



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 9 December 2021 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor M Adams (Chair)

Councillor W Lewis	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Cox	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor S Rees

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D Powell, Director Corporate Estates
Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction

18 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed Members to the hybrid meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny. The following Members were present in the Council Chamber:

County Borough Councillors G Caple, G Hughes and W Lewis.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J James MS, M Griffiths and E Stephens.

19 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

20 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 21st September 2021 and the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 12th October 2021 as an accurate reflection of both meetings.

Matters Arising

21st September 2021 – A Member requested confirmation that the published Section 19 Investigation Report for Treherbert had been shared with the local Members in advance of its publication and the offer of an Officer/Member meeting had been made to them. (The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that he would be able to confirm that this was the case in due course).

21 Consultation Links

Members acknowledged the information provided through the consultation links in respect of open consultations, Welsh Government consultations and those matters being consulted upon by the Local Authority.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication reminded Members that should they wish to form a scrutiny committee response to any consultation, they are welcome to raise that matter at any time.

With regards to the Welsh Government consultation listed 'Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan' ending on the 12th January 2022, and in light of the work that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Working Group had undertaken, leading the field on this matter; a query was raised as to whether the Council will engage and comment on the consultation and strategy to ensure it meets the expectations of the recommendations and issues highlighted by the working group.

The Service Director advised that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee would be looking for the opportunity to include and consider this matter as part of its forward work programme and confirmed that there would be a Service response.

22 Update Report on Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy & Implementation Plan

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report which outlined the opportunity for Members to consider and challenge the objectives set out within the Strategy for Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC). The Strategy had been received and adopted by Cabinet at its meeting held on the [15th November 2021](#).

Members were reminded of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny working group to consider 'the development of Infrastructure to support low carbon vehicle ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf' and the formulation of nine recommendations and its recent engagement on the wide-ranging consultation exercise which contributed to the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy 2021-2025.

The Director of Corporate Estates provided details of the internal consultation with stakeholders and two public consultation exercises which had been undertaken via the Council's engagement website 'Let's Talk RCT' to progress and inform the Strategy which has subsequently been approved by Cabinet.

The Director set out the ten ambitions of the strategy and highlighted the correlation with the ten recommendations that had been previously produced by the Scrutiny Working Group and agreed by Cabinet. He emphasised that the

earlier work of scrutiny had informed the current strategy and he advised how the strategy would help identify an RCT wide approach to promote and encourage the development of a robust and practical electric vehicle charging (EVC) network in the short, medium, and long term, whilst considering the wider issues such as the transition from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs) as part of the Council's wider sustainable transport goals.

Following the Director's introduction and comprehensive presentation of the Strategy for Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) in RCT, he advised of recent guidance from Welsh Government which had been published today requesting that examples of good practice from this local authority are sought and taken forward.

The Director explained that to date all schemes underway across the local authority have been funded by the Cardiff Capital Region Deal such as charging points in public car parks however, there may be the need for additional funding to deliver new work streams in the future.

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were given the opportunity to raise queries:

A Member sought clarification on ambition number eight which they considered would be the biggest challenge of all with residents due to the high number of terraced houses across the county borough. Also, whether the funding from the Cardiff Capital Region Deal is for taxis or for the wider public use.

The Director acknowledged the issues around the particular ambition but assured Members that guidance and a road map will be available for residents at the time when questions about charging close to residential properties are raised. If there are insufficient taxis utilising the infrastructure and chargers, they will be available to the public to use as long as they can pay for the charging facility.

Another Member suggested the Council consider its public spaces where charging for terraced houses could become difficult. A query was raised as to whether residents and partners will be able to access the Council's workplace charging facilities and in the case of new and substantially refurbished buildings providing 10% of their parking spaces for charging, what is the Council doing to get the maximum benefits from its recent refurbishments.

With regards to quality of access to charging, it was suggested that the strategy needs to look at ways in which areas without identified site are supported to ensure those sites are identified and we don't allow the Heads of the Valley to be the last or worst provision in the county borough.

Other Members were in favour of the workplace car parking which in areas of high volumes of terraced housing offers a solution for residents to charge their vehicles at work and drive home. Is there evidence to show whether in those areas where the infrastructure is in place, the shift to electric vehicles has increased as that would be a contributing factor to influencing the decision to purchase an electric vehicle. The Member asked whether all options been considered such as grant funding to develop the rear of residents' gardens in terraced houses to allow for charging infrastructure.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Council's EV fleet vehicles

will soon be tested as part of a trial to track the distance of the vehicle during its working week following one charge. He explained that the Council's recently constructed schools and all new schools will provide EV charging facilities as part of the Council's forward-thinking approach as well as considering other, appropriate owned and operated council sites.

Other points made included:

- Will there be an app which will share the location of the local charging facilities to assist with journey planning?
- What is the collaboration with the Health Board?
- How will the pandemic impact on workplace charging as so many employees are working from home? Does the strategy take into account the shift from the sale of diesel engines from 2030 disallowing hybrid vehicles as an alternative, will the Strategic Plan take account of these matters?

The Director of Corporate Estates confirmed the close working relationship with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. He also acknowledged that the implementation Plan would be brought back before the Scrutiny Committee in due course. The Director advised that both matters had been considered in the preparation of the strategy and residents consulted on the change in demands of their travel needs as a result of the pandemic.

The Director responded to a query regarding the workplace charging and advised that in due course, when the rapid charging infrastructure comes into place, partners will be invited to use the Council's facilities. He also advised that the maps within the strategy, set out at Appendix 3, are to be delivered in 2021/22, the pins in the maps represent those areas where the infrastructure has already been delivered this year but does not represent the final list, as recent additions such as the new Primary School in Hirwaun, with 2 new charging facilities, doesn't appear on the map. He added that the work will be progressed in consultation with residents and stakeholders.

In conclusion the Director advised that his team is working closely with colleagues in Planning and confirmed that planning policy guidelines are being updated. He also clarified that a refurbishment at a local Leisure Centre already includes ducts under the flooring in the car park to allow future infrastructure for charging facilities to be included at a later date.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To acknowledge the report and appendices (attached) and the adoption of the [strategy](#) and its formal publication on the Council website, following consideration of the outcome of the public consultation undertaken; and
2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will undertake pre-scrutiny of the implementation plan, which will propose how the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, across the County Borough, will be developed.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications presented his report which provided Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to review and where required, update its already agreed forward work programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, following consideration of the draft Cabinet forward plan attached in the report.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications reminded Members that the work programme 2021/22 is the final report of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee developed to cover the period up to Local Elections in May 2022. Members were advised to consider any areas from the attached work programme 2021/22 in order for pre-scrutiny to reflect on the Committee's aims and objectives as well as to add value to the work of the Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

One Member raised concern regarding the '*Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for older People*' as set out within the draft Scrutiny work programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year and the importance of receiving further updates to ensure work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been implemented efficiently and effectively in dealing with social care issues within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Further it was noted that there was no reference to tip safety in the Cabinet forward work programme.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications advised that an update could be provided to the Committee from the appropriate Director in relation to the Council's current position at the appropriate time. It was noted by the Chair that due to the volume of reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2022; the update report could be addressed later in the year.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications advised that once published the Section 19 Investigation reports will be presented as a collective to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Work Programme for the 2021-22 Municipal Year and to receive a further update on a 3-monthly basis.

(Note: The lost motion to bring a further report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to the end of the Municipal Year, relating to the '*Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for older People*', was proposed by Councillor P Jarman and seconded by Councillor D Owen-Jones. County Borough Councillors P Jarman and W Jones wished to have it recorded that they voted in favour of the lost motion).

24 Scrutiny Working Group Recommendations

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications presented his report which sought to provide Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the findings and recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Working Group, which was established to progress the motion adopted by Council on the 18th of September 2019 as set out on paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The Service Director reminded Members of the progress made at the end of 2019 and early 2020, with the call for evidence from partners such as Transport

for Wales to support Members' deliberation. The Service Director recalled that with the advent of the Pandemic, progress was hampered resulting in the Working Group being reconvened in early 2021, during which time significant changes had been implemented in relation to the transport landscape, with the progress of the South Wales Metro.

The Service Director advised that the recommendations as set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report, and subject to consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, would be reported to full Council in the New Year.

One Member sought clarification on the last two recommendations, particularly dealing with the moratorium arrangements implemented by the Welsh Government. A query was also raised in relation to the rail line towards Tower Colliery to Zip World. The Member suggested that further consideration should be given to the travel lines for the Hirwaun community and hoped that they would be involved in the final decision on the preferred location for the Station through a consultation process. The Chair pointed out that this matter had been addressed within the report at pages 149-151.

Following discussion, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group as set out on paragraph 6 of the report (subject to it being amended to reflect that Cllr G Caple is the local ward Member for Cymmer not Porth as set out within the report).

At this point in the meeting, the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications commented that he was able to confirm that advance notice had been provided on the Section 19 Investigation report for Treherbert to the two local Members on the 16th November 2021, ahead of the publication date.

25 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and contribution in the meeting. He summarised the key points to have arisen from the meeting, specifically acknowledging those Officers involved in producing the report for Electric Vehicle Charging and he welcomed the opportunity to pre scrutinise the implementation plan which would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in due course.

This meeting closed at 6.25 pm

**CLLR M. ADAMS
CHAIR.**