

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 27th June, 2019.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chairman); Councillors G.D.D. Carroll, G.A. Cox, R. Crowley, G. John, Ms. S. Sivagnanam and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillor N. Moore.

100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors O. Griffiths and Dr. I.J. Johnson.

101 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN -

Councillor O. Griffiths was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year.

102 MINUTES -

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th April, 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to it being noted that on page 5 of the minutes the words “a former quarry” be amended to read “like a quarry” and that on page 8 at the penultimate paragraph the space in the word “parking” be deleted.

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

No declarations were received.

104 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 2018/19 (REF) -

Cabinet had, on 17th June, 2019, referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration with a request that any comments be referred back to Cabinet.

The sickness absence report set out the sickness absence figures for the 12 month period 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2019 which was part of the agreed performance management arrangements.

The Operational Manager for Employee Services, in presenting the report, advised that there had been a significant decrease in absence levels during 2018/19 compared with the same period for the previous financial year.

The absence rates were set out in paragraph 4.1 and showed a decrease from 10.14 days lost per FTE or 9.12 days over the period. The target for the year being 9.3 FTE days lost.

It was noted that the decrease in absence was largely due to the improved management of long term sickness cases. There had also been an increase in the level of scrutiny of absence cases which now took place on a monthly basis between the HR Business Partnerships and Occupational Health Teams. Absence had also discussed at Directorate Management Teams as part of their service based action plans.

The detailed absence breakdown in each service area was included at Appendix A to the report.

In considering the report, the following discussion took place:

Question	Officer Response
There appeared to be more stress level issues listed for home rather than work. How is this controlled?	Discussions had been held at the beginning of the process as to how the work and home stress levels should be reported with it subsequently being agreed that whatever the reason that was presented in the first instance, would be the appropriate reason to record.
In noting that stress was associated with all different forms of mental health issues reference was made to how the issue of depression was recorded	Depression was recorded under the Stress Category which were the categories prescribed by Welsh Government.
Could the Committee have the private sector figures as referred to in the CIPD Survey to future meetings?	The Operational Manager agreed to look into the feasibility and email Members accordingly and would arrange for the information to be recorded in future reports.
In referring to "other musculoskeletal" reasons for absence, a Member queried how many could be related to the carrying of green waste bags by the refuse collectors and raised concern as to the increasing number of residents who were overfilling the bags which could have an impact on waste collection. A Member also commented that Welsh Government should be approached to promote awareness of composting to assist / support Local Authorities in relation to absence levels by staff.	The HR officer agreed to discuss the concern with the relevant Department.
In referring to the gender difference between men and women who reported mental health issues, a Member queried what more the Council could do to support men.	In response, the Operational Manager stated that historically men did not come forward as much as women but it was something the Department could pursue and promote awareness of.
Paragraph 4.15 referred to Mental Health	The information could be reported if

<p>Champions. Members requested more detail in relation to who they were, whether they were male or female, ages, etc. and could often have a breakdown in the future. It was further suggested that the Council should also encourage a culture where people can confide in others.</p>	<p>available and the HR officer agreed to undertake the research and report back to Committee.</p>
--	--

Having considered the report in detail, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet -

- (1) T H A T a future in-depth report be presented to the Committee in relation to the category "other musculoskeletal" detailing the issues involved and training required.
- (2) T H A T Welsh Government be approached in relation to the promotion of composting.
- (3) T H A T the private sector data in respect of absence levels be presented to Members and included in future reports to Committee.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To apprise Members.
- (2) In order to seek Welsh Government support for its promotion in view of the impact on sickness absence in Waste Collection Services.
- (3) To apprise Members.

105 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER REPORT - APRIL, 2018 TO MARCH 2019 (MD) -

The report had been prepared to provide an update analysis of employee turnover as part of the Council's workforce planning considerations.

