

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday, 12 January 2018

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair);

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, T.A.J. Davies, J.K. Howell, G.H. John, K. Madge, J.G. Prosser, D.E. Williams, W.T. Evans (in place of H.L. Davies) and S. Najmi (in place of D.C. Evans);

Also in attendance:

Councillor E. Dole, Executive Board Member - Leader of the Council;

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member - Resources;

Councillor L.M. Stephens, Executive Board Member - Deputy Leader of the Council;

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;

N. Daniel, Head of I.C.T.;

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services;

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;

H. Pugh, Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance;

P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);

G. Ayres, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager;

D. Hockenhull, Marketing and Media Manager;

H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager;

J. Owen, TIC Programme Manager;

J. Williams, Applications Development Manager;

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen - 10.00 am - 12.10 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F. Akhtar, H. Davies, D.C. Evans and C. Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Madge	6 - Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2018/19 -2020/21	Daughter works in Social Services;
A. Davies	9 – Corporate Services Departmental Business Plan 2018/19-2021;	Sister-in-Law is Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance.

3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. **CARMARTHENSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr. Barry Liles, Principal of Coleg Sir Gar and Chairman of the Public Services Board, who presented the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board Annual Report 2016-17. The report provided an overview of the requirements of the Board and the steps taken during the first year of its being to establish its ways of working, undertake the necessary statutory requirements and develop the role of the PSB in order to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Carmarthenshire and Wales. It was a requirement of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that a local authority scrutiny committee was responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the work of the PSB and in Carmarthenshire, the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee had been identified as the lead scrutiny committee.

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

- In response to a comment relating to the invitation referred to at the last meeting for members of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee to observe a PSB meeting Mr. Liles stated that he would look into the possibility of holding a meeting at a venue which could accommodate the full committee. It was considered, however, that there was a benefit in a lower number of members attending meetings on different dates at the various venues utilised in order to gain an appreciation of the range of issues discussed;
- The question was asked as to whether the partners on the PSB had been able to achieve savings in terms of property as a result of collaborative working. In response it was stated that the focus of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and efficiencies would hopefully follow on;
- It was clarified that Carmarthenshire County Council provided the secretariat for the PSB but there was also payment in kind from the partners who provided officer support. In addition, Welsh Government provided annual funding of £55k at a regional level (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire) which, to date, had been used to support the development of the Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan;
- In terms of representation at PSB meetings Mr. Liles commented that he was highly critical when organisations did not send representatives to the meetings but he was confident that those who did attend were capable of relaying the Board's decisions, requests or concerns back to the organisations they represented. It was emphasised, however, that the PSB was only an in-principle decision making body and recommendations had to be considered by the individually accountable organisations represented;
- It was commented that improvements to transport links from areas such as Ammanford to Llanelli needed to take place in light of the developments proposed as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal such as the Wellness Village at Delta Lakes. The Leader gave an assurance that transport issues would be addressed as part of the City Deal.

Whereupon the Chair thanked Mr. Liles for attending.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board Annual Report 2016-17 be received.

6. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2018/19 TO 2020/21

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 27th November 2017. The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2018/2019 together with indicative figures for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending need and took into account the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on 10th October 2017. It was reported that the announced provisional settlement had been better than anticipated though the reduction on the current year's settlement, which had an enhanced impact when inflationary factors, demographic and demand changes were considered, had a significant negative impact on the Council's resources. The budget proposals would assume full delivery of the £25.6m identified savings. Furthermore, the budget proposals assume a Council tax increase by 4.12% in the Strategy and a 1% movement equated to +/-£820k.

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

- In response to a question the Committee was advised that as from 1ST April 2018, following negotiations with union representatives, the Standby rate would be reduced thus achieving the proposed savings detailed in the report;
- It was emphasised that managerial efficiency proposals were considered on an individual basis and whilst they may not affect service delivery they could impact on the quality of the service provided;
- The issue of school reserves was raised, particularly as the majority of schools were in deficit, and it was stated that the Education Department was looking into the matter. It was noted that a specialist TIC [Transform, Innovate and Change] Schools Officer had been appointed to assist schools in identifying possible efficiencies they could achieve;
- The Committee was assured, in response to a concern, that there were no liabilities that had not been accommodated in the Strategy. In terms of the City Deal projects there would be no legal commitment by the Authority until all funding, including private sector funding, had been secured;
- It was acknowledged that the decision by China to ban imported waste would have implications for CWM though the exact nature was not yet known and the structure of CWM itself was being looked at.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the report and endorse the Charging Digest.

7. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 - 2022/23

The Committee considered the 5 year capital programme which had been approved by the Executive Board for consultation on the 18th December 2017. It was noted that feedback from the consultation process, along with the outcome of the final settlement, would inform the final budget report which would be presented to members for consideration in February, 2018. The proposed capital programme was a capital spend of some £199m over the next 5 years and current funding proposals included external funding of £56m. The report highlighted the final settlement received from the Welsh Government which indicated capital funding of £9.423m for the Authority in 2018-19. The funding was made up of Supported Borrowing of £5.858m and General Capital Grant of £3.565m. In summary, the overall position of the capital programme was funded for the first 3 years from

2018/19 to 2020/21 with a current small shortfall of £1.462m in the 4th year of the programme 2021/22.

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

- In response to a question it was confirmed that funding for the Glanamman workshops was included in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Capital Programme proposals;
- It was pointed out that other than the proposed leisure centre and care home the proposed Delta Lakes schemes within the Wellness and Life Science Village were not part of the capital programme;
- It was noted that the proposed new Heol Goffa School to be built within the Penrhos School site was included within the MEP Programme.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Five Year Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2022/23 be endorsed.

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

The Committee considered the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2018-21 which outlined the priorities for the department and identified how they supported the 5 Ways of Working and the 7 Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

RESOLVED to note the Plan.

9. CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - 2021

(NOTE: Councillor A. Davies had earlier declared an interest in this item and left the meeting during consideration thereof.)

The Committee considered the Corporate Services Departmental Business Plan 2018-21 which outlined the priorities for the department and identified how they supported the 5 Ways of Working and the 7 Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance, in response to a question, stated that she was satisfied that she had sufficient staff in the audit section to satisfy audit requirements though there were still a number of posts to be filled.

RESOLVED to note the Plan.

10. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 7th February 2018 be noted.

11. MINUTES - 6TH DECEMBER 2017

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th December 2017 be signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Cllr. K Madge's name in the list of attendees.

CHAIR

DATE