



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee
held on Wednesday, 20 July 2022 at 2.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee Members in attendance virtually:-

Councillor J Brencher	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor C Middle	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor G L Warren
Councillor K Webb	Councillor G E Williams

Officers in attendance

Mr Roger Waters – Director Frontline Services
Mr C Hanagan – Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Ms Jacqueline Mynott – Head of Infrastructure Asset Management
Mr Andrew Griffiths – Service Director Highways and Engineering
Mrs Sarah Daniel – Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Ms Julia Nicholls – Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

Invitees

Ms Lori Frater – Welsh Government Coal Tip Safety Team
Mr Justin Toland – Welsh Government Coal Tip Safety Team

In absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications sought nominations for a Chairperson. Cllr G Hughes was nominated, no further nominations were received.

6 Declarations of Interest

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

7 Quarter 4 (year-end) Council Performance Report for 2021/22

The Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services presented the Council's Quarter 4 Performance Report (to 31st March 2022) to the Committee.

It was explained to Members that the Year End Report was presented to and approved by Cabinet on the 18 July 2022 and contains revenue and capital budget performance; Treasury Management prudential indicators; Organisational Health information including staff turnover, sickness and Council strategic risks; and Corporate Plan updates (including investment updates).

The Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services provided the Committee with an overview of the key information included within the report in respect of financial data, workforce data, strategic risks and year-end Corporate Plan

Priority position statements

Following conclusion of the presentation of the report the Chair referred to the levels of staff sickness and asked what interventions or preventative measures were in place to support staff back into the workplace

The Service Director Finance and Performance advised members that there were helplines for staff available and an Occupational Health team where staff could self-refer or be referred by their line managers. There were also many Health and Wellbeing initiatives such as group walks and leisure facilities available. He further added that there targeted intervention work as undertaken on a service by service basis. For example a high number of wellbeing meetings were undertaken in the Social care service so the Authority could understand the reasons behind the high sickness levels and monitor the impacts of COVID on the service area and provide the staff with additional support where required. He concluded that there is a greater emphasis on staff wellbeing across the Council as a whole.

RESOLVED: Members noted the contents of the report

8 Coal Tip Safety (Wales) White Paper

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised Members the report sets out their opportunity to formally respond to the Welsh Government's consultation which sets out the proposals for a Coal Tip Safety (Wales) Bill. The proposals aim to introduce a consistent approach to the management, monitoring and oversight of disused coal tips. The Welsh Government consultation was launched on the 12th May 2022 and ends on the 4th August 2022.

The Director Frontline Services welcomed representatives from Welsh Governments Coal Tip Safety Team and thanked them for attending to provide Members with an Overview of the proposals set out in the consultation documents.

Members received a comprehensive presentation from the officers which set out the proposals out for consultation in the White Paper review

A Member welcomed the proposals on coal tip safety and stated that from the storm experience in 2020 the public have been very anxious to know what category of tips are in their areas. She asked when this information will be made available to the public.

The representative from Welsh Government advised that the asset register will be public facing which was announced when the First Minister announced the Coal Tip Safety Bill which is expected in 2023. The Asset Register will release the location of the coal tips. She reassured members that there was work ongoing on to ensure the quality assurance of this. She added that as some of the tips will be privately owned with the owners not necessarily aware of this, further work on data protection is also ongoing.

The Chairman asked how public perception and concern will be managed, especially where there were high category tips in certain areas as this may

concern residents.

A Member asked if extreme weather events such as flooding and heat had been taken into account and how these could impact on the tips and if there had been any discussion regarding the removal of high categorisation tips

The Welsh Government representative replied that they had not been made aware of any centrally funded initiatives for the removal of tips. However, discussions are ongoing on the long term reclamation of tips which was a highly complex area of work. She added that the responses from UK Government was that this is a devolved matter. The First Minister and Minister for Climate Change and Minister for Finance have gone back to UK Government stating that this is a matter that was present before devolution and that financial support is required so this does not impact on other areas of funding.

On the matter of Extreme weather events, discussion with leading academics on this about predictions on precipitation were continuous and they also work with Natural Resources Wales to get the age of the drainage systems, but reiterated that the funding element is substantial. The representative for Welsh Government stated that one of the key drivers for the management regime to be adapted was so a management plan for higher rated tips can updated to reflect how the policy will respond to extreme weather. These inform what the hazard assessment will consider such as tip location.

A Member referred to the 12 month inspection regimes and asked if this will be brought back to Overview and Scrutiny. The Service Director Democratic Services stated that this is something that can be reported back on a regular basis

A Member asked if the Authority has confidence to meet the requirements within the resources we available.

The Director Frontline Services advised that the Authority are working closely with Welsh Government on funding for the next financial year to enable the purchase of vital monitoring equipment to undertake with confidence, inspections and maintenance works for RCTCBC and privately owned tips. He reassured members that inspection regimes are in place and have been throughout this process and are carried out by staff. He added that permanent monitoring is in place with the coal authority coming in to undertake independent inspections too.

9 Urgent Business

None

**G Hughes
Chairman.**