

POLICY AND RESOURCES/ CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

27 September 2017

Chairman: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Councillors: C.Edwards, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey,
S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, J.D.Morgan, S.M.Penry,
L.M.Purcell and J.Warman

Officers In Attendance S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, A.Evans,
Mrs.K.Jones, C.Furlow and A.Manlipp

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors R.G.Jones, A.J.Taylor, C.Clement-
Williams, D.W.Davies, D.Jones, A.R.Lockyer,
P.A.Rees and A.Wingrave

Invited Member: Councillor S.Jones

1. **CHANGES TO OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATION**

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

2. **WELLBEING OBJECTIVES AND CORPORATE PLAN**

Committee received a presentation on the above report, Members then raised the following:-

- Members felt that the Wellbeing goals were commendable , however it was difficult to ascertain whether the Public Services Board's goals were in line with those of the Authority;
- In relation to consultations, Member noted that this had been carried out over the summer period, in order to meet deadlines;
- Members noted that the final version of the Plan would be presented to Council on 28 September 2017, for adoption;

- Members were pleased with the number of responses received to the consultation, however it was felt that the Plan should be broken down to show the impacts on areas of the County Borough and Councillors contact local Groups to help with the implementation of the Plan;
- It was acknowledged that the Plan integrated some of the Authority's other major Plans such as the Local Development Plan, and such things as the Welsh Language Standards and the work of the Valley's Task Force, etc.;
- Members supported the provision of out of school activities, but expressed concern at the problem of accessibility. In addition the provision of sporting activities was seen as an issue in outlying areas of the County Borough;
- Members felt it important to focus on poverty and the ongoing crime/antisocial behaviour within certain areas of the County Borough. It was noted that the Cabinet Member, Officers and Police representatives had visited areas where antisocial behaviour was a problem. In addition, an initiative was being introduced in Neath. There was a need to prioritise actions due to the lack of resources, however work would be ongoing throughout the Borough, wherever the need arose.
- There would be significant challenges throughout the County Borough with savings/income generation of around £65-£68m being required over the next 5 years.
- The effects of Brexit on the Country's economics were not yet known.
- In relation to Education, Members were advised that a mapping of the provision would be undertaken in order to identify any duplication of provision. In addition schools would be provided with a toolkit to identify and deal with such things as emotional well-being and mental illness.
- Members felt that an increase in inward investment would be of benefit to the Authority, although the building of a prison in the area may increase congestion on the M4.

Following scrutiny, the Committee supported the proposal to be considered by Cabinet.

3. HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE INCREASES

Members received a verbal update in relation to the above, in that the Leader had received an e mail advising him that only 5 of the 13 responses received were in favour of the increase. There were 257

Hackney Vehicles and 343 drivers in the County Borough, the response rate was therefore very low-although this was not unusual.

As a result of the above and following scrutiny, it was agreed that Cabinet be requested to defer the report for further consultation.

4. **RESPONSE TO THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION 'OUR VALLEYS, OUR FUTURE' CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Members were advised that the above document had been issued for consultation by the Welsh Government. The Leader had established a Task and Finish Group to look at the proposals in depth and to draft a response, as well as developing recommendations for valley communities more broadly.

Members received a Draft letter prepared by the Task and Finish Group which, it was proposed, would form the basis of the Council's response to the Welsh Government's consultation.

Members raised the following points:-

- The change in the work demographic now allows more people to work from home resulting in less travel;
- There was a need to take into account the impact of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and other corporate plans on the future of the valleys, particularly land use. Some of the LDP was at odds with the Welsh Government proposals. The Chief Executive agreed that there was a need to address issues such as the National Resources Wales Flood Risk Maps, etc. There would be an opportunity to tweak the LDP in January 2018;
- In relation to the Strategic Hub referred to in the consultation document, Members were not against its development but felt that it would be of more benefit in valley communities;
- Transport was still seen as a major issue in the valley areas, and Members were advised that consideration could be given to the Authority running its own bus company in due course. Members were reminded that both the Dulais Valley and Glynneath had rail links. Could these be reopened? Emphasis would need to be on the development of transport infrastructure throughout the valleys. In relation to the City Deal proposals, perhaps consideration could be given to joining up the metros both in the Cardiff and Swansea Valley areas? Officers advised

that this would not be possible in the Cardiff area and that the Swansea proposal did not include Neath;

- Members felt that there was a need to promote tourism in the County Borough;
- Members hoped that Welsh Government would consider the Authority's response as contained in the circulated report;
- It was noted that the Task and Finish Group would continue.

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

CHAIRMAN