

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 3 MAY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K.V. Broom (Chair) (In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

D. Nicholas

Councillors (Virtually):

T. Davies

A. Evans

H.A.L. Evans

D. Jones

M.J.A. Lewis

A. Leyshon

K. Madge

M. Thomas

Also Present (In Person):

Cllr. D. Price, Cabinet Member - Leader;

Cllr. A. Lenny, Cabinet Member – Resources;

Also Present (In Person):

N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy;

H. Pugh, Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance;

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

T. Thomas, Principal Business Development Officer;

A. Eynon, Principal Translator;

R. Morris, Members Support Officer;

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer;

Also Present (Virtually):

G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services

M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and remotely: 10.00 am - 11.10 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Davies, R. James and A.G. Morgan.

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

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
T. Davies*	5 – Chief Executive’s Department Divisional Delivery Plans – People Management;	Son’s partner worked in the Education & Children Department;
A. Evans	5 – Chief Executive’s Department Divisional Delivery Plans – Legal and Administration;	Mother worked in Democratic Services section;
M.J.A. Lewis*	5 – Chief Executive’s Department Divisional Delivery Plans – People Management;	Niece worked in the Education & Children Department;
K. Madge	5 – Chief Executive’s Department Divisional Delivery Plans – People Management;	Daughter worked in Social Services;
D. Nicholas	5 – Chief Executive’s Department	Daughter worked in

	Divisional Delivery Plans – People Management;	Planning Department.
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[*Declaration made immediately prior to the item being discussed.]

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

**4. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
FORWARD WORK PLAN FOR 2023/24**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024 prepared in accordance with the Council’s Constitution which required Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish annual forward work programmes identifying issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the municipal year.

Members were reminded that at the informal meeting held in regard to the Committee’s draft Forward Work Programme there had been a consensus that in light of recently expressed concerns it might be appropriate for the Committee, initially, to receive a report and presentation on the operation of the Council’s contact centres at an informal session.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

4.1 that the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee’s 2023/24 Forward Work Programme be endorsed;

4.2 that arrangements be made for the Committee to receive a report and presentation on the operation of the Council’s contact centres at an informal session.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S DEPARTMENT DIVISIONAL DELIVERY PLANS

The Leader presented, for the Committee’s consideration, the Chief Executive’s Department’s Divisional Delivery Plans for 2023-24 encompassing:

- ICT and Corporate Policy;
- People Management;
- Legal and Administration;
- Electoral and Civil Registration;
- Marketing and Media/Translation Services;
- Business and Cabinet Support.

The Plans detailed the strategic actions and measures that the services would take to make progress against the Council’s Well-being Objectives, thematic priorities and service priorities.

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

ICT and Corporate Policy

- Members were assured that cyber-security was taken extremely seriously and the Authority took a multi-faceted and robust approach to the prevention of cyber-attacks;

- In response to a comment the Head of ICT and Corporate Policy stated that over 90% of Freedom of Information requests were responded to within 20 working days;
- It was noted that the new Back-Office system and On-line Portal for greater Citizen Access and Self-Service would enable members of the public to receive feedback on issues/requests submitted by them;
- In response to a query the Leader stated that the Tackling Poverty Advisory Panel would be chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes with membership on a cross-party politically proportionate basis. He stated that reports to the Panel could be made available to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee if it wished. He thanked all members for their input into the tackling poverty agenda;

People Management

[NOTE: Cllr. K. Madge, having earlier declared an interest in this Divisional Delivery Plan, remained in the meeting for its consideration.

Cllr. T. Davies declared an interest in this Divisional Delivery Plan as his son's partner worked in the Education & Children Department but remained in the meeting for its consideration.

Cllr. M.J.A. Lewis declared an interest in this Divisional Delivery Plan as a niece worked in the Education & Children Department but remained in the meeting for its consideration.]

- In response to a query regarding increasing demand on the Occupational Health team the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management) acknowledged that referrals, particularly to the well-being service, had increased as a result of covid. Referrals arising from long-covid issues remained low;
- It was acknowledged that the target of June 2023 to 'review relevant HR policies to support the development of a more flexible and dynamic workforce' was ambitious but managers were being provided with bespoke training particularly in regard to managing a post-pandemic 'hybrid' workforce which was both office and home based. It was hoped that flexibility would benefit individuals and the Authority;
- In response to question the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management) responded that he had asked the TIC team to review its programme specifically with the aim of strengthening the service. The hope was expressed that a properly resourced TIC team could possibly generate income;
- the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management), in response to a comment, stated that more data would be included in the Delivery Plan in regard to apprenticeships;

Legal and Administration

[NOTE: Cllr A. Evans, having earlier declared an interest in this item, left the meeting during consideration of this item.]

- Reference was made to the 'Legal requirement to allow members to attend either physically or remotely (multi-location meetings)' and concern was expressed over the detrimental effect this had on the democratic process with some members having never met each other face to face. It was suggested that all members should at least be required to attend full Council in person. The Leader accepted this was a valid point but

reminded members that there was a statutory obligation on the Council to offer hybrid meetings, which had their pros and cons, for Councillors;

- It was noted that the Democratic Services Committee would shortly be considering a report on suggested improvements to the Councillors enquiry process;
- the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management) confirmed that the analysis of the current workforce to identify future workforce requirements, skills and competencies would also focus on succession management;

Electoral and Civil Registration

- Reference was made to the fact that the 2023-24 budget for 'Elections-County Council' appeared to be high for a year in which there would be no elections. The Head of ICT and Corporate Policy agreed to ascertain the reason and circulate the details to members;
- Concern was expressed over the new Voter ID requirements at Parliamentary polling stations and it was suggested that the Council should do all it could to publicise the issue in advance of the next elections. The Leader endorsed the concerns and commented that the Media and Marketing team would be involved in making the public aware of the requirements;_

Marketing and Media/Translation Services

- In response to a query the Leader commented that the creation of a digital support toolkit to promote local events/festivals across the County would include rural areas and provide links to funding bodies;
- In response to a concern the Leader stated that he was acutely aware of the need to improve the time taken at Contact Centres to answer calls and additional resources had been made available over recent months.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Chief Executive Department's Divisional Delivery Plans be received.

6. CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT DIVISIONAL DELIVERY PLANS

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented, for the Committee's consideration, the Corporate Services Department's Divisional Delivery Plans for 2023-24 encompassing:

- Revenues and Financial Compliance Service Delivery Plan 2023-24;
- Financial Services Delivery Plan 2023-24.

The Plans detailed the strategic actions and measures that the services would take to make progress against the Council's Well-being Objectives, thematic priorities and service priorities.

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

Revenues and Financial Compliance Service Delivery Plan 2023-24

- In response to a question the Head of Revenues & Financial compliance clarified that 'Local Taxation' in regard to the Budget 2023/2024 related specifically to the staffing costs of council tax – the recovery team for council tax and NNDR [National Non-Domestic Rates] and the NNDR

administration staff. Whilst some income was received for administration costs via subsidy not all the costs were covered. The income received also reflected the fees recovered when debts were repaid.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Corporate Services Department's Divisional Delivery Plans be received.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting be received.

8. MINUTES - 31ST MARCH 2023

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 31st March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE