



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 OCTOBER 2020

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: 2020- 2021 MUNICIPAL YEAR

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a work programme for the municipal year 2020/21. In doing so, Members are asked to consider future scrutiny topics since it established its initial 3 month work programme which focused on the Council's COVID-19 response and recovery,

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

2.1 Acknowledge the contents of the proposed draft Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year (October –December 2020), attached as Appendix 1 to the report;

2.2 Consider progress, achievements, and the effectiveness of the scrutiny work programme and scrutiny practice;

2.3 Consider and determine other matters it may wish to consider, challenge and scrutinise over this period, taking consideration of the factors set out in sections 4 and 5;

2.4 To afford the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to identify any matters within the Cabinet forward work programme attached at Appendix 2, which warrant further review; and

2.5 Request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications reports the Cabinet and Scrutiny Work Programmes for further consideration by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is proposed that Members of the Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to review the next phase of its work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year following the extended three month period when scrutiny activity has been focused on the Council's COVID-19 response and recovery.

3.2 The proposed work programme allows for an element of flexibility (taking a 3 month view) and taking into account any additional consultative documents or legislative matters requiring attention.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Members will recall that the [Local Authorities \(Coronavirus\) \(Meetings\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#), published at the end of April, provided the opportunity for committee functions to operate virtually and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was part of the first phase of committee functions to be rolled-out virtually. At that time, Members supported the proposal for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as the Council's overarching Scrutiny Committee, to consider the forward work programme of the Cabinet and initially take a council-wide approach.

4.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook a more streamlined approach towards its work programme for the extended 3 month period which allowed for a more time for discussions including the Council's response to COVID-19. All Members were invited to engage in these key matters as well as to undertake urgent business that ordinarily would have been under review by the four themed scrutiny committees, which was recognised by both the Council's Senior Leadership Team and the Cabinet.

4.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on two occasions, on the 26th June 2020 and on the 30th July to manage the short term work programme and to ensure that all non-executive members had the opportunity to engage in the process. In August the Overview & Scrutiny Committee responded to a Call-In of an Officer Delegated Decision (the sale of part of the Former Lady Windsor Colliery Site, Ynysybwl) where members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee determined to refer this decision back to the 'decision maker' for reconsideration.

4.4 With the delayed start to the 2020/21 municipal year, and the time that would, under normal circumstances, have been devoted to work planning, it is proposed that Scrutiny considers a work programme that is manageable and able to make changes accordingly on a short term basis, with the opportunity to review the next quarter in December 2020.

5. SCRUTINY APPROACHES DURING THIS NEXT PERIOD

5.1 The Committee acknowledges the current pressures on the Council as it continues its focus on the impact of the pandemic, response and recovery. COVID-19 will continue to have a significant impact on Council resources and normal working across many service areas for some time to come. The ability to resume a business as usual approach in terms of the scrutiny work programme will need to have sight of this. As such, the attached work programme reflects that resource constraints may impact on the level of scrutiny activity and ability to commit to the fullest work programme at this time. Members are asked to acknowledge the balance required for a flexible and supportive scrutiny work programme that has clear objectives, expectations and lines of questioning.

5.2 With this in mind the Overview & Scrutiny forward work programme, attached at Appendix 1, sets out a manageable and realistic scrutiny activity for the next three months allowing for the more pressing matters to be considered whilst having the flexibility to respond to emerging issues.

5.3 As well as new topics the Committee will need to consider the continuation of past activities in the future Work Programme where work may be incomplete. Members will recall that before the onset of the global pandemic, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a scrutiny working group to consider the development of future transport infrastructure in response to the South Wales Metro. It was due to receive and consider the submissions following the call for evidence to Elected Members and relevant stakeholders which would support the development of the final recommendations for consideration by the Council's Cabinet and Council.

5.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also in the process of establishing a cross party working group to review the Local Development Plan for RCT. The Group would play a formal role in the preparation of the Revised LDP, to contribute to the initial identification of the vision, aims and objectives of the Plan, which will then feed into the preparation of the Preferred Strategy and ultimately the draft (Deposit) Revised LDP.

5.5 It is timely that these will be revisited over the coming months and the committee will also develop the list of topics under the heading 'Ongoing matters for future review'. Members are reminded that given the current climate the forward work programme priorities are subject to change should other specific business need to be considered by the Committee on this date.

5.6 The Committee is invited to share ideas about any other topics that might need to be looked at by scrutiny in future.

6. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

6.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme has been developed in consultation with the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, relevant Cabinet Member and consideration of those outstanding items.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

10.1 This work programme takes consideration of the Council's Corporate Plan the work programme of the Cabinet and the service response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are asked to identify any items they would like to review in greater detail from the draft Cabinet work programme which will also ensure that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee fully evaluates the effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny function during these uncertain times.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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