

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2024 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

F D Bletsoe

M Jones

Present Virtually

H T Bennett  
M L Hughes

P Davies  
T Thomas

RM Granville  
G Walter

S J Griffiths  
AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

RL Penhale-Thomas

Invitees:

Councillor Huw David  
Councillor Jane Gebbie  
Councillor Hywel Williams  
Councillor Rhys Goode

Leader of Council  
Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services Health  
Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration

Mark Shephard  
Carys Lord  
Kelly Watson

Chief Executive  
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change  
Chief Officer - Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

Deborah Exton  
Martin Morgans  
Christopher Morris

Deputy Head of Finance  
Head of Partnership Services  
Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate

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**Officers:**

Laura Griffiths  
Joanne Norman  
Alex Rawlin  
Rachel Keepins  
Meryl Lawrence  
Stephen Griffiths

Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services  
Group Manager – Budget Management  
Corporate Policy & Public Affairs Manager  
Democratic Services Manager  
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny  
Interim Scrutiny Officer/ Democratic Services Officer – Committees

**Declarations of Interest**

None

**100. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>  That the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 14 December 2023, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	17 January 2024

**101. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28**

Decision Made	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>  Following detailed consideration and discussions with Cabinet Members and Officers, the Committee made the following Recommendations:  1. The Committee recommended that communication with the public be improved using as many different means as possible and that a simple pie chart graphic be distributed to residents of the borough
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identifying where funding comes from and how it is spent.

2. The Committee recommended that there should be an in person option for the Budget consultation and other mechanisms and different communications tools used to reach people who are digitally excluded, having regard to concerns expressed by residents who felt disenfranchised as they were unable to access an online budget consultation.
3. The Committee requested a list of all services the Council provides to residents, businesses, whomever, including whether they have a level of statutory element or are completely non statutory, understanding that it is a significant piece of work but providing sufficient detail to feed into the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) for next year's Budget considerations and the need to identify future savings for the next few years while understanding the impact of potential changes on residents. The Committee recommended that the future BREP process could then sit upon that registry of services to inform decisions going forward.
4. Following discussions regarding the remit of the BREP and the Capital Programme and that a revised Capital Programme would be considered by Council in February, the Committee proposed that next year the Capital Programme should form part of the BREP process in order to look at the detail and sufficiently scrutinise, and also asked whether the Terms of Reference of BREP could be amended by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) to redefine the remit for the next year.  
  
The Committee welcomed the response from the Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR, and Corporate Policy that BREP was quite unique to Bridgend and it was not as straightforward as COSC deciding what BREP could do, there was a process and other options could be looked at to see if there was something more workable but would need to be taken away and some proposals developed to put to the relevant body to make a determination.
5. Following discussion regarding staffing reductions across multiple areas of main Council back office services, the Committee requested a qualitative impact assessment of all those changes taken together to understand the impact of this reduction in head count and the significant longer term impact, and welcomed the Chief Executive's response of the need to reflect on how achievable it would be and that he would discuss with colleagues about whether this could be done.
6. The Committee recommended that potential income generation opportunities from sharing services be actively explored, proactively offering the Authority's services where there is potential for income to be generated, to mitigate against some of the future budget reductions which would be required over the course of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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	<p>7. The Committee discussed strategic responsibilities that the Authority will be unable to deliver, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduced capital receipts reducing the ability to borrow for capital projects, as borrowing is based upon ability to pay back.</li><li>- Inability to deliver the Strategic Transport Plan, etc.</li></ul> <p>a. The Committee recommended that these and other similar risks should be contained in the Corporate Risk Register and be properly scrutinised and subject to an objective review of risk management to ensure that the risks are being properly analysed and mitigated.</p> <p>b. The Committee also recommended that operational risk be monitored by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the overarching Corporate Scrutiny Committee, in addition to monitoring of governance and financial risk by the Governance and Audit Committee.</p> <p>8. The Committee agreed to defer any additional final recommendations until the meeting of COSC on 30 Jan 2024, when all Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be received.</p>
Date Decision Made	17 January 2024

**102. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	17 January 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#) for Part One and this [link](#) for Part Two.

The meeting closed at 13:56.