



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 5TH MARCH 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor H.W. David - Chairman  
Councillor Mrs. J. Summers - Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

C.J. Cuss, J.E. Fussell, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, D. Rees, R. Saralis,  
J. Taylor

**Also Present:**

Cabinet Members: Councillors Mrs. C. Forehead (Human Resources and Governance/  
Business Manager), G. Jones (Housing), K.V. Reynolds (Corporate Services), D.V. Poole  
(Community and Leisure Services), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Planning)

**Together with:**

N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), P.S. Evans (Head of Information, Communications,  
Technology and Customer Services), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and  
Organisation Development), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Governance), N. Scammell (Head  
of Corporate Finance), L. Donovan (Education and Leisure Personnel Manager), S. Pugh  
(Communications Manager), L. Rogers (HR Service Manager), J. Jones (Democratic Services  
Manager), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, D.G. Carter, Mrs. D. Ellis,  
C. Hawker and Ms. J.G. Jones.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed representatives from the Wales Audit Office (WAO), together with  
Members from Monmouthshire County Council, who were observing the meeting as part of  
the WAO's national Scrutiny Improvement Study.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were received at the start and during the course of the meeting as follows – Councillor J.E. Fussell in regards to agenda item numbers 6(3) [Senior Officer Remuneration – Financial Implications] and 8(1) [Discretionary Rate Relief Applications]. Councillors Mrs. C. Forehead and K.V. Reynolds enquired as to possible declarations of interest in regards to agenda item no. 6(3) [Senior Officer Remuneration – Financial Implications]. Details are minuted with the respective item.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 30th January 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 11, on page nos. 1 - 5) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

There were no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

**4. CABINET REPORTS**

The Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had not been requested to be brought forward for review at the meeting.

**5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS**

Councillor Mrs. C. Forehead, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Governance/ Business Manager, gave a verbal report to Members and updated them on the current national pay negotiations. She advised that at a meeting on the 26th February 2013, employers had made a formal offer with two proposals to the trade unions. Details of each proposal were highlighted and Members informed that these were currently being considered by the trade unions. Following questions raised by Members, Cllr Forehead gave further clarification.

Councillor K.V. Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, gave a verbal report to Members and made them aware that following Council's approval of the budget proposals last week, the contract for the development of the former Ystrad Mynach site will now be let. The contract period is estimated at 40 weeks, with completion early 2014.

In addition, Councillor Reynolds informed Members that Merthyr County Borough Council have now also approved the collaboration project with Caerphilly in respect of procurement services and thanks were given to Liz Lucas, Head of Procurement, and her team for their continuing success in this area.

Members thanked the Cabinet Members for their presentations and added their congratulations to Mrs. Lucas and her team. Further information was then given in regards to funding and sponsorship of the new sports development.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **6. PASSPORT PROGRAMME**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development introduced Mrs. Liz Rogers, HR Service Manager, who gave a presentation to Members on the Passport Programme. An initiative run by the Council in conjunction with its partners, to engage with young people and tackle youth unemployment.

Mrs. Rogers explained the reasons for the Programme's development and gave an overview of progress to date, the targets and the outcomes. It was noted that the scheme is based around a tiered approach to support young people with work experience, paid work based traineeships, traditional apprenticeships and a fourth tier to support graduate placements. With the aid of a diagram she explained the programme model and how the diagnostics ensure that the scheme is the right scheme for the trainee and that the appropriate courses are selected. Members were informed that the model could be adjusted to ensure the Programme's success.

Funding arrangements were also detailed and Members were asked to note that the Council had been organising work placements for the last 18 months and so far 270 placements have been delivered across all 4 tiers and that trainees will have prior consideration for vacancies advertised internally as soon as they commence their placement.

Members thanked Mrs. Rogers for the informative presentation and welcomed the Passport Programme. The scale of youth unemployment was recognised and the work undertaken by officers and those partners involved in the Programme was applauded. Clarification was then given regarding the potential to replicate the initiative at other local authorities.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the presentation and requested an update on the Programme in six months time. Members also requested an electronic copy of the presentation.

## **7. DRAFT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The report sought Members' views on the draft Citizen Engagement Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough Council and asked for their views, and an in principle endorsement of the draft strategy, before consideration by Cabinet.

The draft Citizen Engagement Strategy builds upon developments within Caerphilly County Borough Council since adoption of the first Consultation Strategy in 2001 and outlines the direction and scope of CCBC's engagement activities to effectively inform and involve citizens within the borough. Officers highlighted the key objectives and the accompanying Action Plan.

Members discussed the report and officers responded to general questions. In particular, officers were asked how they would ensure engagement with a cross section of diverse social economic groups would be accomplished. Officers asked Members to note the increased use of social media, in addition to traditional methods such as view point panels and customer satisfaction surveys. While these additional methods were acknowledged, Members raised concerns that certain constituents could be excluded and they asked officers to ensure that full engagement was achieved and measured.

Further more, Members questioned whether communication across the Authority was sufficient to ensure all directorates fully met the proposed strategy's aims, particularly as the Communications Team were the driving force behind the strategy and the budget holders for the initiative. Officers acknowledged Members' concerns but advised that there was a new internal communication strategy that should ensure effective liaison took place.

In closing Members received assurances that the strategy and Action Plan would be reviewed informally on a regular basis and formally on an annual basis. While it would be challenging to engage with a cross section of all constituents, this was a national principle and officers were confident this would be achieved.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report, and subject to their comments being taken into consideration, endorsed in principle the draft Citizen Engagement Strategy. Furthermore, for the reasons contained within the report, the Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Communications Unit lead a working group with cross directorate representation in taking forward the Action Plan.

## **8. SENIOR OFFICER REMUNERATION – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Councillor J.E. Fussell declared an interest as he could not be involved in the scrutiny process, as he had he had been involved in the decision making process that was subject to scrutiny. He left the meeting at this time. Cabinet Members Councillors K.V. Reynolds and Mrs. C. Forehead, as members of the former Remuneration Panel sought legal advice as to whether they should also leave the meeting. The Head of Legal and Governance confirmed that as they were not members of the Scrutiny Committee they could remain in the meeting, but they were not to take part in the discussion.

Before commencement of the agenda item, the Chairman politely requested Members to restrict any discussions to the report that was before them, and not refer to individual officers or the decision of the Remuneration Panel in September 2012.

The report sought to clarify the financial implications of Council's decision on 17th January 2013 in respect of senior officer remuneration, as requested by Councillor C.P. Mann.

The Head of Corporate Finance reviewed the report and confirmed that this had been revised following consultation with the Authority's external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers. No further comments had been received post revision. In addition, she explained the virement of budget relating to taking funds generated by the Heads of Service vacancy savings to increase budget heads to fund the additional cost. As a result, she advised senior officer remuneration did not impact upon council tax levels.

Members discussed the report in depth and officers responded to general questions. Further clarification was also sought relating to articles published in the local media and discrepancies were reviewed. Officers reiterated that full Council, at its meeting of 27th February 2013, considered and agreed a factual report on budget proposals for 2012-2013 and the medium term financial strategy for 2013-2016.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **9. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA**

While there were no requests for any reports to be prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor C.P. Mann requested that minutes of other meetings be presented in a timely fashion. Officers informed Members that minutes were presented to the Scrutiny Committee once their accuracy had been confirmed at the next appropriate meeting of that group.

**10. INFORMATION ITEMS**

At the start of the meeting, Councillor J.E. Fussell declared an interest in the Discretionary Rate Relief Applications report as he is a Non-Executive Director of Greencap. He had already left the meeting at this point in proceedings.

The following reports were received and noted without discussion:

- (1) Discretionary Rate Relief Applications;
- (2) Employee Relations Activity 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Up To 31st December 2012);
- (3) Write Off Debts – 2012/13 Half Year;
- (4) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme;
- (5) Minutes of the Caerphilly Local Service Board Meeting held on 10th October 2012;
- (6) Minutes of the NNDR Meeting held on 11th February 2013.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN