



CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 pm WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS**

This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

Part 1

1. Chairs Announcements
2. Declarations of Interests
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 22*)
 - 19th April 2023
 - 28th June 2023
4. Annual Report (*Pages 23 - 44*)
5. Pre-decision Scrutiny
 - To select appropriate items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (cabinet reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
6. Forward Work Programme 2023/24 (*Pages 45 - 46*)
7. Urgent Items

Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
8. Access to Meetings

To resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

Part 2

9. Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s
 - To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (cabinet reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 14 September 2023

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor P.Rogers**

Vice
Chairperson: **Councillor C.Jordan**

Councillors: T.Bowen, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams,
C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones, R.G.Jones,
S.Paddison, R.Phillips, S.Pursesey, S.H.Reynolds,
A.J.Richards and M.Spooner

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*

- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

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Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Cabinet / Education Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees

19 April 2023

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Councillor R.Phillips

Vice Chairperson: Councillor P.Rogers

Councillors: T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, C.Galsworthy, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, C.James, J.Jones, R.G.Jones, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, C.Phillips, S.Pursey, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, M.Spooner, D.Thomas and D.Whitelock

Co-opted Voting Members: M.Caddick

Co-opted Non Voting Members: R.De Benedictis

Officers In Attendance C.Barnard, N.Blackmore, R.Bowen, R.Crowhurst, C.Griffiths, J.Griffiths, Liam.Hedges, A.Jarrett, C.John, H.Jones, K.Jones, N.Jones, N.Pearce, A.D.Thomas, A.Thomas and J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors W.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, S.Hunt, A Llewelyn, M.Peters, S.Knoyle, N.Jenkins, S.Jones and J.Hurley.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

It was proposed and seconded and agreed that Cllr Rebecca Phillips be the Chairperson for this meeting.

It was proposed and seconded and agreed that Cllr Phil Rogers be the Vice-Chairperson for this meeting.

2. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided advice to members on this item:

As you will know, when arriving at decisions relating to any of the Councils business, you must do so with an open mind and consider all the information before you objectively, and have due regard to the advice of your Council's officers. During the decision-making process, you must act fairly and in the public interest. You are required to make your decisions on the basis of the facts in front of you, and not to have made your mind up in advance of the meeting.

If you consider that you have come to a settled view or decision in respect of this matter prior to the meeting on the 19th April 2023 and are will be unable or unwilling to take into account any other representations or advice, you will

in all likelihood have predetermined the matter. Whilst it is expected that this is unlikely, should you find or consider yourself to have predetermined the decision, please declare this at the earliest opportunity to the Monitoring Officer. If you have pre-determined this matters you will be unable to take any part in this decision and are unlikely to be able to participate if any further decisions fall due to be made.

The proposal which falls due to be considered on the 19th April 2023 is a new and fresh decision that members will make, so the fact that you may have voted in a particular way at a previous meeting, will not

amount to pre- determination provided you retain a genuinely open mind in respect of this new meeting.

You are also entitled to hold a preliminary view about a particular matter in advance of a meeting (otherwise known as pre-disposition) as long as you keep a genuinely open mind and are prepared to consider the merits of all the arguments and points made about the matter under consideration before reaching your decision.

Pre-determination, on the other hand, as I have indicated earlier would be where you have clearly decided on a course of action in advance of a meeting and are totally unwilling to consider the evidence and arguments presented on that matter during the meeting. Accordingly if you feel you have predetermined your position you should not be taking part in any decision making process. Pre-determination could not only invalidate the decision, lead to proceedings being brought against the Council and it may also amount to a breach of the Members Code of Conduct.

To make you aware there are two different types of predetermination you must consider:

- Actual predetermination – this is when a person has closed their mind to all considerations other than an already held view.
- Apparent predetermination – this is where a fair-minded and well-informed observer, looking objectively at all circumstances, considers that there is a real risk that one or more of the decision-makers has refused even to consider a relevant argument or would refuse to consider a new argument.

It is perhaps this element of apparent predetermination that you must give great thought to.

It should be noted that the determination here is one for members to decide. If a challenge was brought as to a decision maker having predetermined a matter, it would be for that member to justify and provide evidence, in all likelihood to the Courts, that they were not predetermined.

For the sake of clarity, manifesto commitments and policy statements) which are consistent with a preparedness to consider and weigh relevant factors when reaching the final decision, are examples of legitimate predisposition, not predetermination. In addition, previously expressed views on matters which arise for

decision in the ordinary run of events are routine provided you are able to approach this particular decision with an open mind.

Name	Item	Interest	Dispensation from Standards Committee	Is the Interest prejudicial and requires member to leave the meeting?
Cllr. Marcia Spooner	Item 5 SSIP	Chair of Governing Body at Rhos Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Nathan Goldup-John	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Coedffranc Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Rhidian Mizen	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Cwmafan Primary school Governor of Cwm Brombil	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Sonia Reynolds	Item 5 SSIP	Governor YGG Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Rob Jones	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Coed Hirwaun Primary School Governor of Ysgol Cwm Brombil	Speak Vote	no
Cllr. Dan Thomas	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Gnoll Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. James Henton	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of YGG Tregales	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Wayne Carpenter	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Gnoll Primary School Governor of Melin Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Rebeca	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of	Speak	No

Philips		YGG Pontardawe Governor of YGG Trebannws	Vote	
Cllr. Phil Rogers	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Llangatwg Community School Governor of Catwg Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Marie Caddick (Co-Opted Member)	Item 5 SSIP	School Governor of St Josephs Primary School Neath		No
Cllr. Andrew Dacey	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Sandfields Primary School Governor of St Joseph's RC School & 6th Form Centre	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Wyndham Griffiths	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Blaenhonddan Primary School Governor of Wauanceirch Primary School	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Steve Hunt	Item 5 SSIP	Daughter works at Castell-nedd Primary School Governor of YGG Blaendulais	Speak Vote	no
Cllr. Sian Harris	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Creunant Primary	Speak Vote	No
Cllr. Scott Jones	Item 5 SSIP	Governor of Federated	Speak Vote	No

		Primary Schools of the Upper Afan Valley.		
Cllr. Nia Jenkins	Item 5 SSIP	School Governor at Alltwen Primary School	Speak Vote Decided to not vote	No

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - STRATEGIC SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ENGLISH - MEDIUM 3-11 SCHOOL TO REPLACE ALLTWEN, GODRE'RGRAIG AND LLANGIWG PRIMARY SCHOOLS (ENCLOSED WITHIN CABINET PAPERS)**

Officers provided a brief overview on the report outlined within the circulated agenda. This included an outline of the process and options available to Cabinet when considering the report.

Members of the scrutiny committee first considered the consultation process. Members referred to the risk outlined within the report concerning the staff and community resisting any change to education as a result of any decision made. Officers advised that the Risk Assessment contained mitigations around this and officers also emphasised their knowledge and experience in delivering school reorganisation across the borough.

Officers confirmed that there were 13 different face to face meetings with various representatives from the community. There was also one face to face public meeting and one online public meeting. Members had been provided all the consultation responses received. Where possible, the consultation report had outlined facts and evidence to respond to comments received.

It was confirmed that the political aspects of any correspondence that was sent out during the consultation period, had nothing to do with officers.

Officers outlined that the intention of consultation was to assist with shaping a proposal and to ensure that officers have thought of everything to assist with formulating recommendations for Cabinet to consider. From officers' experience, the majority of consultation responses usually received are against a proposal.

It was confirmed that the £14.7million capital grant from Welsh Government has been ring fenced for school reorganisation within Neath Port Talbot. However, members could not determine where this money could be spent if the proposals were not agreed by Cabinet. A further satisfactory grant funding application would have to be made to access any money from Welsh Government.

As part of the process, officers are obliged to undertake a community impact assessment. It was undertaken and included as part of the consultation documentation. That concluded that there was very little use of the schools by the community. The use that is being made by the community is mainly by parents or family groups. It was confirmed that new schools are obliged to have properly considered and thought out community access. Members were concerned that the new facilities would not be within the same communities that they are currently situated.

With regards to the playing fields, it was confirmed that the new site does have sufficient room for the school and to maintain the current number of playing fields. Further that they would be compliant with requirements of various sports.

Welsh Government are keen to promote community use of new school provisions. It would be incumbent on the governing body of the school to ensure that this happens.

Officers outlined that the LDP is currently undergoing a review. The LDP has to ensure that sustainable communities are delivered going forward and has to be aligned with various other policies and strategies. It was acknowledged that the site identified for the potential new school is a difficult site. However, a long list of sites was considered prior to this one being agreed and the identified site was the most acceptable, including access to public transport and walking and cycling routes. Specific issues in relation to the planning of the site, would be fully considered at the planning application stage.

Members expressed their concern at the pupil numbers identified for the new school. The numbers of the three schools amalgamated together do not meet the numbers required for the new school. Members queried how these figures were arrived at. Officers confirmed that the proposal outlines the number of pupils that could claim a place within the catchment. It does not include Welsh medium schools. Further there are no intentions to close any other schools

within the Swansea Valley. The number includes future planning, future developments and the number of pupils that could claim a place within the catchment area.

It was noted that over the last 10 years, the number of pupils attending schools in the Swansea Valley has increased by 160. Members specifically questioned the safe routes to school plan in relation to Alltwen. Officers outlined the route from the current Alltwen Primary School site down to the proposed site of the new school. Officers confirmed that should the proposal proceed then every pupil accessing the new school would have their safe route to school individually assessed.

Relevant detailed traffic management plans would be undertaken as part of the planning process, not as part of the current process. However officers were confident that it would be only require minor highway works to be undertaken should the proposal progress. A survey has been undertaken to determine the current existing transport in the area.

Members raised concerns with industry capacity issues for the required home to school transport. Officers advised that currently it was only planned for one extra bus to be required, therefore this should not be an issue.

Officers outlined how the school could ensure that children accessing the transport could still attend after school clubs. This would be a decision for the school governing body on how this was managed.

Members were concerned that unless a child was in full-time education then they could not access home to school transport and this could ultimately result in a decline in the number of children attending nursery. Welsh Government policy sets out that transport does not have to be provided for nursery children, however officers confirmed that members could look at the NPT policy if they wished to do so.

It was noted that active travel is a priority of Welsh Government and there is ongoing investment with regards to it in terms of bidding for the funding. There is ongoing work being undertaken by the authority to assess active travel routes and ensure that the community have maximum access to suitable routes.

Members expressed their concern that there were no exact costings with regards to changes to highways in response to the proposal. Officers advised that they are experienced at delivering schemes within the funding envelopes that are in place. It was agreed that both Welsh Government and NPTCBC contributions would have increased since the original case was put together in 18/19.

Officers advised that they were satisfied that the highway network could accommodate the increase in volume of traffic. However, officers informed that they did not know the exact costings for any highway works and if any further amendments would need to be made to highway plans.

Officers confirmed the two biggest factors that determine the standard in a school are the quality of leadership and management in a school and the quality of teaching. As a general rule, there are better quality applicants for larger schools than smaller schools in terms of headship.

Members were reminded that Estyn were a statutory consultee with regards to the proposals. Their comments indicated that the standards across the schools would at least be maintained, if not improved.

Members were informed that if the proposals were approved a shadow governing body would be formed. This governing body would appoint a new Headteacher for the school. A structure will then be agreed for the school. The local authority will then ask the shadow governing body to take a decision to ring fence all the jobs in the new school from the existing staff at the schools.

It was confirmed that Welsh Government would fund significant remodelling of schools, in addition to new builds. However, any business case would need to satisfy the 5 case business model and also the BREEAM standards.

Members considered the Welsh Language impact assessment. There are 13 impacts identified. There are mitigations identified in the assessment. Officers noted that it is an assessment only and not documented facts. The assessment considers the proposal as a whole and identifies potential impacts – both positive and negative. Many of the identified actions have also been input into the WESP.

Welsh language primary schools are still experiencing low transfer numbers. Members were concerned the proposal will have a further negative impact on pupils attending Welsh medium schools.

Officers confirmed the proposed school projected numbers was based upon the current numbers from the three schools and the pupils in the catchment area for the proposed schools.

Officers confirmed that pupils can travel across border to attend schools outside of NPT. Officers confirmed if they were able to put an ASD provision into the current schools, this would have been done already. If the proposal falls, a suitable provision will need to be sourced elsewhere within the county.

Members considered the new swimming pool which is part of the proposal. Members queried if the proposal falls, what are the consequences for the three schools and the swimming pool moving forward?

With regards to Alltwen and Llangiwig, the schools will continue to remain open and they will be maintained as all current schools are within the current maintenance budget and programme. With regards to Godre'graig, advice will need to be given with regards to how to proceed, including provision for a new school and business cases to be drafted. Officers confirmed it will be very difficult to secure capital funding for a new school. In terms of the swimming pool, this would not be funded by Welsh Government. There is possible grant funding available from Sports Wales, up to £300,000 however the potential cost of a replacement pool would be £13million at this time. Officers confirmed the pool will close in two years' time, at the longest.

Officers outlined the current state and potential maintenance of the swimming pool.

Following scrutiny

A recorded vote was proposed and seconded and agreed.

The recommendation as outlined on page 36 of the Cabinet report was proposed and seconded.

For: Cllrs C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, C.Galsworthy, R.Jones, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, S.Pursesey, P.Rees, S.Renkes, S.Reynolds, D.Whitelock,

Against: Cllrs T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, C.James, J.Jones, C.Lewis, C.Phillips, R.Phillips, A.Richards, P.Rogers, M.Spooner, D.Thomas,

Abstain: M.Caddick.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was not supported to Cabinet.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

Councillor R.Phillips

Chairperson

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Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

**(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot and
Microsoft Teams)**

Members Present:

28 June 2023

Chairperson: **Councillor P.Rogers**

Councillors: T.Bowen, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams,
C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones, R.Phillips,
S.Pursey, A.J.Richards and M.Spooner

**Councillor
Apologies:** R.Jones and S.Reynolds

**Officers In
Attendance** A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, C.Griffiths, H.Jones,
S.Brennan, S.Curran, N.Daniel, S.Davies,
T.Davies, C.Furrow-Harris, S.Griffiths,
R.Headon, A.Hinder, C.Owen, A.Thomas,
L.Willis and P.Chivers

Officer Apologies: K.Jones

Cabinet Invitees: Cllr.W Griffiths, Cllr.J. Hale, Cllr.S.Harris,
Cllr.S.Hunt, Cllr.J Hurley, Cllr.S.Jones, Cllr.
S.Knoyle, Cllr.A Llewelyn and Cllr.C.Phillips

1. Chairs Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Mr Noelwyn Daniel, Director of Strategic and Corporate Services who had recently commenced in post.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 9, 12, 13, 14, 17 and 18 from the Cabinet Board Agenda.

2. Declarations of Interests

Cllr. P Rogers - Cabinet Agenda item 18 – personal non-prejudicial

Cllr. H. C Clarke – Cabinet Agenda item 17 – personal non-prejudicial

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 25th April 2023, 10th May 2023, 17th May 2023, 24th May 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Report of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group**

Members commented that the Task & Finish Group had been productive and produced interesting ideas, and expressed their interest in continuing to have a member involvement in the Welsh language going forward. The strategy should be a living document and subject to regular review, monitoring and updating to strengthen awareness and use of the language across our communities and in the work of the council. It was noted that the strategy was important across the whole of the council but particularly within Social Services. Members commented that it had been difficult for the authority, partners and community organisations to progress the previous strategy due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agreed to commend the findings of the Task & Finish Group as well as the amended Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to Cabinet.

5. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Council Tax Premiums – Long Term Empty Homes and Second Homes

Members asked that the current financial environment is taken into account when any decisions are made.

Members added there was a financial impact and income could be generated if the policy was implemented. Following consultation, a report will be brought back to committee before the final decision is made. Any decision will not be implemented until the financial year the year after next.

Following scrutiny the recommendations were supported to Cabinet.

Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring

Members requested further information on the average call handling waiting times. Officers confirmed that a detailed report concerning Customer Services and Performance was given at a members seminar earlier this year. As Customer Services is now part of People and Organisational Development a full review is planned and this will be the first task of the newly appointed Customer Services Manager and members will be involved in the review process. There are many factors that affect call handling performance, the current performance indicator target is 40 seconds which is a short amount of time when staff are completing other tasks. Members queried whether the call timing started following the recorded Welsh/English message or when the phone call was answered? Officers confirmed that the timing commenced following the recorded message. Members re-iterated their offer to be involved in the review process.

Members questioned why the mandatory safeguarding training completion rate was not higher. Officers will obtain further information from HR and this item will be added to the next Scrutiny meeting agenda.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

Revenue Outturn and Reserves Position Statement 2022 23

In relation to the home to school transport budget, members asked if any work had been carried out during the budget setting process in relation to the overspend and whether there were other innovative ways of providing this service. Officers confirmed a range of strategic reviews on transport were ongoing; the outcome of which will be reported to members as part of the budget setting process for this year. Officers are equally concerned regarding the overspend and pressures on the home to school budget. Members thanked staff for their hard work and the issues they had recently overcome.

Members were pleased that in relation to out of county placements, that young people are being educated closer to home and also commented that it was pleasing to see additional funding for the School Based Counselling Service.

Members asked for clarification on the movement of underspend to reserve pots and the reference in the report to 'capacity to support regeneration projects' and queried what the reserve might be used for. Officers confirmed that the funding could potentially be used for employing additional staff to assist in temporary pressures. There are various projects ongoing; these projects include Freeport, Wild Fox and the Global Centre of Rail Excellence so the funding could be used to provide support for these areas. There is also the possibility that it could be used for commissioning external advice in some of these areas if the expertise is not held internally. It was noted that in May the Cabinet approved the contribution of £200k towards the cost of the Freeport development so this reserve could be utilised if required.

Following scrutiny the report was noted

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

Members requested more information on the appeal of the authority against the decision regarding Swansea Valley Schools. Officers confirmed there was no further update at the present time and will advise members when further information is known.

Members questioned the translation service that is used by staff and asked what could be offered to members. The Director of Strategic and Corporate Services confirmed that translation services would be reviewed to identify where services could be strengthened to improve and strengthen the use of the Welsh language and translation facilities in house.

Following scrutiny the report was noted

6. Forward Work Programme 2023-2024

This item was noted.

7. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

8. **Access to Meetings**

Resolved: to exclude the public for the following items pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

9. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (Exempt under Paragraph 14)
Following scrutiny the recommendations were supported to Cabinet.

Former Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Road, Neath (Exempt under Paragraph 14)
Following scrutiny the recommendations were supported to Cabinet.

CHAIRPERSON

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee 20th September 2023

Report of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chairperson

Matter Information

Wards Affected:

1. All Wards.

Annual Report of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Purpose of the Report:

2. To update members on the work undertaken by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub-Committee for the civic year 2022/2023 and to note and commend the report to Council.

Background:

3. To provide an overview of the work of the committee for 2022/2023.

Financial Impacts:

4. No Impact.

Integrated Impact Assessment

5. There is no requirement at this stage to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information only.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

6. No impacts.

Workforce Impacts

7. No impacts.

Legal Impacts

8. No legal impacts.

Risk Management Impacts:

9. No impacts.

Consultation

10. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

11. That the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee note and endorse the annual Report 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1 and commend to Council.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

12. To note and endorse the Annual Report 2022/2023 of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Implementation of Decision

13. Immediate.

Appendices

14. Appendix 1 - 2022/2023 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee Annual Report
15. Appendix 2 - Cabinet Scrutiny Committee summary of items considered
16. Appendix 3 - Cabinet (Policy & Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee summary of items considered.

List of Background Papers

17. None.

Officer Contact

18. Cllr Phil Rogers - Chair of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Cllr.p.rogers@npt.gov.uk

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2022/2023

**‘Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet
(Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub
Committee Annual Report’**

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1. Chair's Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report for Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee for the period June 2022 to May 2023.

This report provides the opportunity to reflect on the work that has been undertaken by the committee and its attempts to ensure that any decisions taken are in the best interests of the citizens of Neath Port Talbot.

You may be aware that this Committee has within its remit the scrutiny of the Council's budget, the Corporate Plan and the risk register.

We as a Scrutiny Committee are under no illusions that the difficulties facing this Council will continue for the foreseeable future and it is important the Scrutiny continues to develop as the Council responds to the national guidelines etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Vice Chair Councillor Chris James for his continued support along with the Cabinet Members who have been present at the meetings to listen to and consider the views of the Committee prior to making any decisions.

Finally, I would like to thank the officers for their invaluable support and guidance through the year and I look forward to working with you again during the next civic year.

Councillor, Chairman. Phil Rogers
Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

2. Introduction to Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny suggests that there are four key principles to effective Scrutiny and they are:

1. provides ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
2. enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
3. is carried out by ‘independent minded governors’ who lead and own the Scrutiny process
4. drives improvement in public services

Scrutiny is an integral part of the Council’s political structure and in many ways it plays a key role in assisting the Cabinet. Scrutiny Committees in the Council have met regularly through the year and have considered a wide range of issues. A number of the Scrutiny Committees have undertaken some in depth work as part of their forward work programmes, and this is highlighted within this document.

The Scrutiny Committees within the Council are:

- Cabinet
 - Policy & Resources Sub
- Education, Skills and Wellbeing
- Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
- Environment, Regeneration & Streetscene Services

Each of the Committees includes a mix of non-Executive Councillors that is politically balanced to reflect the political balance of the Council. The Chairs and Vice Chairs plus the Committee Membership are decided annually by Full Council. Each Committee meets at least 8 times during a Civic Year.

3. Purpose of Annual Report

- 3.1** The main aim of this report is to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Cabinet Scrutiny and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee 2022/2023.

3.2 The document may also facilitate discussions on additional items that could be included within the work programme for 2023/2024.

4.0 Overview of the work of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee during 2022/2023

4.1 Number of Meetings

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee met on 10 occasions during 2022/2023.

Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee met on 4 occasions during 2022/2023.

4.2 The Work Programme 2022/2023

Generally, the agendas for the scrutiny meetings have been consistent with those outlined in the forward work programme. The Committee agree its Scrutiny work programme during their Forward Work Programme Workshops held on 15.11.22 and the 13.06.22 for the Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee.

When developing the work programme, it was essential to consider the key plans and strategies of the Council. The work programme also includes the results of any external inspections that had been undertaken within a specific service area or on a corporate level.

The review of the work of the Committees are included in the following pages and has been structured to reflect the key roles of the Committee: Pre-Decision Scrutiny (which included policy development and review) and any items they wished to look at as part of their remit (usually for information purposes)

4.3 Key Issues considered during 2022/2023

Throughout the civic year the Committee is consulted on a number of areas that require decision. These range from routine general issues to the larger more complex decisions. Cabinet Board Members are in attendance during discussions and any views of the Committee are taken on board prior to making a decision.

The Scrutiny Committee also undertakes the performance monitoring role by considering a wide range of reports. Members challenge the information that is included which enables them to understand the issues facing the service. These reports are monitored on a quarterly basis.

As well as scrutinising key decisions, the Committee identifies topics within their remit in which they wish to look at in more detail. These items are usually for information purposes e.g. updating Members on specific projects of work.

The Council is well placed to demonstrate the improvements it has made to the scrutiny function, and it is essential that we continue to build on these developments, and I look forward to the next year as we take forward the priorities of the Council.

5. Issues considered Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

June 22 – May 2023

See appendix 2 attached for full list.

Insourcing of Leisure Services

Members were presented with information relating to the insourcing of leisure services, as detailed within the report circulated.

Following discussion, the following amendment to recommendation 2 contained within the circulated report was proposed and seconded: “That the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Cabinet Member be granted delegated authority to make initial decisions required to present a full business case to Cabinet/Cabinet Board in October/November 2022 to achieve the delivery of the insourcing of leisure services by the 1st April 2023 (providing that such delegation shall not be utilised where there is a proposed change in service delivery and or significant cost to service delivery).

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet, with the amendment included.

Strategic School Improvement Programme - Proposal to Establish an English-Medium 3 - 11 School to Replace Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary Schools

The circulated report provided detail regarding the proposal for a new consultation around the proposal for school reorganisation in the Swansea Valley; the proposal was to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg Primary Schools.

The following amendment was proposed and seconded as follows:

That the recommendation be amended to change the consultation period start date from 5th December 2022 to the new start date of 9th January 2023, with the 42 days consultation period following that date.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the amended recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.

Public Services Board consultation on the Draft Well-Being Plan. 2023-2028

Members were given a presentation on the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board consultation on the Draft Well-Being Plan.

Members were provided with a summary of duties that arise from the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act places a duty on the Public Services Board to prepare and publish an assessment of the well-being in its area and then prepare and publish a local well-being plan setting out its local objectives to improve the well-being in the area and the steps it proposes to take to meet them.

This is now the second well-being plan that the PSB is consulting on.

Following scrutiny members agreed to:

- Note the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board draft Well-being Plan as statutory consultee (as listed under Section 43 (1) of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and provide their comments/feedback that has been raised at today's meeting be included within the consultation.

- That the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee write to the Chair of the PSB, inviting the partners of the PSB to a future meeting of the scrutiny committee to consider the PSB Well-being Plan in further detail.

Corporate Plan - Strategic Change Programme for the Period 2023- 2024

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny Members were supportive of the recommendation to Cabinet with the amendment as set out:

That the reference to Climate Change on page 133 of the circulated report be expanded to reflect the Climate Change motion approved at Council earlier this civic year and that this commitment is repeated on page 134 of the circulated report to underline the commitment to advancing this work in this civic year pending a fuller review of the corporate plan for the period 1st April 2024 onwards.

Celtic Freeport

Members were updated on the outcome of the Welsh Freeport Competition announced by the UK and Welsh governments and the request to take forward the work involved in submitting an Outline Business Case which is the next stage of the Freeport policy process, as detailed within the circulated report.

Officers advised the committee that there was an error within recommendation (e) detailed within the circulated report. It was noted that recommendation (e) read:

‘Approves the commitment of £250,000 revenue to prepare the Outline Business Case and Financial Business Case and notes any requests for additional financial commitment will be brought back to Cabinet for further approval;’

It was noted that the figure £250,000 were to read £200,000 and not £250,000 as detailed within the report.

5.1 Issues considered Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee

October 2022- April 23

See appendix 3 attached for full list.

Customer Services Update

Members were provided with an update in relation to Customer Services, following the transfer of the service from Digital Services to People and Organisational Development within the Chief Executives Directorate, as detailed within the circulated report.

Officers provided members with a PowerPoint presentation.

Discussions took place around the practicalities of the telephony system and the data that it gathers. Members were interested in the full customer journey to ensure that any possible improvements were considered. Officers noted that any comments raised at today's meeting would be considered as part of the review.

Members were informed of a Council app that was currently being developed to help with the customer journey. Members were pleased about this to replace the dated council app.

Members wanted officers to have consideration for those constituents that don't use IT and to ensure a system was in place to ensure that the review was inclusive of all constituents.

The scrutiny members offered their support to officers to help with the review on Customer Services. It was noted that members were interested in having a Task and Finish group/one day workshop session.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

6.0 Investigative Scrutiny

Each year a Scrutiny Committee can undertake a piece of work in more depth on a specific area where they feel they could assist in delivering service improvements.

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group

Members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee undertook a Task and Finish Group, to review the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the County Borough, to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No 1) Regulations and to aim for the Welsh Government's target of achieving 1 million Welsh Speakers by 2050.

The Task and Finish Group commenced on the 23rd November 2022 and met twice to complete this task.

The Task and finish group put forward the following recommendations.

1. That approval be granted for the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (attached Appendix 1) to go out to Consultation for a 4 week period.
2. That the Consultation responses are considered by the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group and the final Welsh Language Promotion Strategy be proposed to Cabinet for approval.

Following scrutiny at the meeting on the 5th of April 2023 the recommendation of the Task and Finish Group was supported to the Cabinet Board.

7. Scrutiny Contact Information

The Scrutiny Team are located in the Chief Executive's Policy and Democratic Services section and their contact details follows:

Name	Position	Contact Details
Charlotte Davies	Senior Scrutiny and Project Management Officer	E-mail: c.l.davies2@npt.gov.uk Tel: 01639 763745
Alison Thomas	Scrutiny Officer	E-mail a.thomas6@npt.gov.uk Tel: 01639 763300
Tom Rees	Scrutiny Officer	E-mail: t.rees1@npt.gov.uk Tel: 01639 763922

Alternatively, if you think Scrutiny should consider a certain area or issue as part of their work programme then please e-mail democratic.services@npt.gov.uk

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Appendix 2 - Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Committee Name:		Cabinet Scrutiny Committee		
Number of Meetings held during the Council Year:		12		
Date of Meeting	Issues Considered	Information/Monitoring/Decision	Amendments	Task and Finish Group Created
29th June 2022	Welsh Medium Starter School - Neath Abbey	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
	Delivery of the Welsh Government's Discretionary Cost of	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Neath Port Talbot Hardship Relief Scheme	Decision - Option 2 recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Levelling Up Fund Bids	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Potential Neath Port Talbot Freeport Opportunity	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
28th July 2022	Flying Start Expansion - Phase 1	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Insourcing of Leisure Services	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board with amendments	Amendment to recommendation 2 contained within the circulated report was proposed and seconded: "That the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Cabinet Member be granted delegated authority to make initial decisions required to present a full business case to Cabinet/Cabinet Board in October/November 2022 to achieve the delivery of the insourcing of leisure services by the 1st April 2023 (providing that such delegation shall not be utilised where there is a proposed change in service delivery and or significant cost to service delivery).	N/A

	Additional Capital Programme Allocations	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Childcare in Schools and Education Buildings: Temporary Changes to Current Rent Arrangements	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Housing Renewal and Adaptation Service (HRAS) - Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Castle Drive Culvert Reconstruction	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Panteg./Cyfyng Road, Landslip	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Provision of a Welcome Centre	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
19th October 2022	Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 – As at end of September 2022	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/2023 - As at end of September 2022	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2027/2028	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
	Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Review	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
21st November 2022	Freeport Bid Submission	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
30th November 2022	Strategic School Improvement Programme - Proposal to Establish an English-Medium 3 - 11 School to Replace Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwig Primary Schools	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board with amendments	That the recommendation be amended to change the consultation period start date from 5th December 2022 to the new start date of 9th January 2023, with the 42 days consultation period following that date.	N/A
	Pontardawe Swimming Pool -Emergency Works	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
19th January 2023	2023/24 Budget Proposals for Consultation	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Approval of strategic ‘anchor projects	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
22nd February 2023	Self-Assessment 2021/2022	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Establishment of Liaison Forum in Respect to Afan Valley Adventure Resort	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A

	Establishment of an Advisory Panel in Respect of the Global	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Phase One of the Accommodation Review.	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Capital Budget Monitoring Report 22/23 as of the End of December 2022	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 2022-2023 as at the End of December 2022	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	The 2022-2023 Risk Register Monitored and Report	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
1st March 2023	To exercise the powers set out in Section 35 of the Wellbeing	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
10th March 2023	Public Services Board consultation on the Draft Well-Being	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
	2023/24 Revenue Budget Proposals	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
5th April 2023	Report of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Quarter 3 Performance Indicators	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
25th April 2023	Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
	Corporate Plan - Strategic Change Programme for the Period	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board with amendments	Commitment is repeated on page	N/A

		Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board with amendments	Officers advised the committee that there was an error within recommendation (e) detailed within the circulated report. It was noted that recommendation (e) read: · 'Approves the commitment of £250,000 revenue to prepare the Outline Business Case and Financial Business Case and notes any requests for additional financial commitment will be brought back to Cabinet for further approval;' – It was noted that the figure £250,000 were to read £200,000 and not £250,000 as detailed within the report.	N/A
10th May 2023	Celtic Freeport	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	None	N/A
17TH May 2023	Grant of Officer Indemnity to Karen Jones in respect of Loc	Information Only - Members noted the report	None	N/A
	Update in relation to the delivery of the Neath Port Talbot			

Appendix 3 - Cabinet (Policy & Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Date of Meeting	Issues Considered	Information/Monitoring/Decision	Amendments	Task and Finish Group Created
04/10/22	Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 - Annual Report 2021-2022 Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Annual Report 2021-2022	Decision on both items	no amendments	no T&F required
24/01/23	Income Generation and Process to Date Consultation on 2023-24 Budget Proposals	Information - committee noted the report Information - committee noted the report	no amendments no amendments	
07/03/23	Customer Services update	Information - committee noted the report	no amendments	Members were interested in having a Task and Finish group/one day workshop session.
	Third Sector Grant Funding – Additional applications for funding	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	no amendments	no T&F required
	Miscellaneous Grant Fund Application	Decision - recommendation was supported to the Cabinet Board	no amendments	no T&F required
18/04/23	Neath Port Talbot Cyber Security Strategy Update 2023 Cost of Living Crisis Neath Port Talbot CCTV and Emergency Response Update	Information - committee noted the report Information - committee noted the report Information - committee noted the report	no amendments no amendments no amendments	no T&F required no T&F required no T&F required

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Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2023		
28 th June	Welsh Language Promotion Strategy – Task & Finish Final Report	Chair of Cabinet Scrutiny
20 th September	Annual Report	Chair of Cabinet Scrutiny – Cllr Phil Rogers
13 th October	PSB – Wellbeing Plan	Vanessa Dale
8 th November	Safeguarding Training Report	Lynne Doyle
24 th November	PSB – Wellbeing Plan	Vanessa Dale
13 th December		
2024		
24 th January		
16 th February	PSB – Wellbeing Plan	Vanessa Dale
6 th March		
17 th April		
9 th May	PSB – Wellbeing Plan	Vanessa Dale
29 th May		

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