

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 March 2019

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
W. Walters, Director of Regeneration & Policy
N. Daniel, Head of I.C.T.
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
S Burford, Project Manager
R James, Performance Planning & Business Officer
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen: 10.00 am - 11.40 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F. Akhtar, K. Broom and T.A.J. Davies.

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

With reference to Minute 6 of the last meeting the Committee considered a report which provided a position statement on the Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village. The report included:

- an update on current expenditure;
- an update on progress with the City Deal Business Case;
- details regarding termination of the Collaboration Agreement;
- the findings from the independent legal review which had assessed robustness and compliance around the procurement and governance processes;
- the findings of the Wales Audit Office Review which had assessed the Authority's management of process, risk and governance and the protection of public money;

- updates on the Joint Government and Joint Committee City Deal Reviews;
- Progress on the development of the concept design for phase one and next steps.

The Committee was advised that since the despatch of the papers for the meeting the UK and Welsh Government response to the Swansea Bay City Deal Independent Review had been received together with the Swansea Bay City Deal Internal Review of Governance Arrangements Report March 2019. Both were due to be considered in detail by the Executive Board and the Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee following which they would be reported to the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- members welcomed the findings of the independent legal review and Wales Audit Office Review;
- in response to a query the Director of Corporate Services advised that the costs for ground work undertaken on the Delta Lakes site in 2017 had been absorbed by the original Joint Venture scheme in order to facilitate future unidentified development;
- in terms of the Committee's role in scrutinizing the City Deal it was considered that there was a need for clarification in order to avoid duplicating the work of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee on which the Chair served;
- concern was expressed that there appeared to be a public misconception that the Wellness Village was solely a Carmarthenshire County Council project even though it involved other public sector bodies;
- both officers and members expressed disappointment and concern that the Swansea Bay City Deal Internal Review of Governance Arrangements Report had been reported by the press prior to the Joint Committee having had an opportunity to consider it;
- concerns were expressed over the amount of Carmarthenshire County Council officers' time taken up by the City Deal as a whole and the pressure on the Authority's communications section in having to counter inaccurate press reports and respond to media requests for information.

Officers were thanked for the comprehensive update.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

4.1 that the report be received;

4.2 that arrangements be made for a briefing session to update all members on the City Deal with emphasis on the Wellness Village project;

4.3 that a further update be provided at the next meeting.

5. QUARTERLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2018 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2018

The Committee considered the Quarterly Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator report for the period 1st April 2018 – 31st December 2018 to ensure that the activities undertaken were consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2018-2019 adopted by Council on the 21st February, 2018.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the monitoring report be noted.

6. 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 as at 31st December 2018 in respect of the 2018/19 financial year.

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

- The Director of Corporate Services, in response to a query, agreed to circulate details of the managerial savings delivered across the Authority;
- Members were advised that extra funding for teachers pensions had now been received from central Government;
- The Director of Corporate Services commented that within his department there did not appear to be a link between unfilled vacancies and sickness absence. There were, however, recruitment challenges in some areas;
- It was suggested that the fact that planning fees could not be increased to counter the income shortfall as they were set at National level should be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

7. QUARTER 3 - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER 2018 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of progress against actions and measures in the New Corporate Strategy 2018-2023 to deliver the 2018/19 Well-being Objectives as at 31st December 2018 and broken down by Scrutiny.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the report.

8. QUARTER 3 - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER 2018 DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report detailing progress against the actions and measures in the New Corporate Strategy 2018 -2023 to deliver the 2018/19 Well-being Objectives relevant to the Committee's remit, as at 30th June 2018.

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

- Members were advised, with regard to the aim to complete Scrutiny Training by Spring 2019, that an all-Member Scrutiny Training session by the Centre for Public Scrutiny had been arranged for 29th March 2019. Work was also in hand to review the remits of the Scrutiny Committees;
- The Director of Corporate Services advised that empty council properties would not be disposed of unless offers were realistic;
- Reference was made to the fact that the TIC team was endeavoring to build up its own skills and capacity so that there was less need to rely on external consultants;
- The Director of Corporate Services agreed to ascertain the extent to which local companies were being encouraged to bid for construction and waste contracts;

- Members were assured that the agile working programme was progressing well and that feedback from staff had been positive.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. 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.

10. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on the 26th April, 2019 be received subject to the inclusion of an update on the Wellness Village.

11. MINUTES - 6TH FEBRUARY 2019

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th February 2019 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE