

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

29 September 2014

Chairman: Councillor D.W.Davies

Vice Chairman: Councillor A.Jenkins

Councillors: Mrs P.Bebell, A.Carter, M.Harvey,
Mrs.L.H.James, A.R.Lockyer and
Mrs.S.M.Penry

Officers In Attendance N.Evans, Mrs.K.Jones, H.Jenkins and
Mrs. N. Sparkes

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees, A.N.Woolcock and
A.H.Thomas

1. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

There were no Declarations of Interest from the Members.

2. **TO SELECT APPROPRIATE ITEMS FROM THE CABINET BOARD AGENDA FOR PRE-SCRUTINY (CABINET BOARD REPORTS ENCLOSED FOR SCRUTINY MEMBERS).**

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

Draft Neath Port Talbot Annual Report 2013/2014 “*Rising to the Challenge*”

Members were reminded that the report before them was a draft of the Council’s Annual Report for 2013/2014 that required consideration prior to submission to Council on 15th October 2014.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure requires the Council to produce two annual reports which account for improvement (forward look) and performance (backward look).

The first report (forward look), the Neath Port Talbot “Corporate Improvement Plan 2013/2016 – Rising to the Challenge” outlined the Council’s priorities for improvement for the next three years. The second report (backward look) provided an assessment of how well the Council delivered services during the last financial year and described the progress made on delivering the six improvement objectives outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Members were informed that the report was accurate and balanced and with regard to performance, the Council had delivered mostly on what it said it would.

There had been an overall improvement compared to the all Wales figures and this was a good performance considering the number of staff the Council had lost. One of the concerns going forward was how does the Council maintain this performance.

In relation to the 25% of indicators that have declined in performance, the Council will prioritise these and consideration given to how we will address these areas.

Members were advised that in relation to the indicators under the remit of Public Protection these will be considered by the Social Care Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee as part of its 2014/2015 work programme. It was agreed by Members that each scrutiny committee should consider any relevant information as part of their performance monitoring role.

Members were concerned that whilst the sickness absence figure had declined from 9.65 days per employee to 9.19 days per employee this was only a 4.8% reduction that was below the 10% target that had been set. It was agreed that each Scrutiny Committee should consider sickness absence information on a regular basis as part of the performance monitoring reports. Members were further advised that as part of the performance appraisal one of the personal objectives for all Chief Officers and Heads of Service was to reduce sickness absence.

It was highlighted that the summary annual report had been developed following requests by the public and the Policy and

Resources Scrutiny Committee and was now in an easier to understand format.

The Scrutiny Committee resolved to support the recommendations contained within the report.

Report of the Head of Financial Services

Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2013/2014

Members considered the above report that is presented annually due to regulations under the Local Government Act 2003. The report reviews treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2013/2014. The report met the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

Members questioned why some of the loans that were taken out were for a period of days. Officers advised Members that this was down to cash flow and the need to ensure sufficient funds were available.

In relation to the money that had been invested in Icelandic banks, Members were advised that there was £887k outstanding of which £387k was being held in Icelandic Kroner. Members were further advised that this currency is untradeable outside of Iceland and the Local Government Association is pursuing ways of obtaining the money, the £387k is held in an Escrow account in the name of the Local Authority and generating an interest of 4%. Members were advised that the Head of Financial Services was confident all the outstanding monies would be returned.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the recommendation contained within the report.

CHAIRMAN