

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Rachel Flynn, Martyn Holland, Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams and Bob Murray.

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Meirick Lloyd Davines and Emrys Wynne

Chief Executive (JG), Head of Customers, Communication and Marketing (LG), Service Improvement Manager (FA), Strategic Planning & Performance Officer (EH), Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE) and Democratic Service Officer (KE).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Committee members Councillors Anne Davies, Huw Jones (Chair), Arwel Roberts and David Williams.

Councillor Richard Mainon, Lead Member for Developing Community Infrastructure for business item 6.

In the absence of the Chair the Vice-chair, Councillor Hugh Irving chaired the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Councillor Martyn Holland registered his disappointment that his comments under Business item 5, 'Developing a Highway Maintenance Strategy' on the lack of funding to maintain the rural roads network had not been included.

Councillor Holland requested that it be noted that Flintshire County Council had recently announced that it required an investment of circa £40m in its highways network to maintain them to a satisfactory standard. Similarly Denbighshire required an investment of approximately £11m on its bridges and highways structures alone in order to maintain them to a satisfactory standard, this was in addition to the investment required in the county's roads in order to maintain them.

Whilst Welsh Government (WG) funding was always welcomed the Road Refurbishment Grant received recently amounting to £1.2m, due to the costly nature of highways maintenance projects, had all been used to improve a limited number of roads in the county.

Denbighshire had a network of circa 14,000 miles, of which only approximately 3,000 were classified as A & B roads and consequently attracted WG maintenance funding.

The majority of the county's roads were either C or Unclassified roads, therefore did not form part of the data used to attract WG funding to invest in them, this in turn would disadvantage the county's rural areas, businesses and residents.

Other European countries had used some of their Objective 1 money to improve the roads infrastructure, but for some reason Wales had not adopted this approach.

Resolved that, subject to the above, the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19th July 2018 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Assets introduced the Planning and Performance Officer's report (previously circulated) which presented the Committee with a copy of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and a narrative on the proposed deletions, additions and amendments to the Register.

During his introduction the Lead Member outlined the review process for the Register and gave a definition of the terms 'Inherent Risk' and 'Residual Risk'. The Corporate Risk Register contained the high-level risks identified by the Council, lower level risks were included in Service Risk Registers. The Corporate Risk Register could be updated at any time but is formally reviewed every six months and Service Risk Registers are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Risks could be escalated from Service Risk Registers to the Corporate Risk Register if necessary, conversely Corporate Risks could be downgraded to Service Risks and entered into the relevant Service's Risk Register.

The Lead Member also advised that Appendix 1 to the report had been reformatted at the Committee's request, to enable members to easily identify which 'risks' were new, had changed, been removed or had not been subject to any changes.

Members' attention was drawn to two new 'risks' which had been added to the Register as part of the recent review:

- Risk number 00036: the risk that any negative impacts of leaving the European Union cannot be mitigated by the Council – this risk had been added as the impact of the United Kingdom's (UK) exit from the European Union (EU) was still unclear. Due to the current uncertainties surrounding

this specific matter, both the 'inherent' and 'residual' risks had been classified as B1 (red).

- Risk number 00037: the risk that partners do not have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support the delivery of shared plans and priorities. This risk had an 'inherent risk' classification of B1(red) and a 'residual risk' classification of C2(amber) due to the fact that collaborative boards were attended by senior management and collaborative plans and priorities (e.g. the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan) had been developed to reflect broader public sector priorities (Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan, for instance).

Responding to members' questions the Lead member and Planning and Performance Officer:

- advised that both the 'inherent' and 'residual' risk classification for 00035 relating to the Regional Growth Deal were classified at C1 (red) at present. This was because the details of the Deal were still being compiled. When more specific details on the Deal were available the risk scores would be reviewed based on the new information;
- confirmed that the preparatory work the Council had undertaken in relation to the potential impact the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) in Denbighshire could have on residents and the Council (risk number 00016) had been very successful. Consequently the 'Inherent Risk' classification of B2 (red) had been reduced to a 'Residual Risk' classification of D3 (Yellow). Communities Scrutiny Committee had examined this work in detail earlier in the summer. This 'corporate risk' could potentially reduce even further and be transferred to the Service Risk Register to be managed by the Service in future;
- advised that whilst 'risks' could potentially change at any time and that the Register would be amended to reflect this at the time, a formal review of the Corporate Risk Register in its entirety was undertaken by the Corporate Executive Team (CET) every six months.
If a risk was downgraded to a Service Risk or removed completely it did not mean that it could not be re-entered on to the Corporate Risk Register at a later date if circumstances necessitated its inclusion;
- advised that with respect of risks 00033 and 00034 - the risk that the cost of care outstrips the Council's resources and that demand for specialist care could not be met locally – more money had been set-aside for social care services, particularly specialist services. However demand for such services were difficult to predict and could fluctuate.
In addition the Health Services could at times have responsibilities in relation to the funding of specialist care. With a view to mitigating against the risks in this particular area reserves had been set-aside to help support the Council during times of peak demand for expensive specialist services. It was highly unlikely that either of these two risks would be removed from the Corporate Risk Register in the foreseeable future;
- advised that whilst the UK Treasury had guaranteed certain funding to replace EU funding that would be lost, this guarantee was time limited and no details were available yet on long-term funding. The WG had also committed to replace some EU funding, but details were not yet available on:
 - what type of funding would be available;

- whether it would replace lost EU monies with like for like; or
- if it would be available across Wales or confined to certain geographic areas.

