

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2023 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

H T Bennett  
S J Griffiths  
G Walter

F D Bletsoe  
M L Hughes  
AJ Williams

P Davies  
M Jones

RM Granville  
RL Penhale-Thomas

Apologies for Absence

T Thomas

Officers:

Mark Shephard  
Kelly Watson  
Carys Lord  
Claire Marchant  
Janine Nightingale  
Lindsay Harvey  
Deborah Exton  
Alex Rawlin  
Kate Pask  
Jessica Mclellan  
Nimi Chandrasena

Chief Executive  
Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services  
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change  
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing  
Corporate Director Communities  
Corporate Director Education and Family Support  
Deputy Head of Finance  
Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager  
Corporate Performance Manager  
Scrutiny Officer  
Democratic Services Officer - Support

Invitees:

Councillor Huw David  
Councillor Jane Gebbie  
Councillor Hywel Williams  
Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell  
Councillor John Spanswick  
Councillor Rhys Goode  
Councillor Neelo Farr

Leader  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Social Services and Health  
Cabinet Member for Finances, Resources and Legal  
Cabinet Member for Education  
Cabinet Member Climate Change and Environment  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration  
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing

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Declarations of Interest

None.

**89. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Minutes of meetings of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 3 and 24 July 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	23 October 2023

**90. Budget Monitoring 2023-24 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast**

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the Committee write a letter, to the Welsh Ministers for Climate Change and Education and Welsh Language expressing their concern regarding the delay in publishing the outcome of the review into Home to School Transport and requesting that it be expedited, which would enable the Council to consider difficult but necessary options regarding the challenging Education and Schools budget positions.</li><li>2. That a communication be shared publicly, clearly demonstrating the complex issues contributing to the cost pressures in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and showing, for example, the cost of services per head.</li></ol> <p>and the Committee requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. A written update regarding the aim and purpose of the 5-Point Action Plan to target in-year spend and details of the progress made against it.</li><li>4. Detail regarding the costs associated with pursuing payment of outstanding Council Tax and the triggers and costs of Court action due to persistent non-payment.</li><li>5. The best case, worst case and predicted case scenario modelling of further efficiency savings to</li></ol>
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	<p>Schools Delegated Budgets to provide Members with an indication of the number of schools likely to fall into a deficit position and requiring development of recovery plans.</p> <p>6. In relation to school meals and catering services:</p> <p>a) An indication of figures and possible outcomes of the ongoing formal review of prices of school meals; and</p> <p>b) That the review considers, as far as the Welsh Government Guidelines regarding waste management allow, a review of portion sizes to ensure food sufficiency for older pupils and less wastage for younger pupils.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 October 2023

**91. Performance Management Improvement Plan**

Decision Made	<p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following Recommendations:</p> <p>7. That the Committee write a letter, to the Auditor General for Wales expressing their disappointment that a representative from Audit Wales was unable to attend the Committee meeting, due to budgetary constraints, to help the Committee better understand Audit Wales' perspective.</p> <p>8. The Committee expressed concern regarding their restricted ability to scrutinise public spending on capital projects due to commercial sensitivity.</p> <p>The Committee referred to examples including the School Improvement Group, chaired by the Leader and the Children's Social Care Improving Outcomes Strategic Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, which consider sensitive Schools and Children's Services matters respectively.</p> <p>The Committee requested whether, a similar Group or Board could be established to consider sensitive and commercially sensitive information regarding the Communities Directorate/Capital Projects and that a Member of the Scrutiny Committee be invited to sit on the Group or Board to provide assurance that public spend on capital projects is scrutinised.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 October 2023

**92. Forward Work Programme Update**

Decision Made	<p>Following detailed discussion and consideration of the Forward Work Programme (FWP) Report and having regard to the Scrutiny Officer advising that it may be too soon to monitor the Workforce Strategy Action Plans in December as the Strategic Workforce Plan was only scrutinised by the Committee in September, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Committee approved its FWP in Appendix A subject to the additions and amendments listed below, noted the FWPs for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Appendix C, D and E, and noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheets to track responses to the Committees’ recommendations made at previous meetings in Appendices B, F, G and H:</p> <p>a) the scope of the <i>Scrutiny Annual Report</i> include an update on the newly formed Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and noted that this will be added to the Annual Report for 2023-24.</p> <p>b) an information report regarding the <i>Cessation of Ukrainian Refugee Host Sponsorship</i>.</p> <p>c) a report on the Council’s Engagement and Participation Strategy and that the <i>Using Service User Perspectives to Inform Decision Making</i> report scheduled in January 2024 include the following in its scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the Council will manage expectations during this challenging economic time;</li> <li>• how messages are clearly communicated to residents; and</li> <li>• how to ensure an adequate feedback loop between residents and the Council.</li> </ul> <p>d) The Committee agreed to review whether to retain the <i>Review Progress of Disabled Facilities Grants</i> on their FWP following consideration of the <i>Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24</i> at its meeting in December 2023 and whether to retain the <i>Digital Strategy Review</i> on its FWP at a future meeting.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 October 2023

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**93. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	23 October 2023

The meeting closed at 14:40