

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 14 JANUARY 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 14 JANUARY 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

JPD Blundell

J Gebbie

RL Penhale-
Thomas

T Thomas

CA Webster

Apologies for Absence

N Clarke, B Sedgebeer, RMI Shaw and JC Spanswick

Officers:

Gail Jewell

Scrutiny Officer

Andrew Rees

Democratic Services Manager

Tracy Watson

Scrutiny Officer

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

98. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 12 December 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

99. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2022 REVIEWED FOR 2019-2020

The Interim Chief Executive introduced for the Committee's consideration the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 reviewed for 2019-20.

The Interim Head of Finance informed the Committee that the Corporate Plan is reviewed each year, focusing mainly on updating the Council's commitments and success measures for 2019-20. She stated that the revised Plan better aligns with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 comprising seven sections. She informed the Committee that the three wellbeing objectives are both the Council's improvement objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and wellbeing objectives under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Once approved, the Plan will replace the current Corporate Plan and will be supported by the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Plan for the first time featured a Corporate Plan on a Page.

The Committee commented that the number of meetings of Council is greater than 7 per year and requested that this be amended in the Plan.

The Committee requested clarification of the number of Cabinet Members being shown in the Plan as 7 Cabinet Members. The Leader clarified that there are 7 Cabinet Members, although one Cabinet position has not been appointed to at present.

The Committee commented that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal was projected to deliver 25,000 jobs and questioned how many of those jobs would be delivered within the County Borough. The Leader informed the Committee that the 25,000 extra jobs would be delivered across the region. He stated there is evidence of 7,000 residents of the Borough travelling eastwards to work in Cardiff each day and it was likely that residents of the Borough will continue to access jobs across the region. It was the intention to create as many jobs that could be secured in the Borough during the City Deal programme. He stated that the projected 25,000 jobs across the region were not broken down by local authority area.

The Committee expressed concern that without investment in the highway network the extra jobs created would add to traffic congestion. The Leader informed Cabinet that the Council is embarking on its biggest ever development at the Bridgend Science and at Pyle to support the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). He stated that he would keep Members informed as the City Deal project progresses.

The Committee expressed concern at the recent announcement by Ford of potential job losses at its engine plant in Bridgend in an area which cannot afford to lose jobs and questioned whether discussions had been held with other organisations and stakeholders. The Leader commented that the authority is ready to mobilise a team to support employees whose positions may be at risk at the Ford plant. He stated that the authority has a good track record of working with the UK and Welsh Governments to support people at risk of redundancy and any intervention needed. The Interim Chief executive commented on the worrying news although there was at present a lack of clarity on plans by the Ford Motor Company. He stated that any direct intervention would come from the UK and Welsh Governments. He confirmed that a support team will be mobilised to advise employees at risk of losing jobs at the engine plant.

The Committee asked what support would be made available to Ford employees. The Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee that support given would be at the invitation of the Ford Motor Company. The Cabinet Member Communities that an announcement of jobs at the Ford plant would also have an impact on ancillary industries which supply the plant.

The Committee commented on the need for there to be more of an emphasis on the growth of GVA in the City Deal. The Leader commented that GVA growth is a key indicator for City Deal and there is a need to narrow the gap in GVA with other regions in the UK.

The Committee questioned the accuracy of the targets for the percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the target of 65% in 2019-20 for people who have completed reablement can go higher and was likely to be 70% to 72%.

The Committee questioned the support given to vulnerable groups and which groups had been identified. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed the Committee that the Education and family Support Directorate would be the subject of an Estyn inspection in March. He stated that a Vulnerable groups Team had been established and there are close working relationships with the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and the Pupil Referral Unit. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed the Committee that the authority is meeting all its statutory obligations.

The Committee questioned the reason for the footfall targets to town centres reducing as the aspiration should be for footfall targets to increase. The Committee also questioned why the target for the number of vacant premises in town centres had not been reduced.

The Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee that the contract with the camera operator has changed which has resulted in the number of cameras reducing. He also informed the Committee that reducing the number of vacant premises is a complex one and there is unfortunately an increasing trend nationally for vacant premises in town centres. The Leader informed the Committee that encouragingly the former McDonalds building is in the process of being redeveloped, however there is a worrying trend for vacant premises to be on the increase in town centres. The Committee questioned the targets given to the Empty Properties Officer. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations informed the Committee that the officer's focus had been on tackling empty housing this year.

The Committee referred to the targets for Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and hoped that the process will be streamlined for the transfer of assets going forward. The Deputy Leader informed the Committee that he chairs the CAT Working Group which had now met a number of times and commented that some local authorities had been brutal in its approach with the transfer of assets. He stated that due diligence had to be exercised before assets are transferred to ensure they thrive and are sustainable for future generations. He also stated that the transfer of assets had taken longer than he would have liked but there is a need for the process to be right. The Cabinet Member Communities commented that the CAT process is being streamlined and due to the range of assets to be transferred there would be a need for more than one process to be put in place. The Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 will be examining the effectiveness of the CAT process at its next meeting. He also informed the Committee that the target for CAT will be more ambitious next year.

The Committee requested a narrative to explain the number of individuals that are discussed at Transition Panel and have a transition plan in place. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing commented that the performance framework is being looked at across Wales and that the Heads of Service are fully engaged in this process. She stated that care leavers are counted up to the age of 25 and that transition planning should start when an individual reaches the age of 14. She informed the Committee that everyone over the age of 16 should have a transition plan.

The Leader thanked the Committee for the contributions it had made to the Corporate Plan.

The Committee thanked the invitees for its contribution.

Conclusions

Subsequent to the Committee's consideration of the report and draft Corporate Plan Members made the following comments for consideration and inclusion:

In Section 6: Democracy and Partnership, the Committee highlighted that the Council meet more than the stated seven times a year and that Cabinet is made up of six not seven councillors.

During discussions regarding City Deal – a key programme to assist with maintaining the wellbeing objective 'Supporting a Successful Economy', Members highlighted how Bridgend is strategically placed for travel within the region and how important obtaining jobs within the County Borough through City Deal would be for future generations.

The Committee discussed the possible job losses from the Ford engine plant in Bridgend and were pleased to know that the Council were readily available to support the employer and employees. Members request to revisit this topic at a future meeting

when a decision has been confirmed to explore the wider implications of the closure of Ford engine plant.

When discussing the success indicators under the title 'To create conditions for growth and enterprise' heading, the Committee recommend that the calculation of growth of GVA in the Borough is added and reported upon.

On page 28 of the report the Committee queried the targets set for the percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement and six months later have: a) a reduced package of care and support, for years 2018-19 and 2019-20. Following the outcome of discussion, the Committee recommend that the target for this indicator is reconsidered and increased given the fact that the actual for 2017-18 was 70.64%.

The Committee recommend that further information be provided in the Corporate Plan as to the context and rationale behind each target, to determine how the target has been calculated, why a target has not been achieved or why a target had been raised or lowered.

When discussing the success indicators under the title 'to work in partnership with the third sector, town and community councils and community groups to build resilience' the Committee welcomed Cabinet's response in relation to Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process, in that evidence and best practice had been sought with neighbouring Authorities.

In relation to 'The percentage of individuals discussed at Transition Panel that have a transition plan in place by age of 16/17', Members queried how many children the indicator relates to and recommend that presentation of this indicator is provided as a number rather than a percentage in the future.

As the Corporate Plan is a publically accessible document, the Committee emphasised the need for Directorates to ensure accuracy of figures within the report prior to publication.

100. BUDGET MONITORING 2018-19 - QUARTER 2 FORECAST

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the Council's position as at 30 September 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the projected revenue and capital outturn position for 2018-19.

101. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019-20 TO 2022-23 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Committee received the final report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel and the responses from all the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in relation to Cabinet's draft budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Committee determined to submit the recommendations outlined at Appendix A and B to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

102. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer reported on items to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 11 February 2019 and sought confirmation of the information required for the subsequent meeting to be held on 3 April 2019. She also reported on a list of potential

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Forward Work Programme items for prioritisation and allocation to each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Conclusions

The Committee agreed the items scheduled for the meeting on 11 February 2019 and 3 April 2019 including the invitees to attend.

The Committee confirmed the following items for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme:

24 January 2019	SOSC 3	Revised CAT Process
30 January 2019	SOSC 1	Education Outcomes
13 February 2019	SOSC 2	Direct Payment Scheme
25 February 2019	SOSC 3	Empty Properties
28 February 2019	SOSC 1	Supported People Programme Grant Review of Fostering Project
18 March 2019	SOSC 3	Homelessness
27 March 2019	SOSC 2	CAMHS
29 April 2019	SOSC 1	Home to School Transport

Members agreed to receive and consider the following items if it is decided not to receive and scrutinise the Directorate Business Plans:

- Collaboration work with the Police
- Community Safety Partnership

Members requested that when the above items are received by the Committee that the Police and Crime Commissioner is invited to attend the meeting.

Members asked if the report on Homelessness could include the Council's definition of homelessness.

103. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE AGAINST ITS COMMITMENTS AT QUARTER 2 OF 2018-19 (INFORMATION REPORT)

The Committee received an overview of the Council's performance in 2018-19 as at Quarter 2, which compared performance with the commitments to delivering the improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-22.

The Committee expressed concern at the time taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants and the barriers in place preventing their earlier approval and that this be considered at a future meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2.

The Committee requested earlier sight of the Council's performance at Quarter 3.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the half year corporate performance.

104. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 11:25