

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

18 October, 2017

The Mayor: Councillor D.Keogh

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor S.Jones

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, S.ap.Dafydd, D.W.Davies, N.J.E.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, C.Edwards, M.Ellis, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, W.F.Griffiths, S.Harris, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, C.James, H.N.James, D.Jones, H.Jones, L.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, M.Protheroe, L.M.Purcell, S.Purse, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, R.Thomas, J.Warman, D.Whitelock, C.Williams, A.Wingrave, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, D.Michael, K.Jones, R.George and A.Manchipp

Representative of the Wales Audit Office: Present

Representatives of the Translation Service: Present

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 6 September 2017, be confirmed.

2. **S.BARRY WALES AUDIT OFFICE ON THE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT (AIR) AND INTRODUCTION TO THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE**

Council received a presentation from Mr Steve Barry of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on the Annual Improvement Report (AIR). In addition Members received a brief outline of the work of the WAO.

Following the presentation Members asked the following:-

- How were the recommendations made in relation to the governance arrangements for service change monitored. Members were advised that, since the compilation of the WAO report, the reporting template had been amended to ensure that all the information needed to support decision making was contained within reports and was consistent across the various Committees and Cabinet Boards. This development build upon the training of reporting Officers had been undertaken throughout the Authority by the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services. In relation to evaluating the impact of service changes – the revised report template would identify how change could be assessed, for example evidenced by the continued provision of services, the attainment of statutory requirements for such services as recycling and the provision of improved services.
- In relation to the risk register, Members expressed concern that progress had been slow and that the register was not yet fit for the purpose of managing the Authority's risk. Members noted that the WAO report referenced in the AIR was dated October 2016. Progress had been made in addressing the recommendations to ensure there was more consistency in the identification, recording, measurement and ongoing reporting of risks. The Council's insurers Marsh had provided training to reporting Officers and guidance had been introduced to improve consistency. In due course there would be a need to bring forward a revision of the Risk Policy to incorporate some of the revised arrangements into the Council's formal arrangements. All of these changes would be assisted by the introduction of new software. A further report would be submitted to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board in early 2018.
- In relation to the Performance Management Arrangements for the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate Members noted the WAO proposal that Adult Services 'learn from' Children's Services.

- Members asked whether the changes to the Committee portfolios which had brought all of the social services functions into one Committee would be seen as an improvement in practice. Mr Barry advised that he was not able to offer a view on the structure of the Council's Committees, however, as far as improving performance management, ultimately it was the behaviour of the staff and not the configuration of Committees that was the most important.

The Leader then summed up and advised Members that this was the last meeting Mr. Barry would attend as he was retiring. On behalf of Council the Leader thanked him for the professional way in which he had dealt with the Authority and wished him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

RESOLVED: that the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2016/17, as contained in the circulated report, be noted.

3. **ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

Council received the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services which presented the Annual Report 2016-2017 (Corporate Improvement Plan – 'Rising to the Challenge'). Members noted that the report reported on the priorities of the last administration. All of the issues that required attention within this administration had been included in this year's Corporate Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Report for 2016/17, as contained in the circulated report, be adopted.

4. **STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES: INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS**

RESOLVED: that the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (Mr Aled Evans) be appointed to the post of Statutory Director of Social Services on an interim basis to take effect immediately and retrospectively to 9 October 2017.

5. **DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES HEALTH AND HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**

Council received the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services Health and Housing for 2016/17.

Following presentation of the report, Members raised the following:-

- In relation to the introduction of Direct Payments, was this now in place and achieving the predicted savings. Members were advised that there had been a lot of work to put the scheme in place, and that it was too early to determine the savings. This would be kept under review, however it was important to recognise that the scheme would allow service users the freedom to choose the best care package to meet their own particular needs, and that should that be in house provision, that this would also be provided.
- Members questioned the ability of the Authority to deliver services through the medium of Welsh? Officers confirmed that work was ongoing in relation to this issue and that it may be necessary to work in collaboration with neighbouring Authorities. Members were keen to ensure that services provided at the single point of contact could be delivered through both Welsh and English.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

6. **PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2018-2019**

Members received the Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in relation to the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2018/19, which had been announced by Welsh Government on 10 October 2017. The Provisional Settlement would be put out for consultation following the meeting of Cabinet on 8 November, 2017.

Members commented that health had again been protected which had resulted in significant pressures on Local Government.

The Chancellor would make his Autumn Statement on 22 November but it was anticipated that this would not have an impact on 2018/19.

Members questioned the detail of the funding formula and were advised that there were 52 specific elements considered in the

distribution of £5.5bn across Wales. Two indicators had been detrimental to the Authority's share ie the number of pupils where the rest of Wales had increased at a faster rate than Neath Port Talbot and that the Authority had less growth in the number of residents 85 years old and over.

Members, Officers and Trade Unions were thanked for the lobbying work which had been undertaken, which in turn had had a positive impact on the settlement.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

7. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Council received a verbal amendment to the circulated report to the effect that Councillor R.Wood was the proposed replacement for Councillor S.Jones on the Community Safety and Public Protection Scrutiny Sub Committee.

RESOLVED: that Councillor S.Jones be replaced by Councillor R.Wood on the Community Safety and Public Protection Scrutiny Sub Committee.

8. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS OF CABINET AND CABINET BOARDS 2016/17

RESOLVED: that the undermentioned Minutes be noted:-

Policy and Resources	20 September, 2017
Education, Skills and Leisure	14 September, 2017
Education, Skills and Leisure	14 September, 2017
Regeneration and Sustainable Development	21 July, 2017
Regeneration and Sustainable Development	22 September, 2017
Streetscene and Engineering	14 July, 2017

Streetscene and Engineering	8 September,2017
Social Care, Health and Wellbeing	3 July, 2017
Social Care, Health and Wellbeing	13 July, 2017
Social Care, Health and Wellbeing	7 September, 2017

CHAIRPERSON