



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : **TRANSFORMATION,** **COMMERCIALISATION AND** **CORPORATE CENTRE** **MEETING**

TUESDAY, 20TH JULY, 2021

PRESENT: Councillors: T Skinner (Chair)
J Amos (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: D Sammon, L Davies and C T Jones

Cooptees:
G Williams (Public) and S Fureed (MTBWYF)

Other Councillors in Attendance:
A Barry (Cabinet Member)

Officers:
M Parry (Revenues Manager) and S Lyons (Performance and Scrutiny Officer)

M Morgan (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
192	Apologies for Absence	No Apologies for absence were received.
193	Declarations of Interest (including whipping)	No Declarations of Interest were made.

	declarations)	
194	Tackling Poverty	<p>The Chair welcomed Councillor A Barry Cabinet Member and Mike Parry to the Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair referred the Committee to the 'Tackling Poverty' report.</p> <p>Mike Parry then led the Committee in detail through the report and together with Councillor A Barry responded in detail to the following questions raised on the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 3.5 – The use of Enforcement Agents – What is the number of Officers – How many cases are there a year – Role of the Bailiff • Paragraph 3.8 – Impact of Covid Pandemic – Suspension of recovery – What does the 1.5% equate to in monetary terms – What is the number of Council Tax payers – Deficit in relation to Council Tax – Has this been recovered to date – Are cases still going to Court • Paragraph 3.9 • What is the figure for those who have applied for Council Tax reduction – How many Council Tax payers are on Housing Benefit – What is the number of Claimants – Figures since Covid or new people – What are the reasons for this • What is the level in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments • How can individuals apply for Hardship relief – Is this relief well known – How was this utilised after Storm Denis – Are Care leavers advised in relation to the Hardship Relief Fund • Paragraph 5.1 – Additional Staff member – Will this post continue • Has there been consultation on not just Council Tax debt but into how much money people have left • Fairness of the Council Tax – Exercise by Welsh Government in relation to Council Tax - Has the Authority been contacted by Welsh Government • In the run up to setting of Council Tax can the Committee be updated if changes are made by Welsh Government • (Mike Parry advised that he would circulate all Councillors with any information from Welsh Government) • Bailiffs – Are goods seized to offset arrears • Paragraph 4.1 – Percentage figures requested in relation to Council Tax Bands • Payment via Direct Debit – Could this figure be increased • When final reminders are sent is there also a visit arranged to find out why there has been no reply to the reminders • Explanation in relation to people whose first language is not English • How many complaints are received per year from the public

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation requested on the Registration function <p>The Chair then referred to the involvement of the third sector as a consideration for the future</p> <p>The Chair also thanked Mike Parry for the report and the response to the questions raised.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed that a thank you be conveyed to staff for their hard work.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The content of the report be noted.</p>
195	Forward Work Programme 2021/22	<p>The Chair referred the Committee to the Forward Work Programme and suggested that the Task and Finish report be moved from the next Meeting and that she would discuss this with the Scrutiny Officer for a Meeting later in the year. The Chair also referred to the Cabinet Work Programme and the need to ensure that the Committee was capturing matters relevant to the Committee in the Forward Work Programme.</p>
196	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	<p>The Chair advised that there was no update on this item.</p>
197	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the matters discussed at the Meeting and the Chair advised that she would follow up as an action the third Sector involvement with the Scrutiny Officer.</p>
198	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	<p>Consultation Process</p> <p>The Chair referred to issues that had been raised by Councillors in relation to the Consultation process and suggested that the Committee undertake an investigation into this process.</p> <p>The Committee then agreed that Consultation be added to the Committee Work Programme.</p> <p>The Chair advised that she would discuss the inclusion of Consultation into the Committee Work Programme with the Scrutiny Officer.</p>