

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

21 February 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

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

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, A.James, Miss.C.Davies and N.Jones

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones and
A.J.Taylor

1. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

1.1 **Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Corporate Communications and Community Relations Strategy**

Members received an overview of the Communications and Community Relations Strategy covering the period March 2018 to March 2020.

Officers provided Members with a presentation highlighting the main areas within the strategy.

Members thanked the officers for the presentation and asked for clarity on what 'even handed' meant, as it is one of the principles for our communications activities detailed in the strategy. Officers advised that it means taking a balanced approach.

It was highlighted that the Authority needs to embrace the opportunities associated with the changes in the media

landscape, however, these must be balanced with communication through traditional media for those who have no access to technology.

Members commended the point that was raised in the presentation on offering subscribers to the new Council e-newsletter the choice of English, Welsh or bilingual versions.

Officers highlighted that there is still work to be done on establishing what metrics will be used to monitor and evaluate communications activity. It was noted that in the first year of the strategy, officers would be happy to report back to committee to on how this part of the work is progressing.

Members outlined an issue linked to the printed edition of the South Wales Evening Post where the Pontardawe headlines are covered in the Neath edition, which is not available for purchase in Pontardawe. Members asked whether the authority has any influence on this. Officers confirmed that they can raise this issue with the Evening Post to ask if anything can be done to rectify this, but it will ultimately be the Evening Post's decision.

Members queried how much the Authority is encouraging the principal of two way communication. Officers advised that there are discussions taking place about developing a new engagement strategy. It was noted that feedback is encouraged and if information is posted on Facebook that is incorrect, then officers can respond with the correct information.

Members raised concern about anti-social behaviour being reported on social media. Officers highlighted that the Community Safety Partnership is working to inform the public to encourage them to report incidents through the correct channels i.e. to the Police (when a crime number will be provided), not via social media.

Members were very supportive of the principals detailed in the circulated report and commended the strategy.

Members highlighted that a policy should be developed on advertising on Council assets, as it was noted that only adverts for appropriate services, products or organisations should be accepted. Officers highlighted that they are working with APSE

specifically on policies of best practise. It was noted that this would be brought to members at a later date.

Members asked who had decided that the logo needed a refresh and for some of the reasoning behind the proposed colour changes. Officers highlighted that changes to the logo had not yet been formally agreed. The officer who is leading on the branding was not present at the meeting, therefore it was noted that a response would be provided to the member following the meeting.

Members raised concern that the new strategy would exclude people who do not have access to social media and the internet. Officers apologised that the presentation may have been perceived as only concentrating on online communications and community relations. It was highlighted that the intention is to make the most of the opportunities presented by digital channels as well as traditional forms of media.

Members agreed with the strategy, however highlighted that those members who are not IT literate would require training to enable members to use social media responsibly.

Members requested that in Appendix 1 to the circulated report MEP's be included with the MP's and AM's list under the Audiences section.

The Deputy Leader highlighted to the committee that over the last decade times have changed, previously in committee there would have always been a journalist and there was no such thing as YouTube or social media. It was noted that traditional media needs to be taken into account, however there is a need to adapt to the changes and embrace new technology.

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

CHAIRPERSON

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