings](#) is testament to the success of those approaches to the virtual roll out.
- 4.3 Initially the Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook the substantive scrutiny role for a three-month period to cover the extended municipal year. In that time Scrutiny saw its forward work programme re-aligned to deal with one or two matters per agenda offering a combination of short reports and verbal updates from Officers.
- 4.4 Members were aware of the then resource constraints under which scrutiny was working and an element of flexibility was adopted whilst the council dealt with local lockdown measure and restraints. At that time Members were satisfied that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was undertaking a council-wide approach and extended the opportunity for all non-executive Members to engage in the scrutiny process.
- 4.5 In October 2020, Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a forward work programme covering the initial three-month period of the new Municipal Year 2020-21, specifically from October to December 2020. This encompassed a more 'business as usual' element as the other four themed scrutiny committees were re-instated and developed their own work programmes.
- 4.6 Whilst in this first period, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee addressed a number of strategic matters, Members were still mindful of the constraints on officers and resources in general and maintained a flexible approach to its work programme. Robust and member led scrutiny was undertaken in this time of crisis.

4.7 It is proposed that Scrutiny continues to consider a work programme that is manageable and addresses the items which require a timely response as well being able to adapt to any necessary changes.

## **5. SCRUTINY APPROACHES DURING THE NEXT PERIOD**

5.1 The attached forward work programme incorporates matters for consideration and the list of topics under the heading 'Ongoing matters for future review' can be allocated as and when appropriate. Members are reminded that, given the current climate, the forward work programme priorities are subject to change should other specific business need to be considered by the Committee on this date.

5.2 It is worthy of noting that the cross-party working group to review the Local Development Plan for RCT has been established and held its first meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The working group will continue to contribute to the initial identification of the vision, aims and objectives of the Plan, which will then feed into the preparation of the Preferred Strategy and ultimately the draft (Deposit) Revised LDP.

5.3 Members are encouraged to contribute to their forward Work Programme by suggesting areas of possible scrutiny.

## **6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

6.1 To fulfil their role as an Overview & Scrutiny Committee member, ongoing training requirements are a key consideration and therefore Members are asked to identify any gaps in their development particularly in relation to undertaking scrutiny of the items listed on the forward work programme.

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 The Cabinet work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder(s).

7.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee forward work programme has been developed based on the new ways of working, in discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as well as with the relevant portfolio holder.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution.

**11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.**

11.1 This is an information report presenting the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes in responding to the Covid 19 pandemic. No decisions are being taken in this report.

**12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 The Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny work programmes for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year are attached. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are asked to identify any items they would like to review in greater detail from the Cabinet work programme which will also ensure that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee fully evaluates the effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny function during these uncertain times.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &**

**COMMUNICATION**

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**SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

***‘Holding the Executive & Council to account in respect of all three priorities within the Council’s Corporate Plan’***

Each of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees is responsible for setting and agreeing its own work programme by identifying a list of themes and topics which fall under the remit of each individual Scrutiny Committee. Following discussion with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Members a practical, realistic and timetabled programme can then be developed.

The scrutiny forward work programmes should provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected; be outcome focussed; ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; align scrutiny programmes with the council’s performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements.

Throughout the year, there are a number of ways in which additional issues can be considered for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme and ideas for inclusion may come from a number of sources such as:-

- Individual Councillors;
- Performance or budget monitoring information;
- Inspection reports;
- Referrals from Council (such as Notices of Motion), Cabinet/Audit or other scrutiny committees;
- Service users;
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations previously made by the Committee; and
- Local Residents

The Cabinet is also required to produce forward work programmes and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee keeps abreast of forthcoming items or topics which may enable scrutiny to be involved in the development of Council policy prior to its formal consideration by Cabinet. It is important to bear in mind that an element of flexibility is applied to each individual work programme that provides Committees with the capacity to scrutinise new / urgent issues that arise during the year.

Date/Time	Overarching Item	Officer	Cabinet Member	Scrutiny Focus
18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Overview &amp; Scrutiny Work Programme January to April 2021</b></li>   <li>• <b>Cabinet Work Programme</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Director Democratic Services &amp; Communications</li> </ul>		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For O&amp;S to agree its own revised work programme for the next 3 months (January-April 2021)</p> <p>To consider and develop a schedule of training requirements for members of the O&amp;S Committee.</p> <p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> To receive the Cabinet Work Programme to identify any future opportunities for pre-scrutiny by the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Councils Corporate Feedback Scheme (CFS)</b></li> </ul>	Customer Feedback, Engagement & Complaints Manager		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> To receive an overview of the Council's Corporate Feedback Scheme with a view to identifying themes, trends and improvements for future review.</p>
23 February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Plan</b></li> </ul>	Group Director Community & Children's Services		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> To receive the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Plan</p>
		Service Director Democratic Services & Communications		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Audit Wales – Rhondda Cynon Taf Annual Improvement Report</b></li> </ul>	Service Director Performance & Improvement		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For Scrutiny to consider the proposals for improvement and the progress made against these actions to be reported to the respective Scrutiny Committees.</p>
17 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Equalities Report 2020/21</b></li> </ul>	Director of Human Resources		<p><b>Pre-Scrutiny</b> of the Annual Equalities Report 2020-21</p>
		Service Director Democratic Services & Communications		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preparing for the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill</b></li> </ul>	Service Director Democratic Services & Communications  Director of Legal Services		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For Scrutiny to consider the preparations for the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill and the provisions to enable electoral reform and establish a new governance framework for local government</p>
14 April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Annual Overview &amp; Scrutiny Report 2020/2021</b></li> </ul>	Service Director Democratic Services & Communications		<p><b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For the O&amp;S Committee to challenge and comment on the draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Scrutiny Annual Report illustrate clear outcomes and objectives?</li> <li>• Has it demonstrated clear evidence and impact of scrutiny outcomes?</li> <li>• Do Members agree it is an accurate reflection of the</li> </ul>

				Scrutiny activity for 2020/21?
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**O&S- Ongoing Matters for Future Review:-**

The Council's Response to Covid-19

Scrutiny response to the Council's Section 19 Investigation Report

Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People

Electric Vehicles (EV) and Charging Infrastructure.

Update on the RCT Scrutiny Review –'Fit for the Future'

Welsh Language Standards Compliance Report

21 Century Schools and Colleges Programme – Mutual Investment Model

Scrutiny Feedback

Feedback to relevant consultations

Quarterly Review of the O&S Scrutiny Work Programme

Review of Cabinet Work Programme

Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2020/2021

**Crime & Disorder Committee** - County Lines & Protection of Vulnerable People' and 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

**Working Group Updates**

The development of future transport infrastructure in response to the South Wales Metro  
Local Development Plan (LDP) - Review of the Local Development Plan for RCT

**SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

***‘Holding the Executive & Council to account in respect of all three priorities within the Council’s Corporate Plan’***

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<b>17 March 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Equalities Report 2020/21</b></li> </ul>	Director of Human Resources		<b>Pre-Scrutiny</b> of the Director, Human Resources in respect of the Annual Equalities Report.
		Service Director Democratic Services & Communications		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preparing for the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill</b></li> </ul>	Service Director Democratic Services & Communications  Director of Legal Services		<b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For Scrutiny to consider the preparations for the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill and the provisions to enable electoral reform and establish a new governance framework for local government
<b>14 April 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Annual Overview &amp; Scrutiny Report 2020/2021</b></li> </ul>	Service Director Democratic Services & Communications		<b>Scrutiny &amp; Challenge –</b> For the O&S Committee to challenge and comment on the draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Scrutiny Annual Report illustrate clear outcomes and objectives?</li> <li>• Has it demonstrated clear evidence and impact of scrutiny outcomes?</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do Members agree it is an accurate reflection of the Scrutiny activity for 2020/21?</li> </ul>
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**O&S- Ongoing Matters for Future Review:-**

The Council's Response to Covid-19

Scrutiny response to the Council's Section 19 Investigation Report

Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People

Electric Vehicles (EV) and Charging Infrastructure.

Update on the RCT Scrutiny Review –'Fit for the Future'

Welsh Language Standards Compliance Report

21 Century Schools and Colleges Programme – Mutual Investment Model

Scrutiny Feedback

Feedback to relevant consultations

Quarterly Review of the O&S Scrutiny Work Programme

Review of Cabinet Work Programme

Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2020/2021

**Crime & Disorder Committee** - County Lines & Protection of Vulnerable People' and 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

**Working Group Updates**

The development of future transport infrastructure in response to the South Wales Metro

Local Development Plan (LDP) - Review of the Local Development Plan for RCT



## **Cabinet Work Programme.**

**Forward plan of proposed Cabinet Business for the 2020/21 Municipal Year**

**Specific Period: -September 2020 – May 2021.**

**(Summary of proposed Key Decisions coming forward for Cabinet Members consideration.)**

***N.B – The work programme is subject to change to take account of any additional / deletion of reports, including any new consultative documents or legislative initiatives from the Welsh Government, which require urgent attention.***

**Contact: Hannah Williams (Tel No. 01443 424062)**

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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## Chief Executive

Cabinet Work Programme	In line with the Council's Constitution there is a need to advise and publish the Cabinet Work Programme.	Continuous		Every 3 months June 20 September 20 December 20 March 21	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication – C Hanagan	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Members</li> <li>• SLT</li> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny</li> </ul>
Council's Performance & Resources Report	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Continuous		Quarter 4 – July 2020  Quarter 1 – September 2020  Quarter 2 – November 2020  Quarter 3 – March 2021	Councillor M Norris. Director of Finance & Digital Services - B Davies	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report is presented to Finance &amp; Performance Scrutiny Committee following consideration by Cabinet</li> </ul>

## SEPTEMBER

Leader's Scheme of Delegation	To formally receive the Leader's Scheme of Delegation following the 2020 Council AGM	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication – C Hanagan	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Members</li> </ul>
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Supplementary Capital Programmes – ‘Education and Inclusion Services’ and ‘Highways, Transportation & Strategic projects’	To provide details and obtain approval for phase 2 of the proposed supplementary capital programmes for Education & Inclusion Services and Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects.	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan.  Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	
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**OCTOBER**

Medium Term Financial Plan Update	To provide Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 – 2023/24 (mid-year budget review)	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor M Norris. Director of Finance & Digital Services - B Davies	Open	
Corporate Performance Report	To consider the Council’s Corporate Performance Report and recommend its endorsement by Council	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Chief Executive – C Bradshaw	Open	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Budget Consultation Report	To inform Members of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2021 /22 budget.	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor M Webber Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication – C Hanagan C Hanagan	Open	

**NOVEMBER**

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Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Annual General Meeting	To provide Members with details of the AGM in respect of the Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Ltd and Amgen Rhondda Ltd.	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Councillor A Crimmings Director of Legal Services - A Wilkins	Exempt	
Council Tax Base	To receive the report in respect of setting the Council Tax Base 2021/22	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	

**DECEMBER**

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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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### JANUARY

Digital Strategy Work - Update	To provide Members with an update in respect of the Digital Strategy Work Programme	Complete	Cabinet	January 2021	Councillor M Norris. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) - Use of RIPA in 2019-20 by RCTCBC	To enable Members to review the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA')		Cabinet	January 2021	Deputy Leader, Councillor M Webber. Director of Legal & Services – A Wilkins	Open	
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report	To consider the Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board.		Cabinet	January 2021	Cllr C Leyshon Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication – C Hanagan C Hanagan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Parenting Board</li> <li>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny</li> </ul>

### FEBRUARY

Corporate Asset Management Plan Interim Update	To brief members on progress with the plan		Cabinet	February 2021	Councillor M Norris. Director of Corporate Estates – D Powell	Exempt	•
Built Asset Review Report			Cabinet	February 2021	Councillor M Norris.		•

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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					Director of Corporate Estates – D Powell		
Budget Report	The need to adopt a budget strategy to recommend to Council as the basis of the budget strategy for the financial year ending March 2022, following consideration of the consultation feedback		Cabinet	February 2021	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Consultation - Service Users, School Budget Forum and Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ul>
Council Fees & Charges	The need to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Fees and Charges for the financial year 2021/22		Cabinet	February 2021	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	
General Data Protection Review Update	To receive an update in respect of the GDPR		Cabinet	February 2021	Councillor M Norris. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	



Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Capital Programme	To propose to Council the three year capital programme		Cabinet	February 2021	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Director of Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Open	

**MARCH**

Annual Equalities Report	To receive the report of the Director, Human Resources in respect of the Annual Equalities Report.		Cabinet	March 2021	Deputy Leader, Councillor M Webber Director, Human Resources – R Evans	Open	Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**APRIL**

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**MAY**

Strategic Equality Plan	To provide Members with details of the Councils Strategic Equality plan		Cabinet	May 2021	Deputy Leader, Councillor M Webber Director, Human Resources – R Evans	Open	
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**ON GOING UPDATES**

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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The Council's Response to Covid-19	To formally receive a service update on the Council's service response to the Covid-19 pandemic	Continuous	Cabinet	When Applicable	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan, Chief Executive – C Bradshaw	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Members</li> <li>• SLT</li> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny</li> </ul>
RCT Flooding Update	To receive updates in respect of flooding in Rhondda Cynon Taf in addition to statutory reporting requirements into flooding.		Cabinet	When Applicable	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan, Chief Executive – C Bradshaw		
Brexit	To receive a verbal update in respect of Brexit		Cabinet	When appropriate	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Chief Executive – C Bradshaw	Open	
Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal	The need to advise of the progress being made in respect of the City Deal		Cabinet	When Applicable	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan & Chief Executive, C Bradshaw	Open	
Staff Panel Report	To receive details of the proposals put forward by the Council's Staff Panel in respect of efficiency savings and		Cabinet	When Applicable	Councillor M Webber & Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication - C Hanagan	Open	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	smarter ways of working						
Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group Recommendations	To receive recommendations coming forward following consideration by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group		Cabinet	When Applicable	Specific to the report	Open	
Scrutiny Recommendations	To receive recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.		Cabinet	Continuous	Specific to the Scrutiny Review undertaken	Open	
Write off of irrecoverable Debts	To update Cabinet with a position statement on irrecoverable debts		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan & Councillor M Norris. Director, Finance & Digital Services – B Davies	Exempt	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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## Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

### SEPTEMBER

Review of Regeneration Business Support Grants	To seek approval to refocus the existing business support grant schemes delivered by the Regeneration Service, and to establish three further schemes – the Town Centre COVID 19 Recovery Grant, the Major Projects Investment Fund and the Flood Resilience Grant.	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Councillor R Bevan Director of Prosperity & Development - S Gale	Open	
Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass)	To update Cabinet on the current progress related to the development and delivery of the major	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Leader of the Council Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development &	Open	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	transportation project: Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass).				Frontline Services – N Wheeler		
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**OCTOBER**

Kick Start Scheme for Young People Aged 16-24 Years	To seek approval for an application to become a Gateway employer under the Department of Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme so that the Council will be able to make applications on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses with less than 30 placements for young people;	Complete	Delegated Decision	October 2020	Joint Decision of the Group Director, Prosperity & Development, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services and the Director of Human Resources	Open	
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Proposed introduction of a new Domestic Heating Grant	To provide a new Heating Grant funded from the Capital Housing Programme to support the strategic objectives contained	Complete	Delegated Decision	October 2020	Group Director, Prosperity & Development Councillor R Bevan	Open	
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	with the Council's Warmer Homes: A Fuel Poverty Strategy 2009-2023.						
Active Travel: Review of Integrated Travel Map	To seek Members' approval to commence a review, including a public engagement exercise, of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM). This report also outlines the reasons for undertaking this exercise.	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor A Crimmings. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler	Open	

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### NOVEMBER

Highways, Transportation And Strategic Projects - Highway Asset Investment Strategy	To provide Members with the highway asset investment strategy	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Leader of the Council Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler	Open	
Community infrastructure levy	CIL regulations require a report to	Complete	Cabinet		Councillor R Bevan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance and Performance</li> </ul>	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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annual monitoring report	update Cabinet on the performance of CIL during the last year and make any amendments deemed necessary.			November 2020	Director of Prosperity & Development - S Gale	Scrutiny Committee	

**DECEMBER**

<b>JANUARY</b>							

**FEBRUARY**

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**MARCH**

Supplementary Capital Programme - Highways, Transportation & Strategic projects	The need to seek approval for detailed investment within the service following Council's approval of the 3 year Capital Programme.		Cabinet	March 2021	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler	Open	
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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**APRIL**

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**MAY**

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**ONGOING UPDATES**

Processing Of Mixed Kerbside Recycling	To provide Members with an update in respect of the opportunities of investment into processing of Mixed Kerbside Recycling		Cabinet		Leader of the Council Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler	Exempt	
Highways Investment Scheme	To receive regular updates in respect of the Highways Investment Scheme		Cabinet		Leader of the Council Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler		



Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Review of Mainstream School Transport Provision	Need to provide Cabinet with the outcomes of the periodic review of the Council's mainstream School Transport Provision		Cabinet	Periodic Review / when applicable	Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan. Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services – N Wheeler	Open	
Porth Town Centre Strategy	To receive updates as and when applicable		Cabinet	When appropriate	Councillor R Bevan Director of Prosperity & Development - S Gale		
Taff Vale Update and Business Plan	Taff Vale Update Report.		Cabinet	When appropriate	Councillor R Bevan Director of Prosperity & Development - S Gale	Open	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Scrutiny Recommendations	To receive any recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Specific to Scrutiny Review undertaken	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny</li> </ul>
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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## Community & Children's Services

### SEPTEMBER

Establishing a Social Letting Agency	To inform Cabinet of the proposal to establish a Social Letting Agency.	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services	Open	
Approval for RCT theatres to produce a Digital Christmas Performance	To provide Cabinet Members with information in relation to the proposal for RCT Theatres to produce a digital Christmas performance to share online in December 2020.	Complete		September 2020	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services	Open	
Proposed Extension and Variation to Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders	To inform Members of the outcomes of the public consultation exercise and to seek authority to extend	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Cllr R Lewis Cllr C Crimmings Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services		

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	the two Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf (the Dog Control PSPO's).				Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services		
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**OCTOBER**

Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Plan	To receive the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Plan	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor G Hopkins, Cllr T Leyshon Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	
Firework Controls	To receive information on Firework Controls following the Council NOM.	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services	Open	
Social Services Annual Complaints Report	Provide Cabinet with an overview of the operation & effectiveness of the Council's Social Services complaints procedure	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor G Hopkins Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Corporate Parenting Board

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Funding for Food Banks and Mental Health Support during 'firebreak' lockdown	To approve £25,000 to support local food banks and mental health support during the Welsh Government's national "firebreak" lockdown and the subsequent weeks ahead.	Complete	Delegated Decision	October 2020	Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  Councillor R Lewis Councillor A Morgan	Open	
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**NOVEMBER**

Bereavement Services – Concessionary Charges In Exceptional Circumstances	That a financial concession is to be afforded to families requiring multiple funeral services within their close family circle. This concession is to be applied during exceptional circumstances (e.g. global pandemic).	Complete	Delegated Decision	November 2020	Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  Councillor R Lewis	Open	
Director Social Services Annual Report	To receive the final report of the Director, Social	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Councillors G Hopkins & T Leyshon.	Open	Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	Services prior to its publication				Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini		Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee •
Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report	In accordance with the SSWB Act, the need to report the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Report to the Cabinet, setting out their priorities for the coming year.	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Councillor G Hopkins & Councillor C Leyshon Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	• Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board
Cwm Taf Carer's Annual Report	To approve for submission to WG the annual report.	Complete	Cabinet	November 2020	Councillor G Hopkins & Group Director Community & Children's Services - G Isingrini	Open	multi agency Cwm Taf Carers Partnership
Publication of 2020 Air Quality Progress Report	To publish the 2020 Air Quality Progress Report	Complete	Delegated Decision	November 2020	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services	Open	

**DECEMBER**


**JANUARY**

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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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National Adoption Annual Report	To receive the National Adoption Annual Report		Cabinet	January 2021	C Leyshon and Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	
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**FEBRUARY**

The Council's response to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation	To receive the Council's response to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation		Cabinet	February 2021	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services		
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Specialist Placements	To receive information on Specialist Placements.		Cabinet	February 2021	Councillor C Leyshon Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini		
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**MARCH**

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**APRIL**

<b>APRIL</b>							
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Hires and Prices Reviews	To receive information of the review of Hires and Prices		Cabinet	April 2021	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services		
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**MAY**

Provision of Cemeteries within RCT	To receive information on the provision of cemeteries in RCT		Cabinet	May 2021	Cllr R Lewis Director, Public Health Protection & Community Services		
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**ONGOING UPDATES**

Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People – Consultation feedback	To receive the consultation feedback		Cabinet	When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins, Group Director Community & Children’s Services – G Isingrini		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
SS&WB Board Development	To consider any updates as appropriate in respect of the SS&WB Board		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins. Group Director Community & Children’s Services – G Isingrini	Open	
Regional Transformation Agenda	To receive an update on the		Cabinet	When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins and		



Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	regional transformation agenda				Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini		
Development of Community Hubs	To consider the development of Community Hubs across the County Borough		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor R Lewis Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Open	
Extra Care Strategy	To receive update reports on the Councils progress in respect of delivery of the Extra Care Strategy		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins. Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	
Advocacy	To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of advocacy		Cabinet	When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins and Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini		
Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report	To receive the Annual report of the Cwm Taf MASH		Cabinet	When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins. Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	
Social Services & Wellbeing Act	To provide updates as and when necessary on the Council's duties in respect of the Act		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor G Hopkins. Group Director Community & Children's Services – G Isingrini	Open	

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Local Air Quality Management Reports	To provide details of the Local Air Quality Management Reports		Delegated Decision	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor R Lewis Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Open	
Scrutiny Recommendations	To receive any recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Specific to Scrutiny Review undertaken	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny</li> </ul>

## Education & Inclusion Services

**SEPTEMBER**

Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme – Mutual Investment Model Welsh Education Partnership Strategic Partnering Agreement	To provide Members with an update on the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding element of Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme and to inform Members of progress Welsh Government has made in procuring a private sector partner to assist with the delivery of education and community facilities in Wales, under the MIM 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.	Complete	Cabinet	September 2020	Councillor J Rosser & Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies	Open	
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### OCTOBER

Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2&3 and Key Stage 4 outcomes for 2019	To provide Members with initial feedback on the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, 3	Complete	Cabinet	October 2020	Councillor J Rosser & Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies	Open	
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	& 4 outcomes for 2019.						
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**NOVEMBER**

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**DECEMBER**

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**JANUARY**

Key stage 4 and 5 Outcomes	To receive the final data from Welsh Government in respect of the Educational Outcomes for RCT		Cabinet	January 2021	Councillor J Rosser & Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies	Open	

**FEBRUARY**

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**MARCH**

Childcare Sufficiency Update - Prescrutiny	The need to provide details of the Childcare Sufficiency Audit undertaken, in line with Welsh		Cabinet	March 2021	Councillor J Rosser. Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies; Childcare Officer - D Humphries	Open	Children & Young People Scrutiny committee
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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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	Government Requirements						
Supplementary Capital Programme – Education & Inclusion Services	The need to seek Cabinet approval for further detailed investment within the service following Council’s approval of the 3 year Capital Programme.		Cabinet	March 2021	Councillor J Rosser. Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies	Open	

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**APRIL**

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**MAY**

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**ONGOING UPDATES**

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Key Decision	Brief Outline	Report Status	Decision Maker (Cabinet / Delegated Decision (DD))	Proposed Date	Cabinet Member / responsible Officer	Open / Exempt Report	Consultation to be undertaken prior to Decision being made?
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Scrutiny Recommendations	To receive any recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Specific to Scrutiny Review undertaken	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny</li> </ul>
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools	To receive any updates in respect of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme		Cabinet	Continuous / When Applicable	Councillor J Rosser. Director, Education & Inclusion Services -G Davies	Open	



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

### **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SCHEME – COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS.**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (i) Provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the inaugural Annual Report relating to the operation and effectiveness of the Council's corporate Customer Feedback Scheme ('CFS') between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 prior to consideration by Cabinet; and
- (ii) Seek the Committee's recommendations and any suggested areas for improvement in respect of the contents and publication of future CFS Annual Reports, together with CFS reporting mechanisms more generally, for Cabinet's future consideration.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Consider and scrutinise the inaugural Annual Report relating to the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Customer Feedback Scheme (Comments, Compliments and Complaints) ('CFS') between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, annexed at Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2.2 Provide recommendations and any suggested areas for improvement in respect of the contents and publication of future CFS Annual Reports, together with CFS reporting mechanisms more generally; and
- 2.3 Agree that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a follow up report on the reporting mechanisms subsequently agreed by Cabinet in relation to the operation of the CFS scheme, including an update on any suggested changes

taken forward, in addition to receiving the CFS Annual Report as part of its work programme.

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Whilst currently there is no statutory requirement for the Local Authority to produce an annual report it is important that Members are properly appraised of the nature of feedback received by the Council's customers, how that feedback has been used and, where appropriate, utilised to ensure service improvement across the Council.
- 3.2 Officers consider there needs to be a more consistent and programmed method of reporting customer feedback which can lead to informed recommendations for improvement and from which evidence of good practice/customer service can be shared more widely across service areas.
- 3.3 Legislative changes to the powers of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 (Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019) giving that office greater investigative powers and through the development of the 'Complaint's Standards Authority' a role in monitoring standards, trends and patterns across public service delivery in Wales.
- 3.4 As part of this legislation the Council is now required to report quarterly on complaints activity to the PSOW.
- 3.5 The CFS records all Comments, Compliments and Complaints received by both residents of RCT and those people visiting RCT who access Council facilities. The scheme does not cover complaints where there are other statutory arrangements in place such as complaints about Social care or School complaints.
- 3.6 The complaints process is a two stage process and is in line with the Public Services Ombudsman's Model Complaints Policy that was adopted by all Local Authorities in 2011.

**Stage One: Local Resolution** – The emphasis at this stage of the process is early resolution of the complaint either by providing an explanation, putting things right or agreeing a way forward which may include identifying where improvements to services are necessary. The timescale for local resolution is 10 working days.

**Stage Two: Formal Consideration** – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by a Senior Council Officer. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 20 working days.

- 3.7 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two investigation, they may progress their complaint to the PSOW.
- 3.8 On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 operational responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the CFS transferred to the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team, who already had responsibility for the existing management arrangements in respect



of the Social Services statutory complaints process. This team is led by the Service Improvement, Customer Feedback and Engagement Manager. This now means that the CFS and statutory Social Services complaints processes for the Council are now managed centrally by one team leading to better use of available expertise and experience as well as ensuring greater resilience in the operation of the CFS itself. Further it will:

- Enable more timely use of information captured via the operation of the CFS through improved reporting mechanisms which will support performance management arrangements and improvement within services;
- Introduce training, support and challenge across all services; and
- Strengthen complaint gatekeeping arrangements to improve the allocation and management of complaints (i.e. the early identification of only those that require action), the introduction of reporting management information to all Services and where agreed, to Members.

#### **4. CFS IMPROVEMENTS**

- 4.1 A number of improvements have been made to the CFS since January 2019 which has meant more accurate recording of customer feedback, the ability to produce better qualitative data, the introduction of quarterly CFS coordinators meetings and the introduction of a benchmarking exercise which rates RCT services against standards set by the PSOW.
- 4.2 Improvements have also been made to the customer facing web and social media information about the CFS to allow customers to better engage with the Council and for customer feedback to be better captured.
- 4.3 Ultimately, improvements to the CFS will enable the Council to improve engagement, understand where services need to be developed and improved and to better understand the needs of its residents and those who live and work in the County Borough.

#### **5. SCRUTINY INVOLVEMENT**

- 5.1 This report highlights the importance of consistent reporting and recommends that an annual report is continued to be produced providing a summary of all activity for the year.
- 5.2 Members are now asked to consider and scrutinise the inaugural Annual Report relating to the operation and effectiveness of the CFS between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, annexed at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 5.3 Members are also asked to consider the appropriate level of reporting and make recommendations to Cabinet, prior to its consideration of the inaugural Annual Report, on how complaints activity is monitored in the future and whether any

further improvements could be made to the process, noting the recent improvements made to date.

- 5.4 It is proposed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive future reports in respect of the CFS in order that feedback can be provided to the Cabinet thus ensuring that the proposals for improvement are being promoted by Scrutiny. It is recommended that the work programme reflect this additional item going forward.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Equality and diversity implications will be considered as part of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's feedback and comments and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

## **7. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of any feedback and subsequent implementation arrangements.

## **8. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 8.1 The function of the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team and the collation of service user feedback through both complaints and compliments provides a quality assurance mechanism by which the Council can measure its performance against the corporate priorities to:

- Deliver essential services well;
- Engage with customers and use feedback to redesign and/or improve our services.
- Ensure local people get good outcomes from their services

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**as amended by**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & INTERIM HEAD OF  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SCHEME – COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND  
COMPLAINTS  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2019 – 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**



## FOREWORD

This report provides an overview of the operation of the Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) including details of the level of feedback received as well as developments and improvements to the scheme for the year 2019/20. During this period the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team have prioritised the development of the CRM system to improve the quality of the information available both for reporting and enabling individual service areas to monitor the effectiveness of their service delivery. A designated post was created within the team to monitor the CFS and to undertake reporting tasks as required by the Complaint's Standards Authority. This has led to changes having to be made to the way in which complaints are categorised in line with PSOW expectations and to enable comparison data to be collected across all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. Whilst this has impacted on the consistency of reporting the message to service areas remains consistent going forward with emphasis on ensuring feedback is logged, responded to effectively and the information is used to improve and plan services.

Training for all CRM system users with particular focus on appropriately closing and re-allocating customer feedback has been undertaken although there is still progress to be made particularly in logging and detailing compliments. There has been a slight increase in the number of complaints being received and this should be viewed as a positive indication that complaint feedback is being more consistently recorded. Improvements have also been noted in the recording or evidence of learning from complaints which was introduced midway through this reporting period with 10% of complaints highlighting service improvements. Whilst the percentage remains low and the quality of data is variable it is nevertheless a positive step forward with many service areas routinely reporting. This will be an area of focus for the CFS co-ordinators in 2020/21. Training that was to be facilitated by the CSA for staff across all service areas was unfortunately postponed due to Covid-19 however this will be provided virtually in 2020/21.

Throughout 2019/20 the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has been proactively monitoring the number of complaints that are left open or unsolved on the CRM database and this has resulted in the number of complaints showing as outstanding at 6 months reducing from 6.6% in 2018/19 to 2.4% in 2019/20. This work will continue with the expectation that the timeliness of complaint handling will improve over the coming years. To assist this the Customer Feedback and Engagement team will be liaising with customer care in relation to the development of a new customer feedback system which can be tailored to meet the requirements of the Council and improve the flexibility of the system particularly for frontline services.

Moving forward the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team will continue to support service areas with their management of Customer Feedback with more focus on using available data to improve performance. Whilst improvements in some areas have been slow I hope this report will evidence the journey that has been made in 2019/20 by the Customer Feedback Team engaging successfully with service areas and improving the quality of data that is available on feedback received from our customers.

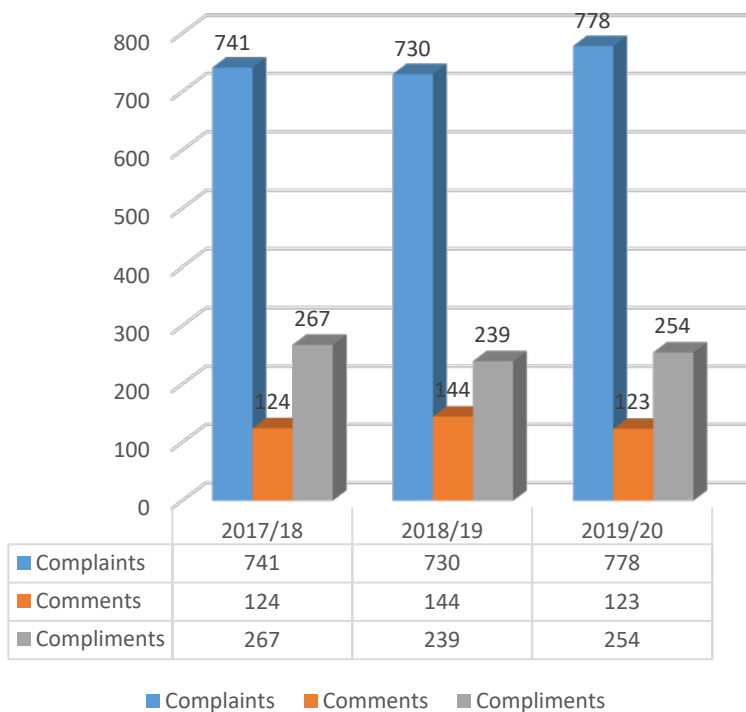
Jayne Thomas  
Service Improvement, Customer Feedback and Engagement Manager

## SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FOR 2019/20

Service Area	Complaints by Stage		Total complaints	Comments	Compliments	Total
	1	2				
Arts and Theatres	2	2	4	0	3	7
Benefits	13	1	14	0	0	14
Council Tax	44	4	48	0	0	48
Customer Care	35	0	35	4	28	67
Corporate Estates	6	1	7	0	4	11
Cross Service Cases (Multiple services)	44	6	50	6	20	76
Education	19	0	19	2	5	26
E-Access	2	0	2	1	0	3
ESG, Highways and Street care	215	4	219	34	126	379
Legal (including elections and insurance)	5	0	5	0	0	5
Leisure	36	1	37	8	5	50
Libraries	1	0	1	0	6	7
Parks and Countrysides'	22	0	22	10	7	39
Prosperity and Development /Housing	31	4	35	6	29	70
Public Health and Protection	38	6	44	3	9	56
Strategy/Events	5	0	5	5	5	15
Unspecified	206	6	212	39	2	253
Cases falling outside of CFS	19	0	19	5	5	29
<b>Totals</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>1155</b>

## KEY THEMES FOR CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer Feedback Annual Comparison



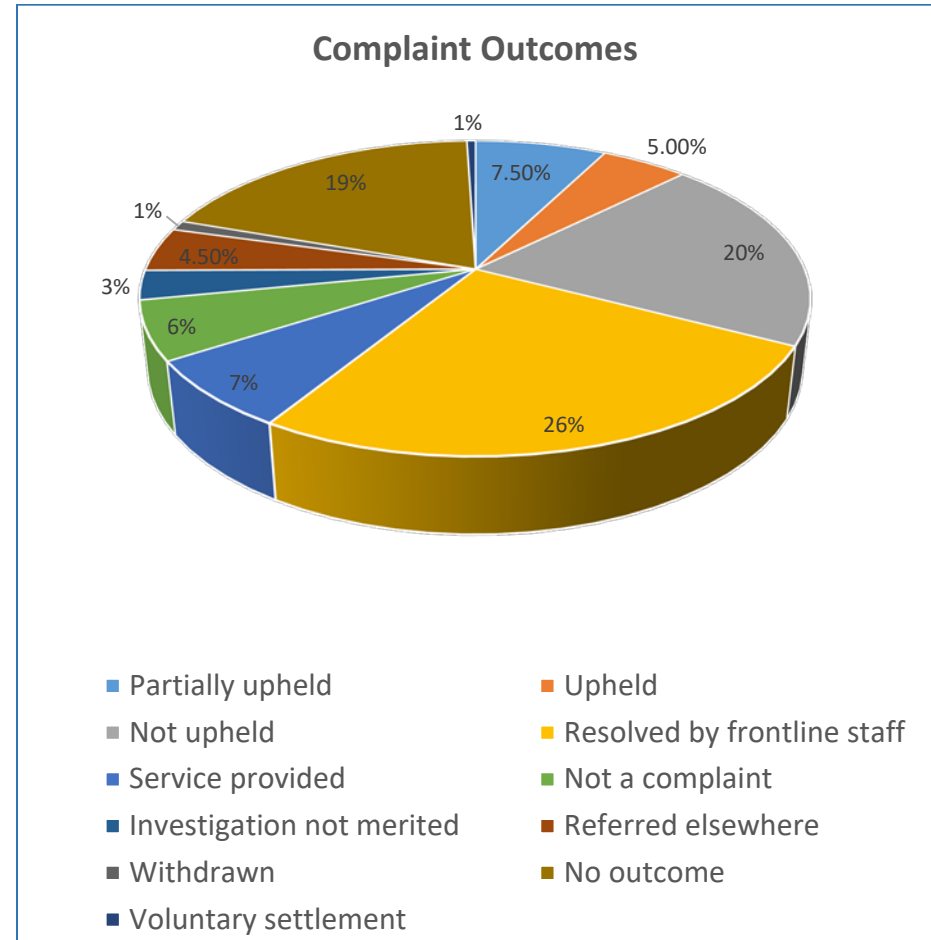
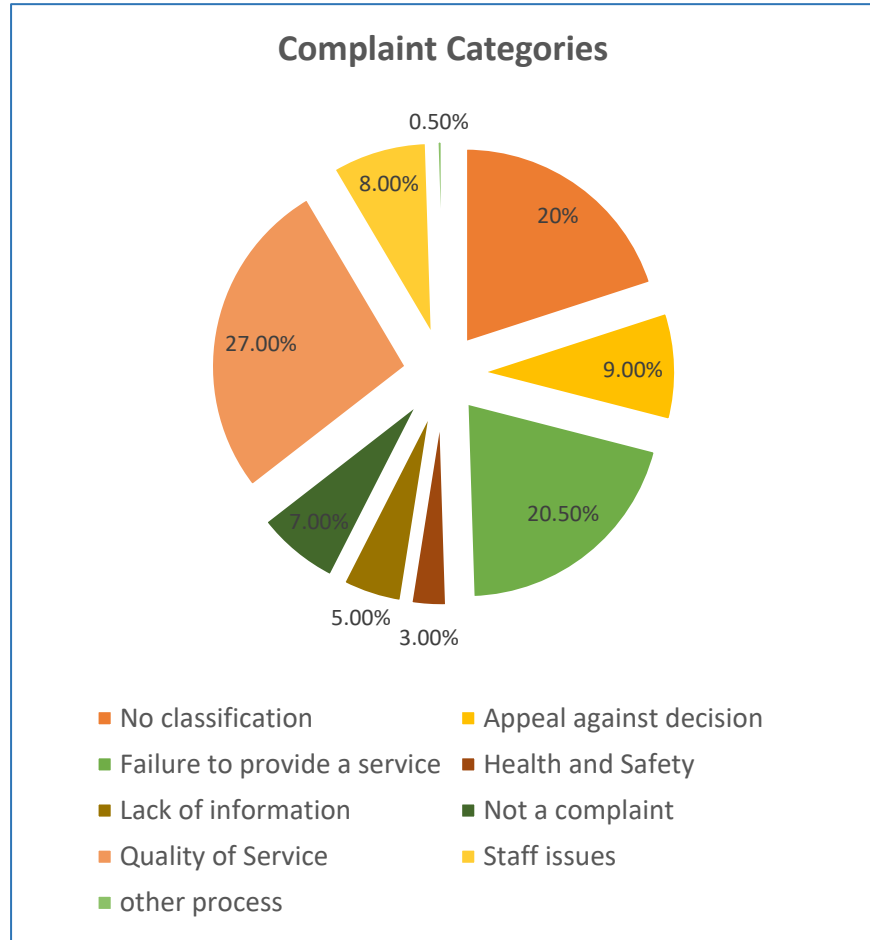
### Key Themes

- A total of 1155 feedback items were logged for 2019/20. This number is slightly higher but consistent with the previous two years and is likely to be an underestimate of the actual amount of feedback received with compliments in particular being under reported.
- There has been small increase on the number of complaints received in comparison to previous years and this was anticipated with the training for staff on accurate identification and recording of complaint issues.
- 65% of feedback was received via the Councils website with only 0.7% of customers choosing to provide feedback face to face. 18.5% of customers provided feedback by telephone and 9.5% by letter. E-Mail correspondence accounted for 8.5% of the feedback received.
- 22.5% of feedback items on the CRM are not allocated to a service area and this indicates that they have not been allocated or closed properly. Further work is required on developing a more flexible system particularly for frontline services.



## SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS.

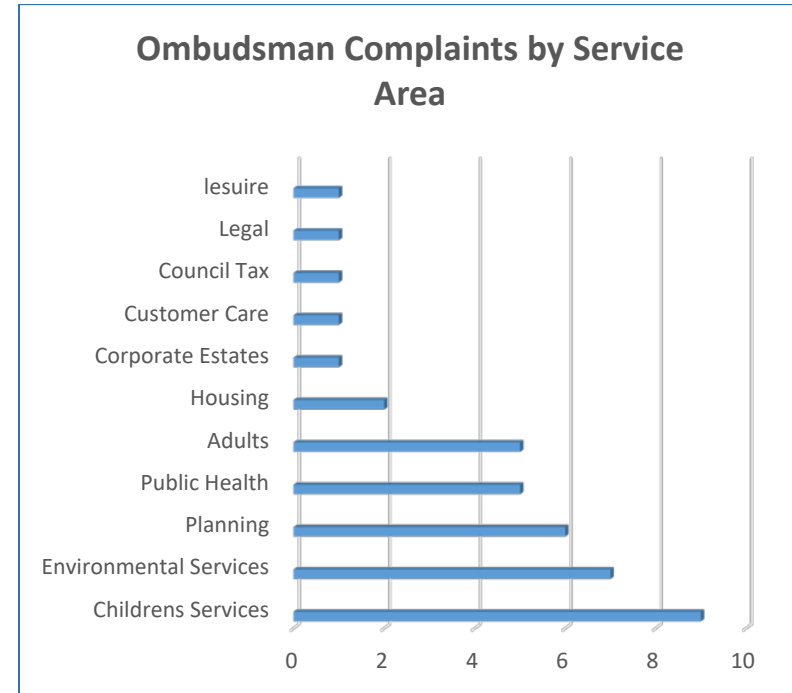
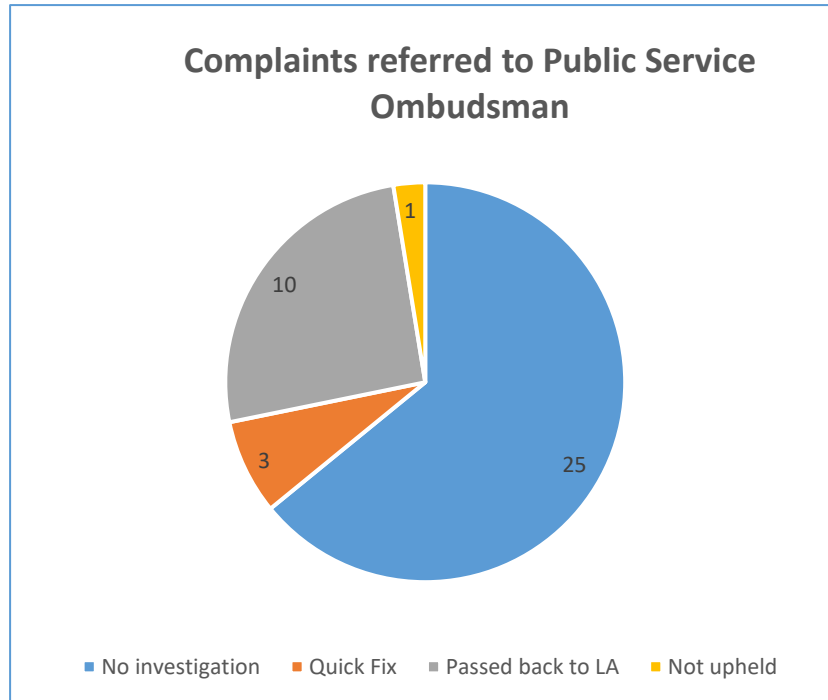
In 2019/20 the Council received 778 complaints through the Customer Feedback Scheme 35 (4.4%) of which were dealt with at Stage 2. This number remains consistent with the previous 2 years. The following charts detail the category of complaint where these were recorded on the CRM system and the recorded outcome where recorded.



## KEY THEMES

- 70% of Stage 1 complaints were dealt with within 10 working days with 59% of Stage 2 complaints dealt with within the designated 20 working days.
- As anticipated and consistent with previous years the Environmental Services Group (ESG) received the most number of complaints making up 28% of the total recorded on the CFS. This however does not include complaints counted in the overall total that have been reallocated and dropped out of the ESG service queue. This represents 27% of the total number and so it is estimated that the true number of complaints for ESG is in excess of 50%.
- The highest number of complaints were categorised as quality of service or failure to provide a service and related to frontline services such as refuse, recycling and street care.
- 26% of complaints were resolved by frontline services. Again the total is likely to be higher and reflects the commitment of frontline staff to deal with customer dissatisfaction as quickly and efficiently as possible. Only 4.5% of complaints progressed to Stage 2 of the complaints process.
- In this reporting period and in line with Ombudsman reporting not all complaints have been categorised as Upheld or Not Upheld. Reporting for future years will be amended to enable service areas to log upheld/not upheld as well as categorising the nature of the complaint and outcome.
- In 2019/20 to ensure compliance with both legislation and internal policies all recorded complaints must identify if any issues raised relates to Welsh language, Equality or Data Protection. In 2019/20 26 complaints in total were recorded, 10 relating to data protection concerns, 6 for Welsh Language and 10 relating to equality issues. 1 equality complaint resulted in staff training regarding working with the gypsy and traveling community.
- Due to changes in policy by the Public Services Ombudsman no benchmarking exercises have been possible in the second half of this reporting year. Following discussions with the PSOW this has now been resolved and it is hoped we can continue to access complaint's information from which we can identify and share learning with other Council's.
- 39 complaints were referred to the Public Services Ombudsman, details of outcomes for these complaints are detailed in the next graph.

## OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS



### KEY THEMES

- The number of Ombudsman complaints received in 2019/2020 is consistent with the number received in 2018/19.
- There are no identified themes or concerns as to a particular service area or service provision with 25 of the 38 complaints not requiring any further action.
- 14 complaints referred to the PSOW related to Social Care.
- The Ombudsman letter to the Council for 2019/20 recommends training from the Complaint’s Standards Authority and arrangements are currently being made for this to take place for staff across all service areas.

## EXAMPLES OF COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Complaint area	Complaint detail	Service Improvement
<b>Housing Advice</b>	Complaint about delays in customers being dealt with at walk in Housing Advice centre.	Internal review of the service to be undertaken to include the views and suggestions of customers on how the service can be improved and in particular waiting times reduced.
<b>Council Tax</b>	Complaint regarding length of time waiting for a refund, leaving customer short of money.	The frequency of payments increased to ensure refunds provided as quickly as possible.
<b>Heritage Services</b>	Customer with Autistic Child complaining of poor experience of visit to Santa's Toy Mine in the Heritage Park.	Relevant training on autism to be provide to all relevant staff including seasonal employees irrespective of length of employment contract. Parent to be involved directly in sharing her view on how attraction can be improved for users with autism.
<b>Crosscutting</b>	Complaint regarding lack of knowledge of customer advisor on the purchasing/general advice relating to residential parking permits.	All advisors advised that any for any future queries customers should be directed to the policy available on the website thus ensuring correct and consistent information is provided.
<b>Leisure</b>	Complaint from parent re. Incident where daughter refused access to pool inflatable despite her being a competent swimmer. Refusal was based on existing policy and child's age.	Policy to be reviewed to take account of child's ability and not just age when considering use of pool inflatables.
<b>ESG rubbish/litter</b>	Complaint regarding amount of litter in area (Maerdy) and need for more bins	More litter bins provided in area.
<b>Crosscutting</b>	Complaint regarding misinformation given by customer advisor regarding Discretionary Housing Payments	Customer Advisors to receive training on the DHP policy to ensure accurate advice and information is provided in the future.
<b>Education</b>	Complaint regarding delay in responding to a query re. college funding	Improvements made to CRM in ensuring information is allocated correctly. Feedback team updated funding arrangements that are within the remit of career Wales and not the Council.
<b>Regeneration and Planning</b>	Complaint regarding involvement of surveyor in Housing Grant application.	All staff reminded of correct process in offering another surveyor where urgent planning request received and allocated survey unavailable.

## EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Service Area	Detail of Compliments (Total received 254) Comments (Total received 123)
<b>Education</b>	<i>Thank you very much indeed. I very much appreciate your help and it is a breath of fresh air to deal with someone so helpful. Hopefully this will assist xxxx with her statement process in Powys.</i>
<b>Customer Care and ESG</b>	<i>Mrs xxxx would like to thank the Contact Centre Advisor who arranged for her large bin to be swapped to a small bin along with the crew members who carried out the exchange. She contacted us earlier today &amp; said that the exchange has already taken place</i>
<b>Recycling and Waste Services</b>	<i>I visited the Bryn Pica (Llwydcoed) community recycling centre at the weekend and I was very grateful to receive help unloading my car from one of the site operatives. He was extremely pleasant and went out of his way to help me on 2 separate occasions on Saturday and this was very much appreciated - this young man is a credit to your team. Please pass on my thanks to him via his line manager.</i>
<b>Corporate Estates</b>	<i>I, and my classmates, were very impressed by the modern facilities and equipment, it was the original school building, where we spent our own school days that made the greatest impression. The sensitive and extensive restoration work has produced a wonderful reminder of times past and an important memorial to the academic heritage of the area. (Tonyrefail Community School)</i>
<b>Crosscutting</b>	<i>Hi I wish to complement your Customer Service, Licencing and Street Works team for helping me complete an application for a container to be located in the Maerdy Area. We at TCMS are working with Trivallis on Maerdy Road. All the staff were helpful, informative and called back when they said they would. Thanks for your help and assistance.</i>
<b>Arts and Theatres</b>	<i>We attended the pantomime today. Can you please pass on our thanks for an excellent performance and arrangements (inside and outside the venue). We used to visit the Grand annually until last year when we moved to visiting the Coliseum (regret not moving much sooner). The quality of your performances and arrangements makes the visit much more enjoyable for all involved.</i>
<b>Housing Advice</b>	<i>I would just like to thank xxxx from housing for all the help he has given me recently during a very stressful and difficult time. He has gone above and beyond to help me and find a solution for me. xxxx thank you so much from the bottom of my heart</i>

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND PRIORITIES**

The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team will continue to review the effectiveness of the Customer Feedback Scheme ensuring that the Council not only provide customer focused services but also use feedback received to both understand our customers' needs and to develop and improve services across RCT. Below are some of the priorities for 2020/21:

### **Improved complaints training.**

Virtual training for 40 key staff across all service areas will be held in the coming months and will be facilitated at no cost to the Council by the newly established Complaint's Standards Authority. The training will cover core modules including complaint handling, investigation, communication and a number of soft skills modules such as effective time management and managing difficult behaviours. It is hoped that this will improve the management of complaints by key staff, raising both the profile of complaints and an improved understanding of effective complaints resolution.

### **Improved reporting.**

The last 12 months has seen all co-ordinators and key staff trained in effectively using the existing CRM system ensuring that all feedback items are properly re-allocated or closed. There is still work to be done to improve the existing CRM system to ensure that accurate information is transferred to any new commissioned system and that any new system has the flexibility to meet the needs of frontline services. New reports will be developed to monitor set performance measures around timescales and it is hoped that improved performance data can be made available to individual service areas by 2021/22.

### **Public facing information.**

The highest percentage of feedback items are received through the Councils website and whilst this is positive not all residents of RCT will have internet access. The Digital RCT plan\* identifies that in RCT '*41,500 (22.5%) adults do not use the internet regularly and are considered digitally excluded*'. Age UK highlight that older people are more likely to not have internet access and are potentially more isolated and vulnerable than some other groups within the community. It is therefore important that the Council offer a range of mechanisms to enable **all** customers to use the Customer Feedback Scheme. In light of this as well as improved web information, public information will be provided in key sites across RCT over the coming year.

### **Improved customer feedback.**

As the Customer Feedback Scheme develops and we promote the Council as a 'learning organisation' it is important that we consider how we effectively communicate to customers through the 'You said We did' platform. Further discussions will take place with relevant officers in relation to improving in this area in 2020/21.