

# POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18 July 2019

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

## **Councillors:**

K.V. Broom, D.M. Cundy, T.A.J. Davies, H.L. Davies, J.K. Howell, G.H. John, C. Jones, K. Madge, J.G. Prosser and D.E. Williams

## **The following Officers were in attendance:**

N. Daniel, Head of I.C.T.  
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services  
G. Ayers, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager  
L. Evans, Policy & Partnership Officer  
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm**

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.M. Allen and J. Edmunds.

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

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Minute Number</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
K. Madge	4 - Draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2018-19	Daughter works in Social Services.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been received.

### **4. DRAFT - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/19**

The Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2018/19 together with the relevant Well-Being Objective [WBO] detailed reports falling within the remit of the committee namely:

- WBO5 - Tackling poverty;
- WBO14 - Promoting Welsh language and culture;
- WBO15 - Building a Better Council and Making Better Use of Resources.

It was noted that it was a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure the Authority must publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year.

The following issues were raised on the report:-

- In response to a concern that there had been a significant increase in the percentage of measures that had declined it was acknowledged that reduced budgets undoubtedly impacted on service delivery and in some

instances it was considered that more achievable targets needed to be set accordingly;

#### **WBO5**

- Members were assured that the authority was doing all it could to minimise the impact of Universal Credit on benefit claimants;
- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ascertain the current position with regard to the proposed Carmarthen Hwb;
- It was noted that the authority was liaising with third sector providers to avoid duplication of service provision;
- Whilst the success of the Christmas Food Hamper Appeal was welcome it was considered that the scheme should be extended to the summer holidays when children were off school for a longer period and some families still required support. Reference was made to the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), funded by the Welsh Government and local authorities, which provide free meals, education and physical activities for children across Wales and the Corporate Policy and Partnership Officer agreed to ascertain whether there was any means of expanding the scheme within Carmarthenshire;

#### **WBO14**

- In response to a query as to why the percentage of Foundation Phase pupils who received a teacher assessment in Welsh had declined it was commented that the actual number of pupils may have increased though this would need to be ascertained;
- Members were advised that an accurate indication of whether the number of Welsh Speakers in the County was increasing or declining would not be available until the results of the next census in 2020 were published;
- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ask the Head of Leisure to ascertain the number of visitors to the County's museums and arts/theatre venues in 2018/19 compared with 2017/18;

#### **WBO15**

- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ascertain from the Organisational Development Team the training offered via the Continuous Improvement network;
- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ascertain from the Head of Property the current situation regarding the sale of Nant y Ci and 5-7 Spilman Street, Carmarthen as the 'For Sale' signs appeared to have been removed;
- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to convey concerns regarding waste collection and fly-tipping in the Llanelli area to the Head of Waste & Environmental Services. Particular reference was made to bags which were labelled by refuse collectors and not collected only to be ripped open by foxes, seagulls etc.;
- The Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ascertain from the Electoral Services Division the latest position regarding the Parliamentary Boundary Review;
- The FOIA section was commended on the number of requests which had been responded to;
- Following on from concerns expressed at the last meeting with regard to work-life balance and the sending of e-mails outside of normal working hours the Committee was assured that the issue was being addressed. The

- Head of ICT & Corporate Policy agreed to ask the Assistant Chief Executive to extend an invitation to all members to visit the Occupational Health Unit;
- Members were advised of the positive feedback in regard to Choice Based Lettings [Canfod Cartref] Home Finder;
  - In response to concerns regarding post-Brexit funding the Head of Financial Services commented that a new earmarked reserves fund of £200k had been established for generic risks. He also agreed to convey concerns regarding the possible acquisition of agricultural land by post-Brexit speculators to the internal Brexit group.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the draft Annual Report 2018/19 be endorsed.**

**5. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19**

With reference to minute 9 of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 the Committee considered the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2018-19 which detailed how the Council had implemented its Strategic Equality Plan and fulfilled its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales. Copies of 'Appendix 1' referred to in the Report 'Contents' page were circulated at the meeting as it had been inadvertently omitted.

The Policy and Partnership Officer agreed to convey to the Procurement section and the People Management division a comment that every effort should be taken to ensure that no Council supplier/contractor, or sub-contractor, should engage employees on zero hour contracts.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the report, subject to the inclusion of 'Appendix 1', be approved.**

**6. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 2018-19**

With reference to minute 7 of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 the Committee considered the Annual Report in relation to the Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2018-19. The Report had been produced in order to comply with the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring arrangements.

The Policy and Partnership Officer agreed to convey to the Planning Section a reiterated concern regarding the loss of Welsh place names and a query as to whether a firm policy in this regard could be developed.

The Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager, in response to a comment, advised that more support was now available to enable staff to move along the Welsh language continuum and a framework had been established for setting Welsh language levels for advertised posts.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the Annual report on the Welsh Language 2018-19 be endorsed.**

**7. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2019.**

The Committee considered the Digital Transformation Strategy and Digital Technology Strategy Annual Report 2019 in accordance with commitments given within both the Digital Transformation Strategy 2017-2020, approved by the

Executive Board in May 2017, and The Digital Technology Strategy 2018 – 2021 approved by the Executive Board in May 2018. A commitment had been given within both strategies to produce an annual report.

The following issues were raised on the report:

- It was noted that whilst there was 87% coverage of superfast broadband in the county only 47% of households had taken up the option. Communities were being made aware of funding available to improve connectivity and a digital connectivity officer post was due to be established to assist in this regard;
- The Head of ICT and Corporate Policy agreed to convey to the Education Department a concern regarding the inability of some pupils to undertake homework due to connectivity issues and to ascertain how this was being addressed by schools;
- In response to a comment the Head of ICT and Corporate Policy agreed that it was important to ensure that the IT infrastructure and connectivity for the proposed Wellness Village was able to facilitate all future plans for the location;
- The Committee was advised that the Council's website, unlike the websites of some Government agencies, could be accessed by users on all mobile devices – particularly important for 'My Account' users;
- Work to engage with the Health sector and third sector continued;
- The Head of ICT and Corporate Policy agreed to look into the possibility of including the third sector within the TLS Upgrade.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Digital Transformation Strategy Digital Technology Strategy Annual Report 2019 be endorsed.**

#### **8. DIGITAL SCHOOLS STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

The Committee considered the Digital Schools Strategy Annual Report 2019 which provided an update on Carmarthenshire County Council's Digital Schools Strategy 2018 - 2021. The Strategy detailed the Council's vision, underpinned by overarching principles and key priorities areas, for the provision of ICT Services to Schools across Carmarthenshire. Within each of the key priority areas a number of key projects and outcomes had been approved and the Annual Report detailed the progress made over the last 12 months.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Digital Schools Strategy Annual Report 2019 be endorsed.**

#### **9. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2018-2019**

The Committee considered the Annual Report listing the treasury management activities which occurred during 2018-2019 in line with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2018-2019 that was adopted by Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the report.**

**10. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19**

The Committee considered the Authority's Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departmental reports in respect of the 2018/19 financial year.

It was noted that officers were continuing to look into ways of reducing the gap between the finalisation of monitoring reports and their submission to the Committee.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive the report.

**11. 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.

**12. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be received subject to the inclusion of an update on the Swansea Bay City Deal / Wellness Village.

**13. MINUTES - 13TH JUNE 2019**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE