

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

15 December 2021

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.E.Freeguard

Councillors: N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, D.Keogh, S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry, S.H.Reynolds, R.L.Taylor and A.N.Woolcock

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, C.Furlow-Harris, S.Davies, P.Hinder, J.Woodman-Ralph and C.Davies

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

1. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board items:

Capital Programme Governance

Members received information in relation to the terms of reference for the Capital Programme Steering Group and Members Surgeries, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members welcomed the new Protocol in relation to Capital Programme Management in order to address the findings of the Independent Governance Review.

Discussions took place around fair distribution of monies. It was noted that the authority do comprehensive surveys of all of the assets within the County Borough on a rolling programme basis. Following the surveys, officers will formulate the best use out of the funding to distribute fairly.

Members queried that there was reference to speed work on highways within the report and requested clarity on the responsibilities. It was noted that only the police can enforce the speed limit and provide speeding tickets. Officers within Neath Port Talbot can utilise evidenced based accidents to put mitigation measures in place to control speed limits.

Members queried whether the council have the resources to research and respond to Freedom of Information Act requests within the appropriate timescales. It was also asked whether the Freedom of information act applied to member's as well as the public. Officers confirmed that members are entitled to request and view any information of the council if they so wished. Requesting information through the Freedom of Information act would not be the best form of practice for member to gather information. In terms of public receiving information, it was noted that general information should be available on the website for public to access to prevent having numerous Freedom of information requests.

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

Quarter 2 (1st April 2021 – 30th September 2021) Cabinet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Members received quarter 2 performance information for KPIs and compliments and complaints data within Cabinet's purview, as detailed within the circulated report.

The Chair highlighted that the Committee understood that a few of the Performance indicators were not meeting targets due to the pressures following the impact of Covid-19. Members highlighted their appreciation of the work that officers continue to do to achieve their targets.

Members highlighted that within the planning department, staff with high knowledge and experiencing had moved on from the authority. Resulting in a lack of resources within the department. Members asked what mitigating measures officers were putting in place to ensure that officer posts were filled, capturing knowledge and experience within the council. Officers highlighted that due to the high demand in delivery service they are currently securing a recruitment package.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Members were updated on the implementation of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee pursuant to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members continued to express their concerns in relation to the Corporate Joint Committees. It was mentioned that there had been correspondence between the scrutiny committee and the minister sharing the committee's concerns.

Members were pleased to see the work that was being done to establish a scrutiny format. However, they shared their concern in relation to previous joint committees where the scrutiny committee was considered at the final stages. It was noted that scrutiny had to be considered from the start to ensure that good governance is in place to hold those to account.

Discussions took place around the responsibilities of the functions of the Corporate Joint Committees. It was noted within the report Governance and Audit would be ultimately Pembrokeshire's responsibility, members queried the set up of this. It was noted that Pembrokeshire would have ultimate control in terms of officer responsibility however, the scrutiny committee of Governance and Audit would have representation of all authorities including Neath Port Talbot.

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

CHAIRPERSON