

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

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

Members Present:

22 January 2024

Chairperson: Councillor P.Rogers

Vice Chairperson: Councillor C.Jordan

Councillors: T.Bowen, C.Clement-Williams, J.Henton,
R.G.Jones, R.Phillips, S.Purse, S.H.Reynolds
and A.J.Richards

**Officers In
Attendance** K.Jones, A.Jarrett, N.Pearce, H.Jones, S.Rees,
N.Daniel, N.Blackmore, R.Crowhurst, T.Davies,
C.Furlow-Harris, C.Howard, A.James, C.Jones,
L.McAndrew, C.Owen, J.Stevens and
A.Thomas

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.K.Hunt,
J.Hurley, N.Jenkins, S.Jones, A.Llewelyn and
C.Phillips

1. **Chairs Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 7, 8,
and 11 from the Cabinet agenda.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2023, were
approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Self-Assessment 2022-2023

Officers gave an overview of the Self-Assessment 2022-2023 report contained within the Cabinet Agenda pack.

Members referred to page 29 of the report (Summary of Performance) and expressed disappointment in the amount of completed areas. Members questioned the delay in the completion of SA22 (refine the councils approach to the Self-Assessment strategy) and SA3 (set up recruitment taskforce) and expressed concern over the length of time taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants, leavers within the Local Authority and the timings around planning applications. Members expressed disappointment that percentage figures did not include full data, as previously requested, which made scrutinising and recommendation to Cabinet difficult.

Officers confirmed that reference SA22 could not be completed in 2022/2023 due to capacity issues but it is hoped that this will be completed for the 2023/2024 self-assessment. Officers apologised for the lack of corresponding figures in the report in respect of the percentages and confirmed this will be included before the document is published.

The Head of People and Organisational Development confirmed that the recruitment taskforce has been set up, but work is ongoing as there are still a number of hard to fill jobs across the council. Work is ongoing to bring forward more detailed leavers data and leaver reason categories have been improved. The data provided reflects 2022/23 and more detailed information will be available as time progresses.

Members stated it would have been clearer if the report had stated that the recruitment taskforce has been set up and continues ongoing work.

Members referred to page 20 of the report and asked for clarification of the approach adopted this year, and why other reports weren't aligned as has happened in other authorities.

Officers confirmed that research was undertaken to establish the best approach for the self-assessment as guidance was limited. It was noted that this was only the second self-assessment that has been

completed and member's feedback will be taken on board in relation to the completion of the third self-assessment. The toolkit will be able to demonstrate the progress made over time and consideration will be given to ensure there is no duplication and that the assessment adds value.

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet.

Update Report on Settlement Position

The Chief Finance Officer advised the committee that this is an information report for Cabinet, which sets out the worsening financial position as a result of the reduced provisional settlement. The report also details three specific grants where there has been significant cuts across Wales.

Members requested further information regarding the implications of any loss of grants.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the council received details of the specific grant reductions at the same time as the provisional settlement was announced on 20th December 2023.

The Director of Social Services, Health & Housing confirmed that when any grant is cut, firstly the service looks at whether there are opportunities to cut what the grant is spent on. In relation to the Social Care Workforce Grant, Welsh Government encouraged the grants to be used to provide support to external domiciliary care providers in relation to domiciliary care recruitment. This work needs to continue resulting in a £500k pressure on the Social Service budget. Work is ongoing to bring the budget into balance.

Members thanked the Director for providing clarity, and questioned whether the shortfall would be identified from the Social Services budget or whether it would be spread across directorates.

The Director confirmed that this pressure would be taken from the Social Services budget and work is ongoing to finalise this.

Members considered the report as circulated within the supplement pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

5. **Forward Work Programme 2023/24**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

6. **Committee Action Log**

The Committee Action Log was noted.

7. **Urgent Items**

There was one urgent item:

APSE Wales Chair – Housing, Homelessness and Community Support

Members did not scrutinise this item.

8. **Access to Meetings**

Resolved: 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

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

Home Office Consultation on Safe and Legal Routes (Exempt under Paragraph 14)

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet.

CHAIRPERSON