

No.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Remote meeting held on 23rd September, 2020.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chairman); Councillors G.D.D. Carroll, G.A. Cox, R. Crowley, Mrs. P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, G. John, Dr. I.J. Johnson, Ms. S. Sivagnanam and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillor N. Moore (Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), Councillors L. Burnett (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration), P.G. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport), Councillor E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services) and Councillor L.O. Rowlands.

65 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairmen read out a number of housekeeping issues including advising that the meeting would be recorded for uploading via the internet and archived for future viewing.

66 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED – T H A T Councillor Mrs. P. Drake be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

67 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July, 2020 be approved as a correct record.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

69 PRESENTATION: WORKING TOWARDS RECOVERY – SEPTEMBER 2020 –

The Managing Director, in conjunction with the Head of Service for Policy and Business Transformation, provided a PowerPoint presentation which detailed the work undertaken within the Council in response to the COVID-19 national pandemic and the corporate approach to recovery going forward.

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The Managing Director advised Members that at the last meeting on 15th July, 2020 the Committee had received a report which had provided an overview of the work underway to develop a recovery strategy for the organisation. The current presentation detailed similar information that had been outlined within that report, however up to date information had also been included with further verbal updates being provided throughout the course of the presentation. The Council's response to date, he stated, had focused on key areas and keeping people safe and well. Additional Governance and decision-making arrangements had been put in place as a result of the lockdown in March. For example, the Council's Emergency Powers process had been adapted, in consultation with senior politicians and with decisions being published on the Council's website. Regular communications with Elected Members had taken place and some virtual meetings, such as a Licensing Sub-Committee, School Admission Exclusion Appeals, a Planning, Cabinet and a Scrutiny Committee meeting had been held during the lockdown. As at September 2020 the Council had resumed its calendar of meetings, undertaking all meetings virtually.

The presentation which had been included within the agenda and uploaded to the Council's website also covered aspects in relation to what the Council had learned throughout the period and drew attention to the Staff Survey that had been undertaken. Committee was informed that over 1,176 responses to the Survey had been received which was an overall response rate of 44% of the current work force and 70% of the total respondents were currently working from home. The message continued to be for staff to work from home if able to do so and to avoid unnecessary travel. The Head of Service stated that the results of the Survey showed how different colleagues were feeling during the pandemic, how their relationship with their team members and line managers were working and how they felt the Council was supporting and communicating with them. All staff had been issued with weekly messages by the Managing Director and the Managing Director had also run a question and answer session with staff virtually.

Some initial challenges had also been faced with the introduction of virtual meetings, however much effort and time had been taken to arrange and manage the virtual meetings process which were now taking place successfully and which had included necessary ICT infrastructure works.

Having regard to transition risks, it was noted that the work over the summer period had been in relation to preparation and planning, with key issues being communication and engagement. In referring specifically to the principles of recovery, the Head of Service referred to the fact that the recovery process would take some time and be influenced by a number of significant issues and would not necessarily be linear in nature. It was however, also an opportunity unlike any other to fundamentally think about the way in which the Council operated and although it was acknowledged that there was a great deal of uncertainty, there were also opportunities.

During the presentation the Managing Director also referred to the fact that the Leader had made a statement the previous Monday evening about the need for people to be vigilant as the data was showing an increase in Coronavirus cases. The Cardiff and Vale Health Board Incident Management Team were meeting on a

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weekly basis with officials from the Vale and Cardiff Councils being included in discussions. Indoor visits to care homes had been ceased and the re-emphasis of the messages concerning social distancing, working from home and avoiding unnecessary travel as well as people not coming together for social occasions were messages that were continuing to be shared via Communications teams.

With reference to the final slide, it was noted that CMT Gold meetings continued on a weekly basis, with the Recovery Strategy being reported to Cabinet in September with all Scrutiny Committees to be updated in October. The update would also include an economic assessment and community impact assessment for the Vale of Glamorgan. Directorates and Corporate Recovery Teams were creating local plans and starting delivery and the Council's Annual Delivery Plan for 2021/22 would encapsulate recovery actions.

In referring to the implementation of local lockdowns, some Members commented that in their view one of the most effective ways of addressing the issue was to ensure that enforcement was consistent. The Managing Director, in response, advised that restrictions were to be put in place and he was aware that closing times for pubs etc. were to be brought forward.

The Leader, with permission to speak, stated that he had had attended a recent meeting with the First Minister, South Wales Local Authority Leaders and Health Board representatives and although frank discussions had been exchanged, everyone was of the same mind and was working together. He wished to assure Members that all the South Wales Local Authority Leaders were keeping in regular contact and working closely together and they had advised South Wales Police that they needed to be more virulent in enforcement. He was also aware that Shared Regulatory Services officers were visiting various premises and issuing notices where appropriate.

The Deputy Leader, in referring to street café licences, stated that most businesses were embracing their licensing objectives but if there were any areas that Members had concerns about, they should contact the Licensing Department.

In conclusion the Managing Director stated that the Committee would receive a more detailed report in October on the Council's recovery strategy.

Members welcomed the update and thanked the officers for the presentation and for the responses to questions, with it subsequently being

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the Council working towards recovery be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents within the presentation and the information provided at the meeting.

70 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1
PERFORMANCE 2020/21 (MD) –

The Head of Policy and Business Transformation, in presenting the report, referred to the purpose of the report which was to present the Quarter 1 performance results for the period 1st April to 30th June, 2020 and the delivery of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

Despite the significant challenges in responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic which had been at its height during the first quarter period, the Council had made positive progress in delivering its in-year commitments in relation to the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21. The performance had contributed to an overall Amber status for the Plan at Quarter 1. It was noted that 65% (149 out of 228) of planned activities outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan had been attributed a Green performance reflecting the positive progress made during the quarter, under challenging circumstances. With regard to the 47 actions attributed a Red status, work was recommencing alongside service reviews which would inform the Council's recovery planning and strategy going forward, progress of which would be reported in Quarter 2.

Members, in noting the obvious reasons why so much of the work could not be carried out as a result of the COVID pandemic, queried whether the process of realignment would be instigated, whether targets would be reset and whether many of the indicators would be written off. The Head of Service advised that the Council remained ambitious and would continue to monitor performance against existing targets. He referred to the continuing economic impacts, encouraging Members to consider these aspects of the Plan and where the Council would be placing its efforts.

Following further discussion, it was also suggested that it would be helpful in Quarter 2 if a table could be included showing the number of Red actions split down into those delayed as a result of COVID 19 and those as a result of other delays. Following a query regarding the information that data appeared to be missing from pages 112 and 113, the Head of Service advised that the information would be updated at the end of the year as they were annual targets.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be accepted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

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71 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JULY 2020 (MD) –

The Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer, commenced by advising Members that the revenue position for 2020/21 had been challenging with the additional pressure for the Council both operationally and financially as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. This had impacted both as a result of incurring additional expenditure but also from a loss of income. Funding had however, been provided by Welsh Government to cover some of the issues.

An efficiency target of £247k had been set for the year and while it was anticipated that this would be achieved, some issues remained relating to unachieved savings targets from previous years. Adverse variances were being projected for a number of services and the use of reserves would be required to resolve these issues in the short term.

The Head of Service also drew attention to the fact that, having regard to lost income, the Council had claimed £1m to date. There were however, significant issues going forward in relation to the pandemic and that when setting the budget the Council had anticipated drawing down from reserves. The Council had received support for the first quarter from Welsh Government to support households but information was still awaited as to whether that support would continue.

Councillor J. Thomas, previous Leader of the Council, reiterated the comments he had made at previous meetings where he felt it had been important to establish reserves and as a result stated that his position on this had now been vindicated. He also took the opportunity to commend the current Leader for doing the same and further stated that the Council was in a better position as a result of having the reserves in order to support the impact of the COVID pandemic.

Following a query regarding a reduction in Council Tax income being received during the pandemic and its impact on the wider budget, the Head of Service advised that a report to the next meeting of the Committee would provide a fuller picture.

The Chairman and other Members took the opportunity to thank the Finance Department for all the efforts undertaken to produce the reports, with it subsequently being

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the 2019/20 revenue budget be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents contained therein and discussions at the meeting.

72 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST JULY 2020 (MD) –

The report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 31st July, 2020 with details by scheme shown at Appendix 1 to the report. The report also set out any requests for changes to the 2020/21 and future years' Capital Programme. The Head of Service advised that a significant number of grants had been received from Welsh Government and referred to the number of successes with regard to the 21st Century school schemes. In referring to a typographical error in relation to Jenner Park Primary water mains replacement, it was noted that the virement should have read £10k as opposed to £10. The Chairman sought additional information in relation to the Victoria Primary school project with other Members seeking further information with regard to the Barry Docks interchange scheme. With the Committees agreement, the Head of Service advised that she would obtain and forward the information to all Members by email, following the meeting.

It was subsequently,

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on the 2020/21 Capital Programme be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of delegated authority as referred to within the report at Recommendation (2) be noted.
- (3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers in relation to a number of schemes outlined in Recommendation (3) within the report be noted.
- (4) T H A T the Cabinet's recommendation to Council that the Managing Director and the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, be given delegated authority to make additions, deletions or transfers to or from the Capital Programme in relation to the Capital Economic Regeneration reserve be noted.
- (5) T H A T changes to the 2020/21 and future years' Capital Programme as identified in Recommendation (5) in the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) In noting the progress on the Capital Programme.
- (2) In noting the use of delegated authority.
- (3) In noting the use of Emergency Powers.
- (4) To enable the Capital Economic Regeneration reserve to be managed effectively.
- (5) To allow schemes to proceed in the current and future financial years.

73 4TH QUARTER SCRUTINY DECISION TRACKING OF
RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE
2020/21 (MD) –

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer presented the report, the purpose of which being to advise on progress on the Scrutiny recommendations for 2019/20 in respect of the 4th Quarter January to March 2020 (Appendix A), 2nd Quarter July to September 2019 (Appendix B), to consider the suggested work programme schedule for 2020/21 attached at Appendix C and for the Committee to note the Emergency Power decisions that had been agreed during the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic relating to the remit of the Committee attached at Appendix D.

Having regard to the forward work programme attached at Appendix C, a Member commented that going forward the document be reduced in size, for ease, when being presented to the Committee and that the site visits detailed at Appendices A and B be included within the Committee's forward work programme in order that the visits could be scheduled to be undertaken at an appropriate time.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the status of the actions listed as completed in Appendices A and B to the report be agreed.
- (2) T H A T the ongoing site visit actions detailed at Appendices A and B to the report be added to the forward work programme and be undertaken at the appropriate time.
- (3) T H A T the suggested forward work programme attached at Appendix C to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website, subject to the additions as outlined in Recommendation (2) above.
- (4) T H A T the use of Emergency Power decisions taken during the national lockdown at Appendix D to the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (2) Having considered that the site visits need to be undertaken but at the appropriate time, in light of the current pandemic.
- (3&4) For information.