



CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9.30 am WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY 2019

COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

Part 1

1. Declarations of Interests
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 14*)
3. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (cabinet reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
4. Forward Work Programme 18/19 (*Pages 15 - 18*)
5. Urgent Items
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, 17 January 2019

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt,
S.K.Hunt, L.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn,
S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry,
L.M.Purcell and A.L.Thomas

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:

27 November, 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, L.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, L.M.Purcell and A.L.Thomas

Officers In Attendance: S.Phillips, K.Jones, C.Griffiths, D.Giles, H.Jones, S.Rees and T.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams and P.D.Richards

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor L.C.Jones - Agenda Item 2 - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2019/20 – as she is employed by DANSA.

Councillor M.Harvey - Agenda Item 2 - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2019/20 – as he is employed by South Wales Police.

- Councillor S.Miller - Agenda Item 2 - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2019/20 – as her niece is employed by the Local Authority.
- Councillor A.N.Woolcock - Agenda Item 2 - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2019/20 – as his niece is employed as a Training and Development Support Manager within the Local Authority.
- Councillor S.Rahaman - Agenda Item 2 - Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Consultation on Corporate Services Budget and Draft Savings 2019/20 – as he is a Local Authority representative (and secretary) for the Neath Port Talbot Black and Minority Ethnic Community Association.

2. **CONSULTATION ON CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2019/2020**

As part of the public consultation on the 2019/20 budget proposals, Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, as it related to the Corporate Services budget.

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the background of the report, and advised that since the circulated report had been written, Welsh Government had confirmed that on 19 December, an extra £13 million would be allocated to Local Authorities within Wales, which would equate to approximately £750,000 for each Authority – the details of this would be reported to Members after Christmas. It was noted that this would not solve the budget deficit or negate the need for the proposed savings within the circulated report. It was highlighted that a lot of small services budgets (such as Human

Resources, Legal Services and so on) are now made up almost entirely of staffing costs.

ICT Division

The ICT Service Manager (who would be taking over as the Head of ICT in 2019 following the retirement of the current Head of Service) advised Members that the ICT budget savings proposals for 2019/20 were predominantly made up of staffing costs. Some longstanding members of staff were retiring, to be replaced by staff starting lower down on the pay scale. Members queried if there were any plans to reduce the amount of staff working within the IT Service Desk, and noted that currently managers were looking at how they could do things differently, such as analysing data and identifying peaks periods.

Members queried whether staffing reductions within the ICT Division could have an effect on digital services; learning within schools and so on. Officers explained that succession management was in place as well as extra training being rolled out. It was confirmed that the IT Service Desk supports schools as well as Civic and other Council buildings. Members felt the out of hours IT help team provided valued support when Members had issues with their computer equipment, and were pleased to note that there were currently no plans to reduce this service. It was noted that a voice recognition system was currently being trialled.

Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Division

The Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer gave an overview of the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Division section of the circulated report. It was noted that although the CCTV service was not statutory, Officers were trying to identify new ways to sustain the service on a different footing, such as diversifying the use of the control room. Members queried whether the CCTV cameras could be left in place, should the system need to be decommissioned, and Officers explained that although it would not be possible to leave dummy cameras in place, an option would be to have the cameras recording, without anyone monitoring them in the control room. Members were concerned that the valuable work done around community safety and partnership should not be undone, and discussed the provision of CCTV in valley areas, as well as the possibility of working with private enterprises to have cameras recording cars entering and leaving valley communities.

It was noted that this would be a good opportunity to revisit the Authority's strategy on CCTV. The Police give no monies toward the CCTV service and do not assist the Authority with maintaining the system – Members felt the annual precept paid to the Police should be revisited on the basis of this. The Chief Executive would speak to the Police and Crime Commissioner about CCTV in Neath Port Talbot.

CCTV as a potential source of income generation was suggested by Members, as well as discussions with the business community of Neath Port Talbot around possible contributions towards CCTV.

Members noted that although the management structure of the Authority was changing, expertise still needed to be maintained within service areas, so upskilling was critical. Members queried how the removal of the Port Talbot One Stop Shop had been decided upon, and noted that two thirds of callers go to Neath One Stop Shop, so the decision had been based on volume of visitors. Members were concerned about how callers with disabilities such as blindness would be able to use the new Skype facilities, and Officers explained that all customer service staff had already been given disabled services training.

Members queried how Pontardawe hub would fit into the changes, and noted that discussions were currently taking place between Officers of the Local Authority and Third Sector organisations within Pontardawe to encourage the promotion of online services as well as giving hands on help to members of the public, where appropriate. Members suggested this practice could be extended to Celtic Leisure.

Commercialisation, advertising and sponsorship were discussed, and Members noted that clearer proposals around these topics would be presented to Members in the New Year. It was noted that a corporate approach to these areas was needed.

Officers explained there were low levels of sickness in the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Division, but the need to support staff through the changes to maintain wellbeing and keep stress levels low, was emphasised. Officers highlighted the importance of manageable workloads, and the need for managers to ensure that their staff don't consistently work out of hours.

Members were encouraged to lobby Westminster regarding the budget cuts, and how this would affect services in their areas. It was noted that new models of service and technologies would be coming out in the next few years, which would be worth exploring.

Legal Services Division

Members noted a verbal amendment to page 15, under the heading 'Land Charges', the word 'Ceredigion' should instead read 'Neath Port Talbot'.

The Head of Legal Services explained that the decision to cancel some of the online resources used by Solicitors for research purposes, was due to the fact they were very expensive, and the information could be sourced from other packages already subscribed to by the Council. Extra in house training would also be provided. Officers highlighted that the option of joining with other Authorities to benefit from discounted deals had already been explored. Members discussed the workload on Local Authority Solicitors following the recent changes to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, and noted that the volume of cases had increased.

It was noted that training within the Legal Service was an extremely expensive element – different ways of training was being explored, including sending one member of staff on a training course, who would then train others within the team on their return, as well as self-learning/teaching.

Members noted the sentence at the top of page 16 of the circulated report ('Any further significant reductions in staff numbers will result in services, either ceasing altogether, or being significantly reduced') and commented that the Authority would be exposing itself to more and more risk, should staffing levels within Legal Services be reduced further.

Human Resources Division

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that only 7% of the Human Resources Budget was made up of non-staffing costs. Members discussed the extra pressure put on the rest of the workforce each time a job was lost. Officers explained that a new Mental Health Strategy would be produced next year and that a stress at work risk assessment was available to all members of staff. The Chief Executive emphasised that it was important to find the right

balance between pressure on staff and quality of service provided, and the Authority needed to be smarter about doing things it don't need to need to do. The good relationships between the Local Authority and the Trade Unions was discussed.

Members discussed work structure charts and the Workforce Information Team, which had been set up three to four years ago to identify who the Council employed and in what role, as well as patterns of sickness and data management.

Finance Division

The Head of Finance advised Members that the Division had achieved over £800,000 of savings in the last three financial years, mainly through voluntary redundancy or the non-replacement of posts which had become vacant through natural turnover. Officers acknowledged that losing experienced staff would result in a loss of knowledge, however training measures and apprentice schemes were in place. It was noted that all funding for support for claimants of Universal Credit had now been allocated to the Citizens Advice Bureau, so the Authority would sign point anyone in need of help.

Other Directorate Management and Third Sector Grants, and Central Savings

Members discussed the impacts on crime and disorder, and noted that the functions that relate to crime and disorder continue to be supported.

CHAIRPERSON

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

5 December 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.E.Freeguard, S.K.Hunt,
S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan,
S.Paddison and S.M.Penry

Officers In Attendance S.Phillips, A.Jarrett, G.Nutt, K.Jones, C.Griffiths,
C.Furlow, J.Stevens, A.Thomas and C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.W.Davies, R.G.Jones,
E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees,
P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.Wingrave

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The following Members made declarations of interest:

Councillor D.W.Davies Re: Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer in relation to the Strategic Equality Plan 2017-2019, as he is a Trustee of the Neath Port Talbot Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association.

Councillor S.Rahaman Re: Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer in relation to the Strategic Equality Plan 2017-2019, as he is a Trustee

on the Neath Port
Talbot Black and
Minority Ethnic (BME)
Community Association.

2. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Board Proposals

2.1 Smart and Connected - A Revised Digital Strategy

Members received the final version of the Digital Strategy – Smart and Connected, following feedback from the public consultation on the draft version of the Strategy, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members queried how the Authority would deliver this strategy to ensure it was fit for purpose. Officers explained a delivery plan would be developed which would contain more detail on how the Strategy would be delivered within the resources available.

Members queried how many responses were received during the consultation period. Officers informed Members that there were a range of different methods used to gather feedback from the consultation and confirmed all consulted parties were listed on page 22 of the circulated report.

Members shared concerns that the strategy would encourage officers to work from home when they are not fit enough to attend work.

Members queried the reference to a Citizens Account. Officers explained it was a portal the public could use. Following sign up a member of the public would be able to access services, however when accessing personal information it would require a password for security reasons.

Members questioned whether officers had considered how people with disabilities were able to access online services. Officers informed Members that there was technology available such as voice technology for people to use.

Members queried whether online sites would be accessed via a mobile application or website. Officers clarified that any future developments would now be available through all methods.

Members questioned what procedures were in place for those that did not have English as a first language, Members referred to Syrian refugees as an example. Officers confirmed that there was specific support available to support Syrian refugees and if there were any specific families that were struggling, this would need to be discussed separately with the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer outside of the meeting.

Members queried if there were any safeguarding measures in place to prevent any hacks or viruses via internet usage. Officers informed Members that there were preventative measures in place to protect users when using the internet within the Council's premises. However, when the internet was accessed via a tablet device it was then more difficult to protect. Officers added that if there was a breach there were ways of auditing events to view where errors had occurred.

Members questioned whether the Authority could deliver IT skills in communities with the partners referenced within the Strategy. Officers explained when grants were awarded to organisations via the Council's Third Sector Grants Scheme it would provide an opportunity to review the impacts and strengthen the way the Authority worked with the organisations, which would then identify funding and any training requirements.

Members questioned the longevity of the Strategy and queried whether the Authority had considered the impact of the Strategy in 25 years' time. Officers explained that it was set in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that a long term view of the strategy was required and highlighted that it would be difficult to do this within current budget constraints.

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

2.2) Strategic Equality Plan 2017-2018

Members received information on the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2017- 2018, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members asked whether the Strategic Equality Plan 2017-18 would be cross referenced with the Welsh Language Standards as they felt they should complement each other. Officers would amend the report, cross referencing the report with the Welsh Language Standards.

Members referred to the Equality Objective Measure 4.1 on the reduced number of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) undertaken, and suggested a different officer to complete the EIA to the officer that would write the report in order to have a fresh view of the EIA. Officers explained that currently the same officer completed both the EIA as the report.

Members queried whether the equality legislation applied to just Wales or was it a United Kingdom wide legislation. Officers clarified that the Equality Act 2010 was one piece of legislation for the whole of the United Kingdom, and that it protected people from discrimination in the workplace and had nine protected characteristics including age, disability, pregnancy, and maternity.

Members stated the progress on page 92, relating to Education performance attainment between boys and girls at foundation phase and key stages 2 and 3 was confusing. Officers informed Members the summary of progress would be raised with officers and amended accordingly.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted, however requested that the cross referencing of the Strategic Equality Plan 2017-18 and Welsh Language Standards be considered.

2.3) Provision of Loan Funding to Celtic Leisure Limited

The Committee received information in relation to the provision of loan funding to Celtic Leisure Limited, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members asked whether there would be a negative impact on the other Celtic Leisure sites, due to Celtic Leisure Limited focusing their priorities on improving the gym facilities in Pontardawe. Officers explained that the service requirements were necessary in Pontardawe and this would help Celtic Leisure Limited to meet their saving targets.

Members queried whether other bodies would be able to enter into a similar agreement. Officers explained that circumstances would not be the same, therefore other bodies would not be able to request a similar agreement.

Members asked that the Business Plan proposed for the Pontardawe site be circulated to the Committee.

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

3. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 18/19**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

CHAIRPERSON

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(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	Periodic report on the progress of work against the Wales Audit	Karen Jones

	Proposals for Improvement	
27 March 2018		
17 April 2018		
8 May 2018		
29 May 2018		

Items to be programmed in for future meetings

- To view the impacts of the decisions on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and the Valleys Action Plan annually (Karen Jones)