

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday, 26 April 2019

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor L.M. Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services;
K. Harrop, Community Safety Manager;
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager;
L. Evans, Policy & Partnership Officer;
R James, Performance Planning & Business Officer;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, 3, Spilman Street, Carmarthen: 10.00 am - 11.20 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.M. Allen, K. Madge and J. Prosser.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

4. CORPORATE STRATEGY 2018-23 DRAFT UPDATE JUNE 2019

Further to minute 5 of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 27th April 2018 Members considered the following Well-being Objective [WBO] delivery plans included in the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 Draft Update June 2019 which were relevant to the Committee's remit:

- WBO 5. Tackling poverty;
- WBO 14. Promoting Welsh language and culture;
- WBO 15. Building a Better Council and Making Better Use of Resources.

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

- Officers noted a request for an updated map indicating the strength of the digital infrastructure in Carmarthenshire, particularly those areas with little or no coverage as this contributed indirectly towards rural poverty. Members were advised that an officer was being recruited to assist communities in their endeavours to improve digital infrastructure;

WBO 14

- The Policy and Partnership Officer agreed to ascertain what could be done to ensure that historical welsh language place names which reflected local culture and history were not lost or replaced with English translations;
- The Policy and Partnership Officer agreed to provide details of the areas within the county being specifically targeted to promote the Welsh language;

WBO 15

- It was noted that no formal agreement had yet been reached with Pembrokeshire County Council in regard to securing a joint procurement service though the Authority's own procurement serve remained robust;
- In terms of Success Measures it was considered that comparisons with other welsh local authorities was challenging due to differing organisational structures, a fact recognised by the Welsh Audit Office, and that what was needed was year on year comparable data;
- Whilst it was noted that the Authority was increasing its reliance on 'cloud' based IT to deliver its own services concerns were again expressed over the poor digital coverage in some areas of the county though it was recognised that this was an issue for the national IT companies to address. It was also pointed out that where residents, particularly the elderly, had no computers or online access extra pressure was placed on local members to bridge the gap with the Authority.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 draft update June 2019 be endorsed.

5. CARMARTHENSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) MINUTES JANUARY 2019

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board [PSB] held on the 14th January 2019. 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.

Amongst the issues raised on the minutes were the following:

- Concern was expressed over the need to increase the awareness of poverty in Carmarthenshire on bodies such as the PSB;
- With regard to the fact that much of the staff support for the PSB appeared to be provided by the Council as opposed to other partners the question was raised as to whether officers had sufficient capacity to undertake this work. In response it was stated that it was a requirement of the Act that PSBs were supported by Council staff;
- It was commented that the reference to the fact that only 3% of fruit and vegetables was currently grown in Wales was extremely disappointing and needed to be pushed by the PSB;
- Reference was made to the heavy reliance on volunteers in some work areas and it was suggested that perhaps consideration could be given to a 'rewards' system of recognition. It was noted that the PSB was looking to develop a volunteering strategy.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the PSB meeting held on the 14th January 2019 be received.

6. POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019/20

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2019/20 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 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee's 2019/20 Forward Work Programme be endorsed in principle subject to further consideration at an informal meeting of the committee members.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 13th June, 2019 be received.

8. MINUTES - 20TH MARCH 2019

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th March 2019 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE