

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 16 JUNE 2023

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

Councillors (In Person):

K.V. Broom

L. Davies

A. Evans

Councillors (Virtually):

K. Davies (substitute)

T. Davies

H.A.L. Evans

R. James

D. Jones

M.J.A. Lewis

K. Madge

Cabinet Members in attendance (In Person):

Councillor P. Hughes

Councillor A. Lenny

Also Present (In Person):

N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services

E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer

J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

D. Hockenhill, Marketing and Media Manager

K. Evans, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.11 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Nicholas.

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

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Madge	4 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23	Daughter works in Social Services.
A. Evans	4 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23	Family member works in Democratic Services section.
M.J.A. Lewis	4 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23	Niece works in Education department.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

There were no declarations of party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

4. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23

[NOTE: Cllrs. A. Evans, K. Madge and M.J.A. Lewis having earlier declared an interest in this item, remained in the meeting for its consideration.]

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 28 February 2023 in respect of the 2022/23 financial year. The report also included an appendix which detailed the Savings Monitoring report for 2022-23.

Overall, the monitoring report forecast an overspend for the year at departmental level of £6.159m with a forecast underspend on the Authority's net revenue budget of £470k.

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

- The Media and Marketing Manager, in response to a query regarding contact centre vacancies, stated that some vacancies had recently been filled, with the newly appointed members of staff currently undergoing a period of training. It was further reported that following a change in processes within the section, response times at customer contact centres had improved significantly; nevertheless, capacity and resilience to meet demand in the busier winter months was a priority for the section going forward. The Media and Marketing Manager also provided Committee with an update on the divisional realignment, which was expected to be implemented by mid-July.
- In response to a query the Cabinet Member for Resources assured the Committee that the Cabinet would be considering the issue of county farms and further information would be available to members in due course. The Head of Financial Services confirmed that, in response to a change to Welsh Government legislation, Council had allocated monies for slurry infrastructure within its budget for 2023/24.
- In response to concerns raised regarding the over expenditure in respect of coroner's fees, the Head of Financial Services provided an assurance that this matter was under review to establish whether a budgetary pressure would be identified for the 2024/25 Council budget.
- Reference was made to the Commercial Properties portfolio whereby the Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that external funding opportunities were being explored in line with the authority's capital budget, and in this regard a synopsis of the Ten Towns regeneration

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initiative was provided to the Committee which sought to support economic recovery and growth of rural towns across the county. In respect of under-utilised buildings as a result of increased agile working, an assurance was provided that the council's estate was kept under review to ensure optimum return on investment.

- Concerns were raised in respect of the reliance on agency workers, particularly within the social services division as a result of the national recruitment crisis. An assurance was provided that the authority was looking to develop its own workforce in this area by way of the academy training initiative; it was however acknowledged this would take some time.
- In terms of the continued income shortfall at the leisure/sports centres attributable to the drop in attendances, it was noted that the deficit was decreasing and the Committee was pleased to note that membership figures had returned to pre-pandemic levels as a result of positive intervention measures.
- The Head of Financial Services, in response to a query regarding over expenditure in bank charges, clarified that work was ongoing by way of externally commissioned research to inform the authority of the best way forward as part of its wider corporate banking service.
- Reference was made to the budgetary savings derived from the relatively high number of vacant posts and it was queried whether work had been undertaken to assess the budgetary impact should the authority resume to normal staffing levels. The Head of Financial Services duly clarified that the budget reflected a normal level of staff turnover, together with the extraordinary pressure in the labour market in last 12 months. It was however pleasing to note anecdotal evidence of recovery in this area, with recruitment difficulties within some roles easing.
- It was confirmed to the Committee, in response to a query regarding the school meals service, that whilst the income received from Welsh Government was not sufficient to cover the cost of the provision as a result of the pay awards, they had however committed to review this area.
- In response to concerns raised in respect of the costs incurred as a result of fly tipping and tenants not complying with the authority's waste strategy, the Cabinet Member for Organisation and Workforce confirmed that four additional Environmental Enforcement Officers had recently been appointed to address this issue.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

5. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Committee received for consideration the Corporate Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Annual Report which detailed the work undertaken by the Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year. The report had been prepared in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution and provided an overview of the work programme and key issues addressed, whilst also incorporating any issues referred to, or from, the Cabinet, Task and Finish reviews, development sessions and member attendance.

Reference was made to a typographical correction to page 2, paragraph 2 of the report which would be updated to reflect that the committee had convened in October 2022.

A member commented that the attendance levels of some committee members was considered to be unacceptable due to meetings being convened with the option of attending in person or remotely via Zoom.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be endorsed, subject to a typographical amendment to be made to page 2, paragraph 2 of the report.

6. 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 be received.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 7.1 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 on conclusion of the Committee meeting scheduled 19 July 2023.**
- 7.2 Information pertaining to the progress and cost of the Tyshia Transformation Team be forwarded to the Committee for consideration.**
- 7.3 The list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting be received.**

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 3RD MAY 2023

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd May 2023 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.