



**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9.30 am WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 2018**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE**

1. Declarations of Interests
2. Minutes of the previous meeting (*Pages 3 - 10*)
3. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (cabinet reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
4. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet (Finance) Sub Committee agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (Cabinet Finance Sub - Committee reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
5. Forward Work Programme 18/19 (*Pages 11 - 14*)
6. 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

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

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

**Thursday, 21 June 2018**

## **Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:** Councillor A.N.Woolcock

**Vice** Councillor S.Rahaman

**Chairperson:**

**Councillors:** M.Crowley, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, L.M.Purcell, A.L.Thomas and J.Warman

## **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.*

## CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**16 May 2018**

**Chairperson:** Councillor A.N.Woolcock

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

**Councillors:** M.Crowley, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, J.D.Morgan, S.M.Penry, L.M.Purcell and A.L.Thomas

**Officers In Attendance** A.Evans, A.Jarrett, G.Nutt, S.Phillips, K.Jones, C.Griffiths, Hinder and Miss.C.Davies

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.W.Davies, D.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.Wingrave

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### 1. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF CABINET AGENDA**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

#### **Cabinet Board Proposals**

##### 1.1 **Members Community Fund**

Members received information on the Members Community Fund that is to be financed in 2018/19 from Council Reserves. It was noted that permissions are sought to set aside £10,000 for each Ward Member to facilitate investment in projects that support the delivery of the Council's policies and priorities, as contained within the circulated report.

Members welcomed the report and asked whether privately owned rear lanes and school crossing patrols would be eligible under the criteria, and if so how can they be sustainable when the project is for a 2 year period only. Officers highlighted that

the project will eventually expire, and the responsibility would lie with the Member. The director of environment highlighted that the Authority currently does not adopt un-adopted rear lanes. It was noted that the proposals will be looked at in detail prior to submitting them to Cabinet for their approval.

Members asked that in relation to the applications of the projects, members are required to declare an interest if they have an interest in a subject that is being discussed. It was noted that members are able to apply for dispensation; however there was concern that the Head of legal services would be inundated with applications. It was noted that the Cabinet would have the decision and therefore would be the Cabinet that would have to be concerned with the Declarations of interest. It was noted that there would be an all members seminar for members on the Community fund that will include more detail.

It was noted that the money can be used for match funding and highlighted that this is a community benefit fund and needs to benefit the Community.

Members asked whether projects involving purchase of land would be eligible. It was noted that money could get tied up in that type of a project and therefore precautions have been put in place to protect the money from getting ring fenced.

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

## 1.2 Local Government Reorganisation

Members were provided with advice on the Welsh Government's Green Paper "Strengthening Local Government, Delivering for People" issued on 20 March 2018 (at Appendix 1) and the terms of a suggested response, as detailed in the circulated report.

Members highlighted that they were supportive of the response that the Chief Executive had included in the circulated report. In relation to the proposed merger between Neath Port Talbot and Swansea councils, members were concerned about the financial impact of such a change on the residents of Neath Port Talbot. Members also highlighted concerns that an enlarged authority might see a re-focusing of activity into the

city to the detriment of Neath Port Talbot and its valley communities. Members felt strongly that local government should remain “local” not “regional”. The Leader of the Authority highlighted that the letter had been sent to opposition party leaders prior to the meeting for their views. Members requested that should the Cabinet agree to send the proposed letter, then the report of the Chief Executive should be appended for further information of the Welsh Government.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet, subject to the Chief Executive’s report being reproduced in full to accompany the letter included in the papers.

### 1.3 Welsh Language Promotional Strategy

The Chair of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee presented a draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy that had been created by a task and finish group of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the Group had met on several occasions between 29 January 2018 and 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018.

It was highlighted that the Council needed to achieve an increase in the number of Welsh Speakers in Neath Port Talbot over the next five years.

In presenting the work, the Chairman thanked the members of the task and finish group, officers, Mr O.Glenister of Menter Iaith Castell Nedd and Mr C.Campell of Sbectrwm for their efforts and help in producing the draft Welsh Language Promotional Strategy for Neath Port Talbot.

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

## **CHAIRPERSON**

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## **CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**23 May 2018**

**Chairperson:** Councillor A.N.Woolcock

**Councillors:** M.Crowley, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, S.K.Hunt, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry and J.Warman

**Officers In Attendance** A.Evans, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, C.Furlow and C.Davies

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.Wingrave

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### 1. **CABINET SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

### 2. **CABINET AGENDA FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet items:

#### Cabinet Proposals

#### 2.1 Annual Governance Statement 2017/2018

Members received an update on the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 as contained within the circulated report.

Members highlighted that the Annual Governance Statement, refers to 'Openness' and Members asked whether that meant an 'open door policy' or transparency. Officer's highlighted that it referred to transparency, Members therefore asked for the

word openness be changed to transparency in the Annual Governance Statement.

Members stated that the Consultation Pages were not available via the front page of the Neath Port Talbot website and agreed that they should be easily accessed. Officers committed to looking into the issue.

Members noted that the improvement work identified following the development of the Annual Governance Statement is overseen by and progress reported to Audit Committee. Members asked when the Audit Committee would have sight of this and Officers highlighted that it would be included in the Statement of Accounts.

Members highlighted that within the Annual Governance Statement there is a section relating to the Welsh Language Standards and they asked whether the work and findings of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group should be included in this section. Officers responded that the main focus has been the progress of work undertaken in 2016/17, however will be amended to include some wording around the Task and Finish Group

Members asked whether the Corporate Risk Policy had been scrutinised. Officers highlighted that it would be going to the Audit Committee in June 2018.

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

## 2.2 Revenue Outturn and Reserves Position Statement 2017/18

Members received information in relation to the Council's General Fund Revenue Outturn and Reserves position for the 2017/18 financial year as contained within the circulated report.

Members asked for information on the reserves Members stated that some areas require additional money to be spent however the budget isn't available but could existing reserves. It was highlighted that there is detailed information on where reserves are spent in Appendix 2 of the report.



Members asked for more detail to be included on point 3.4 of the circulated report in relation to school reserves. Officers explained that information is presented at Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee and it is within the remit of that committee to scrutinise school reserves in detail.

Members queried the overspend in the internal fostering service for two Looked After Children, and queried whether the amount was high. Officers highlighted that the cost is not just for the two children but includes other associated costs.

Members queried the underspend within the Adoption Service. Officers highlighted that there were less children placed in adoption which required less money.

Member's queried the overspend in 'Other Community Care – Direct Payments, Third Sector'. Officers highlighted that there has been an increase in people applying for direct payments that was not anticipated.

The Chair of Planning highlighted to the Committee that the Planning Department has not got an overspend, it is the amount of money that is owed through the collection of fees that is represented in the report

Members queried the overspend in Elderly Services – residential care – external provision and highlighted that it works out roughly £10,000 per each elderly person and asked whether this was an unexpected overspend in that period. Officers highlighted that there was an increase in people that went in to elderly residential care which accounts for the overspend

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

### 2.3 Capital Programme Outturn 2017-18

Members received information on the financial outturn position for the Capital Programme for 2017/18 as contained within the circulated report.

Members asked whether Officers feel confident that the opening of new schools will stay on budget. Officers highlighted

that 50% of the funding for new schools has come from Welsh Government, however the Authority has also had to match fund 50% but Officers reassured members that grant will be secure.

Members asked for an update on the progress of the former Metal Box site. Officers stated that work was ongoing with the solicitors, but that there were no updates to raise at this point. The Ward Members thanked Officers for their continual updates on the Metal Box.

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

## **CHAIRPERSON**

**(DRAFT)**  
**Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**  
**Forward Work Programme 2018/19**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
23 May 2018		
7 June 2018		
27 June 2018		
18 July 2018		
1 August 2018		

12 September 2018		
3 October 2018		
24 October 2018		
31 October 2018		
21 November 2018		

5 December 2018		
16 January 2019		
23 January 2019		
13 February 2019		
20 February 2019		
6 March 2018		

27 March 2018		
17 April 2018		
8 May 2018		
29 May 2018		