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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12 December 2023

PRESENT (In person) : Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors (Virtually):

K.V. Broom, T. Davies, D. Jones, M. James (sub), T. Evans (sub)

Councillors (In Person):

D. Cundy, A. Evans, D. Nicholas

Also in attendance (In Person):

Councillor D. Price – Leader

Councillor A. Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

The following Officers were in attendance (In Person):

G. Ayers, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager;

A. Clarke, HR Manager (Business Partnering);

N. Evans, Business Support Manager;

H. Font, Employee Wellbeing Manager;

D. Hockenhull, Media and Marketing Manager;

L. Rees-Jones, Head of Administration and Law;

G. Jones, Chief Digital Officer;

J. Owen, TIC Programme Manager;

A. Parnell, Treasury and Investment Manager;

P. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive

T. Thomas, Principal Business Development Officer;

S. Walters, Economic Development Manager;

K. Evans, Democratic Services Officer;

E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer;

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator.

Also Officers in attendance (Virtually):

D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer;

M. Runeckles, Member Support Officer;

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 am - 12.32 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Harries, G. John, J. Lewis. Apologies were also received from the Cabinet Member, Councillor P. Hughes.

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

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
A. Evans	4. Sickness Absence Monitoring Report – End of Year Report – 2022/23 and Q2 2023/24	Personal and prejudicial - Family member works in Democratic Services section
A. Evans	6. Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/2024	Prejudicial - Family member works in Democratic Services section
A. Evans	10. 2023/24 Quarter 2 – Performance Report (01/04/2023 – 30/09/2023) Relevant to this Scrutiny	Personal and Prejudicial - Family member works in Democratic Services section

There were no declarations of any prohibited party whips

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

4. SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING REPORT - END OF YEAR REPORT - 2022/23 AND Q2 2023/24

[NOTE: Councillor A. Evans having earlier declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting]

The Committee considered a report which provided sickness absence data for the cumulative period ending 31st March 2023 plus Q2 2023/24 with an overview of the employee wellbeing support provided.

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- The HR Manager (Business Partnering) informed the committee that hybrid working, was a method of working from home and from different locations across the County, subject to service delivery considerations. Whilst operational staff can not benefit from hybrid working, they could ask for different working options to be considered.
- Members were informed that staff took an average of 11.55 days off sick in 2022-23, nearly 2 days more that the Council's target of 10.65, with the largest reasons for absence being stress and mental health issues, with some factors outside of work also contributing.
- Members were advised that due to long waiting times on the NHS, GP's were advising clients to seek help through their employers Occupational Health services.
- In terms of Occupational Health and the demands on the service, it was noted a business case will be discussed with the Chief Executive to provide a Commercial Manager, as one of the key projects, they will work with the Occupational Health team to look at ways to commercialise the business. The outcome of business case will be reported back to the Committee.
- The Employee Wellbeing Manager explained there were three Health and

Wellbeing Co-ordinators employed across the Authority working with departments to provide bespoke interventions, as part of department's action plans for managing attendance. There are also key health and wellbeing groups which are supported by the co-ordinators.

- It was noted that there had been a reduction in musculoskeletal problems being reported. Training on safe handling for key workers and equipment assessments were some areas assisting in keeping staff safe in a working environment. A physiotherapy service was available for staff via Occupational Health.
- There was a 50% increase in referrals for mental health support reported in the last period. It was noted that there were 8 Mental Health practitioners within Occupational Health.
- The Committee noted an improvement in sickness absence for Primary schools, during the last year. The Committee were informed that sickness absence was managed by the Head Teacher. The Schools' Staff Absence Scheme established in-house provides financial support to member schools to cover the costs of agency staff required to cover sickness. If schools don't follow the correct absence procedures, the contribution is withheld.
- The Assistant Chief Executive informed the group that the take up on the recent staff survey was low. Data was now being looked at to provide direction to staff on future hybrid working.
- Members were advised that the Authority had recently achieved Gold Accreditation following a report by an assessor from Investors In People which was a reflection of the support it gave to its employees;

The Chair thanked officers for the support being given to staff.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

4.1 the report be received.

4.2 the Committee endorse the business case for the creation of a Commercial Manager post to help develop future income generation initiatives

4.3 the Committee receive end of year update

5. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report reviewing the Authority's approach to transformation and ensure that the programme is aligned with the aims and objectives of the new Corporate Strategy. The Transformation strategy was reported to Cabinet in February 2023. The following are the 8 thematic priorities contained within the Transformation Strategy :

- Efficiencies and Value for Money
- Income and Commercialisation
- Service Design & Improvement
- Workforce
- Workplace
- Customers and Digital
- Decarbonisation
- Schools

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- The Committee noted that a former Headteacher of Bryngwyn Secondary school had recently joined the Education department, to share good practice on managing budgets, to ensure schools are not in deficit.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/2024

[NOTE: Councillor A. Evans having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration and voting thereof.]

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 31 August 2023 in respect of the 2023/24 financial year. The report also included an appendix which detailed the Savings Monitoring report as at 31st August 2023.

Overall, the monitoring report forecast an overspend for the year at departmental level of £8,730k with a forecast overspend on the Authority's net revenue budget of £6,098k.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

The Committee considered the Mid-Year Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator report for the period 1st April 2023 – 30th September 2023 to ensure that the activities undertaken were consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023-24, that was approved by Council on 1st March 2023.

The average gross interest earned on investments for the period amounted to £4.63m. This includes £859K interest on the average balance of £39m held for the Swansea Bay City Deal region.

The Committee thanked officers for adding into the report, a glossary of terms.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. SCRUTINY ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee received a report which detailed the progress achieved in relation to requests or referrals emerging from previous meetings of the Corporate Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2023/24 municipal year.

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

9. CARMARTHENSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) MINUTES - OCTOBER 2023

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board [PSB] held on the 3rd October, 2023. 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 Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee had been designated as the relevant scrutiny committee.

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

- In response to a query, the Leader stated that Task and Finish Groups had been set up to find solutions. He stated that objectives were now linked to the Wellbeing Objectives.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the PSB meeting held on the 3rd October, 2023 be received.

10. 2023/24 QUARTER 2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT (01/04/2023-30/09/2023) RELEVANT TO THIS SCRUTINY

[NOTE: Councillor A. Evans having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration and voting thereof.]

The Committee considered a report for monitoring purposes, on Quarter 2 - 2023/24 of the Actions and Measures linked to the Authority's Corporate Strategy and the Well-Being Objectives.

Amongst the issues and queries raised on the report were the following:

- In response to a query the Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager confirmed that the target for complaints within the statutory deadline had not been reached, due to almost double the number of complaints recorded this year compared to last year.
- It was noted that information would be provided to the Committee on how the target on percentage performance against target to generate capital receipts to support the capital programme will be achieved.
- It was noted that information would be provided to the Committee on how improvement will be achieved with the percentage of non-housing responsive repairs works completed within the target.
- The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the new LMS system will improve monitoring of e-learning training undertaken by staff.

- In response to a comment the Chief Digital Officer stated that the Authority had a good estate of laptops since Covid and would provide figures for employees with percentage of laptops with 4GB of memory or under.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

11. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

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

12. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 18TH OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th October 2023 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE