

No.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 14th November, 2018.

Present: Councillor G.D.D. Carroll (Chairman); Councillor V.P. Driscoll (Vice-Chairman); Councillors O. Griffiths, S.J. Griffiths, Dr. I.J. Johnson, N. Moore, L.O. Rowlands and E. Williams.

484 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -

These were received from Councillors R. Crowley and P.G. King.

485 MINUTES -

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 20th September, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

486 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

The following Councillors declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 - Reshaping Services Programme - Update on Implementation having received dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and vote at meetings on matters relating to Reshaping Services:

Councillors V.P. Driscoll, S.J. Griffiths, Dr. I.J. Johnson, N. Moore, L.O. Rowlands and E. Williams.

487 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST, 2018 (MD) -

The Head of Service, in presenting the report, commenced by advising that the report had been held over from the previous meeting of the Committee as that meeting had been utilised for a Joint Workshop of the Environment and Regeneration and Corporate Resources and Performance Scrutiny Committees. In referring to the contents of the report, the Head of Service advised that the forecast for 2018/19 Revenue and HRA budgets were to outturn within target however, there would be some unplanned roll down from reserves in order to cover elements of overspending in addition to the planned use of reserves.

In outlining various aspects to the specific service areas as detailed in the report, the Head of Service also referred to the savings targets for the Authority which had been set at £6.298 million for 2018/19.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a statement detailing the projected progress against savings targets for 2018/19 with it being currently projected that there would be a shortfall against the savings target of £724,000. With specific

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reference to Learning and Skills, the Head of Service advised that due to the pressures for the Department there was a draw down on the use of reserves.

In referring to the fact that the report had been deferred for consideration at the last meeting of the Committee, Members were informed that Cabinet were due to consider the revenue and budget proposals 2019/20 and revised budget 2018/19 at its meeting on 19th November, 2018 and that this would provide Committee with a far more up to date position. Following that referral, all Scrutiny Committees would be considering the budget proposals in the December cycle of meetings and requested to pass any comments to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as the lead Scrutiny Committee in order for all views to be forwarded to Cabinet.

In noting the pressures on various services and the report being presented to Cabinet on 19th November, Members agreed to accept the report however having regard to the issue in relation to private housing at paragraph 24, further clarification was requested to be e-mailed to all Members of the Committee.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

In view of the timescale in that the current budget position was being presented to Cabinet on 19th November, 2018.

488 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2018 (MD) –

The report advised Committee on the progress on the 2018/19 Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 31st August, 2018 and changes to the Capital Programme. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the financial progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August, 2018. Similarly to the previous report on revenue monitoring, this item had not been presented to the last meeting of the Committee as that meeting had been utilised for a Joint Workshop of the Environment and Regeneration and Corporate Resources and Performance Scrutiny Committees. Members were advised that an updated capital monitoring report and additional Capital Programme proposals 2019/20 and 2023/24 and Capital Monitoring 2018/19 was being reported to Cabinet on 19th November, which could in turn be presented to the December cycle of meetings.

Notwithstanding the above, a Member queried whether all the works in schools had now been completed or whether any had slipped. The Head of Service advised that although some work had slipped from the original dates, the vast majority had now been addressed.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be noted.

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Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents contained therein up to 31st August, 2018 and in noting the additional Capital Programme report proposals for 2019/20 to 2023/24 and Capital Monitoring 2018/19 report to Cabinet on 19th November would be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for its December meeting.

489 PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2019/20 (MD) –

The Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee was requested to consider a proposed response to Welsh Government in relation to the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2019/20. The Head of Finance, in presenting the report, referred to the proposed draft response attached at Appendix A, advising that the response outlined what had already been done to reduce spend in the Council and the additional costs the Council was facing in the coming financial year which had not been reflected in the provisional settlement.

By way of background Committee was advised that when announcing the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2019/20 on 9th October the Minister had launched a six week consultation period with responses being required by Welsh Government no later than 20th November, 2018. The final settlement from Local Government was noted to be published on 19th December, 2018.

In terms of the detail, the overall settlement proposed an average reduction of 0.3% across Local Authorities in Wales and for the Vale the reduction was 0.7% equating to a cash reduction of £1.037m. Taking into account inflation and other known pressures such as national pay inflation and the non-funded teachers' pension scheme, the budget reduction equated to 4.2%.

In conclusion, the draft response requested that the following be considered:

- Immediate transfer of the £15m budget for schools to the RSG;
- The removal of all grant conditions on the £30m announced for social care so that it could concentrate on core children's and adult services;
- The designation of the £30m aligned to the Regional Partnership Boards to be set as a "Local Government Preventative Services Fund";
- The raising of the floor from -1.0% and a settlement that reflected the general inflationary uplift.

In considering the report a Member queried information that they had been made aware of regarding a potential further £58m to be shared between Welsh Local Authorities and queried whether the Cabinet had received this information and whether this had been discussed with the WLGA and whether any further information had been received with regard to the ICF. Reference was also made by some Members to the way Welsh Government treats Local Government and Health Boards in particular when running deficit budgets particularly in view of the challenges facing local Government regarding Education and Social Services budgets. The Head of Finance stated that she had also heard that £58m was being discussed but had no further information on this but that if it was received, she would

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prefer that it was placed within the RSG as this would enable the Authority to use the funding in the best way to support local needs. With regard to the ICF, again no further information had been received to date.

Following consideration of the response, the following suggestions were put forward by Members of the Committee:

- That on the third page of the letter, after the fourth paragraph, a table be inserted summarising what the previous paragraphs equated to for clarification purposes
- Consideration be also given to providing comparisons in the letter with other Local Authorities and the Vale;

A Member also commented that it would be useful if the report identified services the Council may be considering relinquishing and was advised that the budget report that was due to be submitted to Cabinet the following week would focus minds on such aspects. A couple of typographical errors in the letter were also noted with the Head of Service advising that these had already been identified and the final response would be amended accordingly.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T notwithstanding the couple of typographical errors, the comments of the Scrutiny Committee outlined above be referred to Cabinet for consideration for inclusion in the response to Welsh Government.

Reason for recommendation

Having considered the contents contained therein.

490 RESHAPING SERVICES PROGRAMME – UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION (REF) –

The report had been referred by Cabinet on 15th October, 2018 for the Committee's consideration.

The Head of Performance and Development, in presenting the report, advised that a copy of the report had also been sent to all Elected Members of the Vale of Glamorgan, clerks of Town and Community Councils, Members of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee, Community Liaison Committee and the Public Services Board for their information and in order to provide an update on the progress as a whole being made on the Reshaping Services programme.

With specific reference to various work streams, the Committee was advised of the RAG status of each project to date as follows:

- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Inclusion (Amber)
- Catering (Amber)
- Library Services (Completed)

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- Transportation (Amber)
- Neighbourhood Services (Amber)
- ICT (Amber)
- Property Projects – Corporate Office Building Rationalisation and Cleaning and Security (Amber)
- Social Services Budget Programme (Amber)
- Learning and Skills: Strategy and Resources (Green)
- Building Services – Cleaning and Security Services (Amber)
- Corporate (Resources Director) Services (Amber)
- Youth Services (Amber)
- Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities (Amber)
- Digital Vale (Amber)
- Procurement (Third Part Spend) (Amber)
- Establishment Review (Amber)
- Corporate Workstream Projects
- Town and Community Councils and the Voluntary Sector (Amber)
- Demand Management (Amber)
- Effectiveness of Spend (Grants – Completed)
- 2019/20 – 2020/21 Reshaping Services Programme
- Programme Activity
- Programme Management (Green)
- Organisational Development (Green)
- Communication and Engagement (Green).

A Member was pleased to note that there appeared to be no issues that were flagged as Red and the Head of Performance and Development advised that progress was being made on all projects. Full updates on individual projects were being reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny as appropriate, and that would continue. In referring to the projects with Amber status, he advised that that indicated there was slippage, although the projects were progressing.

A Member raised the issue that there would be merit in considering the element of how services were increasing in effectiveness, as opposed to considering budget only implications, as it was important to not only identify savings made but also those areas where there had been transformation or change. The Head of Service further stated that the Wales Audit Office had informed the Council that they would be undertaking a piece of work on the Council's Reshaping Services programme in the New Year, and that quality issues would be raised as part of that audit.

Having regard to the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the detailed service reviews described in the report be reported to the Committee for consideration in due course.

(2) T H A T regular progress reports continue to be brought to the Committee to provide updates on the progress of the Reshaping Services programme.

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(3) T H A T the update on the implementation of the Reshaping Services programme be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To provide the Committee with details on any proposed changes resulting from Reshaping Services projects.
- (2) To keep the Committee informed of the progress being made on the programme.
- (3) In noting the progress to date as contained within the report.

491 AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES: VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018 (REF) –

The report had been referred to the Scrutiny Committee and to Cabinet with the view for any recommendations made to be referred back to the Audit Committee for consideration.

The Head of Performance and Development, in presenting the report, advised that Ms. Sara-Jane Byrne of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) had presented the report to the Audit Committee meeting at its meeting 19th September, 2018, which summarised the audit work undertaken during the period 2017/18 and covered all work undertaken by other inspection and regulatory bodies such as Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). The report was attached as an appendix to the report.

The WAO report findings were generally positive and concluded that overall the Council was meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement. Key highlights were:

- The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources;
- The WAO was satisfied that the Council had appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- The Council complied with its statutory improvement and reporting duties.

Seven proposals for improvement had been made specifically focusing on strengthening scrutiny arrangements within the Council to enable it to respond to future challenges and have greater impact. Further strengthening the arrangements for Scrutiny remained a priority for the Council as identified in the Council's Annual Self-Assessment and work was already underway with the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group to develop an action plan to address these proposals. The action plan would be reported to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in due course and incorporated within the Insight Board's Tracker, which monitored progress on a monthly basis.

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The Annual Improvement Report (AIR) also outlined a number of proposals for improvement relevant to local government, included in national reports published by the WAO, since publication of the last AIR. These had been reviewed and relevant actions incorporated within the Council's Insight Tracker for monitoring and would be reported to Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee as work to address the proposals progressed.

In line with the Council's performance monitoring arrangements, Members of the Audit Committee would continue to be informed of progress against all regulatory recommendations and improvement proposals via a six monthly (half-year) update report and this would be supplemented with the annual review of progress via the Council's Annual Self-Assessment. Progress against these recommendations/proposals for improvement would be monitored by the Council's Insight Board and reported to Scrutiny Committees prior to reporting to the Audit Committee for final oversight.

The Head of Service advised that the Council had "an Insight Tracker" reporting mechanism and reports on progress in respect of national reports were made to Council Committees on a regular basis.

Having regard to the contents of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having considered the Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report 2018.

492 AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FIT FOR THE FUTURE? (MD) –

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised the Committee of the Auditor General for Wales' Overview and Scrutiny Fit for the Future? Report together with the draft action plan that had been prepared in response to the proposals for improvement contained within the report.

It was noted that the Wales Audit Office (WAO) had undertaken reviews of 22 Local Authorities in Wales on how fit for the future their scrutiny functions were. Between October 2017 and February 2018 the WAO undertook document reviews, interviewed a small number of key officers and ran focus groups of key Councillors to understand their views on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's (the Council) current scrutiny arrangements and in particular how the Council was approaching and intended to respond to current challenges including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act) in relation to those scrutiny activities as well as how the Council was beginning to undertake the scrutiny of Public Service Boards (PSBs).

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As part of the review, the WAO also reviewed the progress the Council had made in addressing the recommendations from its earlier National Improvement Study "Good Scrutiny: Good Question" (May 2014).

The WAO published its review "Overview and Scrutiny Fit for the Future?" attached at Appendix A to the report in July 2018 setting out seven proposals for improvement as outlined below:

- P1. Skills and Development - Councillors should further consider the skills and training that Scrutiny Members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges and develop an appropriate training programme.
- P2. Informing Governance - the Council's Scrutiny Committees should ensure that where appropriate Cabinet Members rather than Council officers are held to account for the efficient exercise and effective functions in accordance with statutory guidance.
- P3. Function - the Council should review the type of scrutiny support required to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges.
- P4. Function - the Council should explore different and more innovative methods for undertaking scrutiny activities.
- P5. Function - the Council should consider how its scrutiny activity can focus on those areas where it would have most value.
- P6. Function - the Council should be more innovative in how it engages the public in scrutiny activities.
- P7. Evaluation - the Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity and to learn from this in order to shape the future work of the scrutiny function.

In response to these proposals for improvement, a draft action plan had been prepared and had been presented to the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group at its meeting on 19th September, 2018.

The WAO had provided an overview of the report, advising that the challenge for Councils was to think about how they currently scrutinised and how well placed their arrangements were for the future. At that meeting the WAO advised that they recognised the significant Member Development Programme that had been undertaken and noted the successful alignment of the Scrutiny Committees to the Council's key objectives.

The Committee was therefore being requested to consider the draft action plan and refer it to Cabinet for approval together with any comments.

A number of Members expressed disappointment in respect of the report's comments on the observations at Committee meetings that had been undertaken by the WAO as they considered there had been a number of meetings that had been in the public interest where full scrutiny had been undertaken and, in their view, the WAO had missed the opportunity to view and observe those meetings. All Members were also of the opinion that Cabinet Members should be present at Scrutiny Committee meetings, not necessarily to be questioned but to have an understanding of the views of the Scrutiny Committees following debates in order to inform their decision making. It was also accepted that in most instances where there was a

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major issue, there would be significant public interest but for others not. Reference was made to the Scrutiny Committees' forward work programmes where a number of reports were noted as having slipped and therefore the Scrutiny Committees had to amend their forward work programmes on a regular basis. They considered that greater attention should be given to this aspect with Cabinet and officers being requested as far as possible to adhere to scheduling timescales.

Following full consideration of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the report be noted and the action plan endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.
- (2) T H A T Cabinet be requested to approve the ongoing monitoring of the draft action plan as part of the Council's existing performance monitoring arrangements.
- (3) T H A T it was the Committee's unanimous view that Cabinet Members should attend all Scrutiny Committee meetings as outlined above.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) In order that the Committee's comments can be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and the action plan can be approved.
- (2) To ensure effective monitoring of performance was undertaken via the Insight Board and Audit Committee.
- (3) In order that Cabinet Members can be questioned on decisions at Committee meetings and also that they have the opportunity to hear debates.

493 REVIEW OF CORPORATE COMMITTEE REPORT TEMPLATE (MD) –

The Head of Performance and Development advised that the current corporate Committee report template was longstanding and since its implementation there had been a number of significant legislative developments. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 205 had come into effect in April 2016 and the Act placed particular emphasis upon ensuring public bodies thought more about the long term, worked better with people, communities and each other, looked to prevent problems and took a more joined-up approach to their work.

The Five Ways of Working set out in the Act gave a framework through which public bodies must work through to deliver the seven national Well-being Goals for Wales. The Five Ways of Working were:

- Long Term: looking to the long term so the Council did not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
- Integration: taking an integrated approach so that public bodies looked at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives;

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- Involvement: involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affected them;
- Collaboration: working with others in a collaborative way to find shared solutions;
- Prevention: understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.

By working through the Five Ways of Working, public bodies ensured they were working towards the Sustainable Development Principle, which was a fundamental part of how public bodies must now operate through the Act. The principle was to act in a manner which sought to ensure that the needs of the present were met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To aid Elected Members in their scrutiny of reports and to facilitate decision making, the revised template attached at Appendix B to the report proposed the inclusion of an introductory table. The table provided an effective overview of the key aspects of the report and a greater transparency than the current structure. An Executive Summary had been included in this table to provide an overview and to enable the most critical aspects of a report to be summarised into a small number of paragraphs. Replicating the existing report template, the Recommendations, Reasons for Recommendations, Background and Key issues for Consideration sections were maintained in the revised template. Through keeping these sections a consistency across the report presented to differing Committees would be achieved, enabling Members to continue to effectively scrutinise report content.

To further aid Elected Members to exercise their duties under the Act and to assess whether proper and adequate consideration of the National Well-being Goals, the Five Ways of Working and the Council's Well-being Objectives had been given; a specific section had been included in the revised template.

It was being proposed that the new corporate Committee report template, once approved, would commence usage in the February 2019 cycle of Committees.

Members welcomed the revised report template and the specific inclusion of the Executive Summary proposal section within the template.

Having fully considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the report and the reasons for the proposed revision of the corporate Committee report template be noted.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet to enable the revised corporate Committee report template to be implemented in the New Year.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents contained therein and having received a detailed overview of why a revised Committee report template had been proposed.

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(2) To seek Cabinet approval for the changes to the revised corporate Committee report template.