



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12th November 2019

SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMMES

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is seek Members proposals to develop a forward work programme for the next six months. Members are asked to consider the draft forward work programme (attached as Appendix 1) and determine whether the items included (particularly from January 2020 –April 2020) are relevant and in line with the terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:-

- 2.1 Review and agree the draft Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2019/20 (which now includes work programme topics from January to April 2020);
- 2.2 Identify any additional items Members wish to consider including in the forward work programme; and
- 2.3 Consider any training requirements that will assist Members in their role.
- 2.4 Consider providing the necessary flexibility to accommodate pre-scrutiny opportunities and early engagement in policy development; Members should also consider providing the opportunity for consideration of items generated through future public engagement.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will recall that at a previous meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, held on the [1st July 2019](#), a report was presented by the Service

Director of Democratic Services & Communications, which outlined a number of changes to the Scrutiny arrangements in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- 3.2 One of the improvements included the development of a more streamlined forward work programme, which contained less items for consideration at each committee meeting to allow for more in depth review of topics and potential referrals from Council, Audit Committee and other sources.
- 3.3 Initially, the scrutiny work programmes were developed 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. The attached draft work programme contains items for consideration for the remaining Municipal Year, from January 2020 to April 2020.
- 3.4 The attached draft work programme has been compiled from current business identified and matters relating to the Council's Corporate Performance themes and priorities.
- 3.5 When setting their work programme members are asked to consider and acknowledge their role relating to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals and the importance of ensuring that the decisions of the Council are progressed through the lenses of the Act.
- 3.6 The proposed work programme also incorporates matters previously identified by Scrutiny members such as:-
 - The Council's plastic waste policy;
 - The bi-annual report on the Councils Corporate Feedback Scheme (CFS);
 - A Scrutiny Working Group to consider the future rail development in the County (to include the wider County Borough footprint as amended) (Notice of Motion to Full Council [18th September 2019](#))
 - A meeting dedicated to the Crime & Disorder Committee March 2020 (under Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act, 2006) – items previously identified from qualitative data produced at Committee's request.
- 3.7 A series of Cabinet/Scrutiny engagement sessions were held throughout October between the Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs, respective Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Officers, which supported the Scrutiny arrangements going forward and also informed the respective forward work programmes.

4. TRAINING

- 4.1 To assist Scrutiny Members in fulfilling their role a training session was arranged for all RCT scrutiny members and co-opted members on Friday, 25th October

2019 (9.30am-12.30pm). The session was facilitated by Dr Dave McKenna, a dedicated scrutiny practitioner with ten years' experience including as Manager of Swansea Council scrutiny team. He has presented at national conferences in Wales and hosted workshops at three Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conferences.

- 4.2 The scrutiny training session was solution focussed and asked Members to consider what works well in their own local authority and what Members are looking to improve by using good practice ideas. One of the key aims of the session was to explore how scrutiny in RCT can have more impact through improved questioning.
- 4.3 Further to the Scrutiny training session, ongoing training requirements are a key consideration and therefore Members are asked to identify any other gaps in their development particularly in relation to undertaking scrutiny of the items listed on the forward work programme.
- 4.4 It is important for all members of scrutiny to engage in the training opportunities provided to support their role.

5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Council continues to progress opportunities for the public to engage in the scrutiny process. Further enhancements are underway to provide better access to the business of scrutiny online. This includes providing more user-friendly information to support the public engaging in this important element of the Council's democratic processes and overall governance functions.
- 5.2 Members are asked to consider the Council's Scrutiny Public Engagement Protocol, agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the [13th December 2018](#).
- 5.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will shortly consider subject areas to be promoted through social media, for the public, to select as matters for scrutiny to explore and consider. Members are asked to provide flexibility in their work programmes to allow sufficient opportunity for scrutiny of these areas, where they fall within the remit of the committee.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 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 effective scrutiny.
- 6.2 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.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The considerations and comments of Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been sought in respect of the forward work programmes and it will be for the Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to review and agree its own work programme at its meeting on the 12th November 2019.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

- 11.1 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](#).
- 11.2 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.

