

# Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 March 2025

## Responses to Recommendations / Information requested.

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
<b>Quarter 3 Performance 2024-25</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>			
1	Members discussed staff sickness and the support offered and that some Governing Bodies offered online access to a GP for private prescriptions as part of their staff wellbeing package of support. The Committee <b>recommended</b> that the provision of this option to Council staff be explored and liaising with colleagues in schools where the offer has	<p>Schools who have opted out of the long-term sickness mutual fund service level agreement, have elected to purchase a Staff Absence Insurance product from the market. This product has a range of wellbeing features that support employees.</p> <p>Consideration of all options available to the Council will be considered.</p>	Accepted

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	been made for details.		
2	Members referred to the issue of not having access to documents available on the staff intranet, such as Directorate Business Plans, and the Committee <b>recommended</b> that the possibility of integrating a link to the information onto the Members' Portal be expedited pending a longer term testing of the basic working model allowing access via the intranet.	A review has been completed to examine the opportunity to integrate with the Members Portal, however this is not possible. Therefore, a Teams Channel for members will be setup and managed by democratic services which will allow for the sharing and access to documents such as business plans that are currently only available on the intranet. The longer term solution will be explicit access to the intranet. The team are currently assessing development requirements with regards the current intranet, which will include access by members.	Accepted

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<b>Additional Information</b>			
3	The Committee acknowledged that the 100% target for staff completing mandatory e-learning was unrealistic for a number of reasons and noted that a review was underway to try and create a more intelligent/prioritised approach to mandatory e-learning. However, the Committee <b>requested</b> data demonstrating the contributory factors preventing the target of 100% from being achieved.	The completion of mandatory e-learning modules has been reviewed to ensure the completion targets are meaningful and measurable. This will enable managers to identify areas for improvement, which factor in absences, etc.	

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	In addition, the Committee <b>requested</b> that the narrative in the Performance Dashboard reflect that the figure does not include staff absence for sickness, maternity or paternity leave etc., pending a potential amendment of the target following the review underway.		
4	The Committee <b>requested</b> an update regarding the planning application status relating to the school modernisation of Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sger.	The planning application has been submitted but, as yet, has not been considered by the Planning Committee	Accepted

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5	The Committee <b>requested</b> information regarding the Energy Performance Certificate assessment procedure for public sector buildings in the County Borough and their energy ratings.	Public Buildings over 250m2 require a DEC certificate, costs are dependent on size and frequency is again based on size, 10 years for between 250-1,000m2 and 1 year for buildings over 1,000m2. Advisory Reports are also required for buildings over 250m2 and again are dependent on size, 250-1,000m2 every 10 years, 1,000m2+ every 7 years. This is per building/block, so some schools will have multiple dependent on the number of blocks. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/check-energy-performance-public-building#:~:text=How%20long%20DECs%20last,up%20to%201%2C000%20square%20metres.">https://www.gov.uk/check-energy-performance-public-building#:~:text=How%20long%20DECs%20last,up%20to%201%2C000%20square%20metres.</a>	Accepted
6	Members referred to the development of the Future Waste Services Model bringing the service in-house, and <b>requested</b> that regular Member Briefings/updates be provided to ensure Members are appraised of progress and to allow them to	The project team will happily provide update briefings on bringing the waste service in-house as requested. With regard to resident expectations, for clarity no changes to the service type or schedule are planned with the change in provider so the public should not be noticeably aware of any change.	Accepted

