

*Mae'r cofnodion hyn yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth yng nghyfarfod priodol nesaf y Pwyllgor.*

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next appropriate meeting of the Committee,

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT Minutes** of the Special Meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 5 p.m.

**PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor M. Powell – in the Chair

**County Borough Councillors**

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| S. Bradwick  | G. Hughes    |
| G. Caple     | S. Rees-Owen |
| J. Cullwick  | G. Thomas    |
| M. Diamond   | J. Williams  |
| G. R. Davies | T. Williams  |
| G. Holmes    | R. Yeo       |

**Non Committee Members/Education Co-opted Members in Attendance**

County Borough Councillor M.Norris – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Mr.J.Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative

Mr.C.Jones – GMB Representative

Ms.L.Davies – Unite Representative

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr.P. Nicholls – Head of Legal-Litigation, Planning & Environment,  
Community & Children's Services

Mr. C. Bradshaw – Chief Executive

Mr. C. Lee – Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services

Mr G. Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services

Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S. Rees-Owen and M. Diamond. An apology for absence was also received from Mr.R.Hull (lay Member of the Audit Committee).

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED** – to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct there were no personal declarations made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

## **3 DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19**

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement reported on the purpose of the meeting which was to provide Members with the opportunity to review, challenge and propose amendments to the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2018/19 in respect of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of 'Economy', 'People', and 'Place'.

The Service Director explained that Members of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee were being asked to form a judgement on the extent to which the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2018/19 sets out a balanced and evidenced based assessment of the Council's 2017/18 performance in its Corporate Plan priorities and whether the Council's ambitions for 2018/19 are understandable that will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised.

It was pointed out that the final draft version of the Corporate Performance Report 2018/19 would be presented to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018, incorporating any amendments deemed necessary by the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The Service Director also advised that an overview of each Priority would be presented by the relevant Officer in the following order: Economy, People and Place, with opportunity for Members to ask questions after each overview.

### **Economy – Building a Strong Economy**

The Chief Executive provided an overview of performance in relation to the priority 'Economy – Building a Strong Economy' and advised that good progress has been made in respect of a number of long term projects such as the City Deal and the South Wales Metro. There have been positive developments in the town centres of Pontypridd (Taff Vale Project and the YMCA) and in Aberdare (the Boot Hotel) and Cabinet Members and Officers have played a key role in supporting and encouraging local businesses to the area. The Chief Executive went on to indicate that significant investment has also continued to be made in schools across the County Borough and good academic attainment had been achieved within the first 3 key stages although

it was difficult to measure Key Stage 4 due to changes to the qualifications that can be included within this performance indicator.

It was reported that opportunities exist to deliver further improvement in areas such as reducing the number of pupils excluded from schools and increasing the footfall to some of our town centres.

Following the presentation, the Committee discussed the information and questioned the Chief Executive.

The Committee acknowledged the developments in the town centres of Pontypridd and Aberdare but queried the lack of employment opportunities in the northern part of the County Borough compared to other areas which is encouraging residents to move to the Southern parts of the County. The Committee acknowledged the investment that the City Deal will bring but stated that manufacturing needed to be brought back into communities like Hirwaun, to keep residents in work.

The Chief Executive indicated that by investing in the County Borough's key town centres, this will have a ripple effect which will positively impact on smaller towns in the long term. The Chief Executive referred to the existing bus links that are in place between Rhondda Fach/Fawr and Porth and added that the City Deal is looking at jobs for the local area and presenting graduate opportunities, and has developed projects such as the Energy Park in Hirwaun. Reference was also made to the Metro which will replace / upgrade the existing infrastructure and then support development in other areas.

A Member of the Committee raised concern at the lack of notification provided to the residents of RCT in respect of the introduction of the new Refuse and Recycling Collection Service which had been set up to help improve recycling rates and service delivery. In response Members were reminded of the steps in place to inform residents of the new process such as via social media, door knocking and awareness campaigns in advance of the change. The Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee confirmed that Members of this Committee had the opportunity to undertake pre- scrutiny of the report prior to it going to Cabinet. Another Member reported her concerns regarding the potential for people to leave their black bags outside the houses of others. It was reported that the Council will continue to provide support to households who for various reasons may find these proposals challenging e.g. households with ash waste and large families.

In response to a query in respect of the number of empty properties brought back into use per annum and the issue of supporting those residents living close to an empty property, it was confirmed that the target has been set linked to the level of available resources. The Chief Executive added that

additional one-off investment is being made in this area for 2018/19 through the estimated income to be generated by the decision to remove council tax discount on dwellings that have been empty for more than 6 months (this being effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018).

It was agreed that the figures set out on page 16 of the report relating to the number of private sector dwellings which have been vacant for over 6 months would be corrected and consideration be given to whether the inclusion of both unemployment and worklessness statistics were clear for the reader.

A Member asked for clarification regarding the following three issues: closing the achievement gap between children who are disadvantaged and their peers; school attendance; and the increase in school exclusions, having regard to the linkage and cause across all three issues. The Chief Executive explained that with regards to attendance, the local authority does issue a number of Fixed Penalty Notices; however, there does need to be more engagement at school level. The Chief Executive added that from September 2018 the attendance strategy would be revised. It was reported that with regard to exclusions there is sufficient provision within our schools but further improvements do need to be made particularly to improve the Special Education Need provision. In respect of closing the gap, it was explained that there is currently a lot of work being undertaken in this area although a different approach may be required to achieve the impact sought.

A Member commented that more assaults on teachers are taking place within our schools and this should be dealt with by way of exclusions as the Local Authority has a duty of care towards its teachers and staff. It was agreed that certain behaviour warrants exclusion but it was also pointed out the importance of understanding why certain behaviour is happening within the classroom. The Chief Executive stated that the Local Authority does not advise Head Teachers when to exclude pupils, this being the responsibility of headteachers / schools to decide based on the evidence before them and appropriate measures need to be put in place to support both teachers and pupils.

The Committee discussed the need for more vocational courses within colleges and schools to help fill the gaps for skilled labour in the workforce. It was reported that most schools tailor their curriculum to suit students and local colleges offer level 2 and 3 qualifications as well as successful work based learning environments; however, this needed to be done within the parameters of the National Education System in Wales.

A Member wished to remind Committee that the recent educational event, 'Attend and Achieve' had been held at the Coliseum, Aberdare with the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning. It had been a

successful event and a reminder to all that lots of things are being achieved and there is cause to celebrate much within education.

A Member asked whether reference could be made within the 2018/19 action plan around what support / involvement the Council will have in developing the Rhondda tunnel.

In response to a query about reference to the Welsh Language within the report, the Service Director, Performance & Improvement confirmed that reference has been made to the Welsh Language in the main body of the report on page 45 and within the PLACE priority action plan.

### **People – Promoting Independence and positive lives for everyone**

The Group Director for Community & Children's Services provided an outline of the Council's Corporate Plan priority for People – Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone. He reported that good progress has been made to maximise people's potential and maximise people's independence. He reported on the following successful initiatives: the Stay Well @ Home Service which supports the Council's priority of "supporting independent lives for everyone" as people will be cared for in their own homes as much as possible by avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions and discharging people home from hospital as early as possible, and Resilient Families, which supports vulnerable families who are unable to cope. The Group Director also highlighted that the Stay Well @ Home service is also being considered for two national awards which he credited to the dedication of the staff. He explained that the Council is investing in extracare facilities and has continued to invest in its Leisure Services to encourage residents to be more physically active. In conclusion the Group Director acknowledged that there is still more to do to embed the Resilient families model and safely reduce the number of children looked after and provide people with more choice in terms of developing community based alternatives to more institutional settings.

The Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee concurred with the Group Director with regards to the good progress of the Stay Well@ Home Service.

A Member sought an explanation for the disparity in the life expectancy of those residents who reside in the North compared with the South of the County Borough. The Group Director reported that service provision from a social services perspective was based on individual needs but that work was ongoing on a local and regional level to strengthen community based provision.

The Chair commented on the percentages set out on page 25 of the report relating to the percentage of people using direct payments and asked whether the numbers could be provided to set the percentage in context. The Group Director indicated that there are approximately 350 people in receipt of direct payments and that the principle of including number and percentages could be incorporated into future reporting.

## **Place – Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work**

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services presented performance in relation to the priority for Place – Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work. It was explained that there are 4 underlying priorities: people feeling safe in their communities; parks and green spaces; involved and resilient communities; and maintaining a clean and attractive environment. The Group Director outlined each priority in detail and the Committee discussed the content of the report before asking questions of the Group Director.

A Member queried the gaps in the statistics on pages 181 and 195 of the report (shown as N/A i.e. % of residents surveyed in targeted town centres who feel unsafe; % residents satisfied with the conditions of roads and pavements; and average number of working days taken to clear fly tipping incidents). The Group Director indicated that this data had not been collected for 2017/18 and arrangements were being put in place for these to be reported in 2018/19.

In addition, it was also queried whether there was all Wales information available for the performance indicator ‘% of residents satisfied with the County Borough as a place to live’ as this was sourced from the National Survey for Wales data. The Group Director indicated that the availability of all Wales information would be checked and if available would be included within the report.

A Member queried the correlation between the targets set out in the report compared to the indicators outlining where the local authority is among the bottom quartile in Wales (i.e. for the % of Principal A and B Roads in overall poor condition). He also asked whether the targets are challenging enough. The Group Director confirmed that although these indicators remain in the bottom quartile for Wales, the long term direction of travel was one of year-on-year improvement linked to the additional investment allocated to this area. The Group Director indicated that for A roads, in 2010/11 performance was 16.2% in overall poor condition compared to 5.2% in 2017/18 and for B roads, in 2010/11 performance was 15.2% compared to 6.23% in 2017/18.

Another Member queried why the ‘number of recorded incidents of antisocial behaviour’ which was below target when less incidents had been recorded in 2017/18. The Group Director explained that an increase in recorded incidents had been expected due to awareness raising activities undertaken during the year. The Group Director added that on-going work would continue in this area in 2018/19.

Another Member queried the PI relating to the % of municipal waste collected by local authorities. The Group Director confirmed that the definition has changed and this has had a significant impact on all local authorities. He stated that the Welsh Government target is 70% by 2024/25 and actions are

continuing to be considered to ensure the Council meets this target. The Group Director referred Members to page 170 of the report which highlighted improved recycling levels following engagement with residents in areas where recycling has previously been relatively low. The Service Director Performance and Improvement also indicated that the overall picture of 2017/18 performance was: 61% is recycled, approximately 2% sent to landfill and approximately 37% incinerated and turned into electricity that is passed through to the national grid.

A Member asked if there were any future plans to have SHED in the Rhondda recycling centres. It was confirmed that the query would be passed to the relevant Director and a response provided to the individual Member.

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

1. That the draft Corporate Performance Report 2018/19 represents a balanced and evidenced based assessment of the Council's 2017/18 performance in its corporate Plan priority areas;
2. That the Council's ambitions for 2018/19 are understandable and will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised;
3. That the Council is maximising its contribution to the 7 national well-being goals; and
4. To approve the final draft version of the Corporate Performance Report 2018/19 subject to the comments and minor amendments proposed.

**M. Powell**  
**Chair**

**The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.**