

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday, 27 April 2018

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources
L.M. Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
H. Pugh, Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance
J. Williams, Applications Development Manager
A. Wood, HR Strategic Manager
R. James, Performance Planning & Business Officer
C. Jones, Principal Procurement Officer
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
B. James, Welsh Language Development Officer
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, Spilman Street, Carmarthen: 10.00 am - 11.45 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. Madge.

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. DRAFT NEW CORPORATE STRATEGY 2018-23

Members considered sections of the draft new Corporate Strategy 2018-23 relevant to the remit of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The draft new Corporate Strategy would replace the current one published in 2015 and would consolidate the following plans into one document:-

- the 2015-20 Corporate Strategy;
- the Improvement Objectives, as required by the Local Government Measure 2009;
- The Wellbeing Objectives as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – these did not have to change every year, or be deliverable within one year and it was perfectly legitimate to set objectives which spanned more than one year;
- Carmarthenshire County Council's Executive Board key projects and

Programmes for the next 5 years, as set out in “Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the next 5 years”.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Concern was expressed that whilst 33% of households could be defined as living in poverty initiatives such as those within the Swansea Bay City Deal appeared to be geared towards urban rather than rural areas. In response members were advised that the Deal included projects such as ‘Pembroke Dock Marine’, ‘Yr Egin’ and ‘Digital Infrastructure’, significant investments which would benefit the rural areas;
- It was suggested that the statistic of 33% of ‘households’ living in poverty did not take into account individuals living in houses in multiple occupation [HMOs] who therefor remained ‘hidden’. The Committee was advised that in Llanelli’s Tyisha Ward, where there were a number of HMOs, officers from Communities First and the Wellness Village Team were working together to ensure that there was integration between the ‘Village’ and local people benefited;
- It was suggested that schools should include financial literacy within the curriculum as part of life skills or perhaps the Council could circulate packs to schools;
- In terms of Well Being Objective 14 ref. B4 and the targeting of specific areas to promote the welsh language it was pointed out that research based on the 2011 census had indicated areas where there had been a decline in the use of the Welsh Language and resources were being focussed accordingly. The Welsh Language Development Officer agreed to circulate more information in this regard;
- The Head of Financial Services agreed to follow up a query as to how well the Authority was meeting its target for the payment of invoices to small businesses;
- In response to a query as to how the development of a joint procurement service with Pembrokeshire County Council was progressing the Committee was advised that a joint team had been established which was working well but would be monitored;
- Officers advised that based on members comments a number of the ‘Actions and Measures’ would be strengthened prior to submission to the Executive Board.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the draft new Corporate Strategy 2018-23 be endorsed

6. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2018/22

The Committee considered a draft of Carmarthenshire County Council's Procurement Strategy 2018-2022 the aim of which was to have a framework in place so that procurement and commissioning decisions played a key role in supporting the delivery of the aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy and Carmarthenshire's Well-Being Plan.

The following questions/observations were raised:-

- In response to a comment the Committee was advised that the Joint Procurement Shared Service with Pembrokeshire County Council was being monitored and held to account by the TIC Board. It was noted that the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority was now supported by the arrangement

although much of the equipment it needed to procure would be unique to that service;

- In terms of the Swansea Bay City Deal it was noted that Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, had recently announced that each partner authority would be allowed to retain 50% of the business rates generated by the City Deal projects within their boundaries;
- Whilst the Authority worked closely, within legal restrictions, with small and medium sized local businesses who could provide specific services the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance emphasised the importance of achieving the right balance in terms of value for money and compliance with procurement legislation;
- Reservations about the possible awarding of a further contract to a company that was already the subject of concern had to be supported by evidence such as whether the company had been given the opportunity to address those concerns and departments were encouraged to have in place robust systems to record such evidence;
- The delivery of efficiencies would be monitored via a Category Management approach and any cash savings would be transferred to Departments accordingly. It was agreed that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee could be kept apprised of any efficiencies and savings identified;
- In response to a comment as to whether tender documents could be simplified for smaller tenders in particular members were advised that tender packs were now appropriate to the spend area.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

6.1 that the draft Strategy be endorsed;

6.2 the Committee be kept apprised of any efficiencies and savings identified;

6.3 that the Director of Corporate Services be requested to circulate details on the latest position with regard to the governance of the Swansea Bay City Deal.

7. WELSH GOVERNMENT CODE OF PRACTICE - ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT IN SUPPLY CHAINS

The Committee considered a proposal to sign up to the Welsh Government Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. In signing up to the Code the County Council would agree to comply with 12 Commitments designed to eliminate modern slavery and support ethical employment practices. Other organisations operating in Wales from any sector are also to be encouraged to adopt the Code. The Committee was advised that Carmarthenshire County Council was leading on a Regional Civil Engineering Construction Framework (to include Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire) which would be tendered for this September. This would be the first, and ‘pilot’, tender where consideration would be given to the Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Code of Practice and, where appropriate, relevant sustainable and ethical procurement requirements would be embedded as part of the specification.

Members welcomed the principles behind the Code but recognised that there would be practical difficulties in terms of its enforcement such as ensuring that it was also adhered by companies further down the supply chain. In response it was stated that the Authority was in the process of reviewing the terms and conditions of contracts to include more robust clauses but the onus was currently on main

contractors. The Committee was also advised that other enforcement agencies were also tasked with tackling anti-slavery issues.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

7.1 to endorse the proposal to sign up to the Code;

7.2 the outcome of the 'pilot' be reported to the Committee.

8. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 14th June 2018 be received.

9. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received the Non-Submission report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10. MINUTES - 21ST MARCH 2018

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st March 2018 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE