



**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10.00 am WEDNESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2020**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE**

**Part 1**

1. Declarations of Interests
2. Minutes of the Previous Meetings (*Pages 3 - 16*)
3. Pre-decision Scrutiny
  - To select appropriate items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (cabinet reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
4. Forward Work Programme 2019/20 (*Pages 17 - 22*)
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, 13 February 2020**

**Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:**        **Councillor M.Harvey**

**Vice  
Chairperson:**        **Councillor S.Rahaman**

**Councillors:**        S.apDafydd, S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt,  
S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, R.Mizen,  
J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry,  
S.H.Reynolds and A.N.Woolcock

**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:**

**30 October 2019**

**Chairperson:** Councillor M.Harvey

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

**Councillors:** S.apDafydd, S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers In Attendance:** S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, K.Jones, A.Thomas, C.Griffiths, K.Warren, H.Jones, C.Furlow-Harris, R.Headon, C.Davies and T.Davies

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, L.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. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

Councillor S.Rahaman	-	Re Item 10 on Cabinet Board papers - Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019: Draft Annual Report 2018-2019 and Extension of the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 until April 2020, as he is Secretary/Trustee of NPT BME Community Association.
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## 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the previous meetings, held on 25 September and 2 October, 2019, be approved.

## 3. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

### Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019-20

Members queried the overspend within the Household Waste Recycling Centre, specifically the reason that wood waste needed to be transported to Devon to be recycled. Officers explained this was due to Devon's higher capacity for recycling wood, which would contribute positively to Neath Port Talbot's recycling targets. Officers within the environment section were working with the Cabinet Member to reduce the spending around recycling whilst still improving on the amount recycled.

The underspends and overspends in the Social Services, Health and Housing budget were discussed. It was noted that the removal of some Welsh Government reviews had led to independent reviews being carried out. Some service users and their families had been used to certain packages of care, and were not always initially supportive of having these altered.

Officers explained that within the refuse and recycling service, sickness and bank holidays caused extreme pressures on workloads. Existing rubbish rounds were being re looked at, and there had already been a cut of funding for refuse built in for 2020/21.

### 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.

Members discussed the current budget pressures in relation to Alderman Davies Church in Wales Primary School.

The meeting resumed in open session.

Further areas of discussion included:

- The reserves position
- Intermediate Care Fund – ‘Neglect Project’
- Out of county placements
- Reduction in numbers of Looked After Children (LAC).

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

#### Treasury Management Monitoring 2019-20

Investment by the Council was discussed, and Members noted that whereas England had General Powers of Competence to be able to invest in any project they had scrutinised, Wales currently does not. This makes the investment process, in areas such as shopping centres or art work, for example, more difficult for Councils within Wales.

Although Members were generally in favour of large scale investments, currently the risks involved were too great, as well as the absence of General Powers of Competence, which would potentially be brought in with the introduction of the new Local Government Act. The Council presently must rely on the general powers of wellbeing that exist under the Local Government Act 2000.

The acquisition of pieces of art work was discussed. As well as the need for the involvement of the auditors, and a full business case being produced, officers emphasised the need to look for returns on investments that underpin the services the Council provides.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

#### Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019: Draft Annual Report 2018-2019 and Extension of the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 until April 2020

Members discussed the progress made over the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, in line with the equality objectives set out in the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-19.

The role of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors was clarified, along with who they report to and where they were based.

The Scrutiny Chair for Social Services wanted it to be recorded that herself, and a representative from Unison, took part in the event for council staff to celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage, in addition to the participants listed in the report.

Exclusions among Special Educational Needs (SEN) children were discussed, and Members noted that Neath Port Talbot has the highest number of SEN children in Wales. It was noted that a chaotic home life contributes to these exclusions, so a whole range of support mechanisms needed to be in place, including involvement from social services.

Other discussion topics included:

- Early entry for GCSE exams at key stage 4
- Permanent exclusions and prevention strategies
- All Wales performance data
- Direct Payments Support (DPS)

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

#### 4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/20.

**CHAIRPERSON**

## **CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Members Present:**

**20 November 2019**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

**Councillors:** S.apDafydd, S.E.Freeguard, S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers In Attendance** S.Phillips, A.Evans, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, K.Jones, A.Thomas, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, P.Walker, 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

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### **1. PRE- DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

#### **Alternative Model – Older Person’s Council**

The Older Person’s Council (OPC) had not been reviewed since it was set up in 2005. With an ever increasing older population, plus changing issues affecting older person’s lives, as well as the big changes around adult social care, it was the right time to form a different type of model.

Members emphasised how important it was for the voice of older people to be heard loud and clear within Neath Port Talbot. Discussion had taken place over the last 2 years with members of the OPC, as well as various other groups within the local community which engage older people. It was planned to hold a symposium around April 2020 to speak to older people about the issues which affect their lives. A mix of additional methods would be used to

capture the views of older people, including over the internet and face to face.

Members praised the work of the current OPC, and noted that the same members could also be a part of the new remodelled forum, if they so wished. Members stressed the importance of capturing the views of representatives of older people, such as carers.

It was noted that there would be no change to the current age criteria, and older people would be able to join from the age of fifty.

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

## 2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

The scrutiny officer advised members that a number of dates had been changed in order to accommodate the recently announced UK Parliamentary Election on 12 December 2019. The forward work programme had been updated accordingly.

The committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/20.

## **CHAIRPERSON**



## **CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**9 December 2019**

**Chairperson:** **Councillor S.Rahaman**

**Councillors:** S.apDafydd, S.A.Knoyle, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.H.Reynolds and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers In Attendance** S.Phillips, A.Jarrett, H.Jenkins, G.Nutt, D.Giles, J.Hodges, C.Furlow-Harris, C.Davies and T.Davies

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

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### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor S.Rahaman Re Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants for Financial Year 2020/21, as he is he is a local authority representative and Secretary/Trustee of NPT BME Community Association.

Councillor S.Reynolds Re Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants for Financial Year 2020/21, as she is a trustee/current acting manager of Canolfan Maerdy. As her interest was prejudicial she withdrew from the room during the discussion and voting thereon.

## 2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 30 October, 2019, be approved.

## 3. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

### Officer Indemnity

Officers explained the current arrangements concerning staff and assets, during the transfer period of the Material Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) which was being brought in house to be Council run. Discussion also took place around the directorship of Coed D'arcy Ltd, and the plans for the future.

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

### Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants for Financial Year 2020/21

(At this point in the meeting, Councillor S.Reynolds reaffirmed her interests and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.)

Members queried page 56 of the circulated report regarding financial support to the Black Minority Ethnic Community Association. It was noted that as the organisation had not been awarded charitable status in 2019, the money given in this period would be carried over and used in 2020/21.

Members noted that the monitoring arrangements fitted logically within budget timescales. The half yearly monitoring reports were needed by partners and would provide certainty and clarity and would inform this scrutiny committee.

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 was discussed, and members requested that an update report be brought to a future meeting detailing the financial support that was provided under this legislation.

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

(Councillor S.Reynolds re-joined the meeting)

#### Quarter 2 Key Performance Indicators

The circulated report was discussed, and it was noted that the number of days lost to sickness included, in part, work related stress. Staff within the Council had been reduced by over 30 per cent in the last 10 years, so work load was increasing.

With regards violence against women, current legislation was not in line with increasing demand for services, which had led to a lack of investment. Relationship counselling was part of certain lessons within schools, but it was emphasised that teachers already had a high workload and were over worked, without being identified as solutions for solving this issue.

Problems with staff retention and employment of Welsh speakers was highlighted as a cause of the high average time to answer telephone calls in English and Welsh. This was being addressed by the employment of four modern apprentices.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

#### 4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

The committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/20.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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## CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**10 January 2020**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.Rahaman

**Councillors:** S.apDafydd, S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry, S.H.Reynolds and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers In Attendance:** S.Phillips, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, H.Jenkins, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, A.Thomas, C.Furlow-Harris, S.Curran and T.Davies

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, L.Jones, E.V.Latham, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards and A.Wingrave

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### 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor S.Freeguard Re Draft Budget for Consultation 2020/2021, as she is a member of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor S.Rahaman Re Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 – Draft Equalities Objectives, as he is a local authority representative and Secretary/Trustee of NPT BME Community Association.

Councillor A.N.Woolcock Re Draft Budget for Consultation 2020/2021, as he is a member of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

## 2. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

### Draft Budget for Consultation 2020/2021

Members considered the draft budget 2020/2021 prior to consultation.

Clarification was sought over why additional reserves from the Council's budget were not being used. Officers gave an overview of the current position with reserves (both general and specific), and explained that there was no certainty around how much money would be available from Welsh Government in future years, so it was responsible and prudent to keep reserves as long as possible.

The proposed 5% increase in Council tax was discussed, as well as the Council Tax reduction scheme, which was available to financially disadvantaged households across Wales. It was noted that £244 million was available across Wales - £16 million of which was allocated to Neath Port Talbot, with 17,000 people benefiting from the scheme.

Members acknowledged that the level of Council Tax was a significant burden to some people, but noted that for every 1% which was taken off the proposed increase in Council tax, an extra £700,000 had to be found from somewhere else to bridge the budget gap.

The following were discussed:

- Grants to leisure services
- Structure and period of the consultation
- Firefighters pensions and precepts

The Cabinet Member for Finance emphasised the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation, in the time available.

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

## Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024

Members discussed the circulated report, including whether hate crime in sporting events was sufficiently covered. It was noted that this would be covered as part of the consultation.

Concern was expressed at the 'vagueness' of the reference within the valleys impact section of the report ("The draft equalities objectives, and the actions identified to deliver them, will be achieved against a backdrop of a reduced workforce alongside ongoing financial challenges"). Officers explained that a full Integrated Impact Assessment would be undertaken following the consultation, and attached to the next iteration of the Plan.

Members felt that the word 'continue/continuing' should be inserted where necessary within the draft Plan, in order to acknowledge that certain objectives had already been taken into account within the previous Plan.

It was noted that the draft Plan took into account what was possible within the resources the Council currently had available. The consultation process was discussed, and the methods used when reaching out for respondents.

Bullying was discussed – both towards pupils and teachers, as well as how the data was captured, and the reporting mechanisms.

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

## Launch of the Citizens' Panel

Officers explained that the Citizen's Panel would not replace formal consultations undertaken by the Council. Questionnaires would be formulated by the communications team and sent out to a demographically representative group of local residents, approximately 12 times a year by an independent social research company.

Members noted this would be a quicker and more agile way of obtaining the public's views. The Panel's views could be sought on anything that covered the range of Council services. Officers were keen for young people to have a voice on the Panel, as well as staff who were residents.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

3. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020**

The committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/2020.

**CHAIRPERSON**



**Cabinet Scrutiny Committee  
Forward Work Programme 2019/20**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer</b>
29 May 2019		
19 June 2019		
10 July 2019	Public Service Board – Annual Report	Karen Jones
31 July 2019		
25 September 2019	Public Services Board – updates on Wellbeing Objective 2 (To build Safe and Resilient Communities)	Public Services Board

2 October 2019	Periodic report on the progress of work against the Wales Audit Proposals for Improvement	Karen Jones/ Caryn Furlow
30 October 2019		
20 November 2019	(Joint Meeting of Cabinet/Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committees to scrutinise the Margam park/Pontardawe Arts Centre Proposals, immediately before Cabinet Scrutiny)	
<del>4 December 2019</del> CANCELLED		

- moved to 9 <sup>th</sup> December at 10.00am		
10 January 2020 (Change of Date)	**Budget on Cabinet**	
5 February 2020	To view the impacts of the decisions on the Valleys Action Plan (Included in Cabinet Board Report)	Karen Jones/ Fiona Clay-Pool
	To view the impacts of the decisions on the welsh language promotion Strategy (Included in welsh language report on Cabinet)	Karen Jones/ Rhian Headon/ Caryn Furlow
12 February 2019		

19 February 2020		
5 March 2020	**Budget**	
	Customer services report (from meeting of 2 <sup>nd</sup> October)	
1 April 2020		
29 April 2020		
27 May 2020		

### Items to be programmed in for future meetings

- Evaluation Structure for Wellbeing Objective 2 – Public Services Board
- Public Services Board – updates on Wellbeing Objective 4 (To support wellbeing through work and in the workplace). - TBC Public Services Board
- Updates and monitoring of the Citizens Panel

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