The figures for the period April 2018 to March 2019 indicated a slight increase in turnover (from 8.88% to 9.27%) in comparison to the same period in the previous year. The total number of leavers increased from 457 to 472. Corporate turnover had increased from 8.65% to 10.74% and turnover in schools had decreased from 9.08% to 7.98%.

The report provided information on all leavers as well as voluntary leavers with comparisons made to the previous year's data.

A comparison of the employee turnover rate was set out in the report as below:

Directorate	April 2017 to March 2018		April 2018 to March 2019	
	Total Leavers Headcount	% of Headcount	Total Leavers Headcount	% of Headcount
Environment and Housing Services	49	5.89	78	9.57
Learning & Skills	41	8.60	52	11.43
MD and Resources	49	10.76	39	8.69
Social Services	70	10.75	87	13.09
Corporate Total	209	8.65	256	10.74
Schools	248	9.08	216	7.98
Overall Total	457	8.88	472	9.27

A more detailed breakdown of leavers by Directorate and service area could be found at Appendix A to the report. A more detailed breakdown of voluntary leavers by Directorate and service area was attached at Appendix B to the report, it being noted that voluntary turnover accounted for 85% of all leavers for 2018/19 which was an increase on the previous year's figure of 75%.

Voluntary turnover levels had increased in all Directorate areas with Social Services having the highest percentage of employees who had chosen to leave the Council (11.89% up from 8.29%).

The report also highlighted the number of resignations had increased in 2018/19 compared to the same period of the previous year from 280 to 303.

Following a query as to the amount of money saved by the Council when staff left the organisation, it was noted that though some positions may not be reappointed, most would be filled.

The Chairman, in referring to paragraph 2.21 and the Annual Employee Awards event, queried whether other Councillors could be involved in the ceremony to also offer their appreciation to staff. The Leader advised that he had no objection to other Members of the Council being involved.

A Member stated that although accepting that it would not be appropriate for Members to be informed of every member of staff who left the organisation, it would however, be appropriate for Members of all Committees to be informed of the staff who had left the organisation and their replacements who attended the Committees on a regular basis.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T the Employee Turnover Report be noted and that further details of employee turnover as outlined at the meeting be included in future reports.

(2) T H A T a recruitment report be prepared for future consideration by the Committee.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) To advise Members as part of their monitoring role.

106 4TH QUARTER SCRUTINY DECISION TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2019/20 (MD) -

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and detailed the proposed Work Programme Schedule for 2019/20.

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, in presenting the report advised that Appendices A and B attached to the report set out the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, with Members being requested to review progress against each recommendation to assess whether further action may be required, ensure the required action was being undertaken and to confirm which recommendations were to be agreed as completed.

In referring to the recommendation under Minute No. 669 at Appendix A, that further advice in relation to the requirement for Members of the Council to receive a DBS check be explored in particular having regard to ward surgeries with the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer confirmed that all Members had been emailed with a copy of the advice from the Monitoring Officer.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T the following recommendations be deemed as completed:

17 January 2019	
Min. No. 669 – Corporate Safeguarding Mid-Year Report (REF) – Recommended	
(2) That further advice in relation to the requirement for Members of the Council to receive a DBS check be explored with the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services.	All Members of the Committee had been emailed with a copy of the advice. Completed
Min. No. 672 – 3rd Quarter Scrutiny Decision Tracking of Recommendations and Updated Work Programme Schedule 2018/19 (MD) – Recommended	
(2) That the work programme be amended as outlined above and uploaded to the Council's website.	Work programme amended and uploaded to the Council's website. Completed

14 March 2019	
Min. No. 855 – Staff Engagement Update (REF) – Recommended	
That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be referred to Cabinet and the approach to progressing staff engagement activities through 2019 as detailed in the report be noted.	Cabinet, on 15 th April, 2019 resolved that the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be noted, and the approach to progressing staff engagement activity throughout 2019 be endorsed. (Min. No. C647 refers) Completed
Min. No. 856 – Withdrawal of Discretionary Funding for Fare Paying School Transport Services (REF) – Recommended	
That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be referred to Cabinet for their consideration during the consultation process.	Cabinet, on 15 th April, 2019, resolved [1] That in the absence of any formal recommendations, the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be noted. [2] That approval be granted to undertake a public consultation on the proposed withdrawal of funding for the fare paying school bus service exercise, as listed in Appendix A to the Cabinet report dated 18 th February, 2019. [3] That a further report be received by Cabinet following the public consultation exercise, as referred to in Recommendation [2] of the original Cabinet report. (Min. No. C648 refers) Completed
13 December 2018	
Min. No. 601 – Initial Revenue Budget Proposals 2019/20 and Revised Budget 2018/19 (MD) – Recommended	
(1) That Cabinet be advised of the Committee's comments regarding acknowledgement of the increase in demand for services for Adults and Children and the pressures on the service's budgets, with a call for an easing of the cost pressures that needed to be fully considered and applied.	Cabinet, at its meeting on 21 st January, 2019 resolved that the contents of the report be noted and passed to the Budget Working Group for consideration in concluding the budget proposals for 2019/20. (Min. No. C552 refers) Completed
(2) That the Initial Revenue Budget Proposals for 2019/20 and the comments raised by the Committee, including those relating to cost pressures as set out Recommendation (1) above be forwarded to Cabinet.	
(3) That Cabinet be advised of the Committee's view that cost pressure V1 and the waste recycling treatment contract should be fully funded to the	

value of £850k per annum and for this money to be allocated from the Council's General Fund Reserve.	
(4) That Cabinet and the Budget Working Group be advised of the Committee's view that serious consideration is given to the level of reserves held in the Council Fund Reserve before costs are passed onto residents in the form of increased Council Tax.	
(5) That Cabinet be requested to consider carefully the impact for the service areas should it decide not to fund some of the cost pressures noted for the Directorate.	
(6) That the Council and Cabinet lobby both Westminster and the WLGA with a copy to the Minister Kirsty Williams regarding the teachers' superannuation costs, pointing out the issues and whether they would be prepared to look favourably on the Council in this regard.	
Min. No. 602 – Initial Capital Programme Proposals 2019/20 to 2023/24 and Capital Monitoring 2018/19 (MD) – Recommended	
<p>(1) That notwithstanding the requests for further information, the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committees as outlined below be endorsed and reported to Cabinet for consideration.</p> <p>Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on 5th December, 2018:</p> <p>(2) T H A T the Initial Capital Budget proposals for 2019/20 be noted and that the Committee's comments be referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 6th December, 2018:</p> <p>(1) T H A T the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee pass on to Cabinet, the Committee's recommendation that additional</p>	<p>Cabinet, at its meeting on 21st January, 2019 resolved that the contents of the report be noted and passed to the Budget Working Group for consideration in concluding the budget proposals for 2019/20.</p> <p>(Min No C551 refers)</p> <p>Completed</p>

<p>funding should be allocated for capital bid E1 Carriageway resurfacing/Surface treatments, with extra investment to come from the Council's General Reserve.</p> <p>(2) T H A T the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider a future report outlining the use of Council Capital receipts and the land/property portfolio held by the Council, with consideration of how the Council's assets could be used.</p> <p>Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 11th December, 2018:</p> <p>(1) T H A T Cabinet be requested to consider that if there was any additional funding forthcoming for asset renewals in schools, that the aspects of dignity and privacy for pupils be considered.</p>	
--	--

(2) T H A T the Work Programme attached at Appendix C be updated and uploaded to the Council's website and include the reports as outlined below:

- An in depth report in respect of the "Other Musculoskeletal" category;
- a progress update report regarding the Joint Audit Service be presented to the Scrutiny Committee during the next Municipal year.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations and having regard to discussions at the meeting.

(2) Following consideration by the Committee and for information.