

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
HELD IN REMOTELY VIA SKYPE ON WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

MC Clarke
JE Lewis
DBF White

SK Dendy
AA Pucella
PJ White

J Gebbie
G Thomas

A Hussain
CA Webster

Apologies for Absence

PA Davies, M Jones, MJ Kearn and T Thomas

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Rachel Pick	Scrutiny Officer
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

121. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 dated 16 March 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

122. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report. She advised that following the lockdown in March, Scrutiny Committees were initially postponed as the Council focused upon key priorities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A report to Cabinet in June requested that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the creation of a Cross-Party Recovery Panel, which, at their meeting in July, approved and established a panel with the aim of shaping, informing and advising Cabinet on the Council's recovery planning to form the basis of the recovery phase of the pandemic. The Panel met six times in August and produced recommendations to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, which were reported to Cabinet a week later. A formal response from Cabinet was expected shortly. The Recovery Panel was now awaiting the Public Service Board's Community Impact Assessment to consider the findings, before selecting its next area of focus to be examined in greater detail.

Members of this Committee then attended the combined meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees 1 and 2, which took place in July, to consider reports on Post 16 Education and Learner Travel. This had been postponed from March. Recommendations for Post-16 Education were considered by Cabinet in July, who took a decision on the preferred option and then considered the recommendations upon Learner Travel in September, deferring the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learner Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government in March 2021.

The Budget Research and Evaluation Panel meetings commenced in July. Four meetings had taken place to date, with the final meeting scheduled for December.

The Schedule of Meetings for the remaining municipal year had been agreed at Annual Council in September, and as the Recovery Panel had now been established, it was recognised that, moving forward, meetings of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees would need to be focused and strategic to avoid a duplication of work.

The Council had since been advised that the Local Government Financial Settlement from Welsh Government would be later than expected. This meant that scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy would need to be considered by Scrutiny Committees after Cabinet considered the draft proposals on 19 January, and not in the December cycle of meetings as originally planned. Consequently, arrangements would be made to move the dates of the January meetings to facilitate this, and an announcement would be made at Council on 18th November.

With these changes in mind, it was proposed that, at its next meeting on the 14 December, it would be timely that the Committee received a verbal update briefing from the Corporate Director upon the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon the Social Services and Wellbeing Service area, and the operational response.

With regards to the meetings of scrutiny after the MTFs, the Committee was asked to identify any further items for consideration on the interim Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings. There needed to be an emphasis on consideration of issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation. The Committee would have the opportunity at each meeting to revisit its Forward Work Programme and the Scrutiny Officer suggested that Members may wish to wait until the next meeting of the Committee to set further topics, following the verbal update from the Corporate Director.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Questioning Skills Training for Scrutiny Members and Training for Scrutiny Chairs had been postponed due to the national lockdown. The WLGA was now able to offer this training via Microsoft Teams. It was therefore proposed that two sessions be arranged: one session of Scrutiny Questioning Skills for all Scrutiny Members and One session of Scrutiny Chairs' Training for all Committee and Panel Chairs. Dates were to be confirmed.

There were no requests to include specific information in the item for the next meeting.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings using the agreed form, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee confirmed the proposed initial items for the Committee's Forward Work Programme set out in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the report.

123. CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

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The Chairperson invited nominations from the floor, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor D White be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 as an Invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

124. NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairperson invited nominations from the floor, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor S Dendy be nominated as the representative of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 to sit as a Member of the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

125. URGENT ITEMS

None.