



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
25TH MAY 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Pritchard - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. A. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, L. Harding, G. Kirby (Vice Chair), C. P. Mann, B. Miles, J. Pritchard (Chair), R. Saralis, Mrs M. E. Sargent, G. Simmonds, J. Taylor and L. G. Whittle.

Cabinet Members:

Cllr. C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) and Cllr. Mrs E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Property Services).

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), S. Foley (Regional Community Cohesion Officer), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), D. Morris (Contracts Manager), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer).

Also in attendance:

Councillor K. Etheridge and L. Dallimore (Unison Branch Secretary).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Cuss and G. Johnston.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 6TH APRIL 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 6th April 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 7) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the reports planned for the period May 2021 to February 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6th April 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

It was proposed that the Asylum Dispersal Scheme report and the Community Empowerment Fund report be added to the Forward Work Programme for a special meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to be held on 23rd June 2021.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the additional reports proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Councils' website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION – QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor K. Etheridge and supported by Councillors R. Gough, G. Simmonds, A. Farina-Childs and R. Owen. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report and make an appropriate recommendation to Council.

Councillor K. Etheridge outlined the Notice of Motion, which referred to Rule 10 of the Council's Procedural Rules, and called on the Council to ensure, in the future, Elected Members are allowed to table questions to the Leader and ask a supplementary question without recourse to the Cabinet Member.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the Notice of Motion as outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report. With agreement from Councillor K. Etheridge an additional recommendation was proposed and seconded.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

- (i) That the notice of motion be supported.
- (ii) That the Constitution be amended in relation to Rule 10(4) to allow a supplementary question to be asked of the Cabinet Member, this supplementary question must be directly related to the main question asked.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING SCHEME

The Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Property Services presented the report which sought the views of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on a proposed Employee Volunteering Scheme, prior to consideration at Cabinet. Members were informed that the Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees of Caerphilly County Borough Council, with the benefit of releasing the capacity of employees in supporting local communities and the associated benefits to employee well-being.

The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy reminded Members that the Employee Volunteering Scheme is an outcome of the Corporate Review process that was agreed in July 2020. Members were informed that it is also a direct result of the successful work undertaken by the organisation as a whole on the buddy scheme and looks to expand on the benefits already delivered through that scheme within communities.

Members received a contribution from the Caerphilly Branch Secretary of UNISON. The union supported the Volunteering Scheme provided that agreed terms were adhered to and there was no impact on conditions of service for employees.

Clarification was sought in relation to the longer-term volunteering option and how the quantity of volunteering is calculated in order for employees to be eligible to apply for two days leave of absence which equates to 14.48 hours per calendar year. The Regional Community Cohesion Officer advised the Scrutiny Committee that the longer-term volunteering involves a commitment of a minimum of 12 months with regular volunteering and engagement taking place at least once a month, however there was no minimum amount required in terms of the actual hours. The Senior Policy Officer advised that there was an error in section 7.1 of the report and that it should state that an employee will participate in a minimum of 12 months volunteering, not 12 days. It was highlighted that the leave of absence is in recognition of volunteering commitment.

Assurances were sought in that all employees would have an equal chance to participate in the Employee Volunteering Scheme and that an employee would not be prevented from volunteering because their colleague was already taking part. The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy outlined how all volunteering opportunities would be advertised on the Volunteering Wales website and the process will be managed through the Caerphilly Cares Team with a service manager part funded with the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). It was suggested by the Officer that an update report be presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in 6 months, ahead of the Annual Review. It was also highlighted that equal access to the scheme was a key aim but that service delivery would still have to be considered by the employee's manager. Members also heard how an

escalation process would be in place for those with concerns over how the scheme was being operated. The Scrutiny Committee agreed to the suggestion that an update report be brought before Members in 6 months.

In response to a query regarding volunteering opportunities the Senior Policy Officer advised Members that for any longer-term volunteering the organisation for which employees volunteer must be registered with Volunteering Wales and the employees volunteering time will be managed through the Volunteering Wales website.

A query was raised in relation to school employees accessing the Employee Volunteering Scheme. The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy advised Members that all HR policies need to be considered and adopted by each Governing Body. The Member asked about the situation with other Councils in regard to this matter and the Policy Officer outlined how approaches differed across Councils because of different school patterns but there was agreement that it was for respective Governing Bodies to decide.

A Member asked if volunteering could create full-time and part-time employment eventually if the voluntary duty being performed related directly to the Authority. The Senior Policy Officer outlined how the “Buddy Scheme” was a good example of this situation happening with the creation of the Caerphilly Cares posts.

The Chair raised concerns that some employees might feel obliged to carry out volunteering commitments and also suggested the two days leave of absence in recognition of volunteering commitment is not sufficient recompense for the work carried out by staff over a 12-month period. The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy highlighted that the proposed two days leave of absence would allow current service delivery levels to be maintained and indicated a survey of volunteers could be included in the update report which would come to Committee 6 months after the scheme commenced. The Policy Officer advised Members that there was flexibility with the scheme and gave the example of allowing day and part-day voluntary work which was aimed at employees with family commitments and those providing frontline services.

The Director of Education and Corporate Services highlighted to Members that the Employee Volunteering Scheme is driven by employees and there was no requirement placed upon staff to take part. Issues such as potential barriers to voluntary work and the level of recognition would be considered as part of the review.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report and made comments on the Employee Volunteering Scheme and the proposal to implement the Scheme with a review to be carried out in 12 months on the uptake and benefits of the Scheme, prior to consideration at Cabinet.

9. SOCIAL VALUE POLICY AND THE ADOPTION OF THE THEMES, OUTCOMES AND MEASURES FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services presented the draft Caerphilly County Borough Council Social Value Policy and the proposed adoption of the Themes, Outcomes and Measures Framework.

Members received a contribution from the Caerphilly Branch Secretary of UNISON. The union supported the policy but highlighted that the TOMs Framework should not be viewed as just a set of arbitrary data and also called for a Social Value Action Plan.

The Head of Customer and Digital Services delivered a presentation on the Social Value Policy. Clarification was sought regarding paragraph 8.2. of the report, which is in relation to the annual fee paid to our Social Value procurement and measurement partner. Officers confirmed this would be flexible dependent on the number of contracts administered through the portal. Members sought further clarifications and were advised that Officers are currently

undertaking further consultation with Members due to the fact no set amount of contracts have been agreed to be administered through the portal, therefore the total annual fee is unknown at this time. Officers have agreed to update Scrutiny Members via updated Policy and Resources Scrutiny reports and/or direct consultation.

Members reaffirmed their desire for Council contracts to reflect the living wage and were supportive of local supply chains and local communities. These issues are being addressed via the Council's Programme for Procurement.

Members acknowledged Social Value is wider than the procurement discipline and Social Value should be considered by other Council service provisions e.g. Planning via the Local Development Plan.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered and commented on the content of the Social Value Policy and the TOM's Framework, prior to submitting and presenting the information to Cabinet for endorsement.

The meeting closed at 7.25 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 28th September 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR