

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

25 July 2023

Recommendations/Actions

Update on Communities Directorate Position and Challenges

The Committee discussed, in depth, the structure, resources and pressures within the Communities Directorate.

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and the Cabinet Member, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. That the Update on Communities Directorate Position and Challenges report be made available to all Committee Members.

Officer's response

Email sent to with report attached to Committee Members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 and 2.

2. The Committee welcomed the proposal of a plan over the next five years to develop a new Target Operating Model (TOM) as explained by the Corporate Director of Communities, of what the Communities Directorate can deliver in alignment with their resources and budget. Looking at all the services they deliver, statutory responsibilities and the communities' expectations. The Committee recommended that at the opportune time when the Target Operating Model (TOM) draft becomes available it is added to the Forward Work Programme for review by the Committee.

Officer's response

The Corporate Director for Communities agreed that the development of a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for the Communities Directorate will be added to the forward work plan and will be shared at the earliest possible opportunity.

3. That the Town and Community Council Forum consider the current model of partnership working between the Local Authority and the local Town and Community Councils and explore options for better communication, more collaborative working and whether the authority can assist Town and Community Councils take on leadership of certain service provisions. The Members requested that the outcome of this discussion be provided back to Committee as an information report.

Officer's response

The Corporate Director for Communities advised that a discussion surrounding the Town and Community Council methods of partnership working with the local

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authority takes place and that the suggestions from the Forum regarding improving communications and taking on additional responsibilities can be discussed.

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, there were no requests for further information from the Committee.

Forward Work Programme (FWP) Update report

The Committee discussed the draft outline FWP and Members expressed concern in relation to the Communities Directorate having sufficient resources, commenting upon the level of Directorate budget savings made over the last 10 to 12 years, the level of unfilled vacancies, the outstanding responses to Scrutiny Recommendations, information requests and delays in reports being available. The Committee stressed that this was not a criticism of the Director or any staff.

Following detailed discussions, the Committee made the following recommendations:

4. The Committee discussed the Communities Directorate operating with a £31m budget allocation in the financial year 2023/2024 and it is representing 9% of the authority's budget. They considered whether any benchmarking had been done in terms of budget per head of population in the authority for Communities versus those of other authorities in South Wales of a similar size. The Chief Executive advised a piece of work had been commissioned through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) which they intend to share in the next Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP).

Officer's response

The Corporate Director for Communities advised that the work from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in benchmarking will be considered as part of any Target Operating Model (MOT) discussion in the Communities Directorate.