

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 st JULY 2019	Agenda Item 4
	Update Review – Overview and Scrutiny ‘Fit for the Future’

REPORT OF:-

THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress in response to the review the Council Scrutiny arrangements as reported to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting and to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 1st May 2019.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny:-

- 2.1 Consider the progress to date in delivering upon the actions agreed in response to the review undertaken by the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications as reported to this Committee in May 2019;
- 2.2 Review and agree the draft Terms of Reference of each of the Scrutiny Committees (attached at Appendix 1)
- 2.3 Consider and endorse the Work Programmes of the four themed Scrutiny Committees to the individual Scrutiny Committees for their final agreement (attached at Appendix 2); and
- 2.4 Review and agree the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2019/20 (up until December 2019 in the first instance) ((attached as Appendix 3)),

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will recall that at the previous meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, held on the 1st May 2019, a report was presented by the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications which provided a response to the request from committee members to review the Council Scrutiny arrangements and to update Members on the progress to have arisen from the WAO report in respect of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements 'Fit for the Future'.
- 3.2 Members acknowledged that, although a number of positive changes have taken place since the revised scrutiny arrangements in 2015, they agreed that improvements to some current practices were needed and they welcomed the suggestions for improvements to the following specific areas:-
- Review the terms of reference of each scrutiny committee;
 - Streamline the Scrutiny work programmes and agendas;
 - Formalise the process for Scrutiny to facilitate Council motions; and
 - Further enhance the public engagement section of the website.
- 3.3 In agreeing that these specific areas required attention, Members also wished to give the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs greater input into the process of reviewing the revised terms of reference and forward work programmes and therefore it was resolved that they would have the opportunity to discuss and comment on both in advance of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

4. WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED SINCE MAY 2019?

- 4.1 Since May 2019, a number of improved practices have been put in place such as establishing a more formal process for the Scrutiny Chairs. All agendas, reports and Minutes are now formally published and available for inspection via the Council webpages at least three clear days before the meeting, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
- 4.2 This process ensures accountability and demonstrates a positive change towards engaging with the public in the Council's Scrutiny process. This will increase the visibility of Scrutiny further and impact upon the decisions taken by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs. It also recognises and acknowledges the important role they play in leading the way forward and supporting their fellow scrutineers.
- 4.3 A set of clearly defined terms of reference for each scrutiny committee has been produced which includes placing the Corporate Plan theme 'Economy' under the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Crime & Disorder Committee (under Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act, 2006) to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The former will rebalance the workload of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee and the latter will return the Crime & Disorder to the overarching Scrutiny Committee so that it may take a more strategic role and serve as a platform for receiving updates from the Police Crime Panel as previously requested by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.4 A new Scrutiny Work Programme template has been devised, drawing from research undertaken and examples of best practice to find the best fit for this

Council's Scrutiny Committees. It is now more streamlined and user friendly and where possible the number of agenda items have been reduced to allow for more in depth review of topics and potential referrals from Council, Audit Committee and other sources.

- 4.5 The Scrutiny Work Programmes have been developed initially on a six monthly basis (up until December 2019) so as to give each individual scrutiny committee the opportunity to take stock and review their respective programmes going forward. Determining its own work programme and deciding on what evidence to seek to fulfil its scrutiny role; asking relevant and timely questions at meetings and participating in activities that the Committee has agreed to pursue outside of its formal meetings are all key to good scrutiny.
- 4.6 To support this process a scrutiny criteria form has been developed which considers issues such as impact, performance and the rationale behind the chosen topics (Appendix 4). This criteria has been critical in setting an informed work programme for each Scrutiny Committee and will ensure that when identifying topics for investigation, the scrutiny work is beneficial to the respective Scrutiny Committee and in the public interest.
- 4.7 The Forward Work Programmes have also aligned themselves with the Council's Corporate Performance themes and priorities as well as acknowledging the Well-being of Future Generations goals.

5 SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

- 5.1 Below is an overview of scrutiny activity since May 2019 so that Members can follow the sequence of events and understand the process for delivering the draft terms of reference, draft work programmes and other developments which have taken place since the previous meeting.

Month	Activity
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review - Overview & Scrutiny 'Fit For the Future' -Members receive a report on the proposals to review the Council's Scrutiny arrangements and an update on progress arising from the WAO report 'Fit for the Future' at its meeting on the 1st May 2019 (likewise the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs received the same information); • Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings are formalised and all agendas, minutes and reports are now accessible via the Council website; • Research is undertaken to find the best fit for the Council's Scrutiny Work Programme template; • Consideration of the Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference to establish the relevant themes and a balance for each Scrutiny Committee.

June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meet to consider the draft terms of reference and draft Scrutiny Work Programme template; • The final Scrutiny Chair's blog from the Chair of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee is uploaded to the dedicated Scrutiny webpage completing the sequence; Scrutiny engagement and information sharing sessions are underway between the Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs, respective Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Officers to strengthen the Scrutiny arrangements going forward; • Scrutiny Work programmes are drafted using a criteria, incorporating matters from 2018/19, notices of motions and in line with the Council's Corporate priorities to produce a draft proposal of topics (up until the end of December, as agreed, for further review to take place so as to measure the effectiveness of the work programmes for the following 6 months);
July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Scrutiny Work programmes are to be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (1st July 2019) for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommended sign off by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) of its own work programme; • Endorsement of the four themed Scrutiny Committees to their respective meetings to follow (for determination of its own work programme and deciding on what evidence to seek to fulfil its scrutiny role); • The draft terms of reference for each of the Scrutiny Committees to be agreed by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (1st July 2019) and implemented.
July-December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the Scrutiny Work Programmes and assess their suitability and effectiveness in October 2019.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed necessary for the purposes of this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The considerations and comments of Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been sought in respect of the report and it will be for the Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to agree these developments at its meeting to be held on the 1st July 2019.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report, although amendments to the Councils constitution will need to be taken forward as appropriate.

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

- 10.1 The proposals to address the WAO report proposals includes arrangements to strengthen the Council's consideration and scrutiny of its work, through 'the lens of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations

Act'. These arrangements will be embedded into the business of the Council as set out in the Policy Statement agreed by Cabinet on [2 November 2016](#).

- 10.2 The proposals outlined within the report will work to ensure a sustainable and robust scrutiny structure is in place which will effectively challenge policy decisions taken forward.

11 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Council is continuing its work to strengthen its scrutiny arrangements and these enhancements support the council in responding to the findings arising from the recent WAO report and will further strengthen governance and accountability arrangements.

