



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 JANUARY 2021

CABINET/SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: 2020- 2021 MUNICIPAL YEAR

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to maintain its challenging but supportive approach to scrutiny during Covid-19 by considering the Cabinet Work Programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (attached at Appendix 1) and to identify any matters that Members wish to consider in greater detail.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Acknowledge the contents of the attached draft Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes and determine whether the items included in the latter are relevant and in line with the terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and
- 2.2 To afford the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to identify any matters within the Cabinet forward work programme for pre-scrutiny; and
- 2.3 Consider any additional training requirements that Members consider would assist them in their role.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet Work Programme should be prepared to cover a period of three months, with an updated version provided at the end of this period.
- 3.2 Following the amendments to the Leaders Scheme of Delegation at the Council AGM on the 25th May 2016 it was agreed that going forward a detailed Cabinet

Work Programme be published for a 6-month period, allowing sufficient notice and opportunity for consultation and / or pre scrutiny.

- 3.3 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 from January to April 2021.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that following the introduction of social distancing measures at the end of March 2020 the Council saw the suspension of formal committees as it responded to the pandemic crisis. The decision making and governance continued to operate in compliance with the Council's Constitution to discharge key decisions.
- 4.2 The Council successfully rolled out its committee meetings on a virtual basis and it has since been acknowledged that the methodical approach to virtual meetings has equipped Members with the necessary support and knowledge to overcome any technical challenges and allowed them to fully participate in the Council's democratic process. The level of engagement and [number of virtual meetings](#) is testament to the success of those approaches to the virtual roll out.
- 4.3 Initially the Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook the substantive scrutiny role for a three-month period to cover the extended municipal year. In that time Scrutiny saw its forward work programme re-aligned to deal with one or two matters per agenda offering a combination of short reports and verbal updates from Officers.
- 4.4 Members were aware of the then resource constraints under which scrutiny was working and an element of flexibility was adopted whilst the council dealt with local lockdown measure and restraints. At that time Members were satisfied that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was undertaking a council-wide approach and extended the opportunity for all non-executive Members to engage in the scrutiny process.
- 4.5 In October 2020, Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a forward work programme covering the initial three-month period of the new Municipal Year 2020-21, specifically from October to December 2020. This encompassed a more 'business as usual' element as the other four themed scrutiny committees were re-instated and developed their own work programmes.
- 4.6 Whilst in this first period, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee addressed a number of strategic matters, Members were still mindful of the constraints on officers and resources in general and maintained a flexible approach to its work programme. Robust and member led scrutiny was undertaken in this time of crisis.

4.7 It is proposed that Scrutiny continues to consider a work programme that is manageable and addresses the items which require a timely response as well being able to adapt to any necessary changes.

5. SCRUTINY APPROACHES DURING THE NEXT PERIOD

5.1 The attached forward work programme incorporates matters for consideration and the list of topics under the heading 'Ongoing matters for future review' can be allocated as and when appropriate. 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.

5.2 It is worthy of noting that the cross-party working group to review the Local Development Plan for RCT has been established and held its first meeting on the 26th November 2020. The working group will continue 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.

5.3 Members are encouraged to contribute to their forward Work Programme by suggesting areas of possible scrutiny.

6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

6.1 To fulfil their role as an Overview & Scrutiny Committee member, ongoing training requirements are a key consideration and therefore Members are asked to identify any gaps in their development particularly in relation to undertaking scrutiny of the items listed on the forward work programme.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 The Cabinet work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder(s).

7.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee forward work programme has been developed based on the new ways of working, in discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as well as with the relevant portfolio holder.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

11.1 This is an information report presenting the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes in responding to the Covid 19 pandemic. No decisions are being taken in this report.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny work programmes for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year are attached. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are asked to identify any items they would like to review in greater detail from the 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

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &

COMMUNICATION