

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS

Minutes of the meeting of the Chairs & Vice Chairs meeting held on Monday, 5 July 2021 at 4.00 pm.

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

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor W Lewis Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor G Thomas Councillor J Edwards
Councillor R Yeo Councillor S Evans

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Ms J Nicholls, Principle Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny
Mrs S Daniel – Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes**

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 February 2021

3 **Scrutiny Update**

The Principle Scrutiny Officer gave an update to the Chairs and Vice Chairs on the following areas:

- **SCRUTINY REFRESHER TRAINING**

The Council Business Unit recently arranged and facilitated Scrutiny refresher training sessions for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and each of the four themed scrutiny committees.

Each training session included a Power Point presentation from the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications who provided an overview of the current scrutiny arrangements in Rhondda Cynon Taf in addition to a refresher on the key scrutiny tools available to Members. Each session was tailored to each individual scrutiny committee's themes/topics and provision of support.

Further information was provided by the Lead Officer(s) of each scrutiny committee on the key topics for consideration for the forthcoming 2021/22 Municipal Year. She added that feedback

will be evaluated by the Council Business Unit to assist with the development of future training sessions.

- **CABINET/SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES**

Most Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs have undertaken their quarterly meetings with the respective Cabinet Member and Senior Officers to populate their forward work programmes

The Officer reminded members that the number of scrutiny committees had been reduced for the 2021/22 Municipal Year to prevent overburdening Members and Officers with a heavy workload. It is proposed that prioritising scrutiny resources for key pieces of work will maximise effectiveness, rather than spreading efforts too thin.

She advised members that it is proposed that due to the reduction in the number of scrutiny committees it's prudent to devise a work programme for the full financial year so that less time is taken up with the review process.

Members discussed their draft Work Programmes and the potential areas for outcomes from each of the items.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised that the Work Programmes do allow for flexibility to undertake further scrutiny as business need arises and priorities change.

WEBCASTING

The Principle Scrutiny Officer advised members that it is anticipated that the briefing to Overview & Scrutiny Members will be undertaken towards the end of July so that members can familiarise themselves with the equipment and operational arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings. It is proposed that the formal broadcast of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will take place in September in conjunction with the wider roll out to the remaining committees.

She added that arrangements will account for the number of Members permitted to attend the Chamber in person to 26 (socially distanced). This figure will include officers from the Council Business Unit who will operate the hybrid infrastructure and will be in proportion to the political balance and following discussions with Group Leaders

The Principle Scrutiny Officer advised members that the role of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs will be paramount in managing the hybrid meetings. She reassured Members that appropriate training will be provided in a timely manner which will include voting through the Mod.Gov app, undertaking working group meetings, adapting questioning techniques and strengthening the knowledge base already held by Members, whilst also considering the promotion of public participation.

The Principle Scrutiny Officer reassured Members that there would be plenty of training opportunities and the chance to undertake a series of

mock meetings to ensure they are confident in using the equipment and are able to familiarise themselves with their preferred way of attending meetings.

The Chair added that due to the legislation within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 hybrid meetings are the way forward and were here to stay. He advised that after the first round of hybrid meetings the Committee should have another chairs and Vice Chairs meeting to re-evaluate where we are and lessons learned.

Members agreed with this approach and felt that they would benefit from plenty of opportunities for training and holding mock meetings to ensure they were confident in chairing meetings going forward. All members welcomed an incremental approach with the opportunity to practice with a series of mock meetings.

The Chair asked that all Chairs and Vice Chairs ensure all their members attend the training sessions to ensure they are familiar with the chamber set up and how hybrid meetings work to ensure the smooth running of future Scrutiny Committee meetings

A member asked how Committees would be voting at hybrid meetings in the future. The Principle Scrutiny Officer replied that members would be able to utilise a voting function through the Mod.Gov app, this way all members, whether in the chamber or on ZOOM would be able to vote in the same way. The Chair added that using a roll call had also been mentioned

A Member asked when the facility to webcast is rolled out if the meetings would then be streamed live. The Principle Scrutiny Officer confirmed that they will be streamed live, with no delays.

Work Programme

All Members discussed their draft Work Programmes and it was acknowledged that they would remain flexible to allow for any emerging priorities as the Municipal Year progressed. The reduced number of meetings also allowed for the flexibility for working groups to be resumed should these be required throughout the year.

The Chairman commented that there were many good items put forward for Scrutiny this year but members should remain focussed to ensuring that the items are able to demonstrate potential positive outcomes and recommendations for the residents of RCT.

RESOLVED: Members noted the update

4 Urgent Business

None

This meeting closed at 4.50pm

**Cllr M Adams
Chairman.**

