

No.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 17th March, 2021.

The Committee agenda is available here.

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

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett, P. King, N. Moore, E. Williams.

517 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Principal Democratic Services referred to a number of housekeeping issues including advising those present that the meeting would be recorded for uploading via the internet and archived for future viewing.

518 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January, 2021 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 11th February, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

519 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

The following declarations were received: -

Councillor G. Cox – Agenda Item 5 – declared that he was a Member of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council.

Councillor G. Carroll – Agenda Item 6 as he was a Governor of Llandough Primary School appointed by the Local Authority.

Councillor R. Crowley – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote in respect of Reshaping Services being a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Dinas Powys Community Council.

Councillor V.P. Driscoll – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote in respect of Reshaping Services, being a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Dinas Powys Community Council.

Councillor Mrs. P. Drake – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote in respect of Reshaping Services being a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Barry Town Council.

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Councillor G. John – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote in respect of Reshaping Services being a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Llantwit Major Town Council.

Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote in respect of Reshaping Services being a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Barry Town Council.

Councillor M.R. Wilson – Agenda Item 5 – Dispensation granted to speak and vote on matters relating to Reshaping Services as a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Penarth Town Council. Agenda Item 6 – being a Governor of Victoria Primary School in Penarth appointed by the Local Authority.

520 QUARTER 3 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 2020/21 (REF) –

Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th March , 2021, had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration, in order to enable the Scrutiny Committee to maintain a continued focus on the management of sickness absence throughout all services of the Council and to make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

The report set out the sickness absence figures for the nine-month period 1st April, 2020 to 31st December, 2020 as part of the agreed performance management arrangements. There had been a significant decrease in absence levels during the first nine months of 2020/2021 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 7.62 days lost per FTE (April to December 2019) to 6.12 days lost per FTE (April to December 2020). The target for Quarter 3 (April to December 2020) was set as 6.68 days lost per FTE. There continued to be a review of absence cases which took place on a monthly basis, in particular reviewing staff with absences over four weeks and those who had regular absences in order to provide early intervention and support.

The performance management approach to absence management would continue throughout 2020/21 with further updates provided to Cabinet and Scrutiny as required. Although Members acknowledged that as a result of the pandemic it would be difficult to make comparisons, Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired as to what support was being made for staff who may have had delayed hospital appointments during the pandemic. The Operational Manager for Employee Services advised that Occupational Health were providing support and contacting GPs as appropriate as well as regular reports and discussions being held with managers. Following a query from Councillor Cox as to the differences in short term and long term sickness whilst staff were working from home, the Operational Manager stated that working from home had had an impact on the figures due to the flexibility for staff and further data analysis would be undertaken. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development also advised Members that staff wellbeing had been a significant consideration, with a wellbeing staff survey undertaken in the summer of 2020 and another to be launched within the next week. From a mental health perspective,

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staff had also been signposted to where they could obtain support from if and when required.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the information provided at the meeting and the details within the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further report be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in the next quarter in order that comparisons could be considered quarter by quarter and that the report include details of the wellbeing work undertaken to date.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents contained therein.
- (2) To ensure that more detailed comparison studies could be made when the data was available and in order that the Committee can consider the wellbeing of staff.

521 RENEWING RESHAPING – THE NEXT STEPS FOR TRANSFORMATION (REF) –

The Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping Services, had been operating since 2015. Over time the Reshaping Services Programme had adapted to the different context within which the Council was operating. The report set out proposals for the renewal of the Reshaping Programme around three new arenas of reshaping activity which were deliberately both inward and outward facing. The arenas contained an ambitious set of strategic priorities encapsulating all areas of the Council's work and were reflective of a desire to make greater links across the Council's community and partners. Cabinet had therefore, on 8th March, 2021, referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Head of Policy and Transformation also provided an on screen presentation to support the report and advised that the Coronavirus pandemic had provided an opportunity to transform services at pace and scale with it being important that the learning from the impact of the pandemic was not lost with any return to normalcy. During the first quarter of 2021/22, the specific work packages associated with the three Reshaping arenas would be engaged upon and further defined, with a view to reporting progress periodically to Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee.

Members considered that the transformation approach presented a more holistic and better collaborative approach with Town and Community Councils than the previous Reshaping programme had. It was recognised that the programme addressed the need to meet multiple sets of challenges and one of the biggest challenges had been the in-year budget savings and commitment to sustainable change during the pandemic. The Chairman referred to the need for robust data analysis to effect

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change. The Head of Service referred to the need to continue the excellent working relationship with the Public Services Board, draw together the work of the programme boards as a programme of work and to identify proposals for engagement. Councillor Ms. Sivagnanam stated that it was important for the Council to challenge itself and that working with external partners would support this. Following a query from Councillor John as to the latest position in relation to car park charging, the Head of Service agreed to seek the detail and provide the information separately to the Members via email.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the information provided at the meeting and the details within the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further report be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in the next quarter in order that an update could be considered quarter by quarter, including reporting metrics.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To ensure that Committee were kept up to date on progress, including measures of progress.

522 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST JANUARY 2021 (REF) –

Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th March, 2021, had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April, 2020 to 31st January, 2021. Details by scheme were shown in Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Dr. Johnson requested that all Members be furnished with detailed information relating to the All Wales Play Opportunities grant, the Welsh Government childcare project and the Welsh Language childcare scheme. The Chairman also requested information be emailed regarding the Penarth Leisure Centre high level glazing and an update on the Street Lighting Strategy. As a result of the requests a discussion ensued as to how such information could also be made available in the public domain as opposed to only being sent to Members. The Section 151 Officer agreed to discuss the request with Democratic Services.

The report set out any requested changes to the 2020/21 and future years' Capital Programme.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

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RECOMMENDED – T H A T the progress made on the Capital Programme be noted and supported.

Reason for recommendation

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

523 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST JANUARY 2021 (REF) –

Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th March, 2021, had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It being noted that the revenue position for 2020/21 was challenging with 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 been provided by Welsh Government (WG) 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 this year and the use of reserves would be required to resolve these issues in the short term.

Members queried the mitigating impact of a reduction in Council Tax collection on the revenue budget, being advised by the Section 151 Officer that losses of income were being experienced by all Local Authorities across Wales. This had also been recognised by WG who were looking to provide some recompense.

Committee was further advised that as WG closed their financial accounts early in the year, Local Authorities would receive funding as appropriate before the end of their financial year. Following a query re any unachieved savings it was noted that if it was evident that the savings were unable to be achieved this would be reflected as a cost pressure. The Vice-Chairman requested information regarding freelance grants and the Section 151 Officer agreed to forward the information and eligibility criteria via email. The Chairman in conclusion requested that the Library Service Click and Collect Service be encouraged further via social media.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T position with regard to the Authority's 2020/21 Revenue Budget be noted and supported.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents contained therein.

524 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 3
PERFORMANCE 2020/21 (MD) –

The performance report presented the Council's progress at Quarter 3 (Q3) (1st April to 31st December, 2020) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) (2020/21) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives. The Head of Service provided an overview of the report by way of a presentation on the screen.

Despite the ongoing challenges of responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Council had made positive progress in delivering its in-year commitments in relation to its ADP. This performance had contributed to an overall Amber status for the Plan at Q3. All four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives had been attributed an Amber performance status at Q3 to reflect the progress made to date which was considered to be positive given the unprecedented challenges the Council continued to face.

70% (161 out of 231) of planned activities outlined in the Council's ADP had been attributed a Green performance reflecting the positive progress made during the quarter, under challenging circumstances. 24% (55) of planned activities were attributed a Red status. Of the 55 actions attributed a Red performance status during the quarter, 91% (50) were directly as a result of service reprioritisation measures undertaken in response to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In relation to these areas, where appropriate, work was now recommencing as part of the Council's recovery plans and strategy.

Councillor Dr. Johnson requested further information in respect of the Civil Contingency service, Kick Start Project and BAME, although recognising that BAME probably fell within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee as the lead. The Head of Service agreed to obtain and forward the information in respect of the Civil Contingency Service to Members and to discuss the provision of a report on BAME with the relevant officers of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

In response to the query on the Kickstart Project, the Head of Human Resources stated that 72 opportunities had recently been advertised with 30 being at the point of offer.

In conclusion the Chairman, in referring to the HR Engagement Plan, advised that it was important to encourage engagement and in particular to engage with those who may have hidden disabilities.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 commitments as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- (2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of under-performance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the

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Committee be noted and that the Committee's views and recommendations be referred thereafter to Cabinet for their consideration and approval.

(3) T H A T the progress being made through the Council's recovery strategy and Directorate Recovery plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents contained therein

(2) To ensure the Council is effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to secure continuous improvement outlined in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009 and reflecting the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

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

525 SERVICE PLANS AND TARGET SETTING TO DELIVER THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN (IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1) 2021/2022 (MD) –

The report presented the service plans and targets within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee. These set out the specific areas of focus associated with the delivery of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (Improvement Plan Part 1) for 2021/2022 as aligned to its four Corporate Plan Well-being (Improvement).

In progressing the Annual Delivery Plan, it would help meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG Act). Both pieces of legislations placed specific duties on the Council in relation to objective setting and reporting. Under the WBFG Act, the Council was required to publish its Well-being Objectives by 31st March each year and to keep these under review. Under the Local Government Measure, the Council also had to set annual Improvement Objectives and publish these as soon as possible at the start of the financial year.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act would replace the performance provisions associated with the Local Government Measure and would place similar duties on Local Authorities. The final performance report from the Measure would be published by 31st October 2021 in the Council's Annual Review of Performance (Part 2 Improvement Plan) 2020/21.

In line with the Council's duties under the WBFG Act (and those defined in the forthcoming Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill), the Council continually reviewed the relevance of its Well-being Objectives and the current objectives were agreed in 2020 as part of the development on the Corporate Plan 2020-25. These objectives had been reviewed as part of end of year performance work to produce the Council's self-assessment and annual review of performance (Part 2

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Improvement Plan 2019/20) as well as in the development of the Council's Coronavirus Recovery Strategy. The Council had also consulted on its Well-being Objectives as part of the engagement work on developing its Annual Delivery Plan for 2021/22 and overall, majority of respondents agreed with the Council's Well-being Objectives. As a result, going forward into 2021/2022, the Council was assured that its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and the associated commitments outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/2022 (contained in the background papers appended to the report) were relevant in delivering improved outcomes for Vale of Glamorgan residents and contributed to the national Well-being Goals. The Annual Delivery Plan and Service Plans detailed the activities that would be undertaken in 2021-22 to deliver the Council's Well-being objectives within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Council's Recovery Strategy.

The commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan were reflected in the Service Plans (Appendix A to the report) together with proposed service improvement targets (Appendix B to the report) to show how individual service areas would contribute to their achievement and overall delivery of the Council's four Well-being Objectives. Scrutiny Committee Members were asked to review and recommend the Service Plans and service improvement targets for endorsement via Cabinet.

Councillor Dr. Johnson, in referring to the substantial detail of information contained within the documents that the Scrutiny Committee had to consider as well as the fact he appreciated the difficulties in setting set targets for the coming year in light of the pandemic, enquired as to whether it would be more beneficial if Members of the Scrutiny Committee or Full Council could receive a presentation on the subject.

The Chairman also in agreement suggested that other options be explored for the scrutinising of the information bearing in mind that the other Scrutiny Committees would have only been required to consider the areas within their remit. The Chairman also suggested that the Committee also look at how other Local Authorities scrutinise such information.

Following the above discussion it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Service Plans (at Appendix A to the report), proposed service improvement targets for 2021/22 (Appendix B to the report) and all planned activities as they related to the remit of the Committee (Appendix C to the report) be noted.

(2) T H A T it would be useful to provide a further briefing for all elected Members on the approach, structure and content of the Service Plans and targets, as the understandable level of detail contained within the reports made it challenging to scrutinise the full detail.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents contained therein and discussion at the meeting.