



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE, BUSINESS CHANGE AND CORPORATE SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor T Lewis (In the Chair)

Councillors B Carter, G Jones, L Mytton, D Roberts, W R Smith and S Williams

Coopteers:

Alison Harris

Officers:

Mark Thomas (Head of Corporate Services), Ewan McWilliams (Corporate Performance Manager), Gary Evans (Audit Manager), Louise Ballinger (Senior Auditor), Mike Parry (Revenues Manager) and Ann-Marie McCafferty (Research and Monitoring Officer)

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Mair Morgan (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
141	Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Isaac, Councillor L E Smart, Councillor Richard Thomas, Anne Morgan and Tanya Skinner Co-opted Members.
142	Declarations of Interest	Councillor L Mytton Declared her Interest in Item Three –

	(including whipping declarations)	Debt Collection – Use of Debt Recovery Companies as the Company she worked with had a Contract named in the papers – Staff Training.
143	Debt Collection - Use of Debt Recovery Companies	<p>Councillor L Mytton having Declared her Interest in this item left the Meeting for the consideration of the item.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Mark Thomas and Mike Parry to the Meeting.</p> <p>Mark Thomas referred the Committee to the ‘Debt Collection – Use of Debt Recovery Companies’ report and gave the background to the report.</p> <p>Mike Parry then gave a detailed overview of the report to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee were also advised that under Paragraph 3.9 2015/16 should read 1 and not 0.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised by the Committee and were responded to in detail by the Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 3.9 of the report – What is the basis of the Complaints • Before a Council Tax case is issued to an Enforcement Agent, a minimum of five Notices are issued to the Debtor – Would there be any contact from the Debtor to the Council in this time • Does the Council pay external agencies to get the money back • Is there a cost to the public between the first and fifth Notice – Is there a cost per letter • Do neighbouring Councils use both internal and external Enforcement Agents • If there is a response to the first letter are there extra costs at this point or are costs frozen • Is there any way to mitigate repeat offending • The proportion of work retained in house has increased to 91% in 2015/16 – Why not 100% - Is it an expertise or capacity issue • Are there any complaints in relation to Council staff • How much is the cost per head to the Council for the five letters • How are the Enforcement Agents identified <p>Resolved that:</p>

		A Task and Finish Group be established to further consider this matter and that this Group comprise Councillor T C Lewis (Chair), Councillor D Isaac (Vice Chair) and Councillor W R Smith.
144	Draft Annual Governance Statement for financial year 2015/16	<p>The Chair welcomed Gary Evans and Louise Ballinger to the Meeting.</p> <p>Gary Evans led the Committee through the 'Draft Annual Governance Statement for financial year 2015/15' report.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised by the Committee and were responded to in detail by the Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation regarding the level of staffing in the Audit Department • Appendix A – (h) – What procedures are in place re- Governance – Are issues able to be picked out at an early stage • Appendix A – Scrutiny Arrangements – Strengthening the process – Budget lines against reports – Indicate the critical areas <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee notes and contributes to the content and production of the Annual Governance Statement 2015/16</p>
145	Performance Report - Corporate Plan. Preparation for the Wellbeing Duty, Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	<p>The Chair welcomed Ewan McWilliams and Anne Marie McCafferty to the Meeting.</p> <p>Ewan McWilliams led the Committee in detail through the 'Performance Report – Corporate Plan, Preparation for the Wellbeing Duty, Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' report.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised by the Committee and were responded to in detail by the Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 8.10 of the report – Training for Scrutiny Members – Financial considerations – How to get Members involved • How far will there be drilling down to help people with Well Being <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The preparation for the Wellbeing Duty be noted.</p> <p>Councillor L Mytton left the Meeting at 5.30 pm.</p>
146	Annual Scrutiny Report 2015/16	The Committee were referred to the 'Annual Scrutiny Report – 2015 / 2016 report'.

		<p>The Committee also agreed that further discussion take place in relation to recording equipment being installed in the Committee Rooms.</p> <p>A Member also referred to Appendix II and recommended that the report last year in relation to the work of Scrutiny be re-circulated.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The content of the report be noted (b) The report be forwarded to a Meeting of Full Council (c) Council's instructions be requested in respect of the commencement of Webcasting of all or a selection of Scrutiny Committee Meetings with effect from September 2016
147	Preparation of Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17	<p>The Chair referred the Committee to the 'Preparation of Scrutiny Work Programme – 2016/17' report.</p> <p>The Committee were also advised that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee would be attending a Corporate Management Team Meeting in relation to the Work Programme.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The Content of the report be noted and preparation of the 2016/17 work programme be commenced.</p>
148	Progress report - Joint Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Cwm Taf Public Services Board	<p>The Chair referred the Committee to the 'Progress report – Joint Scrutiny Committee to Scrutinise the Cwm Taf Public Services Board' report.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The content of the report be noted (b) The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee meet with RCTCBC Colleagues to further discuss and develop proposals for the Joint Scrutiny arrangements of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board.
149	Older People's Commissioner for Wales - Guidance on Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments and Scrutiny	<p>The Chair referred the Committee to the 'Older People's Commissioner for Wales – Guidance on Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments and Scrutiny' report.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The contents of the report be noted and Scrutiny's role in ensuring that any changes to Community Services are monitored and that the impact on older people and others are taken into consideration in line with the guidance.</p>
150	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	<p>Councillor G Jones referred to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and advised that the Regeneration, Planning and Countryside Committee had convened a Task and Finish Group in relation to DFG's.</p>

151	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected on the items that had been discussed at the Meeting.
152	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent.