

## **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**(Via Microsoft)**

**Members Present:**

**24 February 2021**

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

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

**Councillors:** S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, D.Keogh, 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** K.Jones, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, C.Griffiths, N.Pearce, S.Rees, H.Jones, C.Furlow-Harris, R.Headon, C.Plowman, J.Woodman-Ralph and C.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. Pre-decision Scrutiny**

The Committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

**Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 - Annual Report 2019 – 2020**

Members were presented with the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 Annual Report for the period 2019-2020, as detailed within the circulated report.

Discussions took place around Equality Objective 6 - Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. Members queried whether there were any developments in relation to Shopmobility being located in Neath Town Centre to improve usage. Members were advised that the Shopmobility service was currently located within the new multi-storey carpark, to give immediate access

to the users straight from parking their vehicle. It was also noted that there had been a decline in usage due to the impact of the pandemic and following recovery of the pandemic it is hoped that usage of the service would increase.

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

#### Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Progress Report October 2019-March 2020

Officers presented the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy progress report for the period October 2019-March 2020.

Members noted the affect that covid-19 has had on the promotion of Welsh Language, however it was noted that the progress report was for the period just prior to the start of the Pandemic. It was noted that over the past year there would likely be an effect to the progress report for the period 2020-2021, however, there had been a positive take up of virtual welsh language training courses.

Concern was raised around the loss of the oral use of the Welsh Language, following the closure of Schools due to the pandemic and the affect that this would have caused on the students. Officers took on board the concerns that were raised and reassured members that as pupils start to return to School, it would be a priority of theirs to do a local review in ensuring the loss of education is considered. Members commended teachers for their work in providing support and education to pupils during the pandemic.

It was noted that Human Resources were able to report on the number of employees who have welsh language skills via the employee portal, members queried this figure. Officers informed members that they would gather this information outside of the meeting.

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

#### Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan - Progress Report

Members were provided with a half year update on the progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2020-2021. It was noted that the action plan reflects the governance

issues identified in the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019-2020 which was reported to Cabinet on 21st May 2020.

Within the Governance Improvement Action Plan members queried the action that was taken to ensure that lawful decision making could take place in the event that the Urgency Action Protocol could not be utilised. Officers informed members that this action was taken to ensure that decisions could still take place in any scenario. It was noted that delegated authority was granted to the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors in the event that the Executive could not be contacted.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted

## **CHAIRPERSON**