

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON
MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019 AT 10:00**

Present

Councillor CA Webster – Chairperson

JPD Blundell
J Gebbie
AJ Williams

NA Burnett
M Jones

RJ Collins
RME Stirman

PA Davies
KJ Watts

Apologies for Absence

LM Walters

Officers:

Gail Jewell Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

L M Walters

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A J Williams declared a personal interest in Agenda item 4, due to being a School Governor for Coety Primary School.

51. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on 30 January 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

52. CORPORATE LANDLORD

The Head of Operations – Community Services presented the report to the Committee, the purpose of which was to update Members on progress being made in implementing a ‘Corporate Landlord’ model across the authority’s property portfolio, achievements to date and the next steps in the process.

The Committee were advised that the Council had historically managed its property portfolio in a dispersed manner, where responsibility for the Council’s estate was spread over three directorates and multiple service areas. The Head of Operations – Community Services outlined that the Corporate Model in its simplest terms, is about centralising all property related functions under a single integrated team, which frees up time for the service areas to focus on their core objectives.

Following this, the Temporary Head of Corporate Landlord, along with Managing Director of PeopleToo made a presentation to the Committee detailing to the Committee the benefits of the model, progress made to date, future savings opportunities and key work streams which will take place over the next 18 months.

The Committee supported the benefits of the Corporate Landlord model in eliminating duplication, streamlining services and working as ‘One Council’, but expressed some

concerns in relation to the prioritisation for repairs and maintenance. Members queried how the Corporate Landlord team prioritised one school needs over another, to which the Chairperson followed by questioning whether a school - a paying customer would be prioritised for a repair before an issue in one of the Council's properties. The temporary Head of Corporate Landlord explained all jobs that are requested through the helpdesk are assessed through triage and are dealt with on a prioritisation basis only.

On the subject of the working relationship between Schools and the Corporate Landlord process, the Committee noted that although there is good support from schools and the education, Members highlighted the need to generate a greater uptake in the model by extending communications with school governors with as well as head teachers to highlight the financial and strategic advantages of doing so.

The Committee expressed concern regarding Council owned properties that were currently out of service due to being in a poor state of repair or that asbestos could be found within the asset. Therefore Members requested to be kept informed of any maintenance plans for assets in each ward along with any potential long term decisions that maybe required.

On the subject of the budget allocated to the Corporate Landlord model, the Committee queried the fees allocated to PeopleToo consultancy services and what the figure encompassed. The Head of Operations – Community Services clarified the fee was a notable sum but was less than the savings produced to date and the fee covered services such as expert advice and staff that could not be resourced internally.

The Committee noted that there was no reference to Community Asset Transfer (CAT) in the report and therefore queried how the Corporate Landlord model supported CAT opportunities. The Head of Operations – Community Services reported that communication and initial support for potential community organisations would be allocated to the CAT Officer, but Corporate Landlord would facilitate CAT when arrangements are at contract level.

Resolved:

Although it was evident that the Interim Head of Corporate Landlord was carrying out his role commendably, the Committee highlighted the importance and necessity for the Corporate Landlord project to be led by a senior officer from within the Authority. Therefore Members recommended that this is actioned at the earliest opportunity.

The Committee highlighted the importance of educating schools of the financial and strategic advantages of committing to the Corporate Landlord model. To assist Officers with this progression, Members recommended the following:

- That strong leadership is allocated to ensure an appropriate level of promotion and incentive is provided to be part of the Corporate Landlord process;
- That the outlined benefits of the Corporate Landlord process are presented to governors of each school as well as head teachers;
- That Corporate Landlord is included on the agenda as a discussion item at the next Festival of Learning event or in another forum where schools attend on mass.

Following implementation of the Corporate Landlord Model and the proposed centralisation of soft FM budgets the Committee recommended that further efficiencies

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019

are considered by re-assessing all roles and responsibilities through the Job Evaluation process that would be effected by these changes – in-house and within schools.

The Committee recommended that closer working relationships are developed between the Corporate Landlord team and the Community Asset Transfer Officer to allow communication of information held and knowledge of assets which will assist with effective asset management planning.

During their discussions regarding the Local Authority assets, the Committee recommended that all Members are informed of the outcome of the scheduled condition surveys along with maintenance plans for each asset within every ward.

Additional Information

The Committee queried whether the Corporate Landlord model complete and record surveys of satisfaction for all works undertaken. To assist with the monitoring of the effectiveness of the model, Members asked to receive any feedback received to date to evaluate alongside any obtained following the PeopleToo contact coming to an end.

53. MEMBER AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - PLASNEWYDD PRIMARY

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to present the Committee with the findings and recommendations from a Member and School Engagement Panel (MSEP) meeting with Plasnewydd Primary School.

The Chairperson brought Members attention to paragraph 4.2 point g) with reference to School Governor training and agreed that the topic requires scrutinising and suggested that a selection of Governors are invited to attend the Scrutiny meeting to explore the role and what support is provided by the Local Authority and Central South Consortium.

On the subject of School Governors, the Committee raised concerns regarding promotion of current vacancies within schools and requested that other ways of advertising are considered. Members suggested that a job description should be included which clearly outlines what the role entails and should summarise the time and dates of expected meetings to indicate the required commitment to undertake the post.

The Committee acknowledged the content of the report and queried whether the issues found within Plasnewydd Primary School were replicated in other schools and suggested that it would be useful if Scrutiny provided an annual report outlining themes of found issues.

RESOLVED: Members recommended that an annual report is generated by Scrutiny to outline themes of issues in schools within the Borough, along with what steps were put in place to mitigate these matters.

When discussing 'Further points for Scrutiny', the Committee reiterated the need to explore the role and training needs of a School Governor. Following discussions, Members made the following comments and recommendations in relation to the topic:

- Due to the fact that there are currently approximately 41 vacancies for School Governors, Members recommended that the promotion and advertising for these appointments are considered;
- That the proposed School Governor job description also include the days of scheduled meetings to outline what commitment the post would necessitate;

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019

- Due to training sessions being cancelled due to non-attendance, Members request that the promotion of School Governor training sessions is explored;
- That a selection of School Governor representatives are invited to attend the meeting to provide their views.

The Committee accepted the comments and recommendations of the Member and School Engagement Panel in relation to Plasnewydd Primary School and determined to send them all to Cabinet, the Directorate and the Consortium for a response.

54. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Forward Work Programme report, highlighting the feedback from the last meeting, the Scrutiny Workshop scheduled to take place at the next meeting and the new proposed Scrutiny items.

Resolved:

Although the Committee understood that due to ongoing personal circumstances with the Corporate Director of Education and Family Support to which may have resulted in a delay with responding to comments and recommendations, the Committee requested that their disappointment be noted that a response was not provided by another Officer.

In relation to the item of Communications and Engagement scheduled for 3 June 2019, Members requested that Scrutiny look to invite the Customer Services Manager and a representative from is also invited to attend the meeting.

In relation to the item of Post 16 ALN Review scheduled to SOSC 2 on 5 June 2019, for continuity purposes, Members of SOSC 1 have requested to attend and contribute to this meeting.

55. REMODELLING FOSTERING SERVICES PROJECT

Resolved: The Committee noted the information contained in report and the Appendix.

56. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 12.10.