

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN REMOTELY VIA SKYPE ON MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2020 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor T Giffard – Chairperson

JPD Blundell
J Gebbie
RME Stirman
SE Baldwin

RJ Collins
AJ Williams
TH Beedle

M Jones
KJ Watts
A Williams

B Sedgebeer
PA Davies
KL Rowlands

Registered Representatives

Rev Canon Edward Evans
Morris

Church in Wales
Secondary School Sector

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence
Rachel Pick
Tracy Watson

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Officer

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Beedle declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- LEA Governor at Cwmfelin Primary School
- LEA Governor at Maesteg Comprehensive School
- Chair of Bridgend Governors Association.

Cllr A Williams declared a personal interest in this item because he was an LEA Governor at Pencoed Comprehensive School.

Cllr JP Blundell declared a personal interest in this item because he was a Community Governor at Cefn Glas Infants School.

Cllr R Collins declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- LEA Governor at Plasnewydd Junior School
- Maesteg Town Council Governor at St Mary's & St Patrick's Roman Catholic School.

Cllr R Stirman declared a personal interest in this item because she was an LEA Governor at Bettws and Blaengarw Federated.

L Morris, Registered Representative, Secondary Schools Sector declared a personal interest in this item because she was a Parent Governor at Maesteg Comprehensive School.

Cllr J Gebbie declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- LEA Governor at Mynydd Cynffig Primary School
- LEA Governor at Pil Primary School.

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Cllr T Giffard declared a personal interest in this item because he was an LEA Governor of Tremains Primary School.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 21 January and 3 February 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the correct attendees being reflected.

9. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny presented the Forward Work Programme Update to Members. She explained that it had been some time since the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees (SOSC) had met due to the postponement of the March meeting due to the pandemic. She referred to the purpose of the report in section 1, which was to present proposed initial items for the Committee's Forward Work Programme (FWP), request any information to be included in the item for the next meeting and request any further items for consideration for the FWP for the remainder of the calendar of meetings.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny referred to Section 3 of the report advising that whilst the committee had been postponed there had been the establishment of a Recovery Panel with the aim of shaping, informing and advising Cabinet on the Council's recovery planning to form the basis of the recovery phase of the pandemic. The Panel had met 6 times and heard from 5 sets of invitees, between 4th and 25th August 2020, and produced recommendations to COSC on the 7th September 2020, which were further reported to Cabinet on 15th September, with a formal response from Cabinet expected imminently. The Recovery Panel was now awaiting the Public Service Board's Community Impact Assessment to consider the findings, before selecting the next area of focus to be examined in greater detail in the next phase.

She advised that the Combined Meeting of SOSC1 and 2 had been postponed and rearranged in July for the Committees to consider the proposals for Post 16 Education and Learner Travel and make recommendations to Cabinet, and the decisions were taken by Cabinet in July and September.

She reported that planning and preparations for this year's cycle of Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) meetings commenced well ahead of the first meeting on 24th July 2020, with 3 meetings being supported to date, and arrangements underway for the fourth meeting, and recognised that there were Members of this Committee on the BREP and the Cross-Party Recovery Panel.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny explained that the Schedule of Meetings for the remaining municipal year had been agreed at Annual Council on 30th September 2020. As the Recovery Panel had now been established, it was recognised that, moving forward, meetings of SOSCs needed to be focused and strategic to avoid a duplication of work. Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee must publish a FWP as far as it is known. An effective FWP would identify the issues that the Committee wished to focus on during the year and provide a clear rationale. The FWPs would remain flexible and be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each SOSC.

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The current position following Annual Council on 30th September was the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring and the Scrutiny Annual Report had been mapped. The FWP Update report was being submitted to the Committee for consideration and the outcome would be fed back to COSC on 2nd December 2020 to set a focussed interim overall FWP.

She advised the Committee that at the time of reporting, that Council had been advised that the Local Government Financial Settlement from Welsh Government would be later than expected. Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would therefore need to be considered by Scrutiny Committees after Cabinet considered the draft MTFS proposals on 19 January 2021 and not in the December cycle of meetings as originally planned. Consequently, arrangements would be made to move the date of the January meetings to facilitate this, subject to approval by Council, which was a requirement for all dates of meetings that are moved.

She explained that, as scrutiny of the MTFS would move back from December to January it was proposed that it would be timely that the Committee received an update briefing from the Corporate Director upon the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon the Education and Family Support Service area and the operational response. This would be at the next meeting on Monday 7th December 2020 and the Committee was asked to identify any specific information they would like included in this update for their next meeting.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny clarified that with regards to the other meetings of scrutiny after the MTFS, the Committee was requested to identify any further items for consideration on the interim FWP for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings, using the prior agreed criteria form. She explained that this did not necessarily have to be done at the meeting today, as the committee had the opportunity at each meeting to revisit it's FWP and amend it and refine what it would like included in those items. Members could wait until the next meeting of the Committee to set further topics, as there was room to do that and still request reports in time, but that this was a matter for the Committee.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny referred to Scrutiny Member Training in paragraph 4.8 of the report, and reminded Members of the training on offer from the WLGA in respect of questioning skills training for scrutiny Members and training for scrutiny Chairs, which had been postponed in April due to the national lockdown. She advised that the WLGA could now offer the training via Microsoft Teams, which had recently been rolled out to Members, and it was therefore proposed that the following sessions be organised via Microsoft Teams on dates to be arranged:

- One session of Scrutiny Questioning Skills for all Scrutiny Members;
- One session of Scrutiny Chairs' Training for 3 Scrutiny Chairs, and invite the Chair of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel, the Chair of the Cross- Party Recovery Panel and the Chair of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairperson asked Members if they wished to speak on the FWP, and commented that the key was the need for fluidity and flexibility in the FWP, as discussed with the Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny and Scrutiny Officers. He recalled that when last year's FWP had been set there had have been some topics that had arisen subsequently, over the year. Whilst he would like to set a FWP and stick to it as rigidly as possible, some flexibility was needed if the Committee needed to change dates of meetings or topics, within the Committees remit to do so.

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The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny clarified that there was some flexibility to the moving and refining of topics as the FWP Update Report is considered by the Committee at each meeting however, changes of meeting dates required approval by Council. She explained that it would be difficult to bring a topic too far forward if it resulted in insufficient timescales for reports to be commissioned in time and also that the some reports like the MTFS needed to be considered to meet the timetable for setting the budget for the Council.

There were no requests to include specific information in the item for the next meeting.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings using the agreed form, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee confirmed the proposed initial items for the Committee's Forward Work Programme set out in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of this report.

10. CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

The Chairperson invited nominations from the floor, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Gebbie be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an Invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

11. NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairperson invited nominations from the floor, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor K Watts be nominated as the representative of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 to sit as a Member of the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

12. URGENT ITEMS

None.