

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 2 December 2019

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

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor L.M. Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Independent Group;

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services

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

N. Edwards, Interim Head of Integrated Services

J. Fearn, Head of Property

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

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

S Burford, Project Manager

A Clarke, Lead Business Partner (HR)

J. Owen, TIC Programme Manager

H. Font, Fitness for Work Manager

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP.2.00 - 4.45 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor 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. LLANELLI WELLNESS AND LIFE SCIENCE VILLAGE

Further to Minute 4 of the meeting held on the 20th March 2019 the Committee considered a report which provided a position statement on the Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village. The report included details of the following:

- Planning and design development;
- Funding;
- Partner commitment;
- Branding.

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- In response to a query regarding the rebranding of the project the Director of Corporate Services commented that the rebranding exercise had been completed and a formal announcement would be made soon;
- The Committee was advised that negotiations with a potential academic partner were at an advanced stage and that dialogue with Welsh Government was positive;
- Members welcomed the Hywel Dda University Health Board's commitment to the project;
- In terms of the timescale for seeing 'spades in the ground' on site it was anticipated that this was likely to be late summer 2020 once the business case had been signed off by Welsh Government and the academic partner confirmed;
- The hope was expressed that the design of the village reflected its location in Llanelli and Carmarthenshire.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING REPORT HALF YEAR Q2 2019/20

The Committee considered a report which provided absence data for the cumulative period Qtr.2 2018/19 financial year and a summary of actions to support a reduction in the level of sickness absence.

The Cumulative results showed a downward trend compared to Qtr2 2017/18. The People Management Division continued to support and advise Departmental Management Teams, people managers and employees on the Sickness Absence policy and associated procedures and guidance to ensure absence was managed in a timely, consistent and proactive manner. All Wales Comparative benchmarking data for 2018/19 published in September 2019 indicated that in comparison to all other Welsh authorities Carmarthenshire ranked 7th out of the 22. This was a marked improvement to previous years where the Authority had been ranked 10th in 2017/18 and 15th in 2016/17. The Authority was now placed at the top end of the second quartile whereas it had been close to the median in 2017/18 and in the 3rd quartile in 2016/17.

None of the Authority's five departments had, however, met their Q2 2019/20 performance targets and all Heads of Service had attended the Challenge & Review Attendance Forum to discuss divisional progress to ensure all services were contributing towards a reduction in the level of absence.

The Heads of Property and Integrated Services, two of the poorer performing Divisions in terms of sickness absence [Data Summary Profiles for which had been circulated], had been invited to the meeting and each highlighted the steps being taken to manage and address sickness absence.

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

- In response to a concern that no managers in the Property and Integrated Services Divisions had completed Managing Stress training provided by the Authority within the last 5 years members were assured that this was being addressed. The Head of Property advised that a number of staff had attended courses through external providers;
- It was acknowledged that the increased retirement age added to the challenge of managing sickness absence and every effort was being made to make e-learning more accessible and to support staff. It was also accepted that reductions in staff to achieve savings could lead to stress amongst remaining staff due to increased workloads although this possibility was always looked at carefully before any reductions were sanctioned;
- It was noted that HR Advisors had access to all sickness absence data and regularly liaised with Divisions within their remit highlighting performance differences between divisions;
- Members were apprised of the support given to schools to manage sickness absence which included assistance via the Corporate Intervention Advisory Panel.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received and feedback from the Challenge and Review Attendance Forum and Corporate Intervention Advisory Panel be included in future reports.

6. TRANSFORM, INNOVATE & CHANGE (TIC) PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Committee considered the Transform, Innovate & Change [TIC] Annual Report for 2018/19 which detailed the work of the TIC Programme over the last year and the delivery of more than £4.7m financial savings. Since its establishment in 2012 the TIC Programme had helped identify nearly £20m gross savings. Officers also delivered a presentation outlining a proposed way forward for the TIC Programme following a recent review with a view to enabling the programme to assist in supporting on key corporate priorities.

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

- Members were assured that all TIC reviews were undertaken with a view to minimising the impact on jobs but ensuring any improvements were sustainable;
- It was reiterated that the majority of savings accrued as a result of TIC reviews were retained by Departments to support the delivery of PBB targets and help manage other budget challenges;
- In response to a query it was stated that the savings envisaged from agile working, which were on target, would be achieved in the main through reductions in printing and travel expenditure and the sale or lease of buildings. It was also confirmed that the project was delivering wider benefits such as increases in productivity, although these were more difficult to quantify;
- Some services were considering the use of Artificial Intelligence which had the potential to deliver significant savings;
- Members were informed that a Digital Infrastructure Seminar for all members

would be held at Yr Egin, Carmarthen, on 18th December 2019.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the TIC Annual Report for 2018/19 be received.

7. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

The Committee considered the Authority's Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departmental reports as at 31st August 2019 in respect of the 2019/20 financial year. The report also included an appendix detailing Savings Monitoring 2019-20.

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

- The Head of Financial Services advised members that meetings had been held with schools to discuss overspends and work up recovery plans where required;
- The Head of Financial Services, in response to a query, agreed to ascertain if local authority residential homes currently had the capacity to admit more people;
- It was anticipated that there would be significant demand for care home provision by the mid 2020's from the baby boom generation who were living longer;
- Of the Authority's 110 schools officers were having to liaise with 30 to address their budget deficits;
- The Head of Financial Services agreed to convey reiterated concerns over the management of Nant Y Ci livestock mart to the Director of Corporate Services.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

8. MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019

The Committee considered the Mid-Year Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator report for the period 1st April 2019 – 30th September 2019 to ensure that the activities undertaken were consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2019-20 adopted by Council on the 20th February, 2019.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the monitoring report be noted.

9. POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE

The Head of Financial Services apprised the Committee of the managerial savings for 2018-19 details of which would be forwarded to members.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report detailing progress in relation to actions, requests or referrals emerging from previous scrutiny meetings, be noted.

10. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received the Non-Submission report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 10th January 2020 be received.

12. MINUTES - 10TH OCTOBER 2019

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th October 2019 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE