

## **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot and Microsoft Teams)**

**Members Present:**

**25 April 2023**

**Chairperson:** **Councillor P.Rogers**

**Councillors:** T.Bowen, C.Clement-Williams, C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Paddison, C.Phillips, R.Phillips, S.Pursesey, S.H.Reynolds and A.J.Richards

**Officers In Attendance** K.Jones, A.D.Thomas, M.Shaw, A.Jarrett, N.Pearce, H.Jones, S.Rees, T.Davies, L.McAndrew, C.Furlow-Harris and A.Thomas

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors J.Hale, S.Harris, S.Hunt, J.Hurley, N.Jenkins, S.Jones, S.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn.

### **1. Chairs Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 7 and 8 on the Cabinet agenda.

### **2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

### **3. Pre-decision Scrutiny**

#### **Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028**

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack. Members expressed concerns in relation to the draft strategy. It was noted that there were 71 responses from the Citizen Panel in relation

to the initial questionnaire and this was used in preparation of the draft strategy. There are 500 members of the Citizen Panel, so this reflects a very low response to the consultation.

Members further expressed their concern in relation to the wider consultation, where the response rate was 0.35% of the population of Neath Port Talbot.

Members queried if the consultation should have mandated that all questions of the consultation be answered, so that there can be comparable data available.

Members outlined that, if the strategy is approved by Cabinet, there should be a requirement for strict monitoring of the strategy and improvements in public engagement.

Officers advised that the 71 responses from the Citizen Panel were detailed responses used to inform the strategy. Officers acknowledged that with the wider consultation, the smaller number of responses may have been due to consultation fatigue. However officers advised that responses that were received were detailed.

Officers confirmed that the strategy would be monitored on a six monthly basis.

Officers noted the suggestions from members with regards to improving communication and engagement with the public and agreed to discuss with colleagues as appropriate. Members were informed that the 'Have Your Say' section of the website was linked from the current home page of the Council's website.

Officers agreed that the points relating to customer service feedback were valuable, however advised that they fall outside the remit of this item. The points raised will be picked up by the review of customer services and other strategies.

Members stressed the importance of obtaining feedback from members of the public as they are the persons who are directly affected by services of the Council. Members also queried how members of the public can provide compliments about the Council, as there is only a complaints form available on the website.

The Citizens Panel was set up shortly before the pandemic and was designed to be representative of the adult population of the borough. Its intention was to be used to be able to draw statistically valid

results. It is not valid at individual board level. The Chief Executive advised that the panel likely needs to be refreshed in terms of the participants. The wide ranging ideas that members brought forward in the meeting could be considered in further detail.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.

### Corporate Plan - Strategic Change Programme for the Period 2023-2024

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack. Members referred to page 160 of the agenda pack, which refers to active travel and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

However the reference to reducing reliance on private vehicles has been removed from the proposed plan. Officers advised that the transition to reducing reliance on private vehicles needs to be just. It was acknowledged that by increasing active travel, this should reduce the reliance on private vehicles.

It was also noted that the action points' column on page 160 only refers to public rights of way and members queried if this was relevant to active travel as they are two separate and distinct items.

Members advised that they were keen to see a performance measure on active travel.

Officers advised that there was no specific budget available in relation to the public rights of way network at this time, therefore improvements to the network are restricted by this.

Members referred to page 164 of the agenda, which refers to an active travel plan. Members queried if one existed as they were not aware of one. Officers confirmed that currently there is an existing route map and an integrated network map, and they should be referred to specifically, not just general active travel plan. This terminology will be amended accordingly.

Members expressed their concern about how the document incorporates active travel and that it is spread across various objectives within the plan.

The Chief Executive reminded members that the current plan was drafted as the Council was entering the recovering phase following the pandemic. Members were advised that a more in depth review of the corporate plan would be undertaken over the next 6-9 months. A clear action can be considered and input into the corporate plan in terms of what will be done next year in relation to active travel.

Members expressed their concern that the document is not very reflective of the agreement by Council to declare a climate emergency. Officer confirmed on page 133, there is a brief reference to the previous motion. The Chief Executive advised, in the final draft of the plan, the essence of the previously agreed motion on climate change can be reflected in that part of the document and it can be restated on page 134. This will make it clear within the focused areas that they are set within the overall commitment to climate change.

Members were in agreement that that the reference to Climate Change on page 133 of the circulated report be expanded to reflect the Climate Change motion approved at Council earlier this civic year and that this commitment is repeated on page 134 of the circulated report to underline the commitment to advancing this work in this civic year pending a fuller review of the corporate plan for the period 1st April 2024 onwards.

Following scrutiny Members were supportive of the recommendation to Cabinet.

4. **Forward Work Programme 2022/23**

This item was noted.

5. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**CHAIRPERSON**