

# POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 June 2018

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

**Councillors:**

S.M. Allen, K.V. Broom, D.M. Cundy (In place of D.C. Evans), T.A.J. Davies, H.L. Davies, J.K. Howell, G.H. John, C. Jones, 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:**

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

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services

G. Ayers, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager

A Clarke, Lead Business Partner (HR)

H. Font, Employee Wellbeing Manager

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D.C. Evans.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Madge	5 - Sickness Absence Monitoring Report – End of Year 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. SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING REPORT - END OF YEAR 2017/18**

Further to minute 7.2 of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the Committee considered a report which provided sickness absence data for the 2017/18 financial year. The data indicated that since 2016/17 there had been an overall reduction in the number of days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) from 10.76 days in 2016/17 to 10.15 days during 2017/18. Overall, however, the target of 9.6 days per FTE, which had been set by Corporate Management Team to support a reduction in absence, had not been met. The report also provided information in relation to the initiatives introduced during the year to support attendance management within schools and council departments. These included:

- Introduction of the Schools' Staff Absence Scheme to all primary schools;
- Positive Attendance Management Conference for all Carmarthenshire Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies;
- Ongoing delivery of the Attendance Management development programme to all Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies;
- Establishment of the Challenge & Review Attendance Forum, chaired by the Deputy Leader;
- Improved management information, benchmarking and ranking data;
- Signing of the TUC Charter "Dying to Work Campaign" aimed at supporting employees with a terminal illness;
- Maintaining the Council's accreditation as a Disability Confident Employer.

The report also provides detailed information relating to Cost of absence, Employee Wellbeing data, Number of employees dismissed on the grounds of health capability, Main causes of absence, Sector comparisons and All Wales comparisons (2016/17).

The following issues were raised on the report:

- The Assistant Chief Executive [People Management] agreed that members should be kept apprised of any issues arising from sickness absence in their local schools;
- It was queried as to whether schools could consider using 'locums' to cover staff absence through sickness thus bypassing the use of agencies. In response the Committee was informed that Welsh Government had recently funded the employment of 3 newly qualified teachers to provide planned, not sickness, cover within the Llanelli cluster of schools but it was considered that it could provide an opportunity to test the possibility of such an initiative being set up to provide sickness cover;
- The Assistant Chief Executive [People Management] suggested that where there were continued concerns over the levels of sickness absence the Committee might wish to invite the relevant Head of Service to a meeting to explain the situation and outline any remedial action. He added that the Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams received Data Management Reports which were able to pinpoint sickness 'hot spots' and patterns with a view to any issues being addressed. The Committee might also wish to consider asking Heads of Service to submit reports to future meetings outlining the positive impact and initiatives in order for good practice be shared;
- Reference was made to the extensive training given to managers on sickness management and the comprehensive information available to staff on the intranet;
- The question was asked as to whether reduced staffing levels in certain areas could be linked with an increase in staff absence due possibly to a greater workload and stress on remaining staff;

- It was acknowledged that targets relating to sickness absence management needed to be realistic but challenging;
- The Employee Wellbeing Manager agreed to provide greater detail with regard to the number of employees supported by the Occupational Health Centre in future reports;
- In response to a question the Assistant Chief Executive [People Management] stated that the issue of staff recognition for long service was due to be looked at by the recently established People's Strategy Board;
- In response to a comment that staff should be encouraged to have flu jobs it was stated that information was available to staff but it was a matter for each individual.

#### **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**5.1 that the report be received and that comparators be shown as percentages in future reports;**

**5.2 that arrangements be made for a further Member Development Session on Sickness Absence Monitoring with a view to members being apprised of the type of sickness data circulated to Departmental Management Teams.**

#### **6. CARMARTHENSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) MINUTES - MARCH 2018**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board held on the 8th March 2018. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 required that a designated local government scrutiny committee was appointed to scrutinise the work of the PSB. In Carmarthenshire, the Council's Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee had been designated as the relevant scrutiny committee.

Members were informed that at the most recent PSB meeting held on the 2nd May 2018 the Board had approved the 'Carmarthenshire Well Being Plan: The Carmarthenshire We Want 2018-2023'. A regional meeting of Mid and West Wales PSBs was also scheduled to be held in Pembrokeshire later in the month.

It was considered that Hywel Dda Health Board should look seriously at the implications of closing local community facilities and the difficulties for people in having to travel further and feeling isolated. A concern was also expressed over the fact that the Health Board, at the last PSB meeting, had presented the Mental Health Strategy as an already approved document rather than for consultation and the PSB Chair, Mr. Barry Liles had conveyed his disappointment on the matter to the Health Board representatives.

It was noted that the PSB was addressing the issue of childhood obesity.

The Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager agreed to circulate dates of future PSB meeting with a view to each member indicating their preference for attending as an observer.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the PSB meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be received.**

#### **7. POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2018/19, which had been prepared in accordance with the Council's Constitution which required Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish annual forward work programmes

identifying issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the municipal year.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the **Forward Work Programme for the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for 2018/19** be confirmed.

**8. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Committee received the Non-Submission report.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 be received.

**10. MINUTES - 27TH APRIL 2018**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 be signed as a correct record.

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CHAIR

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DATE