



CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Immediately Following the Joint Meeting of the Cabinet / Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committees)

WEDNESDAY, 27 MARCH 2019

COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

Part 1

1. Declarations of Interests
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting *(Pages 3 - 12)*
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 13 - 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, 21 March 2019

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, S. ap Dafydd, S.E.Freeguard,
M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, 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 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 papers with them to the meeting.*

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

20 February 2019

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

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

Officers In Attendance A.Evans, S.Phillips, K.Jones, G.Nutt, C.Griffiths,
H.Jones, N. Sparkes and C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.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 Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr. N.T.Hunt Re: Report of the Head of Financial Services on the Non Domestic Rates – High Street and Retail Rates Relief Wales 2019-2020 as he owns a business in Port Talbot.

2. **PRE-SCRUTINY CABINET**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Proposals

2.1 **Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring**

Members received information on the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 3, 1st April, 2018 to the 31st December, 2018 for services within Cabinet's purview.

It was noted that an explanation was required on the decline of the performance indicator, relating to the number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee. Members queried whether this was due to pressures in the work place from staff, leaving on the Early Retirement/Voluntary Retirement (ER/VR) scheme. It was explained that even though there had been a decline in sickness absence, officers did not have any major concerns. It was also noted that Neath Port Talbot Council were ranked fifth in the All Wales 2017/18 data for the least working days lost to sickness. It was explained that sickness within the workforce was complex and the current budget constraints would increase added pressure on to the workforce.

Observation was raised in relation to whether data was recorded on staff that were sick but working from home. It was explained that this data wasn't collected as staff that were sick would be on sick leave.

It was queried from Members whether there were particular patterns of sickness within the workforce. Officers explained that Members receive regular reports detailing this information. However, the main cause of sick was stress related, which was commonly home related stress rather than work related stress. It was noted that there were procedures in place to support staff with stress related sickness.

Clarification was required on the 98.5% target relating to the collection of Business Rates performance indicator, as officers were uncertain and confirmed Members would be informed following the meeting.

Staff were congratulated on the increase of online transactions and it was asked what the target was for 2019/20. Officers confirmed that a delivery plan on the Digital Strategy would be brought back to committee detailing further information on additional services that would be put online.

Members queried the decrease in the performance indicators relating to Customer Services. Officers explained that the staff in Customer Services were the first point of contact, and when

the call was then transferred to the appropriate directorate it was then their responsibility to action that call. Officers asked that if there were any specific cases in which calls were not being actioned, to speak with the Assistant Chief Executive and Digital Officer to rectify any issues. It was also noted that a report would be brought back to Committee in relation to the One Stop Shop.

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

2.2 Risk Register Review 2018-19 as at 31 December 2018

Members were provided with an update on the Strategic Risks as at 31 December, 2018.

Questions were raised in relation to the affect Brexit would have on the Council and requested that this item be placed on the Forward Work Programme. Officers informed Members that a report on Brexit would be brought to Cabinet shortly and a seminar would be provided to clarify and inform Members on this topic.

2.3 Additional Voluntary Contributions

Members received information on appointing AVC Wise Ltd to provide a fully managed service for Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) as part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) arrangements. Members also were informed of excluding the requirements of competition, to suspend Rule 2.2 of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules ("CPRs") and to make a direct award to AVC Wise Limited ("the Service Provider").

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

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY CABINET (FINANCE)**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Proposals

2.1 Non domestic Rates - High Street and Retail Rates Relief
Wales 2019-20

(Cllr. Nigel Hunt reaffirmed his interest and left the meeting at this point)

Members received information on the new discretionary rates relief scheme known as High Street and Retail Rates Relief Wales 2019-20.

In response to Members queries, officers explained that the new discretionary rates relief scheme would help keep Local Business in the Community as this was a concern from Members.

Members questioned whether this scheme would support charity shops. Officers explained that there was a discretionary rate for charity shops to apply; however, Members were asked to provide specific details outside of the meeting for a more accurate response.

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

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

Members asked that a report on Brexit be added to the Forward Work programme. Officers explained that a report on Brexit would be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet where Members would have an opportunity to scrutinise. Members therefore withdrew the request for the report to be included on the Forward Work Programme.

CHAIRPERSON

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

6 March, 2019

Chairman: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairman: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, L.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry and L.M.Purcell

Officers In Attendance S.Phillips, A.Evans, H.Jenkins, A.Jarrett, D.Griffiths, P.Jackson, M.Shaw, N.Chapple, C.Davies and T.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

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Committee held a minute's silence, as a mark of respect for Councillor Des Davies, who had recently passed away.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Committee held a minute's silence, as a mark of respect for Councillor Des Davies, who had recently passed away.

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

Councillor M.Harvey - Re: Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing - Western Bay Youth Offending and Early

Intervention Service and Report of the Head of Legal Services - Consultation Response to Welsh Government – Improving Public Transport, as he is employed by South Wales Police.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Decision:

Subject to it being noted that Councillor L.M.Purcell was present at the meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 13 February, 2019, the minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, held on 23 January and 13 February, 2019, be approved.

3. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee scrutinised the following Cabinet items:

Western Bay Youth Offending and Early Intervention Service

The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing gave Members an overview of the circulated report. It was noted that the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service had been the subject of a joint inspection led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Although the final report was not due for publication until late March 2019, the draft conclusions and recommendations indicated that it would not be in the best interests of the children and young people of Neath Port Talbot to wait in order to take remedial action.

It was noted that the Principal Officer post mentioned within the report would require agreement at the Personnel Committee. On costs for this role, and cost implications going forward were also discussed. Members queried the term 'market supplement' and noted that it was a payment in addition to the stated salary, made in order to recruit a suitable member of staff to a position.

Members discussed the relative merits of regional working, and the joint work around 'County Lines' (where criminal gangs set up a drug dealing operation in a place outside their usual operating area) was

used as a recent example of positive regional working. Officers felt that a further independent evaluation of regional working was necessary by the Welsh Government, since the Beecham Review back in 2006. It was felt that in the case of the Youth Offending Service, an in house service would be more manageable and easier to monitor.

Officers emphasised the need for the relevant Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the findings of the inspection report when it was published.

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

Consultation Response to Welsh Government – Improving Public Transport

The Head of Engineering and Transport gave Members an overview of the circulated report. Committee Members noted that only questions 1-21 of the consultation responses were relevant to the meeting today, as the rest of the responses (questions 22-38) related to non-executive functions, and had been discussed at the Registration and Licensing Committee as part of its remit.

Members agreed that the cross party issue of public transport affected all areas and that better connectivity was needed between rural communities. Adopting an in-house transport scheme as an income generation stream was discussed. Although it was felt that providing an in house service for public transport was currently not financially viable, Members did not want to rule this out entirely for the future. To this end, scrutiny committee members suggested the following re wording of question 16 to 'Yes. However...' and the response to question 17 be amended to 'Yes. This is...'

A ticketing scheme regarding concessionary fares/passes, which could be relevant to trains and taxis as well as buses, was discussed.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that Cabinet Board be asked to consider the following recommendation:-

1. That the response to question 16 be amended to 'Yes. However...' and the response to question 17 be amended to 'Yes. This is...'

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

The committee noted the forward work programme for 2018/19.

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 item 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-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE ITEM**

The Committee scrutinised the following private Cabinet item:

Material Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) – In-House Services

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services gave Members an overview of the private, circulated report.

In response to Members queries, Officers gave details of the number of directors and secretaries per company, as well as the redundancy payments that would need to be awarded. There would be no financial implications to the Council. Members noted that consultation with employees would need to take place as well as moving the licence to the Council, so winding down the companies could take up to 12 weeks.

Discussion took place around the following areas:

- Plant and machinery
- Scrappage
- Future use of buildings and land
- Consultation with staff

Members noted that a further report concerning the future of the service would be brought to Cabinet shortly.

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

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 2019		

27 March 2019		
17 April 2019		
8 May 2019	Periodic report on the progress of work against the Wales Audit Proposals for Improvement	Karen Jones
	Public Service Board – Annual Report	Karen Jones/ Lead Officers
29 May 2019		

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)
- PSB – updates on Wellbeing Plan (PSB)

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