

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 19 July 2018

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors:

K.V. Broom, D.M. Cundy (In place of D.C. Evans), H.L. Davies, T.A.J. Davies, J.K. Howell, G.H. John, D. Jones (In place of F. Akhtar), C. Jones, H.I. Jones (In place of S.M. Allen), K. Madge, J.G. Prosser and D.E. Williams

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
N. Daniel, Head of I.C.T.
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
J. Morgan, Acting Head of Homes & Safer Communities
G. Ayres, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager
R James, Performance Planning & Business Officer
L. Evans, Policy & Partnership Officer
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber & Ante Room, Spilman Street, Carmarthen - 3, Spilman Street, Carmarthen. SA31 1LE. - 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Aapologies for absence were received from Councillors F. Akhtar, S. Allen and D.C. Evans.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Madge	5 - Draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2017-18	Daughter works in Social Services.

3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. DRAFT - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18

The Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2017/18 together with the relevant Well-Being Objective [WBO] detailed reports falling within the remit of the committee namely:

- WBO5 - Tackling poverty;
- WBO14 - Promoting Welsh language and culture;
- WBO15 - Building a Better Council and Making Better Use of Resources.

It was noted that it was a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure the Authority must publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year.

The following issues were raised on the report:-

- concern was expressed that rather than being a poverty reducing measure there was evidence in some areas of Carmarthenshire that Universal Credit seemed to be achieving the opposite;
- Carmarthenshire's progress in tackling poverty was commended but it was considered that more help was required from Welsh Government;
- It was recognised that in some rural areas of Carmarthenshire lack of accessibility to services was a contributory factor towards poverty and in this regard mobile libraries were being adapted to mobile 'hubs';
- The Committee was advised that whilst the LEADER programme would end in 2022 the UK Government was looking to establish an Economic Prosperity Programme;
- Reference was made to the work being undertaken to tackle homelessness by enabling support and avoiding a culture of dependency;
- the Economic Development Manager agreed to ascertain the number of apprenticeships, graduates etc taken on under the Work Ready Project;
- the Head of Homes and Safer Communities agreed to provide details of the fuel clubs;
- Officers agreed to look into the possibility of arranging a seminar to update members on issues relating to Universal Credit and the Authority's Action Plan;
- Officers agreed to look at ways of ensuring that the Authority's Christmas Hamper service was not overwhelmed due to increased need;
- Reference was made to the detailed information on the Council's website as to the benefits of being bi-lingual;
- It was noted that Carmarthenshire was one of the few authorities in Wales to report National Survey for Wales findings;
- The Head of Financial Services agreed to provide details of where the £54m budget reductions had been made over the last 5 years;
- Concern was reiterated in regard to possible links between vacant posts, stress and sickness rates and the committee was advised that a further report on sickness management would be submitted in due course;
- In response to a query the Committee was advised that the capability of having a holistic profile in one place of any Carmarthenshire resident was some way off as it would require the sharing of data held on different systems used by other partner organisations such as the Health Board. It was an issue that the Public Services Board was looking into. The 'My Account' facility on the Council's website did enable the Authority to build a limited but useful profile of any individual who was signed up.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the draft Annual Report 2017/18 be received.

6. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

With reference to minute 9 of the meeting held on the 25th November 2015 the Committee considered the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-18 which detailed how the Council had implemented its Strategic Equality Plan and fulfilled its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the report be approved.

7. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 2017-18

With reference to minute 7 of the meeting held on the 5th October 2016 the Committee considered the Annual Report in relation to the Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2016-17. The Report had been produced in order to comply with the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring arrangements.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the Annual report on the Welsh Language 2017-18.

8. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY - ANNUAL REPORT 2018.

The committee considered the Digital Transformation Strategy Annual Report 2018 in accordance with the commitment given within the Digital Transformation Strategy 2017-2020 [Minute 9 of the Executive Board meeting held on the 2nd May 2017 refers]. The Strategy had four Key Priority areas:

- Digital Customer Services
- Digital Workforce
- Digital Communities & Business
- Digital Collaboration

Within each of these areas a number of key projects and outcomes had been approved and the Annual Report detailed the progress made over the last year. The delivery of these projects was monitored regularly by the Digital Transformation Steering Group and an overview of progress given to the TIC Programme Board.

In response to a query regarding the underwater transatlantic cable which had been mooted as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal coming ashore at Oxwich, Gower, it was stated that this would now fall within the Cardiff Capital Region.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Digital Transformation Strategy Annual Report 2018 be endorsed.

9. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2017-2018

The Committee considered the Annual Report listing the treasury management activities which occurred during 2017-2018 in line with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2017-2018 that was adopted by Council on the 22nd February 2017.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the report.

10. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18.

The Committee considered the Authority's Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departmental reports in respect of the 2017/18 financial year.

Amongst the issues raised during consideration of the report were the following:

- In response to a query the Committee was advised that the efficiency proposals in the Chief Executive's Department totalling £580k were likely to be delivered in 2018/19. The Standby rate had been renegotiated and there was likely to be a reduction in the volume,
- Officers responded to queries on the issues of unfunded posts and unachievable income targets.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

11. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 11th October 2018 be received.

12. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received the Non-Submission report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report detailing progress in relation to actions, requests or referrals emerging from previous scrutiny meetings, be noted.

14. MINUTES- 14TH JUNE 2018

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th June 2018 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE