



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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

WYTHHFED CYFARFOD CYFFREDINAL CYNGOR BLYNYDDOL AR HUGAIN
TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL COUNCIL

**Dydd Mercher 10fed Mai 2023 am 4.00pm
Wednesday 10th May, 2023 at 4.00 pm**

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

GWŶS I GYFARFOD PWYLLGOR

C Hanagan
Cyfarwyddwr Materion Cyfathrebu a Phennaeth Dros Dro'r Gwasanaethau
Llywodraethol
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Y Pafiliynau Parc Hen Lofa'r Cambrian
Cwm Clydach, CF40 2XX

Dolen gyswllt: Julia Nicholls - Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (01443 424098)

DYMA WŶS I CHI i Wythfed Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Cyngor Blynyddol Ar Hugain o **GYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF** sydd i'w gynnal yn y dull hybrid ar 10fed Mai 2023 am 4pm

Bwriedir i'r cyfarfod yma gael ei weddarlledu'n fyw, mae rhagor o fanylion am hyn [yma](#)

| AMSER | EITEM | TUDALEN(N AU) |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| 5 Munud | ITEM 1. DATGAN BUDDIANT Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad. <ol style="list-style-type: none">Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm y mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag e a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; aLle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael. | |
| 5 Munud | ITEM 2. ETHOL LLYWYDD Y CYNGOR a) Ethol Llywydd y Cyngor. | |
| 20 Munud | ITEM 3. ETHOLIADAU A PHENODIADAU b) Ethol Dirprwy Lywyddion y Cyngor c) Derbyn anerchiad gan Faer y Cyngor ar gyfer 2022-23. d) Ethol Maer Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-2024. (Cyfle i'r Maer gyhoeddi ei gymar/ei chymar ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-2024) | |

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| | <p>e) Penodi Dirprwy Faer Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-24. (Cyfle i'r Dirprwy Faer gyhoeddi ei gymar/ei chymar ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-2024).</p> <p>f) Penodi Arweinydd y Cyngor.</p> <p>g) Cadarnhau bod Arweinydd yr Wrthblaid fwyaf yn cael ei benodi'n/ei phenodi'n Arweinydd yr Wrthblaid.</p> | |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 4. SWYDDOGAETHAU LLYWODRAETHOL</p> <p>Nodi Cynllun yr Arweinydd parthed Dirprwyo Swyddogaethau Gweithredol, gan gynnwys penodi Dirprwy Arweinydd ac Aelodau'r Cabinet, i'w cyflwyno gan yr Arweinydd yn ystod cyfarfod y Cyngor.</p> | |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 5. CYDBWYSEDD GWLEIDYDDOL Y CYNGOR</p> <p>Trafod adroddiad ar y cyd Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a'r Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu.</p> | 7 - 12 |
| 5 Munud | <p>ITEM 6. PENODI AELODAU PWYLLGORAU 2023-2024</p> <p>Trafod adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu sy'n rhannu argymhellion mewn perthynas â phenodi Aelodau i'r Pwyllgorau canlynol ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-2024.</p> | 13 - 16 |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 7. PENODI CADEIRYDDION AC IS-GADEIRYDDION PWYLLGORAU 2023-2024</p> <p>Trafod adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu.</p> | 17 - 22 |
| 5 Munud | <p>ITEM 8. CYRFF LLED FARNWROL/PWYLLGORAU AD HOC 2023-2024</p> <p>Trafod adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Chyfathrebu.</p> | 23 - 24 |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 9. CYRFF ALLANOL</p> <p>Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu.</p> | 25 - 28 |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 10. CALENDR CYFARFODYDD 2023-2024</p> <p>Trafod adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu mewn perthynas â'r calendr o gyfarfodydd arfaethedig ar gyfer blwyddyn y Cyngor 2023-2024.</p> | 29 - 52 |
| 10 Munud | <p>ITEM 11. ADRODDIADAU BLYNYDDOL 2022/23</p> <p>Derbyn yr Adroddiadau Blynyddol canlynol:</p> | 53 - 92 |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio 2022/23 - Mr Chris Jones, Cadeirydd• Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu 2022/23 - Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol J Edwards, Cadeirydd | |
| | ITEM 12. MATERION BRYD Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn faterion brys yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig. | |

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

At: Pob Aelod o'r Cyngor

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

THE POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To advise Members of the Political Balance of the Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the scheme for the allocation of seats to the different political groups and bodies to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies, as detailed in the Appendix to this report, be adopted;
- 2.2 That the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication be authorised to make appointments to politically balanced bodies upon receipt by him of notification of the wishes of the political groups subject to any subsequent requests for amendment of membership of Committees, being referred to Council; and
- 2.3 Determine the allocation of Notices of Motion for the Municipal Year 2023-24

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 makes provisions for securing the political balance on certain relevant Authorities, Committees and Bodies. In the case of the Council, it is a requirement that the representation of the different political groups to secure political balance is reviewed at, or as soon as practicable after, the annual meeting of the Council.
- 3.2 Subject to the adoption of the scheme, it will be the duty of the Council to make appointments to those seats in accordance with the wishes of the political groups and to facilitate this process, it has been previous practice for power to be delegated to myself to accept and make the appointments notified to me by the political groups. However, in the case of subsequent requests for amendments to the membership of Committees, they should be the subject of a report to the Council.

3.3 Members are requested to note that:

- A Member of the Cabinet may not be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Scrutiny Committees
- At least one Member of the Cabinet can sit on the Governance & Audit and Democratic Services Committees, but the Council Leader is excluded from these positions.

4. **POLITICAL BALANCE**

4.1 In line with the political balance of the Council Members are informed that the appointment of the available seats is as set out in Tables A and B of the Appendix to this report.

4.2 Members are again advised that the Democratic Services Committee Chair must be appointed from a political group which does not form part of the Council's Executive arrangements.

4.3 The Governance and Audit Committee must be Chaired by a Lay member of the committee. There is no restriction upon the Vice-Chair being an elected member of the Council.

5. **ALLOCATION OF NOTICES OF MOTION**

5.1 At the 2022 Council AGM, Minute [\(160\)\(3\)](#) refers, Council agreed to the following allocation of Notices of Motion for the Municipal Year 2022 – 2023 as follows:

Labour - 12
Plaid Cymru -5
RCT Independent Group - 2
Conservatives – 1

5.2 Council's instruction is sought in respect of the allocation of notice of motion for the Municipal Year 2023-2024

APPENDIX 1**POLITICAL BALANCE 2023 - 2024****TABLE A**

| | <i>Total</i> | <i>Labour</i> | <i>Plaid Cymru</i> | <i>RCT Ind</i> | <i>Conservative</i> | <i>Unallocated</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Members | 75 | 59 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Political Balance | 100% | 78.67% | 10.67% | 8.00% | 2.67% | |
| Committee | <i>Available Seats</i> | <i>Labour</i> | <i>Plaid Cymru</i> | <i>RCT Ind</i> | <i>Conservative</i> | |
| Planning & Development | 11 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 | |
| Licensing | 11 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Constitution | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | |
| Appointments | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Pensions | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Appeals | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Total Seats | 45 | 35 | 5 | 4 | 1 | |

TABLE B**INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES SUBJECT TO POLITICAL BALANCE**

| Committee | Available Seats | Labour | Plaid Cymru | RCT Ind | Conservative |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Overview & Scrutiny | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Scrutiny Committee 1 | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Scrutiny Committee 2 | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Scrutiny Committee 3 | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Democratic Services | 17 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Governance & Audit Committee | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

TABLE C
TABLE TO CALCULATE POLITICAL BALANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES

| Total Seats | Labour | Plaid | RCT Ind | Conservative |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 10 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 11 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 12 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 13 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 15 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 16 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 17 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 18 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 19 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 20 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 0 |

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

REPORT

Local Government & Housing Act 1989
Local Government (Committees and Political Groups)
Regulations 1990

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023- 24

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the appointment of the Council's Committees for the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To appoint the under-mentioned Committees for the 2023-24 Municipal Year:-

- a) Planning and Development Committee (x11 Members)
- b) Licensing Committee (x11 Members)
- c) Appointments Committee (x5 Members)
- d) Appeals/Employee Appeals/Chief Officer Appeals Committee (x5 Members)
- e) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- f) Education & Inclusion Services Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- g) Community Services Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- h) Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- i) Governance & Audit Committee (x6 Members)
- j) Democratic Services Committee (x17 Members)
- k) Standards Committee (x2 Members)
- l) Constitution Committee (x8 Members)

m) Pension Fund Committee (x5 Members)

n) Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee (x2 Members)

3. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

3.1 The Council is requested to consider the appointment of the following Committees for the 2023-24 Municipal Year:

- a) Planning and Development Committee (x11 Members)
- b) Licensing Committee (x11 Members)
- c) Appointments Committee (x5 Members)
- d) Appeals/Employee Appeals/Chief Officer Appeals Committee (x5 Members)
- e) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- f) Education & Inclusion Services Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- g) Community Services Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- h) Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (x14 Members)
- i) Governance & Audit Committee (x6 Members)
- j) Democratic Services Committee (x17 Members)
- k) Standards Committee (x2 Members)
- l) Constitution Committee (x8 Members)
- m) Pension Fund Committee (x5 Members)
- n) Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee (x2 Members)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

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

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

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

Background Papers

Appointment of Committees 2023-24

Freestanding Matter

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS FOR THE 2023-2024 MUNICIPAL YEAR & ASSOCIATED MATTERS

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Council's Committees for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.
- 1.2 To confirm which Committee Chair Roles which will qualify for a senior salary in line with the determinations of the IRP.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1 Subject to the appointment of such Committees at Agenda Item 6 Members are advised to make appointments to the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair in-line with the requirements set out within this report; and
- 2.2 Notes the recommendations in respect of which Chairs roles should be in receipt of a Senior Salary in line with the recommendations of the independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Annual Report (Up to a maximum of 19 overall).
- 2.3 Note the need to publish and submit the schedule of remuneration for 2023-24 by 31 July 2023.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS

- 3.1 Subject to the appointment of the Committees at Agenda Item 6 the Council is requested to appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the under-mentioned Committees:
 - Planning and Development Committee
 - Licensing Committee

- Appointments Committee
- Appeals/Employee Appeals/Chief Officer Appeals Committee
- Pension Fund Committee

APPOINTMENT OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

- 3.2 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the 'Measure'), the Council must appoint the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee and that Chair must not be a Member who belongs to a group with Members in the Executive. Council may also appoint the Vice-Chair.

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR

- 3.3 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Governance & Audit Committee Chair, who is appointed by the Committee, must be a lay person and the deputy chair must not be a member of the local authority's executive or an assistant to its executive.

APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- 3.4 The appointment of the persons to Chair the Scrutiny Committees must comply with the requirements set out in the Local Government Measure.
- 3.5 In light of the Political Balance report presented at Agenda Item 5 viz: two or more Political groups with multiple Scrutiny Committees, the application of the procedures set out in Section 70 of the Measure results in the allocation set out below:

Labour Group - 3
 Plaid Cymru Group - 1
 RCT Independent Group - 0
 Conservative Group - 0

- 3.6 The Council must determine, which of the following Scrutiny Committees is to be chaired by the Plaid Cymru Group:
- Overview and Scrutiny
 - Education & Inclusion
 - Community Services
 - Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity

- 3.7 It is proposed that the arrangements for the 2023-2024 are as follows:
- Scrutiny Committee (to be determined) being chaired by a member of the Plaid Cymru Group.

- Nominations from the appropriate Group Officers in respect of these scrutiny Chair posts will be sought at the meeting.
- The Council will need to appoint the Vice-Chairs of the four Scrutiny Committees.

APPOINTMENT OF CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

- 3.8 The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to keep its Constitution under review and up to date and the Constitution Committee has been appointed for this purpose. The Committee is a body to which the political balance requirement of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies.
- 3.9 To note the appointment of the Presiding Member as the Chair of the Constitution Committee and, subject to agreement of agenda item 3, confirm which Deputy Presiding Member should be nominated as the Vice-Chair of the Constitution Committee.

CWM TAF PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 3.10 Following the transition to a single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg, the Joint Scrutiny arrangements currently in place will need to be revised. A report outlining the new scrutiny arrangements will be brought before Members in June.

4 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL DETERMINATIONS

- 4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) is the body tasked with setting the remuneration levels for councils in Wales. The IRP makes determinations in relation to basic and senior salaries, the number of senior salaries permitted within a Council and also the rates and conditions for expenses paid by public authorities. The determinations contained with the latest IRP Annual Report can be accessed via the following links: -
[English Version](#)
[Welsh Version](#)
- 4.2 Members are asked to note that within the final IRP Annual report there is no change to the maximum proportion of Members who are eligible to receive a Senior Salary. Therefore, the maximum proportion of the Council's membership which can be paid a Senior Salary remains capped at 19.
- 4.3 At the Council AGM on the 22nd May 2022 ([Minute 163\(9\)](#) refers), Council agreed to 19 posts attracting a senior salary, for the reasons set out within the report.

4.4 It is proposed that a continuation of these arrangements is taken forward for the Municipal Year 2023 – 2024, in line with the determinations as set out in the report of the IRP,

4.5 Therefore the following Committee Chairs will attract a Senior Salary:

| |
|---|
| Planning & Development Committee |
| Licensing Committee |
| Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| Education & Inclusion Scrutiny Committee |
| Community Services Scrutiny Committee |
| Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity |
| Appeals Committee |
| Democratic Services Committee |
| Pension Fund Committee |

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

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

Background Papers

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS FOR 2023-2024
MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Freestanding Matter

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th MAY 2023

QUASI JUDICIAL BODIES/AD HOC COMMITTEES

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the appointment of Members to sit on the Quasi Judicial Bodies/Ad Hoc Committees.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To appoint Members to the Quasi Judicial Bodies/Ad Hoc Committees for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year as set out at section three of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At its Annual General Meeting each year, the Council is requested to consider appointments to the following Quasi Judicial Bodies/Ad Hoc Committees:

Bodies Subject to Political Balance

- Local Education Authority Governors (Appointments) Committee (5 Members). (4 Labour, 1 Plaid Cymru)
- Voluntary Early Retirement/Redundancy Panel (5 Members) (4 Labour, 1 Plaid Cymru)

Non-Politically Balanced

- Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) (4 Members)

3.2 The formal appointment of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Quasi Judicial Bodies/Ad Hoc Committees referred to above will be dealt with at the first meeting of each Body/Committee.

- 3.3 For the purposes of the requirements of the Local Government & Elections Act (Wales) 2021, the JCC will act as the consultative forum for key decisions with the recognised Trade Unions of the Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

10th MAY 2023

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

Background Papers

Quasi Judicial Bodies/Ad Hoc Committees

Freestanding Matter

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10TH MAY 2023

OUTSIDE BODIES AND OTHER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS.

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the appointment of Members to sit on Outside Bodies and Non-Executive Joint Committees.

2. RECOMMENDATION

OUTSIDE BODIES

- 2.1 To appoint representatives to the Outside Bodies as set out in section three of the report;
- 2.2 To appoint representatives to the Non-Executive Joint Committees as set out below, that meet the key principles of selection.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its Annual General Meeting each year, the Council is requested to consider appointments to the following Outside Bodies as set out below:-

- a) Age Concern Cymru (1 representative)
- b) Consortium Local Authority Wales (C.L.A.W.) (1 representative)
- c) Cynon Valley Indoor Bowls Committee (1 representative)
- d) Edward Thomas Charity (4 representatives)
- e) Joint Council for Wales (2 representatives)
- f) The Alliance (3 representatives)
- g) Tower Site Liaison Committee (3 representatives)
- h) Welsh Local Government Association (5 representatives)
- i) Welsh Local Government Association Executive Board (1 representative and 1 substitute)
- j) Business in Focus (1 Representative)
- k) Trivallis (1 Representative)

- 3.2 The Council is also requested to appoint the Councils representatives to the following non-executive Joint Committees:
- a) South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority(4 representatives)
 - b) Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (Formerly known as Brecon Beacons National Park Authority) (NPA)(1 representative)
 - c) South Wales Police Crime Panel (2 representatives)
- 3.3 As with all appointments to Outside Bodies, Members are expected to act in the interests of the outside body and exercise independent judgement in making decisions, in accordance with their duty of care to the body.
- 3.4 With regards to the appointments to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, [protocol](#) has been developed by the Welsh Government with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) and the three National Park Authorities, to ensure that the most appropriate appointments are made to these roles.
- 3.5 Under Schedule 2 of the National Parks Authorities (Wales) Order 1995, two thirds of the members of the NPAs are appointed by Local Authorities to represent local interests and in line with the political balance of the Local Authority.
- 3.6 In selecting Councillors to serve as members of the NPA, the appointing Authorities are asked to '**satisfy the legal requirements associated with selection and balance the overall weight to be given to the individual principles**'.
- 3.7 The protocol encourages membership to the NPA as far as possible based on the following key principles:
- **Merit** –*Selection should be made based on the basis of members' abilities, broad experiences, qualities and commitment in relation to the strategic work of NPAs and with full regard to the NPA member role description (available from the relevant NPA);*
 - **Equality and Diversity** –*Selection should be fully in line with the principles of equal opportunities and there should be no barriers to increasing the diversity of membership. It is noted there is a history of an imbalance of men compared to women on the NPAs;*
 - **Transparency** – *the Local Authorities should be prepared to share with key stakeholders' information on the selection process followed;*
 - **Close connections to Park communities** – *in accordance with the legislation the aim should be to give priority in selection to those Councillors who have wards wholly or partly within the relevant*

National Park boundary. Selection of Councillors with electoral wards some distance away from the Park should be avoided where possible;

- **Providing stability** - *Consideration should be given as to whether Members are likely to be able to fulfil the position for the electoral term to ensure consistency*
- 3.8 In essence, Members should be committed to the work and ethos of the National Park Authority and demonstrate relevant qualities and interests in order to fully engage with the work of the National Park Authority and for the full duration of their political term.
- 3.9 Where possible Members should be able to demonstrate that they are fully committed to undertake relevant personal development and training in order to effectively engage in scrutiny and contribute to the NPA meetings.
- 3.10 A comprehensive guide for prospective members to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park is available through the following links, and sets out information in respect of their role, commitment and remuneration.
[English Version](#)
[Welsh Version](#)
- 3.11 The Local Authority is asked to consider similar merits and principles when appointing Members to the following non-executive Joint Committees:
- South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (x4)
 - South Wales Police Crime Panel (x2)
- 3.12 It is suggested that Members are appointed on the basis of their commitment and interest in the committee and undertake the appointment for the duration of their electoral term.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

10TH MAY 2023

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

OUTSIDE BODIES AND OTHER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Background Papers

Freestanding Matter

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

10th MAY 2023

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS - MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval of the Calendar of Meetings for the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council

- 2.1 Agree the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2023-24, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2.2 Note that this draft calendar is subject to change, based upon the demands of business over the coming municipal year. Any changes or additions will be undertaken in consultation with the appropriate committee chairs; and
- 2.3 Agree that with the exception of the Planning and Development Committee, meetings will not be convened during School holidays, subject to urgent business needs.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution, Council Procedure Rule 1 (1.1 (xiv)), the Council must present a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year at the Annual Council Meeting.

4. SURVEY OF TIMING OF MEETINGS

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 6(2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, a survey was recently carried out to assess Members' preferences regarding the future timing of committee meetings. Wherever possible the Calendar will reflect these

preferences, however there may be incidences where Committee meeting times need to commence at alternate times due to resourcing and support arrangements needed, or the demands of Council Business, with such discussions being taken forward with the Head of Democratic Services and the appropriate Chair.

- 4.2 Overall 51 Members completed the questionnaire. Members were asked to identify their preferred meeting start time if their preference differed to the current. In total 86% of the respondents cited 5.00pm as their preferred starting time for Council and other committees currently commencing at 5pm.
- 4.3 In respect of Planning and Development Committee the survey responses indicated a preference to both a 3pm (40%) and 4pm (40%) meeting start time. The Head of Democratic Services will consult with the Chair of the Committee, following confirmation of their appointment at agenda item 7 to seek a view at the commencement time of the meeting for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. Members are reminded however, that the 3pm meeting start time of the Committee does greatly assist with the scheduling of other 5pm Committees / ad hoc meetings taking place when needed on a Thursday, especially when the Committee calendar is already busy.
- 4.4 95% of the respondents were happy with the current arrangements in place for meetings that are held on an ad hoc basis e.g. LEA Governors, Appointments Committee, VER Panel and others.
- 4.5 The Survey also sought Members' views on the support provided to Members and a report will be presented to a future meeting of the Democratic Services Committee to consider the outcome of the responses received.

5 PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

- 5.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2023-24 Municipal Year which includes, the proposed dates for the Cabinet, Council, Licensing Committee, Governance & Audit Committee and the Planning & Development Committee.
- 5.2 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 23rd May 2018 (Minute No.15(3) Refers) Committee meetings were to be convened outside of the School holiday periods, save for exceptional circumstances (urgent business requirements). This scheduling has proved successful for Members and it is proposed that this continues.

6. FORMAL DIARY MEETINGS

Council

- 6.1 Within the proposed Calendar, Council meetings are, in the main, scheduled on a monthly cycle. In accordance with the Council Constitution, "Open Government" sessions will be scheduled at each meeting.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Council Constitution the 'Leaders Debate' has been scheduled for the February Council meeting.
- 6.3 The Council meeting scheduled for the March cycle in respect of the Budget strategy may be subject to change depending on the timeline of the Welsh Government Local Government Settlement. Any changes to the date of the Budget Council or any other Council meeting, will be advised upon nearer the date once Officers have received information regarding the timetable for the Local Government Settlement.

Regulatory Committees

- 6.4 The Licensing Committee will meet approximately every six weeks. The Licensing Committee will also meet on a quarterly basis as indicated in the Calendar, to deal specifically with issues arising from the Licensing Act 2003. Licensing Sub-Committees, convened under the Licensing Act 2003, will be convened as and when required.
- 6.5 Dates have been allocated to the Planning and Development Committee throughout the calendar year to allow for, where possible, two meetings per month to take place.

Scrutiny Committees

- 6.6 A schedule of meetings for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the three thematic scrutiny Committees have been included in the calendar. Meetings will need to be scheduled for the Council's Joint Scrutiny Committees.

Governance & Audit Committee

- 6.7 Meetings of the Governance & Audit Committee are scheduled in the calendar mostly on a 6-week cycle.

Democratic Services Committee

- 6.8 It is proposed that the Democratic Services Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis as, in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requirements (Section 15(2)) - it has to meet at least once a year.
- 6.9 However to assist Members' diaries, three meetings have been scheduled in the Calendar. The Chair of the Committee can determine nearer the dates whether the scheduled meetings are required. The Chair will still be able to call additional meetings of the Committee as necessary.

Standards Committee

- 6.10 The Standards Committee will meet as and when necessary in order to deliver its work programme.

Cabinet

- 6.11 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Cabinet meetings are convened at the discretion of the Leader of the Council, and the indicative dates proposed may be subject to change, in response to the diary commitments of Cabinet Members and the demands of business.

Cabinet Sub-Committees

- 6.12 Cabinet Committees will be convened as and when there is sufficient business.

Other Committees

- 6.13 Meetings of the Appointments Committee, the Appeals/Employee Appeals/Chief Officer Appeals Committee, Pension Fund Committee will meet as and when required.
- 6.14 Meetings of the Constitution Committee will be convened when deemed necessary.

7. SPECIAL MEETINGS

- 7.1 Special/Extraordinary meetings of Council or Committees may be called, should this be deemed necessary by the Presiding Officer or the relevant Chair.

8. HYBRID MEETINGS

- 8.1 In accordance with the Local Government & Elections Act (Wales) 2021, The Council has determined that all meetings must be able to operate as multi-location meetings to ensure that participants are able to attend remotely or physically should they wish to do so, subject to those meetings that were determined by Council, to be conducted as virtual only ([June 2021 Council](#)), or by the request of the Chair.
- 8.2 Meetings are live streamed or webcast and placed on the Councils website for viewing following the meeting.

9. TRAINING.

- 9.1 Training opportunities have been undertaken through the detailed Member Induction Programme and additional training has also been undertaken through specific Member or Committee requests. Training support and opportunities have also been identified through the

Member Personal Development Review programme, which is nearing completion. A detailed Members Training programme will be developed and delivered upon following conclusion of this process.

- 9.2 Following the AGM refresher training will be provided in respect of Scrutiny, Planning and Development, Licensing and Standards.
- 9.3 Future briefing sessions will be taken forward prior to full Council meetings to assist Members in their role. Details of which will be provided to Members in advance to assist Members with diary commitments.
- 9.4 Further details of training opportunities can be viewed through the Training report presented to the [Democratic Services Committee](#) on the 27th April 2023.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The production of a calendar of meetings is aimed at assisting and supporting the role of all Members, to provide them with sufficient notice of meeting dates and times. The aspect of hybrid and virtual meetings also promotes the democracy agenda, allowing the undertaking of Council business by Members to be more accessible and manageable.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- Council's Constitution
- The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021

13. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

The Calendar of meetings provides the framework and timeline for decisions of the Council to be taken forward and therefore seeks to ensure all of the Council priorities are taken forward. It also embraces the Future Generations Acts as all future decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The Calendar of meetings for the 2023-24 Municipal Year is attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Members are asked to note the dates and times of the meetings to assist in their diary management.

14.2 Electronic / outlook diary markers will also be circulated to Members in advance of all training and Committee meetings to assist with diary commitments.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 MAY 2023

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

REPORT

Calendar of Meetings for Municipal Year 2023- 24

Freestanding matter

tudalen wag

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS
MAY 2023 – MAY 2024

APPENDIX 1

Planning Committee meeting times are currently scheduled for 3pm, as a continuation of previous arrangements but are to be confirmed following consultation with the Chair

| May 2023 | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| 1 Early May bank holiday | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 Bank holiday for the coronation of King Charles III | 9 | 10 AGM 4pm | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 Cabinet 10:30am | 16 | 17 | 18 Planning Training 3pm | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 Licensing Training 5pm | 24 Overview & Scrutiny Training 4pm Overview & Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |

APPENDIX 1

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|--|
| 29 Spring bank holiday | 30 | 31 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|--|

June 2023

APPENDIX 1

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|--|--|--|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 Licensing Act 2003 4.30pm Licensing Committee 5pm | 7 | 8 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 Extra Ordinary Council 4pm Council 5pm | 15 Standards Committee Training 10.30am | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 Community Services Scrutiny Training 5pm | 20 | 21 Overview &Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 22 Planning and Development Committee 3pm Special Education & Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 4.30pm | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 Cabinet 1pm | 27 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Training 5pm | 28 | 29 | 30 | | |

July 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 Democratic Services Committee 5pm | 4 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 5 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 6 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 Pension Fund Committee 2pm Community Services Scrutiny 5pm | 11 | 12 Council 5pm | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 Cabinet 1pm Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | 18 Licensing Committee 5pm | 19 Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 20 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

August 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Summer bank holiday | 29 | 30 | 31. | | | |

September 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 Licensing Act 2003 4.30pm Licensing Committee 5pm | 6 | 7 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11. | 12 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 13 | 14 Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19. | 20. Council 5pm | 21 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Cabinet 1pm Community Services Scrutiny 5pm | 26 | 27 Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

October 2023

APPENDIX 1

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 Democratic Services 5pm | 3 | 4 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 5 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 Pension Fund Committee 2pm | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16. | 17 Licensing Committee 5pm | 18 | 19 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 Cabinet 10:30am | 24 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 25 Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

November 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---------|---|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 Community Services Scrutiny 5pm | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Cabinet 10:30am Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | 21 | 22 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 23 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 Council 5pm | 30 | | | |

December 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|---------------------|----------|--------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Pension Fund Committee 2pm | 12 Licensing Act 2003 4.30pm Licensing Committee 5pm | 13 Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | 14 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 Cabinet 10:30am | 19 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Christmas Day | 26 Boxing Day | 27 Office Shut Down | 28 Office Shut Down | 29 Office Shut Down | 30 | 31 |

January 2024

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| 1 New Year's Day | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 Community Services Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 16 | 17 Council 5pm | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 Cabinet 10:30am Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 23 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 24 | 25 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 30 Licensing Committee 5pm | 31 Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | | | | |

February 2024

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 Council 5pm (Leaders Debate) | 8 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 Cabinet 10:30am Democratic Services 5pm | 20. | 21 | 22 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 27 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 28 | 29 | | | |

March 2024

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 Council 5pm (Budget Strategy) | 7 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Community Services Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 12 Licensing Committee 5pm | 13 | 14 Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee 5pm | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 Cabinet 10:30am | 19 | 20 Overview and Scrutiny 5pm | 2 RCT Pension Board/ Pension Fund Committee 2pm Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 22 | 23 | 24 |

APPENDIX 1

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|-------------------|----|----|
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 Good Friday | 30 | 31 |
|----|----|----|----|-------------------|----|----|

April 2024

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|--------|----------|--------|
| 1 Easter Monday | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9. | 10 | 11 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 Governance & Audit Committee 5pm | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 Planning and Development Committee 3pm | 26 | 27 | 28 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 29 Cabinet 10:30am | 30 Licensing Act 2003 4.30pm Licensing Committee 5pm | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|

May 2024

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 Early May bank holiday | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 Cabinet 10:30am | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 AGM | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

APPENDIX 1

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| 27 Spring bank holiday | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|--|



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10TH MAY, 2023

ANNUAL REPORTS 2022/23

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Council with the Annual Reports of the following Committees for the Municipal Year 2022/23:
- Governance & Audit Committee
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1 Note the Annual Reports for the Governance & Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny (which are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively to the report).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to provide Council with an update in respect of the work of the Committees during the Municipal Year.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Governance & Audit Committee

- 4.2 The Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee and self-assessment (**Appendix 1** and **Appendix 1B** respectively) was presented to its committee meeting on the [15th March 2023](#), providing a summary of the work undertaken over the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

- 4.3 The report is attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

4.4 Overview & Scrutiny Committee

4.5 The Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which provides a summary of the role and work of the Scrutiny Committees undertaken in the 2022/23 Municipal Year. The report is attached as Appendix 2.

4.6 The report was considered at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the [3rd May 2023](#).

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report. Consultation on the reports was undertaken at each of the Committee meetings referenced.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's constitution.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

9.1 The work of the Committees aims to support the delivery of the priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 'Making a Difference'.

9.2 The work of the Committees also take forward the principals and wellbeing goals of the Well-being and Future Generations Act, linked to each of the Committees Terms of Reference.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Annual reports outline the work of the Committees in the 2022/2023 Municipal Year. The achievements listed in the Annual Reports are not exhaustive but reflect some of the successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how the individual Committees have worked to tackle important issues in a collaborative and efficient way.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10TH MAY 2023

ANNUAL REPORTS 2022/23

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

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23,
INCORPORATING A SELF ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CIPFA 2018
PRACTICAL GUIDANCE NOTE**

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

tudalen wag

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Governance and Audit Committee

Annual Report 2022/23

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A key component of good governance for all organisations is to have in place a Governance and Audit Committee. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council complies with this requirement and the [Terms of Reference](#) for its Governance and Audit Committee, as included within the Council's Constitution, is set in line with the Local Government Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The responsibilities of Governance and Audit Committee, as required by the above legislation, is included at Appendix 1A.
- 1.2 Changes to the way the Council is operating since Covid-19, including new risks as a result of different ways of working, remote and digital working and other service changes have continued to influence the delivery of Council services, local communities and wider society. The Governance and Audit Committee was again mindful of this backdrop in setting its workplan for the year on [7th September 2022](#) and also of the need for robust and proportionate oversight of the Council's governance, internal control and risk managements to be in place. This translated into the continuation of an approach where the Governance and Audit Committee focussed on its core responsibilities:
- Reviewing the draft financial statements;
 - Scrutinising and being satisfied with the Council's Annual Governance Statement, to demonstrate how governance supports the achievement of objectives, and monitor management action in-year to further improve arrangements;
 - Monitoring the Council's internal audit function in terms of overseeing independence, objectivity, performance and professionalism, through the regular reporting of performance and finalised audit assignments;
 - Considering the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements;
 - Considering reports and recommendations of external audit in respect of the Council;
 - Supporting the ongoing development and effectiveness of Governance and Audit Committee; and
 - Ensuring compliance with legal requirements, namely the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, in respect of overseeing the Council's performance assessment and the arrangements for handling complaints.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this report summarises the work delivered by the Governance and Audit Committee during 2022/23 and Section 3 presents the outcome of the self-assessment against the CIPFA publication 'Audit Committees - Practical Guidance for Local Authorities & Police 2018 Edition' (from herein the CIPFA Guidance).

2. WORK DELIVERED IN 2022/23

2.1 The CIPFA Guidance identifies 'Core Functions' of a Governance and Audit Committee along with what it refers to as possible 'wider functions' of a Governance and Audit Committee.

2.2 The Core Functions are set out below (capital and bold text headers) and the work delivered in support of these core functions is summarised under each.

2.3 BE SATISFIED THAT THE AUTHORITY'S ASSURANCE STATEMENTS, INCLUDING THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT, PROPERLY REFLECT THE RISK ENVIRONMENT AND ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPROVE IT, AND DEMONSTRATE HOW GOVERNANCE SUPPORTS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 Legislation requires the Council to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Draft AGS for 2021/22 was reported to the [18th July 2022](#) Governance and Audit Committee meeting and the Committee endorsed the 2021/22 AGS and recommended its certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for inclusion within the Council's 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. Based on the review of effectiveness against the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out in the 2021/22 AGS, the Council's governance arrangements provided the basis to effectively manage service delivery, Corporate Plan priority areas and resources, and had appropriate regard to the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of this process, the Review of Effectiveness and proposals for improvement have been reviewed and challenged by the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Governance and Audit Committee.

2.3.2 During 2022/23 the Committee monitored the extent of progress made by the Council to implement the agreed proposals for improvement set out within the 2021/22 AGS, and this update was reported to Audit Committee on [7th December 2022](#), noting the Committee were satisfied with the progress made to date.

2.3.3 For information, the draft AGS for 2022/23 is to be presented to a Governance and Audit Committee meeting in the first half of the 2023/24 financial year.

2.4 IN RELATION TO THE AUTHORITY'S INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTIONS:

- **OVERSEE ITS INDEPENDENCE, OBJECTIVITY, PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONALISM**
- **SUPPORT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS**
- **PROMOTE THE EFFECTIVE USE OF INTERNAL AUDIT WITHIN THE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

- 2.4.1 From the 1st April 2019 the Council's Internal Audit Service transferred to a regional Internal Audit Service, hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and comprising four local authorities: Bridgend County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- 2.4.2 During 2020/21 the Covid-19 pandemic required Council Services to quickly adapt and implement changes to service delivery arrangements to ensure continued provision of essential frontline services, and this approach continued during 2021/22. Although the situation settled during 2022/23, an assessment of key risks and changes in service delivery arrangements were taken into account as part of compiling the Internal Audit Annual Strategy and Risk Based Internal Audit Plan 2022/23.
- 2.4.3 The Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2022/23 was reported to and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on [18th July 2022](#) and the Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service outlined that the proposed plan would need to continue to recognise particular risks and challenges arising from revised working arrangements, such as remote ways of working. The plan would also need to be flexible to allow for changing circumstances and events that may occur, such as requests to respond to new issues that may arise.
- 2.4.4 During the year, the Governance and Audit Committee received Internal Audit performance updates, including how the Service was continuing to adapt and undertaking audit work remotely, and details of all finalised audit assignments; this suite of information has enabled Members to consider the effectiveness of the Internal Audit process for 2022/23.
- 2.4.5 A key part of the Governance and Audit Committee's role is to support the Council's Internal Audit Service to remain independent, assess whether it has adequate resources available to it and to monitor the performance and quality of work delivered throughout the year. The Internal Audit Service fulfilled this requirement through its Internal Audit Charter¹, that was presented to and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on [18th July 2022](#), and provided the Committee with information to assess the independence of the Internal Audit Service.

2.5 MONITOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONTROL ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING VALUE FOR MONEY, SUPPORTING STANDARDS AND ETHICS AND FOR MANAGING THE AUTHORITY'S EXPOSURE TO THE RISKS OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

- 2.5.1 Summary reports of finalised audit assignments were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee during the year to assist the Committee in forming an opinion on the overall control environment in place within the Council

¹ Internal Audit Charter - a formal document that establishes the Internal Audit Service's position within the organisation, including the nature of the Head of Internal Audit's functional reporting relationship with the Board (i.e. the Council's Governance and Audit Committee).

for 2022/23. The results of Internal Audit's work for the financial year is brought together in the form of the **Head of Internal Audit Annual Report**, and for 2022/23 will be reported in the first half of the 2023/24 financial year.

2.5.2 Based on the internal audit reviews complete during 2023/23 to date, the overall opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for 2022/23 is 'Effective with a small number of areas identified for improvement'. In addition, no significant cross-cutting control issues have been identified that would impact on the Council's overall control environment and the weaknesses that have been identified are service specific. This position is based on the internal audit reviews undertaken to date and will be finalised and reported as part of the Head of Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23.

2.5.3 In line with the above,

- There have been no audit assignments completed to final report stage across the 2022/23 planned areas to date where an audit opinion of limited assurance or no assurance has been placed on the current systems of internal control, governance and risk management.
- No follow-up reviews have been requested by Governance and Audit Committee to date during 2022/23 to be built into the 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan.

2.5.4 With regard to the risks of fraud and corruption:

- At the 7th December 2022 Governance and Audit Committee meeting, the Council's Service Director – Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services provided a progress update against the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption work programme for 2022/23. This update provided assurance on the Council's arrangements to tackle potential fraud and covered the internal control environment that supports this area. The Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Annual Report for 2022/23 is to be presented to the 15th March 2023 Governance and Audit Committee for consideration / approval.
- The Whistleblowing Annual Report for 2022/23 will be reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 15th March 2023. The overall conclusion as set out in the Report (and subject to approval by Governance and Audit Committee), is that '*the Council's whistleblowing arrangements are appropriate*'.

2.5.5 As part of supporting Governance and Audit Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the Council's control environment, Members received introductory training sessions in July 2022 that provided an overview of the Committee's Terms of Reference. Further to this, at the [7th September 2022](#) Governance and Audit Committee meeting, Members agreed arrangements to support the Committee's on-going learning and development; this included a training needs analysis, that was completed by Committee Members in

November 2022 and the results reported to the Committee on [7th December 2022](#) (noting that the results were then used to inform a Learning and Development Plan that was reported to and agreed by the Committee at its [14th February 2023](#) meeting). Looking ahead to 2023/24, learning and development items will be reported to the Governance and Committee on at least a quarterly basis and the programme will be coordinated by Council Officers.

2.6 CONSIDER THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUTHORITY'S RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND THE CONTROL ENVIRONMENT, REVIEWING THE RISK PROFILE OF THE ORGANISATION AND ASSURANCES THAT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN ON RISK-RELATED ISSUES, INCLUDING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

2.6.1 The work-plan for 2022/23 built on the work undertaken in the previous year and continued to widen the coverage of governance and risk management through:

- An overview of the Council's 2022/23 Strategic Risk Register was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 14th February 2023 and Members will continue to be provided with updates on this area where material changes occur. In addition, as part of these on-going arrangements, where the Committee determine that more detail updates are required on a specific strategic risk(s), these will be incorporated into the workplan as part of supporting the Committee's role in understanding, reviewing and challenging the Council's risk profile.
- AGS – the continuation of in-year and year-end progress updates to the Governance and Audit Committee on the implementation of proposals for improvement.
- In line with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, on [7th December 2022](#) the Committee reviewed the Council's draft Self-Assessment for 2021/22 (incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report) in advance of consideration at a meeting of the full Council in January 2023 (noting that the self-assessment included information in respect of partnership / collaboration arrangements). The Governance and Audit Committee resolved, amongst other things, that: it was satisfied with the Chief Executive's responses to questions in respect of organisational capacity to deliver the bigger challenges within the nine themes emerging from the Self-Assessment and also the value of collaboration with partners to seek and deliver improvements in these areas of work; and to make no recommendations for change (in respect of the draft Self-assessment) prior to consideration by full Council.

2.7 REVIEW THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S OPINION AND REPORTS TO MEMBERS, AND MONITOR MANAGEMENT ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY EXTERNAL AUDIT

- 2.7.1 At the [7th September 2022](#) Governance and Audit Committee, the Service Director – Finance Services presented the certified draft 2021/22 Statements of Account for the Council and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund² (this update being accompanied by an overview of Accounting Policies presentation). Also, at the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee on 7th September 2022, Audit Wales provided a verbal update on the progress on the audit of the draft Statements of Account for 2021/22 and informed the Committee, amongst other things, that no significant matters have been identified through the external audit process of the accounts, to date, to bring to the attention of the Committee.
- 2.7.2 The Pension Fund audited Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were subsequently reported to and approved by full Council on the [23rd November 2022](#) and the Council's 2021/22 audited Statement of Accounts reported to and approved by full Council on [18th January 2023](#). Both sets of Statement of Accounts were issued unqualified opinions by Audit Wales (i.e. clean bills of health).
- 2.7.3 Following on, a mid-year update was reported to the Committee on [7th December 2022](#) setting out a Council position statement of progress to implement recommendations / proposals for improvement reported by Audit Wales. Following review of the position statement, the Committee determined that there were no matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention by the Governance and Committee or any matters of a performance nature that require review by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.7.4 Lastly and in line with the Committee's new responsibility, as agreed at the Council's 2022 Annual General Meeting, to review and scrutinise the Council's Treasury Management arrangements, Members of the Committee attended a separate bespoke Treasury Management training session on the 7th September 2022, delivered by the Council's approved Treasury Management Advisors. Following the training session, the Governance and Audit Committee met later the same day and scrutinised the Council's Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22, following its reporting to full Council 6th July 2022. At the [14th February 2023](#) Governance and Audit Committee meeting, Members scrutinised the 2022/23 Mid-Year Treasury Management Stewardship Report, further to its reporting to full Council on 23rd November 2022.

² 7th September 2022 Governance and Audit Committee – the Committee also considered the certified draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee and the certified draft 2021/22 Annual Return for the Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee

2.8 CONSIDER THE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION AGENCIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT OR CONTROL

2.8.1 At the first Governance and Audit Committee meeting of the 2022/23 Municipal Year on [18th July 2022](#), Audit Wales reported the 2022 Audit Plans for the Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund, and thereafter provided quarterly Audit Wales Work Programme Updates during the year to enable the Committee to be kept up-to-date with the work of Audit Wales and providing opportunity to seek clarity / further information where deemed required.

2.8.2 In addition, Audit Wales presented finalised reports to the Governance and Audit Committee during the year (accompanied by Council progress updates on the implementation of recommendations / proposals for improvement contained within the reports):

- [7th September 2022](#) – reports in respect of ‘Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management’ and ‘Springing forward – Workforce’; and
- [7th December 2022](#) - the Audit Wales ‘Assurance and Risk Assessment Summary Report’ and ‘Transformational Leadership Programme Board – Baseline Review – Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board’.

2.8.3 The Audit Wales ‘Annual Audit Summary 2022’ will be reported to the 15th March 2023 Governance and Audit Committee.

3. SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CIPFA PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES & POLICE 2018 EDITION

3.1 The self-assessment checklist included within the CIPFA Guidance has been completed and has been based on the Governance and Audit Committee arrangements in place during 2022/23 and from a review of the information reported to the Governance and Audit Committee over this period. The self-assessment is set out at **Appendix 1B** and also includes the results of previous years self-assessments for information purposes.

3.2 The 2022/23 self-assessment process demonstrates that the Council’s Governance and Audit Committee has progressed the proposals for improvement reported in 2021/22 and has identified three areas for improvement to further strengthen the existing arrangements in place.

3.3 An update on the progress made to implement proposals for improvement reported in 2021/22 and also new proposals for improvement are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – 2021/22 Self-Assessment Progress Update and 2022/23 Self-Assessment Proposals for Improvement

| Good Practice Questions | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------|----|--|-------------------------|--------|----|---|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Response & Proposal for Improvement | Yes | Partly | No | Progress made since 2021/22 and 2022/23 Proposal for Improvement |
| 7 | <p>Functions of the committee Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement? i.e. Good governance; assurance framework including partnerships and collaborative arrangements; internal audit; external audit; financial reporting; risk management; value for money or best value; counter fraud and corruption; and supporting the ethical framework.</p> | | | | No finding / proposal for improvement included within the 2021/22 self-assessment. | ✓ | | | <p>The Governance and Audit Committee's 2022/23 annual Work Programme supported the delivery of its core responsibilities, as set out within the Committee's Terms of Reference.</p> <p>During 2022/23, information was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in respect of partnerships and collaborative arrangements as part of the Council's 2021/22 Self-Assessment and also a specific partnership related report was issued by Audit Wales (i.e. Transformational Leadership Programme Board – Baseline Governance Review – Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board).</p> <p>It is considered the arrangements can be built upon by the Council to set out the overall partnership landscape it operates within and the strategic approach to enable the Committee to determine whether it requires further information and / or assurance in this area.</p> |

| Good Practice Questions | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------|----|---|-------------------------|--------|----|---|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Response & Proposal for Improvement | Yes | Partly | No | Progress made since 2021/22 and 2022/23 Proposal for Improvement |
| 12b. | <p><u>MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT</u></p> <p>Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership | ✓ | | | <p><u>Proposals for Improvement (2021/22)</u></p> <p>Using lessons learned from 2021/22, undertake a training needs analysis of Committee Members to inform a refreshed learning and development plan for 2022/23.</p> <p>Development a library of on-line learning and development information for Committee Members as part of learning and development support arrangements.</p> | ✓ | | ✓ | <p>A training needs analysis has been undertaken during the year and has inform the compilation of a refreshed learning and development plan that will commence delivery from March 2023 (and be kept under on-going review).</p> <p>The learning and development work undertaken following the Local Government elections in May 2022 has focussed on completing the training needs analysis and compiling a new learning and development plan. As learning and development sessions are delivered during 2023, these will be made available via an on-line library.</p> |

| Good Practice Questions | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------|----|---|-------------------------|--------|----|---|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Response & Proposal for Improvement | Yes | Partly | No | Progress made since 2021/22 and 2022/23 Proposal for Improvement |
| 23 | <p><u>EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p><u>Good practice question</u> Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?</p> | | ✓ | | <p>The 2021/22 work programme supported the Committee in delivering its terms of reference and included updates in relation to: learning and development; assurance; governance and risk; performance updates from internal and external audit; and preparatory work in readiness for the Committee's new responsibilities under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.</p> <p>This position will built on in 2022/23 through the compilation of a balanced programme of work and seeking feedback from the Committee on the effectiveness of its work.</p> | | ✓ | | <p>Section 2 of the Annual Report sets out the range of information reported to the Governance and Audit Committee during 2022/23 as part of supporting the Committee to deliver its Terms of Reference,</p> <p>Building on the sound arrangements in place, there is a need to continue to capture feedback from the Committee on areas for improvement and engage with other local authorities / bodies to identify good practice / approaches to evaluate the impact of the Governance and Audit Committee's work.</p> |

3.4 Subject to a version of the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 being agreed, the proposals for improvement (as per Table 1) will form the basis of an action plan that will be led and managed by the Governance and Audit Committee during 2023/24 and kept under on-going review.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 During 2022/23 the Council's Governance and Audit Committee has reviewed and challenged a range of topic areas, including the work of Internal and External Audit, the Committee's responsibilities as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and its new responsibility as agreed at the Council's 2022 Annual General Meeting in respect of reviewing and scrutinising the Council's Treasury Management arrangements.
- 4.2 From a review of the coverage of Governance and Audit Committee's work and oversight during the year, as set out in Section 2, it is considered that the Committee has delivered its workplan and responsibilities in line with its Terms of Reference, and has been supported via a range of specific learning and development sessions.
- 4.3 The Annual Report also sets out, in Section 3 / Appendix 1B, the results of the self-assessment undertaken against the checklist included within the CIPFA Guidance. The outcome of the 2022/23 self-assessment process, consistent with previous years, demonstrates that the Council has sound arrangements in place in respect of its Governance and Audit Committee, noting that a small number of new proposals for improvement have been identified to further strengthen existing arrangements.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE IN LINE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2011 AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021

Chapter 2, section 81 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (revised)

Local authorities to appoint governance and audit committees

A local authority must appoint a committee (a “Governance and Audit Committee”) to—

- a) review and scrutinise the authority's financial affairs,
- b) make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs,
- c) review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the authority,
- d) make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements,
- (da) review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively,
- (db) make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively
- e) oversee the authority's internal and external audit arrangements, and
- f) review the financial statements prepared by the authority.

A local authority may confer on its Governance and Audit Committee such other functions as the authority considers suitable to be exercised by such a committee.

It is for a Governance and Audit Committee to determine how to exercise its functions.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Council Performance Arrangements

- (i) To consider the Council's draft Annual Performance Self-Assessment report and if deemed necessary may make recommendations for changes to the Council.
- (ii) To receive the Council's finalised Annual Self-Assessment report in respect of a financial year as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of that financial year.
- (iii) At least once during the period between two consecutive ordinary elections of councillors to the Council, consider the independent Panel Performance Assessment report into which the Council is meeting its performance requirements.
- (iv) To receive and review the Council's draft response to the report of the independent Panel Performance Assessment and if deemed necessary may make recommendations for changes to the statements made in the draft response to the Council.

Complaints Handling

- (i) To review and assess the Council's ability to deal with complaints effectively.
- (ii) To make reports and recommendations in relation to the Council's ability to deal with complaints effectively.

Self-assessment of good practice

| Good practice questions | | 2019/20 Self-Assessment | | | 2020/21 Self-Assessment | | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No |
| Audit committee purpose and governance | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 2 | Does the audit committee report directly to Full Council? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 3 | Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 4 | Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 6 | Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Functions of the committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance • assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements • internal audit • external audit • financial reporting • risk management • value for money or best value • counter fraud and corruption • supporting the ethical framework | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 8 | Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

| Good practice questions | | 2019/20 Self-Assessment | | | 2020/21 Self-Assessment | | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No |
| 9 | Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 10 | Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this? | N/A | | | N/A | | | N/A | | | | | |
| 11 | Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Membership and support | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. | separation from the executive | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| b. | an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| c. | a size of committee that is not unwieldy | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| d. | consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement) | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 13 | Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the Full Council? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | N/A | | | ✓ | | |
| 14 | Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 15 | Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 16 | Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory? | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

| Good practice questions | | 2019/20 Self-Assessment | | | 2020/21 Self-Assessment | | | 2021/22 Self-Assessment | | | 2022/23 Self-Assessment | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|--------|----|
| | | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No | Yes | Partly | No |
| 17 | Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the Chief Finance Officer? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 18 | Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Effectiveness of the committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work? | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 20 | Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 21 | Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers? | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 22 | Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 23 | Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation? | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 24 | Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 25 | Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work? | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Annual Report 2022-23



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



Councillor J. Edwards

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Annual Report 2022-23

Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the first Overview & Scrutiny Annual report since being appointed as Chair to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2022-27 and following the first year of the revised Scrutiny arrangements. The implementation of the newly created Scrutiny Committee framework supports the new requirements in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act for 2021. These changes provide a more simplified reporting structure which better aligns with the Council Corporate Plan and the operation of services and has further enhanced the ability for better support returning and newly elected Member to undertake their scrutiny role and effectively challenge and scrutinise service delivery.

This report reflects on the diligent efforts and hard work of all our Scrutiny Committees who have been dedicated to ensuring that we operate an effective function and provide a constructive critical friend challenge to drive improvement in the delivery of our services. The report highlights the challenges the Authority has faced, the solutions implemented and the outcomes achieved for our residents. The report also demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement and provides valuable insights into our work. This year we have placed a greater priority on undertaking pre-decision Scrutiny to support the Executive in making well informed and considered decisions and are effective in achieving the intended outcomes for the public.

Some of the highlights from this year's report where Scrutiny have played an integral role and influenced the decision process include a Review of Residential Care in RCT, Scrutiny of the Council's Budget setting process and continuous monitoring the impact of the 21st Century Schools Modernisation programme. These are significant topics that impact on our residents. More information on these topics can be read in greater detail within the report.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay thanks to all Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs, Scrutiny Members and Co-opted Members for their dedication and support in ensuring our Committees have continued to make a positive impact, I would also like to thank our stakeholders & officers for their support, hard work and commitment throughout the year.

Councillor J. Edwards
Chair, Overview & Scrutiny 2022-27 Committee
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Contents

- **Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee (2022-23)**
- **Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)**
- **Community Services Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)**
- **Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)**



Councillor J. Edwards

Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee (2022-23)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates the work of the four Scrutiny Committees and is responsible for approving the Work Programmes developed by the three thematic scrutiny committees to ensure a deliverable, co-ordinated and outcome focussed schedule of work programmes. Where there are matters that fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will determine which Committee has responsibility for its review. This Committee is also responsible for dealing with all 'Call-ins'. More information on the responsibilities of the Committee can be found [here](#).

Pre Scrutiny - Residential Care for Older People

On the **29 November 2022** and **27 February 2023** we had the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the proposals on the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation with care for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Modernisation and investment proposals as a result of a need to modernise and continually improve adult social care services in Rhondda Cynon Taf with the focus shifting to supporting independence so that people are supported to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. More information on the decision taken forward can be found [here](#).

Members welcomed the report and agreed that doing nothing was not a viable option and that there would be a need to make difficult decisions for the benefit of achieving good quality, fit for purpose, modern accommodation for residents. They acknowledged that the demand for residential care has reduced, with more residents wishing to remain independent and to be cared for within their own homes which was at the forefront of our questioning of the proposals;

Recommendations/outcomes

- Members **recommended** appropriate engagement with staff around redeployment and voluntary retirement options be undertaken, where necessary.
- Members emphasised the importance of consulting on the proposals with residents, and families at every stage of the process to ensure that residents are able to stay close to their families. This would also support the Authority in analysing the demand to ensure the facilities are future-proofed and fit the needs of our residents.
- Members raised concerns around the decommissioning of existing care homes before the development of new accommodation such as the relocation of Ferndale House and the Ystrad Fechan care home. As the latter is located on a flood zone, further concern was raised that this resource could be removed permanently if an alternative location is not found – as a result Members **recommended** to receive a further information on this care home, over and above that contained within the report was requested by Committee.
- Members felt that, whilst the Extra Care facilities are excellent, they **recommended** that they are designed to accommodate residents should they develop more complex needs and also meet modern day standards; this would prevent residents having to move facilities and they could remain in their home where their surroundings are familiar and comfortable.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Budget 2023-2024

As well as monitoring the Council's Financial performance throughout the year, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also undertake the crucial role of scrutinising the setting of the **Council's Annual Budget** to ensure that the proposals put forward reflect the priorities of the Council and demonstrate an effective and efficient use of our resources.

As we are all feeling the effects of the current UK Cost of Living Crisis, we were pleased to hear that proposed increases to Council Tax would be minimal and the proposal of 3.5% put forward, was far below the rate of inflation and one of the lowest proposed increases in Wales. Whilst we were reassured to hear that the Budget Strategy allocated funding in full to cover school costs, members **challenged** the use of schools reserves and **recommended** that the Authority supports schools in having a plan in place for utilisation of the reserves to support future efficiencies.

In considering efficiency saving proposals in the Budget, members of the Committee agreed with the Council's approach to maximise efficiency savings and on-going approaches to find new ways of working but recommended that Scrutiny closely monitors the impact of the efficiencies to ensure these do not result in a reduction in the service delivery, particularly frontline services that have a direct impact on our residents.

We were pleased to see that proposals in relation to the fees and charges were realistic and support the Council in achieving a balanced budget. We were satisfied that the charges continue to remain competitive and provide value for money for our residents when compared to neighbouring authorities. We did recommend that the Authority explore the option of charging non RCT residents a higher fee for use of the lido which would result in a higher income for the Authority but also contribute to the reduction of block booking and no shows which the Council has experienced. You can read in further detail our feedback to the Cabinet **here**.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Consultations - Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales – Boundary Commission for Wales' Initial Proposals

Members acted as consultees and provided formal feedback on the final revised proposals of the Boundary Commission for Wales at their meeting on the **7 November 2022**.

The Local Boundary Commission for Wales are responsible for reviewing parliamentary constituency boundaries in Wales and are currently required to submit a formal report by 1 July 2023 on the basis of rules set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020). The review will involve a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in Wales from the current 40 to 32. Further information on the final proposals and how these affect Rhondda Cynon Taf that were considered by the Committee can be found **here**. We look forward to receiving the final decision from the Boundary Commission when published in July.

Outcomes / Recommendations

- Members expressed concerns with the proposal for the **Taffs Well** ward to sit within the Cardiff North constituency as it was felt that **Taffs Well** had no direct connections with the other communities that would fall within the proposed constituency. Members also felt this would cause confusion within the community as they would sit within different Boundaries at a Local Authority and Parliamentary level. Members therefore **recommended** that if **Taffs Well** should move out of the **Pontypridd** constituency, it would be better placed within the **Cardiff West constituency** as the Community has more in common with neighbouring wards such as **Gwaelod-Y-Garth** and **Pentyrch**.
- Similar concerns were raised in relation to **Mountain Ash**, in that this area does not have any strong connections with **Pontypridd** and this aligns better and is more commonly known in the **Cynon Valley**, therefore members recommended that this would fall better if sat with **Merthyr and Upper Cynon Constituency**.
- Members raised concerns that the wards serving **Pencoed** are included in the proposed **Rhondda** constituency and stated that this proposal was contrary to the statement that the commission will seek to recommend constituencies that are made up of whole electoral wards that are next to each other and do not contain detached parts. Members therefore recommended that this proposal is not taken forward

Some other highlights of the Committee included:

Coal Tip Safety (Wales) White Paper

Service Review Community Meals Service

Revised Waste Management Strategy

Electoral Administration and Reform White Paper

**Council Progress Update - Audit Wales Equality Impact Assessments:
more than a tick box exercise?**

Annual Equalities Report

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy – 5 Year Action Plan

Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy

Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)

Consultations

Open Consultations run by the Welsh Government are distributed to Members via the Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer on a monthly basis and are updated every fortnight. The end date of each consultation is noted accordingly for Members' convenience.

On the **29th September 2022**, Members of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee were invited to be consultees of the **Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance 2022 (WelTag)** Consultation and the **National Transport Delivery Plan 2022-2027** Consultation.

Both consultations were run by Welsh Government and representatives from the Welsh Government were invited by the Scrutiny Committee to attend and provide Members with an overview of the background information to each consultation. Members welcomed Ms Clark and Mr Holder, Welsh Government representatives, to the Committee. Members were presented with the questions set out in the consultation and were advised that their responses would be collated and fed back to Welsh Government within the consultation deadlines.

Outcome:

- Members felt that well-being of the community is key and that travel has to be convenient and quick for people to use it;
- Members agreed that the cost of public transport will prohibit the Council achieving Net Zero and advised that if we are to make it more sustainable then the cost of transport has to be addressed;
- Members felt that if the Welsh Government are still working on what 'fairer fares' mean then this negates the purpose of the consultation;
- In respect of the WelTag Consultation, Members felt that there needs to be accountability and scrutiny as the programmes continue. Members agreed that it should be performed by in house teams, however, it was noted that this is reliant on resources. As Democratically Elected Councillors, Members agreed that they are best placed for this, given that they all have links in their own communities and their own areas;
- In respect of the NTDP 2022-27, Members agreed on the importance of raising the accessibility of the Welsh language. The more that people travel by public transport the more they hear and see the language. The more that is used bilingually the better it will be to enhance the use of the Welsh language; and,
- Members felt that they could not answer all the questions in the NTDP Consultation as not enough information had been provided by Welsh Government. Scrutiny therefore requested a further breakdown of the Plan from the Director of Frontline Services.

Subsequently, Scrutiny's comments were collated and sent back to Welsh Government to include Scrutiny as consultees.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Pre-Scrutiny of The RCT Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy

At their meeting on the **15th November 2022**, the Committee received a report which provided an opportunity for Members to pre-scrutinise the **Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy**. At the meeting Members welcomed the Council's Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy and praised the Council's hard work in this area.

The focus of this strategy was to actively protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's Trees and Woodland – the green infrastructure of parks, gardens, woods, trees in streets, footpaths, green spaces, trees and hedges that significantly benefit our environment. The strategy also sets the framework for the Council's commitment to the largest tree planting programme in a generation, adopting the “right tree, right place, right reason” approach.

Outcomes:

- Members considered that the following areas within the report required improvement:
- Consideration on the spacing and planting of fruit trees in clusters to enhance growth, fruit yields and appearance of the trees within the environment and location;
- Whether the report should consider referencing legislation regarding dangerous trees as opposed to the policy referred to in the document. Members felt that the statutory legislation would supersede any local policy and should therefore be included;
- References within the report noting British Standard BS5837 should be checked to confirm that they refer to the updated BS5837 (2012) standard and not previous versions with the name 'BS5837' identifier; and,
- Consideration should also be given to guidance set out by other advisory bodies and relevant associations, such as the NHBC or Royal Botanical Gardens publication and reference materials.

In conclusion, Members commended the report and commented that the Council's ongoing work in this area would lay a solid foundation for supporting further work on the Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Electrical Vehicle Charging 'Implementation Plan' and associated 'Action Plan'

On the **29th September 2022**, Members were provided with **The Electric Vehicle Charging Implementation Plan and associated 'Action Plan'** and were asked to provide comments on the Plan to be fed back to the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee. The purpose of the Strategy is to inform and set out the Council's aspirations and the Implementation Plan is intended to provide further guidance and advice on the requirements for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the County Borough.

Outcomes:

Members supported the Strategy and praised the Council's continue investment in its Climate Change Strategy. Members also considered that the following areas within the report required.

Additional focus and attention:

- The infrastructure and technology must be improved before rolling out the Strategy Council wide;
- Members recommended a hybrid approach;
- Members recommended that the Council improves its communication with residents of RCT before the strategy is actioned;
- The type of charging point is essential if residents of RCT are to take this up i.e. super-fast charging points are needed to get residents on board with the Strategy; and,
- Members agreed to review the practicalities of the implementation plan at a later date and asked Officers to return with a more detailed analysis.

Other Work Included:

- Pre scrutiny of the Community Infrastructure Levy annual monitoring plan
- Consultation: Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (Weltag) 2022
- Green Waste Collections
- Current Biodiversity Works in RCT
- Report on The Council's Recycling Performance 2021/22
- Review of Mainstream School Transport
- Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Update
- Porth Town Centre Strategy
- Welsh Government 20mph Speed Limit 2023
- Highways Investment Scheme
- Update on The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund and The Investment Plans for South East Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf
- The Development of A Draft Regeneration Strategy For Aberdare Town Centre.
- Public Rights of Way

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Bryn Pica Site Visit

Members were provided with the opportunity to visit Bryn Pica on the 25th October 2022 and the 13th January 2023. The tour was comprised of two parts: a visit to the Education Centre to allow Members to learn about the recycling process; this was followed by an on-site visit to the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) to see these processes in action. Members valued this opportunity to learn more about the recycling process and Members felt that these visits should be extended to more schools across the County Borough.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)

Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy

On the **28th November 2022**, the Committee undertook pre-scrutiny of the Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy report, which provided information about children's services plans for developing residential care services in line with the Council's duties, and in the context of the Welsh Government Policy ambition, to remove profit from the provision of care for looked after young people. It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness, and the undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Committee in this area, would strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

Outcome:

- Members acknowledged the considerable uncertainty around providers continuing with a not-for-profit model of delivery by 2027 and wanted reassurance that, if some for-profit organisations, exited the sector, specific provisions were still in place for children and young people to be taken care of.
- Members recognised the legislative intention in the drive to take profit out of the equation but raised concerns that this would have unintended consequences and cut across the drive, to reduce the number of residencies out of county.
- Members felt that it was important for Young People not to be living in bed and breakfast accommodation, whilst acknowledging there were no RCT under 18-year-olds in such accommodation.
- Whilst recognising the shortfalls in the market provision and there were certain exceptions, Members felt it was important for Young People to be reasonably placed, rather than out of county.
- Members felt it was important to consider the appropriate provision, in the right place, acknowledging the need to increase capacity, closer to home, with a sense of urgency.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Support to refugees, Ukraine nationals and asylum seekers in RCT

At their meeting on the **30th January 2023**, the Committee received a report which provided an opportunity for members to scrutinise the support being provided by the Council to refugees, Ukraine nationals and asylum seekers in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). The report outlined the considerable work undertaken by the Council and partner organisations, to respond positively and as effectively as possible across all the resettlement schemes. Members also heard from an afghan refugee who shared his experience as a refugee, coming to Wales.

Outcomes

- Members wholeheartedly supported the work that was being carried out by the resettlement teams, noting the 800 asylum seekers expected to come into the area and were keen to ensure this was done in a comfortable and respectable way.
- Members recognised in respect of the Welcome Centre, there were some very sensitive issues being managed and it was very difficult to get the balance right, in terms of information, but it was important to consider how difficult this made it for local Members.
- Members noted that asylum seekers were probably going to be the most vulnerable of all and had very little access to resources and were keen to ensure the community cohesion strategy was as strong as it could be.
- Members were keen to ensure that if the Welcome centre, closed at the end of March, families would still continue to be supported.
- Members were concerned about the trauma affecting those that were arriving in the UK, and felt it was also important for Officers to have the appropriate support, to respond to trauma in their work, as a lot of what they would hear, would be harrowing.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Learning disability services transformation programme (day services)

At the meeting on **20th March 2023** Members received an in-depth report and presentation regarding the engagement and co-production activity undertaken in the development of a new draft Day Services operating model and Strategy for people with a learning disability in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Members were taken through details of the comprehensive engagement process undertaken to date as part of the Learning Disability Service 'My Day My Way' project and shown a video providing the results of the engagement and key themes that have emerged that will shape the strategy when it is developed.

Outcomes

- Members noted the excellent work undertaken as part of the engagement process and were pleased to see the recognition it has received from the Social Care Institute for Excellence as an excellent example of co-production. Members recommended that the engagement process continues throughout the development of the Strategy.
- Members were welcoming of the need for change and noted the impactful responses received from individuals with a learning disability, parents & carers and staff regarding the way forward for the service and the offers provided to support individuals.
- Members noted the theme of employment and volunteering as a result of the engagement process and raised the potential opportunities that could be afforded to individuals through the growing number of Community Hubs across the borough.
- Members recommended that they undertake pre-scrutiny of the draft strategy and associated actions plans before its consideration at Cabinet.

Other work included:

- **Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22 - 5 October 2022**
- **Representations, Compliments and Complaints Procedures Annual Report - 5 October 2022**
- **Local Authority arrangements to safeguard children and adults at risk – 24 October 2022**
- **Aspects of Trading Standards which protect the vulnerable – 24 October 2022**
- **Audit Wales – Direct payments for adult social care – 24 October 2022**
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2021-24 – 28 November 2022**
- **Hospital Discharge Pressures - 28 November 2022**
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Allocation Scheme 2018 – 30 January 2023**

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee (2022-23)

Update on the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs & Education Tribunal Act 2018 in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

At their first meeting of the municipal year, on the **27th October 2022**, the Committee received a report on the implementation of the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) legislation, in place, which was the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) and the new statutory ALN Code 2021. The report also looked at the potential risks and additional resources needed to ensure the local authority could meet the new statutory duties fully at the end of the three-year national ALN implementation timetable. Members were advised that the report had been presented to Cabinet on the 26th September 2022, and Cabinet had provided approval for the Access and Inclusion Service to progress with phase three proposals during years, two and three of the ALN implementation timetable.

Outcomes

- Members raised concern, whilst acknowledging the new constraints on budgets with individual schools, that staff taking on ALN responsibilities, would need time outside of the classroom to provide these functions effectively e.g., meet with parents, external bodies, etc, and it would be useful to revisit this when budget constraints became clearer within schools.
- Members highlighted the increase in the numbers of children aged 0 to 3 identified as having ALN, whilst acknowledging the implications of Covid-19.
- Members felt it would be useful to have anonymised case studies to come back to the committee, in the future.
- Members agreed that a further update to the Committee should be forthcoming include the priorities outlined, tying in with the status quo, case studies and best practice examples, monitoring and evaluation of early years growth, and the parental engagement plan.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Universal Primary Free School Meals

At their meeting on the **2nd February 2023**, the Committee received a report which provided Members with an update on the roll-out of Universal Primary Free School Meals in Rhondda Cynon Taf whilst considering how Welsh Government funding has been utilised to support this initiative. Members were informed that the Universal Free School Meal policy was part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, which would see free school meals extended to all primary school pupils over a three-year period. This ambition was informed by Welsh Government's understanding that younger children are more likely to be living in relative income poverty. The commitment represented a transformational intervention and an important further step to tackling child poverty and ensuring that children had at least one meal every school day, which was crucial in the current context of the increasing cost of living.

Outcomes

- Members were keen to ensure that special dietary requirements were catered for, including those such as asylum seekers or who had specific religious beliefs, and were included as part of the implementation.
- Recognising the increased costs, Members sought assurance that in relation to the additional catering staff costs, central catering, and data staff costs, would be fully funded by the Welsh Government grant.
- Members were keen to ensure the procurement of local produce, in the future, in the interest of sustainability, noting that the Service worked with procurement colleagues, and this was really high on the agenda with the Council carbon management programme.
- Members felt it would a great idea, to work with Coleg Y Cymoedd, to get that sustainability and chain of young people coming into the industry.
- Members agreed that having scrutinised the contents of the report, they wished to add this to the FWP, as an annual report.

Other work included:

- **Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability – 27th October 2022**
- **The Implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in RCT Schools – Readiness and Support for Schools – 27th October 2022**
- **An overview on the expectations of Curriculum for Wales (CfW) implementation on school transition, particularly when learners transition to secondary schools that have deferred CfW implementation until 2023 – 13th December 2022**
- **Community Focussed Schools – 13th December 2022**
- **Elective Home Education Update – 13th December 2022**
- **The work of the Central South Consortium in the region and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority 2021- 2022 – 2nd February 2023**
- **School Modernisation – Update on Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme – 2nd February 2023**

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Principal Aims

Scrutiny in RCT aims to secure better outcomes for citizens and communities and add to the effectiveness of the Council by supporting to improve Local Authority Policies, Legislation and public services. Scrutiny Committees add value by providing a constructive critical friend role and making clear recommendations to Cabinet and Officers on the development and improvement of Councils priorities.

Work Programme Planning

Scrutiny Work Programmes are formulated at the start of the municipal year, there is a well-established practice of work programme planning in place to underpin the work of the scrutiny committees. There are a number of ways that people who live and work in RCT can get involved in the scrutiny process. Our **work programmes** are available on the Scrutiny web pages of the Council's website and are regularly updated to reflect the changing priorities of the Council. Residents are able to bring views on any topic under consideration by Scrutiny to a Committee's attention.

Development, Training and Support for Members

Following the Local Government Elections in May 2022, all Scrutiny members were invited to attend three dedicated Scrutiny Training sessions, delivered by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). The training aimed to introduce new and returning Members to key topics such as questioning skills, chairing skills and provide Members with a comprehensive understanding of the Scrutiny process within RCT and the best practices required for undertaking effective scrutiny.

Participating in these sessions provided Members with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in the scrutiny committee (and pre meetings), to ask relevant questions and contribute to the development of effective scrutiny recommendations. The introduction of pre meetings has focussed Members' attention on the required outcomes and reduced duplication of questions within the committee meeting resulting in a more effective meeting.

To support Members within the committee setting, they receive:

- Regular updates on Welsh Government open consultations and those from Rhondda Cynon Taf Council relevant to their particular scrutiny committees;
- The Council's Scrutiny research provision which has a number of benefits such as improving scrutiny committee work programmes or supporting scrutiny working groups;
- Dedicated officer resource;
- Timely access to high quality information

In the next Municipal year all scrutiny members will have the opportunity to undertake bespoke, tailored refresher scrutiny training relevant to their specific scrutiny committee. This will act as a mid-year update on the forthcoming individual work programmes and engage Members on the principles of effective scrutiny.

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Public Participation and Engagement

In line with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act to strengthen local democracy and encourage public participation, Scrutiny Members are keen to engage our residents and stakeholders to help to inform scrutiny and improve outcomes. By involving residents and stakeholders in the scrutiny process, there is greater accountability for the decisions made by the Council. Residents and stakeholders are able to provide input and feedback on the decisions made, ensuring that the Council are acting in the best interests of the community.

Increased participation in the scrutiny process can encourage greater participation in the decisions undertaken by the Council. This can help to build stronger, more resilient communities that are better able to address the challenges they face.

The use of a hybrid approach to Scrutiny Committee meetings ensures greater flexibility for public participation in the process of decision making. The ability for residents and stakeholders to participate virtually in meetings removes previous barriers some residents may have experienced based on geographical location and time restrictions. Additionally, the Council regularly live streams or records its meetings allowing residents and stakeholders the opportunity to witness full discussion of items and providing an insight into the Scrutiny process. The combination of hybrid meetings and webcasting is a positive demonstration of accountability and transparency encouraging engagement and debate. Following the meeting the webcast is uploaded to the relevant Scrutiny Committee meeting page.

How do we involve our stakeholders and citizens?

- Members of the Public are able to participate in Scrutiny Committees by registering their interest online and by emailing the Scrutiny Team. Guidance on participating can be found on our website by clicking [here](#).
- Inviting stakeholders and external representatives to contribute to broaden our understanding and inform our discussions. Some of the representatives that have attended this year include:
 - Welsh Government
 - Central South Consortium
 - Headteachers of RCT Schools
 - Refugee living in Wales
- Having co-optees on our Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, representing parent governors, and the Church in Wales.
- Engaging the public whilst ensuring openness and transparency, by webcasting all our Scrutiny committee meetings – details can be found [here](#)

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Research

A scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Such research strengthens Scrutiny Committee work programmes to ensure outcome-based topics are identified.

The Scrutiny research facility is available to all Members of the Council. The aim of this facility is to assist Members with:

- Research on any case work/queries from constituents;
- Research on any reports being presented to Scrutiny;
- Research on any questions that you intend to raise during a Scrutiny Committee;
- Research on an item you feel should be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme; and,
- Any general research item that is important to you and your constituents

Examples of research requests that have been undertaken this Municipal Year include:

- A research request on the Council's hybrid policy;
- Research requests on questions asked by constituents; and,
- Research requests on the attendance figures of co-opted members at Scrutiny Committee meetings

All research requests are welcome and we encourage all Members to make use of this facility. Please email your request to scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Focus For 2023/24

- Strengthen the links between Cabinet and Scrutiny by providing a greater focus on Pre-Scrutiny arrangements, allowing Scrutiny members to influence key decisions before they are taken by the Executive
- Develop the use of Scrutiny Pre-meetings to focus on the Key lines of enquiry at Committee meetings
- Increase engagement with communities through publication of Scrutiny Chair's blogs
- Provide bespoke in-house Scrutiny refresher training for all members of the Council covering core scrutiny skills, work programming and financial and budget scrutiny

The work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2022-2023 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Team

For further details on the contents of this report please email: scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk

Julia Nicholls – Principal Scrutiny Officer - 07385 086814

Sarah Daniel - Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Officer - 07385 086169

Tracy Watson – Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer - 07747 485567

Jess Daniel - Democratic and Scrutiny Officer – 07385 401877

Sarah Handy - Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer - 07385 401942