

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 March 2017

PRESENT: Councillor D.W.H. Richards (Chair);

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, G. Davies, T. Devichand, J.S. Edmunds, W.J.W. Evans, W.T. Evans (In place of D. Price), J.K. Howell, A.W. Jones, A.G. Morgan, R. Thomas, S.E. Thomas (In place of A. Lenny) and D.E. Williams;

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources (Deputy Leader);
P.A. Palmer, Executive Board Member for Communities (Deputy Leader);

The following Officers were in attendance:

O. Bowen, Head of Financial Services;
N. Daniel, Head of ICT;
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
P. Sexton, Head of Audit, Risk and Procurement;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen - 10.00 am - 11.30 am

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Lenny and D. Price. An apology was also received from Councillor L.M. Stephens, Executive Board Member, Human Resources, Efficiencies and Collaboration.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 28th April 2017 be noted.

6. 2016/17 IMPROVEMENT PLAN CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of how each Scrutiny function was performing against the actions and measures in the Authority's 2016/17 Improvement Plan, as at 31st December 2016.

RESOLVED to note the report.

7. 2016/17 IMPROVEMENT PLAN DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the 2016/17 Improvement Plan Departmental Performance Monitoring report which provided an overview of how the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services' Departments had performed in quarter 3 [31st October – 31st December] of 2016/17.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

- With regards to the responses to FOIA requests being off-target, albeit by only 0.03%, the Committee was informed that there had been a high number of requests from private companies and the press on issues such as BREXIT and the City Deal;
- The Committee was informed that the performance status of Action 12008 was actually on target as Welsh Government legislation was awaited;
- In terms of sickness absence it was apparent where the 'hot spots' were and it was considered that it would be appropriate, if the Committee wished, for the Heads of Service in those areas to be called upon to give an account of the reasons for the high sickness absence levels, particularly involving stress-related issues, and the action being taken to address the issues. The Chair commented that this was possibly an issue which the Committee could follow up after the forthcoming elections;
- The Head of Financial Services agreed to ascertain from the Revenue Services Manager the assistance available to individuals who find it difficult to pay Council tax;
- The Head of ICT apprised the Committee of the proposals in hand to provide both members and officers with the most efficient equipment to meet their IT requirements whilst at the same time minimising the risk of security breaches. Following the forthcoming elections Councillors would be given the choice of a Mix Tablet, Laptop or i-pad.

RESOLVED to note the report.

8. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

The Committee considered the Authority's Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departmental reports as at 31st December 2016 in respect of the 2016/17 financial year.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

- Officers noted concerns expressed over the costs associated with School Redundancy and EVR when school budgets were being reduced. It was noted that an extra £200K had been included in the 2017/18 budget for EVR and there was a redeployment policy in place to try and reduce costs;
- Concern was expressed over the reduction in time for staff involved in the delivery of free breakfast services and the effect on moral;
- Concern was expressed over the £880k forecasted variance associated with 'Older People – Private/Vol Homes' but it was acknowledged that this was a query, as were other queries raised, that would need to be raised at the relevant scrutiny committee for that service area;

- With regard to the 'Ammanford / Llandybie Extra Care' scheme it was pointed out that these were in fact self-contained flats and no extra care was offered. The Head of Financial Services agreed to forward this information to the relevant officers and ascertain the reasons for the underspend;
- The Head of Financial Services agreed to ascertain from the appropriate officers a breakdown of the £70k expenditure on the 'Extra Care-Llanelli Area' scheme. He also agreed to obtain further information in regard to the budget breakdowns for the schemes appertaining to 'Llandeilo and Ammanford Primary Schools';
- It was acknowledged that the work to dredge Burry Port harbour had a knock-on effect on the income from mooring fees.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

9. 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.

10. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received the Non- Submission report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. MINUTES

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2017 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE