

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2023

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 HELD IN HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2023 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor C Davies – Chairperson

S J Bletsoe
W J Kendall
MJ Williams

N Clarke
J E Pratt

P W Jenkins
G Walter

MJ Kearn
I Williams

Officers:

Lucy Beard
Rachel Keepins
Meryl Lawrence

Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny

Invitees:

Councillor Huw David
Councillor Jane Gebbie

Leader
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Social Services and Health

Councillor John Spanswick
Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell
Councillor Rhys Goode
Councillor Neelo Farr

Cabinet Member Climate Change and Environment
Cabinet Member Education
Cabinet Member Housing, Planning and Regeneration
Cabinet Member Community Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Mark Shephard
Carys Lord
Janine Nightingale

Chief Executive
Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change
Corporate Director - Communities

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Paul Davies and Melanie Evans.

Councillor Norah Clarke advised that she would need to leave the meeting early.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ian Williams declared a personal interest as a Member of Bridgend Town Council and a Governor of Oldcastle Primary and Brynteg Comprehensive Schools.

44. UPDATE ON COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE POSITION AND CHALLENGES

The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to update the Committee on the current position with the Communities Directorate in terms of budget and resources and future performance.

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Executive and Members discussed the following with Invitees:

- The Authority's vacancy level in comparison with other authorities' rates, the innovative ways of moving some vacancies forward being explored, and the

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2023

restructure being undertaken in the planning department.

- The level of funding for Net Carbon Zero 2030 and the cost of the Directorate work towards it, having regard to the recent announcement by UK Government easing back.
- With regard to a question whether any benchmarking had been done in terms of the budget per head of the population in the Authority in comparison with other authorities in South Wales of a similar size, Officers advised a piece of work through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) would provide benchmarking information across selected authorities in Wales across certain services.
- Whether the Authority could explore ways to invest money to generate revenue that could be invested back into service provision.
- The high expectation of the frontline services provided to communities by the Directorate including statutory responsibilities, looking ahead exploring different ways of operating and what could be delivered aligning with the resources and budget within the Directorate in a new Target Operating Model.
- Exploring a renewed and different relationship with Town and Community Councils, which was being raised in the Town and Community Council Forum and could be shared with the Committee.

The Chairperson advised that there were no further questions for the Invitees, thanked the Invitees for their attendance and, advised that they may leave the meeting.

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

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

45. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee discussed the draft outline FWP and Members expressed concern in relation to the Communities Directorate having sufficient resources, commenting upon

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2023

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:

1. 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).

RESOLVED: The Committee approved the FWP in Appendix A, subject to the above, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B and noted that the FWP, Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and any updates from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

46. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 19:15.