

Minutes of the Corporate Governance Group

10th December, 2021

9.00 am – 10:15 am

Virtual Meeting: Teams

Present:

Cllr. David Jenkins (DJ)	Executive Board Member (Resources) (Chair)
Paul Thomas (PT)	Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Moore (CM)	Director of Corporate Services
Helen Pugh (HP)	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance
Alison Wood (AW)	People Services Manager
Gwyneth Ayers (GA)	Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager
John Williams (JW)	ICT Operations & Governance Manager
Ruth Morgan (RM)	Senior Administrative Officer

Apologies:

Cllr. Mair Stephens (MS)	Executive Board Member (HR)
Linda Rees Jones (LRJ)	Head of Administration and Law
Randal Hemingway (RH)	Head of Financial Services
Noelwyn Daniel (ND)	Head of ICT
Cllr. Tina Higgins (TH)	Councillor

Item No.	Discussion / Action	Responsible Officer
1.	<u>Apologies</u> As noted above.	RM
2.	<u>Minutes of previous Meetings dated 17th September, 2021 and Matters Arising</u> It was confirmed, the Minutes were a correct record and no matters had been raised by the group.	
3.	<u>AGS – Update on Actions – (All)</u> A group discussion had been carried out in terms of reviewing / updating the outstanding current Actions and HLP updated the AGS master template accordingly. HLP confirmed, updated papers to be shared in the next meeting.	
4.	<u>Internal Audit Final Report – AGS – (All)</u> For information purposes, HLP shared with the group, the above Report and Action Plan. Chair confirmed the group were happy to accept the Report.	

<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Council Performance Management Framework – (GA)</u></p> <p>The Performance Management Framework had been submitted to DMTs / CMT and pre Cabinet and was raised during the meeting for completion purposes.</p> <p>The framework was agreed and would be published via the Council’s intranet with communication to be provided to employees on how the framework works.</p> <p>Key elements being :-</p> <p><u>Engagement and Assurance Sessions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New approach being undertaken in terms of the Engagement and Assurance Sessions with each of the DMTs as to the preparation of their departmental Business Plans. <p>Timetable of the Sessions for respective departments as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Services – completed. - Communities – completed. - Education and Children Services – scheduled for middle of December. - Environment - scheduled for middle of December. - Chief Executive - during January. <p>Sessions being carried out by a team of Corporate Officers.</p> <p><u>Development of Performance Management Sessions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qtr. 2 - A session had been carried out with CMT on Qtr. 2 performance and to be rolled out accordingly. • Qtr. 3 – Ultimately, anticipating to receive the same performance report to pre-cabinet. • Dashboard – Continues to be made available. <p><u>Corporate Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of the forthcoming Local Government Elections in May, preparatory work regarding the structure and approach to be carried out in the new year. <p><u>Panel Performance Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the new administration has been established in May, discussion are required regarding the carrying out of the PPA during the 5 year administration. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Information Governance – Verbal Update – (JJ)</u></p> <p>Since the last update, no breaches had been reported to the ICO. However, there continued to be concerns regarding numerous e-mail</p>	

addresses being forwarded incorrectly. Management Team and HoS have been informed of this.

An update to be provided in the next meeting in relation to the promoting of the Handling Personal Information Policy which has been circulated to employees.

Require to continue raising awareness with regards to these errors.

The Cyber Security Stock-take Report has been approved by CMT. JW to circulate to group members the Recommendations from the Report, which are listed as follows:-

- Enforce Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for all staff. This will be a similar principal to on-line banking where you receive a secure code or text message to your mobile phone to confirm identity. Work with HR on how this could possibly be implemented into new staff contracts and service areas to raise awareness of the benefits of using MFA.
- Service areas need to prepare for cyber incidents by having Business Continuity plans that do not rely on IT – if systems needed to be restored from backup, there is a time for recovery during which there would be no access to IT systems.
- ICT Services to carry out testing of DR plans to determine how long it would take to recover a system from tape (offline backups).
- Penetration testing – vulnerability scanning is carried out regularly but there is value in having an ethical hacker attempt to break into IT systems in the same way as their black-hat counterpart would.
- Continue to develop and evolve the Cyber Incident Response Plan to reflect emerging cyber risks.
- Procurement of new Cyber Awareness Training for all staff. Welsh Government have already funded training for Councillors.

2 Actions being:-

- Action Plan from the Report.
- Figures and feedback from the Phishing Exercise to be brought back to the group.

Information Governance – Informal Group Actions/Minutes – (Last meeting cancelled, therefore no minutes to share)

As stated above.

<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Performance and Governance of Principal Councils (Local Government and Elections Bill (Wales) on Chapter 6) – Verbal Update – (LRJ)</u></p> <p>Prior to the meeting, LRJ provided HLP with a written update. In LRJ's absence, HLP read out the following:-</p> <p><i>“- there are two aspects to this, the performance assessment side which Gwyneth will need to update the meeting on, (has already updated during the meeting) and the democratic side. On the democratic side of the requirement for a Public Participation Strategy, we are preparing to recruit more lay members to the Governance and Audit Committee (a third of the members will have to be lay members, and the Chair will have to be a lay member), working up proposals for an electronic petitions scheme, are awaiting a model Simple Guide to the Constitution which the WLGA have commissioned from outside solicitors, which we will need to adapt to our own Constitution when it is available”.</i></p> <p>From LRJ's update, HLP confirmed as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Performance Assessment – GA provided an update during the meeting. • Lay members – To consist of 8 Councillors and 4 Lay Members. Chair of the Audit Committee to be included as one of the Lay Members. 	
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) – Verbal Update – (LRJ)</u></p> <p>Prior to the meeting, LRJ provided HLP with a written update. In LRJ's absence, HLP read out the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“There are 4 x regional CJCs in Wales, and Carmarthenshire is part of the South West Wales CJC. This has long since been established in law by the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations. The CJC has a legal status all of its own, but is regarded by WG as being “part of the local government family”, so the usual provisions eg public access to meetings, papers, webcasting etc will apply.</i> • <i>Some Regions are looking to make their City Deal arrangements into the CJC, but our CJC isn't doing that.</i> • <i>the SWW CJC is proposing to limit the functions invested in the CJC to the ones mandated by legislation ie. strategic development planning, regional transport planning and promotion of the economic well being of the region.</i> • <i>on 2nd December 9 new sets of Regulations came into force re CJCs (imposing such duties as biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems / socio economic / Welsh language standards / well being of future generations / child poverty strategy and there is a lot of concern being voiced about the burdens and</i> 	

requirements being imposed on CJs when essentially they have a very narrow mandated remit (although concern is also being expressed about WG's ambition to impose more on the CJs than their original functions eg the bus reform agenda).

- WG are currently consulting on Tranche 3 of Regulations (closes on the 22nd December), which covers things such as the Code of Conduct for CJC members and co-opted members, extending the role of regulators such as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to CJs, giving CJs the power to trade, views about what the scrutiny arrangements should be, requiring the CJC to have a general fund etc.).
- a fourth set of Regulations are to be consulted upon in early 2022 to cover such things as standing orders for officers, application of new performance and governance regime etc.
- Work has been ongoing in drafting all the base documentation for the CJC in so much as we can, bearing in mind all the outstanding consultations on various aspects, such as the Constitution, Standing Orders etc.
- The Regulations provide that the 4 x Leaders will be the local authority members of the main CJC. The 2 x National Park Authorities will be members but will have limited voting rights.

There will be sub-committees on the identified functions (on which the cabinet member portfolio holders will probably sit), plus sub-committees such as Governance and Audit and Standards (a third of which will be made up of lay members). Guidance is still awaited on the arrangements for Scrutiny, although the general feeling across Wales seems to be that the CJC ought not to be allowed to scrutinise itself and should be subject to local authority scrutiny.

It looks likely that the SWW CJC will hold 2 meetings in January – one to deal with appointments of officers and standing orders, and a second to deal with the budget. Chris Moore is the s. 151 officer and finance officer for the CJC so should be able to update the meeting on where that's at, and on the tax and vat issues that are being looked at by WG and HMRC. NPT is providing the Monitoring Officer, Pembrokeshire the governance and audit function. It looks likely that the CEX is to be recruited (on an interim appointment?) rather than any of the 4 x CEXs performing the function".

In addition, regarding accounting procedures in terms of VAT, possibility of having to register the CJC for VAT and HRMC.

CM regarding accounting procedures the status of the body in respect of VAT, looks like we will have to register the CJC for VAT and HRMC.

	Feedback to be brought back to the next meeting, following the 2 CJC meetings which are scheduled during January 2022.	
9.	<p><u>CRWG – Verbal Update – (LRJ)</u> Prior to the meeting, LRJ provided HLP with a written update. In LRJ's absence, HLP read out the following:-</p> <p><i>“CRWG was intending to have recommended a revised Scheme of Delegation to Officers and a revised Protocol on Representations to the County Council on Planning Applications to Full Council on 8th December, the revisions to the Scheme covering things such as reflecting the movement of services and functions from one Department to another over the years, changes in job titles, new functions arising from new legislation, and some additional delegations being sought (eg changing the threshold for the number of objections required before an application needs to be escalated to Planning Committee rather than being taken by officers etc) and the revisions to the Protocol seeking to better clarify the procedures and deadlines for making representations. But the item was withdrawn because of queries and proposed amendments coming in from the Opposition on the eve of the meeting. Although there was still a majority of CRWG recommending the recommendations in the report it was felt that it would have been awkward to have a discussion on some minute details in a meeting of 74 members. As such, a fresh CRWG has been scheduled for the 5th January in the hope that an agreed Scheme and Protocol can be put to Council on the 19th January 2022”.</i></p>	
10.	<p><u>Monitoring Outputs of Carmarthenshire CC led projects</u> AGREED to be deferred until March 2022.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Planning Service Governance Arrangements – (HLP)</u> <u>Council Meeting – 15/09/21</u> Following updates had been raised :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhodri Griffiths has been appointed as the new Head of Place and Sustainability, and commencing his position as HoS, end of December. • A meeting has been scheduled between the Chief Executive, Leader, Cllr. Hazel Evans, Cabinet Member and PT to discuss the interim arrangements for the Director of Environment's post due to 2 individuals who had submitted their applications for the Director's role who have now withdrawn. Purpose of the meeting, to look at all the options. • An update is due to be submitted to Audit Committee on the Actions on delivering the Audit Wales Report recommendations. 	

12.

Any Other Business

The following items had been raised :-

- **Partner Relationships – GA**
There have been 2 key appointments as follows:-
 - Richard Lewis, Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police. Commencing 13/12/21.
 - Rhodri Thomas, Chief Fire Officer for Mid and West Wales Fire Service.

- **Governance Structure for Pentre Awel**
CM confirmed, he had circulated the latest Governance Structure to group members during the meeting. Logged in the minutes that they have been put in place.

- **Contract Management**
The following work continued to be on going:-
 - Procurement Division drafting a Contract Management Guide.
 - Liaising with L&D Team for e-learning
 - Chair, Chief Executive and CM are due to have a meeting regarding contract management. CM to follow it up.

Chair thanked all present for their attendance and contribution and called the meeting to a close at 10:30 am.