

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

13 December 2017

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: J.D.Morgan, C.Edwards, S.E.Freeguard,
S.M.Penry and J.Warman

Officers In Attendance D.Rees, C.Furlow, Mrs. R. Headon and
Miss.C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.J.Taylor, C.Clement-Williams and
D.W.Davies

1. **MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor D.W.Davies - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in relation to Third Sector Grant Funding as he is a Member of the Black and Ethnic Minority Association from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Councillor A.N.Woolcock - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in relation to Third Sector Grant Funding as he is a Board Member of 'Y Banwen'.

Councillor. S.Rahaman - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in relation

to Third Sector Grant Funding as he is the Secretary of NPT BME Community Association Local Authority Representatives

Councillor. S.M.Penry -

Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in relation to Third Sector Grant Funding as she is a Member of the CVS, Member of the Board MCC and Member of the Age Connect on the Board.

2. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2017**

The Committee noted the minutes.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

It was highlighted to Members that a special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee had been scheduled for 31st, January 2017, that members were requested to attend.

4. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

4.1 **Quality Performance Management Data 2017/18 – Quarter 2 Performance**

Members received information on the quarter 2 performance management data for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017 for Chief Executive's and Finance & Corporate Services Directorates and the performance management data for the same period for services that are within the remit of the other four Cabinet Boards as contained within the circulated report.

Members noted that the percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the academic year in Primary Schools and Secondary Schools had increased, and requested that further information on pupil numbers be included in the data for future reports

Members asked for further information on the Wellbeing and Behaviour Team. Officers confirmed that the team was newly established and committed to obtaining details on and the dates that the team was established, the impact the team has had since being implemented and clarification on why the data was showing a downward trend to provide to Members

Members highlighted that the performance indicators 36 and 37 detailed on page 41 of the circulated report are below the Welsh average and felt that the explanation provided was not adequate.

Members queried the full time education provision provided by the Authority and asked for further information on the home schooling provision. Officers confirmed that they would get a response from the relevant officers to provide to Members.

Members noted the downward trend of children being supported to live with their family and asked for further information in relation to Looked After Children (LAC) and the support that is offered.

Officers confirmed that they would get a response to Members from the relevant Officers.

Members were concerned that that the percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of being looked after hasn't increased.

Members asked for information on the process of recruiting social workers to ensure good quality applicants.

Members highlighted that there was an error at the end of page 61 and that the word 'Gage' should be spelt 'Gauge'.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

4.2 Developing a Language Promotion Strategy

Members received information on the development of a Language Promotion Strategy to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards as contained within the circulated report

The Chair highlighted to the Committee that representation had been received from Cllr.A.Llewelyn, requesting that he be considered for the membership of the Task and Finish Group.

It was agreed that the current Chair and Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, be automatically included in the Membership and sustain their roles of Chair and Vice Chair.

Members asked what responsibilities fall to the Council in relation to the Welsh Language Strategy. Officers confirmed that the Authority is not wholly responsible for improving or maintaining the number of Welsh Language Speakers.

Members commended the idea of developing a Task and Finish Group.

The Deputy Leader informed the Committee that the Task and Finish Group would have a smaller membership than the main Committee and would be politically balanced.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board taking in consideration of the requests from the Committee.

4.3 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter and Report

The Committee received information in relation to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter as contained within the circulated report,

Members asked why the number of complaints received in relation to Roads and Transport is more than double the national average. . Officers confirmed that the relevant Officer would respond back to Members.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

5. **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 items 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.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

6.1 Council Tax Write Offs

Members received information on Council Tax Write Offs as contained within the circulated report.

Members asked for further information in the form of a comparative report from another Council on Council Tax write offs. Officers stated that while this would be possible, the comparison would be difficult as the figures from a different Authority would be different to how the figures are collated in this Council.

Members queried if officers collate the reasons why Members of the public do not pay Council Tax and if there is a common thread. Members asked for a Case Study on 3 individual case studies to be brought back to a future meeting.

Members highlighted that Ward Members previously received letters on changes of public in their ward and asked if these letters could be reintroduced.

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

CHAIRPERSON