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	manage expectations of residents.		
7	With reference to Performance Indicator: CED5, ' <i>Percentage of first call resolutions</i> ', of enquiries which did not result in a first call resolution, the Committee <b>requested</b> information regarding how long they remained in the system and how many calls they took to resolve.	<p>The first call resolution indicator shows the number of calls handled by the customer services team at the first point of contact without having to transfer the caller on. The number of calls relate to those services where Customer Services are able to support such as highways, blue badges, council tax and housing and will exclude services such as recycling and waste, housing benefits etc.</p> <p>There is no methodology to measure resolution call times once the calls are transferred to other service areas. For the first three quarters of this financial year, the total number of calls handled in Customer Services were 53,354 with 37,028 (69.4%) being resolved at the first point of contact.</p> <p>There will always be situations where calls are more complex and will need to be transferred to the relevant service area. However, whilst recognising that there are limitations to the type of queries that can be dealt with by Customer Services, the team continue to review these calls with the relevant service areas to look at ways of upskilling staff to improve the number of calls successfully handled at the first point of contact.</p>	Partially accepted
8	With reference to Performance Indicator (PI): DRW6.1.1, ' <i>Percentage of overall</i>	A breakdown of the £13.045m budget reduction target was provided in Appendix 2 of the Quarter 3 Revenue Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet in January 2025. This includes the £3.441m reduction against school budgets. The breakdown of the £13.045m is attached for information, along with the likelihood of these individual savings targets being achieved. There are projected shortfalls on around 20 of the	Accepted

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	<p><i>BCBC budget reductions achieved</i>, the Committee expressed concern as to whether the annual target of £13,045m and variance of £1.441m included the 3% efficiency saving against Schools Delegated Budgets (£3.441m) and the schools' deficit balances of £4.989m. The Committee <b>requested</b> a written summary breakdown of the figures to include a demonstration of what was anticipated, what is included and what was the deficit</p>	<p>savings proposals, and mitigating action is included in the appendix for these. They do not include the school 3% efficiency saving of £3.441m. This is reported as achievable in year, albeit it has a RED status, and the narrative states "Savings achieved due to overall reduction in Individual Schools Budget (ISB). However, reduced budgets have resulted in total projected deficit balances for schools at year end of £4.989 million at quarter 3".</p> <p>Coming into 2024-25 there were still £415k of budget reductions not achieved in full, as per Appendix 1 of the Quarter 3 Revenue Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet in January 2025. As at quarter 3 there was still a projected £216k shortfall in achieving this target. The majority of these savings will be achieved by the end of 2024-25.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Appendix 2 - 2024-25 MTFS Budge</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Appendix 1 - Monitoring of Prior Yr</p> </div> </div>	

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	brought forward into this year.		
<b>Corporate Plan Review for 2025/26</b>			
<b>Recommendation</b>			
9	The Committee <b>recommended</b> that the proposed merging of the following aims and performance indicators be reconsidered recognising that they are both large and distinct areas, and as such, should remain separated as per the current Wellbeing Objectives:	This was explained in the Cabinet / Council papers of 8 / 9 April and the member accepted the explanation.	Not accepted



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	<p>a. WBO 1 – Aim: ‘Regenerate our town centres and Valleys’</p> <p>b. WBO 4 – Pls: ‘Homelessness prevention’ and ‘Days to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants’.</p>		
<b>Update and Position Statement for the Disabled Facilities Grant Service</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>			
<b>10</b>	The Committee referred to the comment from the Governance and Audit Committee that the “only way more jobs could be delivered was with additional capital”	<p>All the necessary information has been outlined in the report presented on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Section 3.6 of the report outlines the current pipeline for Disabled Facilities Grants and the cases that have not been allocated to date, a total of 607, this data is monitored and can be made available to further committees, breakdown below:</p> <p>DFG Cases - Awaiting allocation</p> <p>2022 - 2023 - 109</p> <p>2023 - 2024 - 267</p>	Accepted

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	<p>and that predictions from the Wales Audit Office regarding the demographic and ageing population indicated that the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) was only likely to increase.</p> <p>The Committee therefore <b>recommended</b> that during the Committee's early discussions regarding the budget, there be a deep dive into the subject of DFGs and the considerations above.</p>	<p>2024 – 2025 - 231</p> <p>On 26th February 2025, as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2029, Council approved an additional £500,000 of capital funding per annum from 2025- 26, for DFGs to reflect the need to enable more people to remain in their own homes.</p>	

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Additional Information									
11	The Committee <b>requested</b> a breakdown of DFGs by adult and children’s cases and <b>requested</b> that future reports regarding DFGs also set out the figures in this way.	Age range	<18	>18				Accepted	
		2023 2024	12	218					
		2024 2025	13	225					
12	The Committee <b>requested</b> a breakdown of DFGs by housing tenure acknowledging Officers’ comments that Registered Social Landlords are responsible for their adaptations.	These are legacy RSL (V2C) adaptations that were on the system prior to the internalisation on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021. All other RSLs cover their adaptations. As per the report following the completion of the 20 legacy cases there will be no further legacy cases pre 1st April 2021.						Accepted	
			Family Home	Owner	Private renting	Housing association			
		2023 2024	4	162	30	34			
		2024 2025	2	171	13	52			

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<b>Scrutiny Review</b>			
<b>Recommendation</b>			
13	Of the options presented within the report, the Committee unanimously favoured and <b>recommended</b> option 2; to retain 4 Scrutiny Committees with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three formally themed Committees: 'Education, Social Services and Communities' or similar. This was on the condition that the caveats contained in the report were included in that the names and remits of the Committees would not preclude a Committee from scrutinising an item in its entirety should any aspect stray slightly into the remit of another.	This review has been presented to full Council and the recommendations as set out in that Report were approved.	Accepted

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	<p>The Committee also discussed matters such as the length of meetings and agendas, engagement of Members, the number of meetings, resources and the workload and numbers of Chairs, but agreed that these matters would need to be discussed further at Council and in relative Political Group meetings. Members <b>requested</b> that the Committee Structure Options and the Scrutiny Protocol be shared with all Political Group Members by Chairs and Group Leaders, as well as the 3 Independent Members not affiliated with any Group, as soon as possible before the meeting of Council.</p>		
<b>Forward Work Programme Update (FWP)</b>			
<u>Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u>			
14	<p>The Committee <b>requested</b> that the following reports be added to their Forward Work Programme:</p> <p>a. Staff Survey (including responses, outcome of staff focus groups and future staff surveys); and</p>	Scrutiny to Action with Scrutiny Chair in Work Planning Meetings.	Accepted

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	b. Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2025-26.	Item has been provisionally added to the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 11 December 2025.	
15	The Committee considered the referral from the Governance and Audit Committee and <b>requested</b> further information regarding the Wales Penalty Processing Partnership before considering whether to add the topic to a Scrutiny FWP. Once the above information had been gathered, the Committee agreed that the proposed scheduling of the Item would be discussed between Scrutiny Chairs with Scrutiny Officers.	Scrutiny have requested the information and will action with Scrutiny Chairs.	
<u>Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC 1)</u>			
15	The Committee expressed concern that the PI target of 100% relating to the roll-out of individual development plans (IDPs) delivered using the online IDP system had not been achieved (0%) and <b>requested</b> that SOSC 1 consider requesting a report to monitor the situation.	SOSC 1 requested report to be added to the FWP at meeting on 31 March 2025.	Accepted
16	The Committee explored the possible link between pupil behaviour and permanent exclusions, and support for pupils with additional learning needs and the waiting lists for specialist provision.	This was included in the report request for the report: Pupil Behaviour, Attendance and Exclusions reported to SOSC 1 on 8 May 2025.	Accepted

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	The Committee therefore <b>requested</b> that the scope of the report regarding Pupil Behaviour scheduled to SOSC 1 on 8 May 2025 include a summary of the draft 5 year plan developed to address the demand on support services, specialist provision and schools.		
<u>Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 (SOSC 3)</u>			
17	The Committee <b>requested</b> that a report on the Shared Prosperity Fund be scheduled on the FWP for SOSC 3 as soon as possible.	Scrutiny to Action with Scrutiny Chair in Work Planning Meetings.	
18	The Committee referred to their recommendation made on 16 December 2024 that SOSC 3 consider requesting a report regarding the Council's response to adverse weather/storms. The Committee <b>requested</b> that the scope of that report include detail on the information shared during internal and Local Resilience Forum debrief sessions held following Storm Darragh and any other inclement weather events.	Scrutiny to Action with Scrutiny Chair in Work Planning Meetings.	