

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16 March 2022

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

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor E. Dole, Leader of the Council;
Councillor C.A. Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Rural Affairs;
Councillor H.A.L. Evans, Cabinet Member for Environment;
Councillor P.M. Hughes, Cabinet Member for Public Protection;
Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Resources;

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
G. Ayers, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager;
E. Philips, Contracts and Performance Manager;
R. James, Group Accountant;
J. Owen, TIC Programme Manager;
A. Eynon, Principal Translator;
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer;
M. Withey, Member Support Officer;
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

Virtual Meeting: 2.00 pm - 4.10 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T.A.J. Davies, J.S. Edmunds and J.G. 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. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the Authority's Corporate Budget Monitoring Report and the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departmental reports as at 31st December 2021 in respect of the 2021/22 financial year. The report also included an appendix detailing Savings Monitoring 2021-22.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

5. ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23

The Committee considered extracts of the Environment Departmental Business Plan 2022-23 relating to the Property Division which were relevant to the Committee's remit. The Plan extracts outlined the priorities for the department and identified how they supported the 5 Ways of Working and the 7 Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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

- The Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) advised that the operation of the Handyvan Service, due to be rolled out for schools, would be included within the TIC programme with a view to the service being deployed on a corporate basis also if viable;
- In response to a comment the Contracts and Performance Manager advised that the Department was working closely with Corporate Procurement to simplify the bureaucratic process which often discouraged local businesses from applying to be included on the minor works framework. The Authority had also held supply and engagement events to which local businesses had been invited;
- The Committee was advised that additional staff were being recruited to ensure that it was possible for every primary school to receive 2 property maintenance inspections during 2022-23 as indicated in the plan. Aside from the planned inspections it was emphasised that schools would still have the full support of the repair and maintenance service.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the Plan.

6. DOMESTIC ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection presented a proposed Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence Policy for the Council which revised the previously adopted Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy in line with aims and objectives of the Authority and prevailing legislation namely the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The 2021 Act sets out further legislative and non-legislative actions to promote awareness of domestic abuse, domestic violence and sexual violence.

The Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) highlighted the proposed inclusion of 'safe leave' in the Time-off Policy which would provide for up to 10 days paid time off, separate from special leave or sickness absence, to anyone experiencing domestic abuse, domestic or sexual violence at a time when it was most needed.

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

- In response to a question the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) confirmed that stalking was an integral part of the proposed Policy;
- the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) agreed to take on board a comment regarding the importance of making staff aware of other avenues of support available such as occupational health should they feel uncomfortable about approaching colleagues or line managers. He added that all staff would be required to undertake the e-learning module associated with the policy;

- It was suggested, as it was recommended within the Policy document that governing bodies apply the principles detailed, that governing bodies should receive appropriate training.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the proposed Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence Policy be endorsed.

7. TIC PROGRAMME POSITION STATEMENT

The Committee considered a report which detailed progress on the implementation of key priorities within the current TIC Programme and key actions to be taken forward next year as part of the TIC Business Plan.

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

- In response to a comment relating to past TIC reviews the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) referred to the need to establish a framework to ensure that all previously identified changes and savings could be effectively monitored;
- In regard to a query as to whether the TIC team was working with other partners to identify savings the Committee was advised that over the past few years there had been discussions with the Health Board, Police and Fire Authorities in regard to sharing good practice. More recently consideration had been given to the possible establishment of a regional transformation network and it was likely that this would be explored further;
- The Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) referred to the current pro-active recruitment campaign to attract people to work for the Authority which included posters on billboards and bus stops etc.;
- The TIC Programme Manager agreed to add the issue of council house boundary fencing to the TIC review programme following concerns regarding the quality of fencing and the number of times some fences had had to be replaced as a result of recent storms;
- Reference was made to the work being undertaken to introduce e-signatures as a means of signing documents etc which would also facilitate savings in areas such as travel costs.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. CARMARTHENSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) MINUTES - NOVEMBER 2021

The Cabinet Member – Leader presented the minutes of the meeting of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board [PSB] held on the 24th November, 2021. 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.

Reference was made to the Draft Well-being Assessment referred to in the aforementioned minutes and the Committee was advised that the PSB, at its meeting on 8th March 2022, had approved the final Carmarthenshire Well-Being Assessment which would be published and circulated in due course.

The Leader stated that the Authority's new lead officer on the PSB was Noelwyn

Daniel, Head of ICT.

The Committee paid tribute to the work of the Corporate Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager and her team in regard to the PSB.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the PSB meeting held on the 24th November, 2021 be received.

9. POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report detailing actions, requests or referrals emerging from previous scrutiny meetings.

The following points were raised in regard to those issues which were still marked as 'outstanding':

- With regard to action Action ref. 1 it was clarified that the spend on external contractors requested was that across all departments.
- With regard to action Action ref. 3 the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) stated that he would ensure that the language record figures for the 2460 school based staff included in the language skills data was circulated to members;
- With regard to action Action ref. 5 the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) stated that the relevant wording in the Vaccination Policy had been amended;
- With regard to action Action ref. 11 the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) stated that he would raise the matter at the next meeting of the TIC Board but assured the Committee that feedback would be given to residents and service users who responded to consultation and engaged in the identification of future TIC priorities and projects.

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. MINUTES - 2ND FEBRUARY, 2022

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd February 2022 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE