



**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10.00 am THURSDAY, 7 JANUARY 2016**

**COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE**

**PART 1**

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. To receive the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 19th November 2015 (*Pages 5 - 8*)
3. To receive the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd December 2015 (*Pages 9 - 14*)
4. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2014/15 (*Pages 15 - 16*)

**Report of the Head of ICT**

5. Corporate Procurement Update (*Pages 17 - 22*)
6. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
7. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
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. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

**S.Phillips**  
**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre**  
**Port Talbot**

**Friday, 1 January 2016**

## **Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:** Councillor D.W.Davies

**Vice  
Chairperson:** Councillor A.Jenkins

**Councillors:** Mrs P.Bebell, A.Carter, Ms.C.Clement-Williams,  
M.Harvey, Mrs.L.H.James, A.Llewelyn,  
A.R.Lockyer, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell,  
A.J.Siddley, J.Warman, I.D.Williams,  
Mrs.A.Wingrave and Mrs.D.Jones

## **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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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**19 November 2015**

**Chairperson:** Councillor D.W.Davies

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor A.Jenkins

**Councillors:** M.Harvey, Mrs.L.H.James, A.Llewelyn,  
A.R.Lockyer, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell,  
J.Warman, I.D.Williams and Mrs.D.Jones

**Officers In Attendance** Mrs.K.Jones, D.Rees, Mrs.S.Rees,  
Mrs A. Hinder, K Davies, N.Evans and  
Mrs.K.Holt

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors P.A.Rees and A.N.Woolcock

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### 1. **COUNCIL TAX AND HOUSING BENEFIT REPORT CARDS**

Members received a presentation on the report cards for Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit.

Members asked what parts of the service would not be maintained within in Council Tax due to budget cuts. Officers confirmed that the visits to check properties to engage with customers to try and negotiate payment would not be maintained.

Members asked whether there were any ongoing issues with sickness absence in the unit and Officers stated that there was one individual who was on long term sick and another was due back at work shortly following an accident while undertaking a visit.

In relation to staff Personal Development Reviews Members were informed that the unit had not undertaken them as yet this year.

Members asked how much housing benefit overpayments were still outstanding. Officers confirmed that it was approximately £2,500,000

but this had been accrued over 15 years. A repayment plan was in place for many of the debts.

Members were advised that the service supported the digital by design programme. Members were concerned that this would be detrimental to some people who may have access issues. It was confirmed that it would not be a one size fits all and the face to face channel would remain open.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16.**

Members noted the forward work programme.

3. **PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

3.1 Governance Group – 6 Month Progress Report and Corporate Assessment Action Plan

Members considered the report and were informed of the progress being made against specific actions. Members were advised that the action in relation to City Region Scrutiny was red because work to strengthen scrutiny of Local Service Board collaborative activity, the work of the Western Bay Social Services and health collaborative and ERW had been prioritised in the first instance. The action plan was acknowledging that scrutiny of City Region activities was a matter that still required consideration.

Members asked for more specific detail on the type of legal challenges that the Council could face. Officers stated that training had been delivered over the summer period by the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Democratic Services to officers emphasising the importance of including all relevant information in reports, in particular the need for robust Equality Impact Assessments and appropriate consultation. Guidance had been issued to all officers' and a standard report template had been introduced to promote greater consistency across the Council. During the training, examples of judicial review

challenges had been used to illustrate some of the key learning points.

Members requested that they are reminded what they should be considering when decisions are before them to mitigate against any potential further judicial reviews.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

### 3.2 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2015/2016 – Quarter Two Performance

Members considered the Performance Management Report for the second quarter of 2015/2016. Members raised their concerns in relation to the performance in relation to Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 assessments. The Chair of the Children, Young People and Educations Scrutiny Committee confirmed that his Committee had already raised their concerns in this area and had received an assurance from officers that results were due to inconsistencies across Wales in the quality of teacher assessments. Members noted that at GCSE level Neath Port Talbot performed very well. The Committee requested that the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor this issue.

Members enquired whether the Council had done all it could to ensure that people can visit local authority sport and leisure centres as the Council was currently last in Wales. It was recommended that the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee request further information on this area at a future meeting. Members noted that it was important that Members were reminded of the respective responsibilities of Celtic Leisure and the Council.

Members also noted their concerns in relation to the number of library materials issued during a year. It was recommended that the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee investigate this area.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

### 3.3 Sickness Absence Monitoring Report

Members considered the report on sickness absence that contained information on sickness absence figures across the Council.

Members welcomed the content of the report and stated that it was easy to understand and well written.

Members commented on some of the high areas of sickness absence and requested that the following service areas prepare an in-depth report for the relevant scrutiny committee:

Schools Sickness	– Children Young People and Education
Street Care	– Environment and Highways
Community Care	– Social Care Health and Housing

Members requested that at the special meeting to be held in December that financial information was provided to demonstrate the costs of sickness absence.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

## **CHAIRPERSON**



## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**3 December, 2015**

**Chairperson:** Councillor D.W.Davies

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor A.Jenkins

**Councillors:** Ms.C.Clement-Williams, M.Harvey,  
Mrs.L.H.James, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer,  
Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell and I.D.Williams

**Officers In Attendance** H.Jenkins, Mrs.K.Jones, Ms.C.Furlow and  
Mrs.A.Manchipp

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors A.H.Thomas, Mrs.S.Miller and  
A.N.Woolcock

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### 1. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor A.H.Thomas Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants in relation to DANSA and Dove Workshops as he is a Board Member on both projects.

Councillor A.R.Lockyer Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants in relation NPT Shopmobility as he is a Board Member.

Councillor A.Llewelyn Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re Third Sector

Grant Funding – Award of Grants in relation to the Ystalyfera Development Trust as he is an ordinary community member, and confirmed his dispensation to both speak and vote thereon.

Councillor I.D.Williams

Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants in relation to the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) as his daughter is employed by the CVS.

## 2. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

### Cabinet Board Proposals

#### (i) Third Sector Grant Funding

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services gave Members an overview of the report which gave details of the first tranche of applications received since the approval of the new Third Sector Grant Funding Scheme, on 23 July, 2015.

Members then raised the following points in relation to the applications received:-

Confirmation was sought on the Scheme, whereby the anticipated 5% reduction in funding from the Welsh Government to the Local Authority, would be passported on to the grant recipients, who will also have a 5% cut in funding. Clarification was also sought on the procedure should the cut in Welsh Government funding be less than 5%, as there was a commitment given to advise applicants prior to the end of December. Members were advised that any adjustments would be made in the next financial year.

(At this point in the meeting Councillor A.H.Thomas reaffirmed his interest and withdrew from the room for the discussions on the applications for grant received from DANSA and Dove Workshops.)

Members questioned the apparent disparity between applications from Port Talbot and Neath/Pontardawe based

organisations. In particular DANSA covered urban areas of Swansea and the Dulais Valley etc., but not in Port Talbot urban areas. Officers advised that DANSA was a community based organisation and provided assistance in those areas worse hit by the withdrawal of bus services. The urban areas of Port Talbot was not seen as much of a problem as buses would still run on the commercially viable routes. The agreement with DANSA was to maintain the current level of service, however the Director of Environment would be advised of Members concerns.

Concern was expressed by some Members that some organisations, may receive financial support for 2 different projects or from multi streams for the same project. Officers advised that there would now be more indepth scrutiny of the work outside organisations undertook as a result of the financial support provided. Officers emphasised the importance of the work undertaken by CVS in ensuring that the third sector engaged with the Council.

(At this point in the meeting Councillor A.R. Lockyer reaffirmed his interest and withdrew from the room for the discusssions on the applications for grant received from NPT Shopmobility.)

Members requested that, due to the nature of the work undertaken by NPT Shopmobility, the Equality Impact Assessment in relation thereto, be revisited in order to keep the information up to date.

The lack of monitoring of those outside bodies supported by the Authority was discussed and Members considered and supported a proposal to invite strategic partners to Scrutiny Committee meetings in the new Civic Year to present details of the work their organisations carried out on behalf of the Council as a result of the funding.

Members were pleased to note that the Ystalyfera Development Trust was recognised as a strategic partner. In addition it was noted that the Trust had won the contract from the Department of Works and Pensions to provide support to members of the public in the County Borough.

Concern was expressed that as a result of the introduction of the Independent Living Scheme and the Direct Payment

Scheme the Authority was relying more on outside organisations such as Care and Repair, but at the same time the Authority was cutting their funding. Officers advised that the funding was core funding, to enable the organisations to remain solvent.

In relation to the work of the Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council, Members noted that it mainly focused on people in Swansea, with few cases in Neath Port Talbot. Some concern was expressed in relation to the financial position of various organisations including the Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council. Alternative provision was being developed with Community Groups in relation to equality requirements.

Members asked that Officers ensure that the Authority supported the CVS in attracting volunteers.

Members received details of the current position in relation to the Community Centre in Croeserw, which was subject to European Grant Funding.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

(ii) Miscellaneous Grant Application

The Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

3. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute No 5 below the Chairman agreed that this could be raised at today's meeting as an Urgent Item pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME**

Committee supported the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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**Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Forward Work Programme**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item
19 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	Council Tax and Housing Benefit Report Cards
	Pre-Scrutiny – Cabinet Board Items
	Quarterly Performance Reporting
7 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Pre-Scrutiny – Cabinet Board Items
18 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Human Resources Report Card
	Community Safety Report Card
	Pre-scrutiny - Cabinet Board Items
	Quarterly Performance Reporting

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	Pre-scrutiny - Cabinet Board Items
	Legal Services Report Card
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	Pre-scrutiny - Cabinet Board Items



## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7th January 2016

### Report of the Head of ICT & Corporate Procurement – Stephen John

#### **Matter for Information**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

#### **Corporate Procurement Update**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with a position statement on the current work programme and continued developments within the Council's Corporate Procurement Service.

#### **Background**

2. The Corporate Procurement Team has been working with the National Procurement Service, Welsh Purchasing Consortium and implementing a Purchase to Pay system (Oracle iProcurement) over the last 12 months, and this report will provide an update to Members on current work and associated developments.

3. The departure of a number of senior staff from within the team has required a small restructure of existing staff with a realignment of responsibilities. This report will also detail these changes.

## **Procurement Update**

4. As highlighted above, the Corporate Procurement Team has engaged with various collaborative bodies during this financial year. The most prominent collaborative procurement organisation in Wales is the National Procurement Service (NPS). The NPS has identified that by using the frameworks that they have put in place, NPTCBC has realised £79,285 of cash releasing savings for the 2014/2015 financial year. We are currently awaiting a report providing a breakdown of what this figure represents as we are unable to reconcile the figure ourselves.
5. Whilst larger scale collaborative procurement exercises can often exclude small suppliers, it is pleasing to note that a number of local and regional suppliers have been appointed to NPS framework to supply to the Council.
6. Star Multifuels, a family run business based in Pontardawe was awarded the contract to supply fuel to the Council, which is circa £1m per annum in expenditure.
7. Ministry of Furniture who are working out of the old Remploy factory based in Baglan and continue to employ a number of old Remploy workers, have been awarded the contract for the provision of office furniture.
8. Also Days Hire, who have offices in Neath have been successfully re-appointed to supply the Council with hire cars.
9. Neath Port Talbot CBC currently procures through a large number of collaborative framework agreements let both nationally and regionally. These are facilitated by the NPS as mentioned above, the Welsh Purchasing Consortium, through regional inter Authority working and locally.

10. A selection of the frameworks being procured on a regional basis is shown below:

Contract	Lead Organisation	Participating Bodies
South West Wales Construction Framework	Carmarthenshire Council	Neath Port Talbot Council, City & County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire Council & Carmarthenshire Council
South West Wales Engineering Framework	Carmarthenshire Council	Neath Port Talbot Council, City & County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire Council & Carmarthenshire Council
South West Wales Ground Investigation Framework	Neath Port Talbot Council	Neath Port Talbot Council, City & County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire Council & Carmarthenshire Council
Window Cleaning Services	City & County of Swansea	Neath Port Talbot Council & City & County of Swansea
Various Western Bay Social Care agreements	Neath Port Talbot Council / City & County of Swansea / Bridgend Council	Neath Port Talbot Council / City & County of Swansea / Bridgend Council

### **Procurement Team Update**

11. The Corporate Procurement Team has recently lost two of its most senior staff. The loss of expertise and experience will undoubtedly have an

effect in the short term but knowledgeable staff remain in post and although their experience is mostly at an operational level it is believed that there is sufficient expertise remaining within the team which will ensure the service continues to meet Council demand. This will be achieved with current staff operating with a re-alignment of roles and responsibilities and with a much greater degree of flexibility.

12. However, although we are comfortable in believing that current staff levels are sufficient, the work programme will be reviewed regularly to ensure that staff are able to cope with demand and should this become an issue then there may be a requirement to recruit short term cover for specific projects.

## **iProcurement**

13. A significant percentage of Council spend is now enacted through the iProcurement system and an implementation plan is in place to complete the roll out to all outstanding departments.
14. As staff migrate to ordering goods and services through the iProc system, management information becomes available allowing each service head a greater degree of clarity and understanding of where their budgets are being spent. Using this information they are able to identify savings opportunities and exercise greater control over who spends what and where.
15. Some services have used the migration to iProc to undertake a significant change in their ordering process and develop a new methodology which delivers the above benefits. The centralised purchasing unit set up in Social Services is one example and since its inception they have increased their control over their external spend making better use of corporate contractual arrangements and providing an increased level of compliance and management information. They have also been able to realise staff savings by reducing the number of staff within the Directorate that are able to order goods and services.

## **Going Forward**

16. It is expected that the National Procurement Service will undertake an All-Wales approach regarding the bulk of the collaborative procurement

required to address common and repetitive spend, installing framework agreements which are accessible via nationally managed catalogues provided through our iProc system.

17. This should have the benefit of reducing the amount of associated work that is currently met by the team, allowing them to concentrate on more complex work that delivers benefits in other areas.
18. However, this will not remove the need for work to be undertaken on regional and national collaboration procurements for Local Government specific goods and services. These are areas where collaborative arrangements have been in place for some time and primarily address highways and construction works.
19. The introduction of the new Public Contracts Regulations 2015 has placed a monetary threshold on social care expenditure on those contracts which exceed £625,000; legally directing the Authority to competitively tender any contract over this value. That requirement, along with ongoing national work in Social Care Commissioning and Procurement, will require the Council to build on the recent work undertaken across the Western Bay region, ensuring that the Council achieves the maximum benefits that joint working can deliver.

### **List of Background Papers**

20. None

### **Officer Contact**

21. Mr Stephen John, Head of ICT and Corporate Procurement,  
Tel: 01639 686218 or email: [s.john@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.john@npt.gov.uk)
22. Mr Ian John, IT Business Relations Manager,  
Tel: 01639 686036 or email: [i.f.john@npt.gov.uk](mailto:i.f.john@npt.gov.uk)

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