



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee held on
Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 5.00 pm.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor J Edwards (Chair)

Councillor J Brencher	Councillor M Ashford
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Evans
Councillor C Middle	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor G L Warren
Councillor K Webb	Councillor G E Williams

Officers in attendance

Ms G Davies, Director Education and Inclusion
Ms A Richards, Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Mr R Waters, Director Frontline Services
Mr S Owen, Service Director Streetcare
Mr A Wilkins, Director Legal Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mrs S Daniel, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence

Councillor S Evans Councillor G Hughes
Councillor M Powell

29 Declarations of Interest

None

30 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the Draft Scrutiny Annual Report to members for their comments and endorsement at Council

Members of the Committee gave thanks to all previous Chairs and Vice Chairs for their hard work and dedication to their previous Scrutiny Committees

The Chair also gave thanks to previous Members, particularly those that had departed at the recent election. She commented that the report gave a fair reflection of the work that had been undertaken and gave her and all Scrutiny members a solid base to work from.

RESOLVED:

Authorised the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications to consult with the Chairs of the respective thematic scrutiny committees to confirm the content of their individual Annual Reports before presentation to Council

31 Consultations

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the reports to Members to seek their views on the Waste Management Strategy and Community Meals Service. Members were advised that the consultations conclude on the 9th January 2022 with any comments and observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being considered as part of the Cabinet decision process

32 Service Review Community Meals Service

The Director Education and Inclusion Services provided an overview of the options

On the [29th November 2022](#), Cabinet agreed to initiate a public consultation and engagement exercise on the preferred service change proposal in respect of the Community Meals Service. A review has been undertaken and several options for the future of the service have been evaluated.

- Option 1: to continue the service as it currently operates with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.
- Option 2: to reorganise the existing internal service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.
- Option 3 (preferred option): to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal home delivery service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal. Option 4: to cease the current service and support service users to find alternative options

A Member sought clarification under the proposal for option 3 and asked if a service user requests a hot meal, could this be heated before delivery. He asked if welfare checks on vulnerable service users could

still be undertaken when meals are delivered in the future.

The Director Education and Inclusion confirmed that all meals are prepared in the Council's facilities and delivered as a frozen meal for the service user to heat at a time of their choosing. She added that where a service user has requested support in heating the meal, this can be provided and the meal will be heated and plated for them. She reassured Members that there will still be support options available for those that require it and the delivery of the meal could therefore also serve as a welfare visit. The Director added that a time analysis could be undertaken and reported back to Scrutiny as she advised that staff delivering the meals are time restricted.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools And Transformation advised members that the Council has strict Food Safety Standards to adhere to and if we defrost a meal, it then has to be eaten in a certain amount of time before it would be unsafe to consume. It was therefore determined that the safest option and in order to comply with food safety standards is to prepare the meal, freeze it and deliver frozen.

Clarification was sought on the containers the meals will be delivered and if they were able to be recycled. The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation advised that the meals are currently delivered in microwaveable safe containers which are 100% recyclable.

A number of Members were supportive of option 3, but emphasised that many people rely on the service, not just for the delivery of a meal but as an opportunity to have a welfare check as some service users do not have regular visitors. They requested if this can continue should any of the proposals taken forward this would provide reassurance for the service users and their families.

Members sought clarification as to how the Council will support service users who may find difficulty in meeting the cost of the meals and whilst an increase of 50p per meal does not seem like a big cost, some families are struggling due to the current UK cost of living crisis.

The Director Education and Inclusion acknowledged that the current circumstances presented difficulties however she reassured members that they will continue to engage with families to understand what support they require and ensure they are signposted to relevant support in adult services.

In response to a query officers confirmed that the meals are developed by a dietician to ensure they are healthy and nutritious and with the menu choice can be expanded with the frozen option. Meals were also regularly checked for quality and safety so they stood up to food safety standards. Members were also informed that data is monitored with uptake in the service being quieter during the summer months. Taster menus were developed with feedback sought from staff and service

users. Where service users opt out of future deliveries an exit survey is undertaken to understand why they have decided to not continue with the service

Members emphasised the importance of engaging with Service users throughout the consultation and any potential transition period to ensure their needs continue to be met and they understand the changes and why they are being made as this is a vital service for some of our most vulnerable residents in the Borough.

Following consideration of the proposals Members **RESOLVED** to :

1. Acknowledge the Decision of the Cabinet taken on the 29 November to initiate a public consultation on the preferred service change proposals attached at [Appendix A](#)
2. Acknowledge the contents of the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on [29 November 2022](#), at [Appendix B](#)

Authorised the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications to notify those Cabinet of the Committees comments and recommendations before they make a final determination on this matter.

33 Revised Waste Management Strategy

The Director Frontline Services provided Overview of report and sought members views on the public consultation and engagement exercise on the option for change, namely:

- The collection of residual household waste on a 3-weekly basis for all domestic waste collections.
- Presentation of waste on a 3-weekly basis will be as follows; strict volume control measures will apply to all domestic waste, namely:
- a maximum of 3 black bags per household, (for those properties with existing black bag waste collections),
- no side waste rule continues for those households with large wheelie bin collections; and
- It was also agreed to consult on a trial of the use of reusable recycling sacks for the collection of dry mixed recycling, (DMR).

Members collectively voiced concern that the proposals could initiate an increase in flytipping throughout the Borough with members receiving queries from residents to clarify how this will be addressed.

The Director Frontline Services reminded Members that the council offers a very comprehensive range of collections available to their residents which includes weekly food, green waste, mixed recycling and adult hygiene collections. In addition, the Authority has one of the most comprehensive Community Recycling Centre offers too. With these many options available to residents, there is no need for people to flytip. He

reassured members that where the Council does find evidence of flytipping, they will always take action and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice which should serve as a deterrent to offenders.

In response to a query, officers confirmed that they will work with residents where they generate additional waste such as pet waste, clinical or hygiene and allow for additional bags, should we be reassured that the resident will work with the Council to ensure they are recycling everything else possible. The Community Recycling Centres will continue to be promoted to our residents to take any additional items for recycling they have. Officers added that most residents currently manage very easily with the current limits as there are plenty of options for them to dispose of their waste effectively.

Members commented that the current success in achieving the recycling rates has only been made possible by ensuring the process is made as easy as possible and accessible to all residents. They encouraged early and continued engagement during any potential changes to ensure the success continues. They emphasised the significance of making the public aware of the importance of recycling and disposing of their waste correctly including potential fines for not reaching Welsh Government set targets for recycling in Wales. A majority of members noted that much of the public concern in respect of the changes related a misunderstanding of the proposals and what can or cannot currently be recycled. Officers responded that they have an awareness team who go door to door to work with the public and presence will be increased in the shorter term in a warning and informing role to support residents.

Members commented that they Members of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee recently attended a site visit to Bryn Pica where the Borough's waste and recycling is sorted and they were very impressed with the first class facilities.

As part of any future changes, a majority of members encouraged engagement local supermarkets to encourage each retailer to take responsibility for soft plastics and other "returnable" items for recycling, to facilitate a reusing of items culture.

Members requested that any change to the recycling bags that are issued to residents is carefully considered so they adequately retain items put in them and are able to withstand adverse weather conditions.

Members felt that educating and raising awareness amongst the public was a far better approach in the shorter term than issuing immediate fines as often residents were not fully aware of the recycling process and once they understood the process they were more often than not compliant and want to support and engage in the process. Members recommended that the Council engage with School Council's and Eco-Committees where possible to raise awareness of the importance of recycling

Following the conclusion of discussions Members **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the Decision of the Cabinet taken on the 29 November to initiate a public consultation and engagement exercise attached at Appendix A
2. Acknowledge the contents of the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 29 November 2022, at Appendix B

Authorised the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications to notify Cabinet of their comments and recommendations before they make a final determination on this matter.

34 ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION AND REFORM WHITE PAPER

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the report which sought Members comments upon the proposals, which are currently being consulted upon, before the 10th January submission deadline.

The Director of Legal Services added that any proposals that simplify the electoral administration and registration process is welcomed. The current proposals for non-devolved elections, voters will be required to present identification at the polling station which creates concern over the divergence of the elections in England and Wales, and causing confusion amongst voters where there may be combined elections.

Members welcomed the election process becoming more a streamlined and the opportunity these proposals present to make this process more straight-forward. Members did however express concern at the development of different process for Welsh Election and UK elections, and expressed concern around the confusion which could be caused, if polls under Welsh and UK and arrangements where conducted on the same day.

A Member raised concern at the UK direction of travel, however many members acknowledged they did not want to see a divergence between nations. Members commented that with the current uptake of voting at less than 30% they would like to see the voting process made as easy as possible to ensure no person is excluded from the process and no barriers precluded them from participating, such as presenting identification at the time of voting.

Members were in favour of an automatic registration process to improve voting numbers. They also stated the importance of engaging in the education sector to improve voter participation and using other platforms to engage young people in the voting process to ensure they have a general awareness at a young age, to ensure it is easy for them to participate, engage and understand the voting process at a young age as evidence suggests that those who engage from a young age, will continue

to do so throughout adulthood

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the Welsh Government proposals.
2. Agree for comments of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee to be formulated by Officers in response to the Welsh Government consultation by the deadline of 10th January 2023.

Request that additional updates are presented as appropriate, as further detail is provided by Welsh Government.

35 Chairs Review and Close

The Chair thanked all Members and officers for attending the meeting and for their contributions.

36 Urgent Items

NONE

**Councillor J Edwards
Chair.**

This page is intentionally left blank