Whilst a commitment had been made that funding already guaranteed would be honoured to ensure that all projects were delivered as originally planned, no undertakings had been received to date with regards to funding that may be available for future projects;

- informed the Committee that a piece of work had been started during the year on compiling a register of community risks e.g. climate change, Welsh Language etc. The information gleaned from this exercise had been used for informing the Well-being Needs Assessment and for assessing any potential impact on communities entailed with the risks identified;
- advised that risk number 00011 related to the Council's ability to respond to a 'one-off' event i.e. similar to the Grenfell Tower disaster. The 'residual risk' score for this risk was E2 (yellow) due to the availability of assistance via the North Wales Regional Emergency Planning (NWREP) Service and the North Wales Resilience Forum (NWRP).

Dependent upon the nature of the incident these organisations would appoint a 'lead' organisation to co-ordinate a response i.e. Police, Fire & Rescue etc. The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group had already requested a report on agencies' response to the recent fire on Llantysilio Mountain; and

- confirmed that with respect of risk number 00021 relating to effective partnerships and interfaces between the Health Board and the Council being developed, whilst both organisations worked closely together there would always be challenges in this area.

Prior to drawing the discussion to a close members requested that future reports include a copy of the 'Risk Matrix' with the report to enable them to analyse the 'inherent' and 'residual' risk determinations and that they be provided with a copy of the 'Guide to Risk Management' document. Members also emphasised the importance of all Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, especially those required for school-based staff, to be kept current and up to date.

Following a detailed discussion the Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above observations –

- (i) to note the proposed deletions, additions and amendments to the Corporate Risk Register (Appendix 1): and***
- (ii) to recommend that the Corporate Risk Register, along with Performance Scrutiny Committee's observations, be presented to Cabinet Briefing at its meeting on 15 October for discussion.***

6 CUSTOMER EFFORT DASHBOARD

In the absence of the Lead Member for Community Infrastructure the Head of Customers, Communications and Marketing introduced the Service Improvement Manager's report (previously circulated) which provided the Committee with an overview of the Customer Effort and Customer Satisfaction results.

The report contained examples of verbatim and suggestions for service improvements based on the feedback received. Members were reminded by the Head of Service that the Customer Effort and Satisfaction Dashboard, had initially been a pilot project, but following its success the system had been introduced as an integral part of the Council's Customer Services Centre.

Following a discussion with the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) work was undertaken to extend the service to other Council customer facing services, these were services that had a high volume of calls from the public and other stakeholders. - during the twelve months up to September 2018 the survey has been extended to four council services and up to 13 different sections.

According to the Service Improvement Manager the system had the ability to produce reports on how much effort had been required on the customer's behalf to resolve their enquiry together with the customer's satisfaction rate at the end of the process.

Over 12 months, analysis of this information identified 3 emerging themes as to why customers were not satisfied following their contact with the council:

- the caller having been transferred, or given a direct-dial number to call, their call was not answered;
- the caller having left a message on an answerphone was not called back; and
- having had their enquiry logged onto the system and asking for a specific Service to contact them, no call-back was received

That led to the Better Telephony Project – increasing customers' ability to 'get to the right place 1st time' when dialling the Council's main telephone number 01824 706000.

Responding to members' questions the Head of Service and Service Improvement Manager:

- agreed to include in future reports actual figures in addition to percentage figures;
- confirmed that the number of mobile telephone surveys completed and returned was pleasing and was above the average return figure for surveys in general;
- advised that the Council was not intending on introducing a mobile phone/tablet App for the purpose of undertaking these types of surveys as local authorities who had introduced them were now phasing them out - due to the complex ICT requirements and 'back office processes needed to support them.

Denbighshire County Council's website was well used by residents and customers for interacting with the authority and developing the website further for this purpose was deemed more effective than introducing an App:

- advised that the new Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) System which was due to be introduced in late October or early November 2018 would work effectively with mobile phones and would improve end to end processes and consequently support resident/customer interaction with the Council;

- confirmed that the data received from the surveys was used to improve services with a view to ensuring that all Services complied with the Corporate Standard for service delivery – the Denbighshire Way. Nevertheless there would always be room for improvement both internally within the Council and externally with stakeholders;
- advised that the data received from the surveys was analysed by a working group made up from officers from the main customer facing services. Service representatives were able to drill down the data and identify which individual advisor within their Service had dealt with the query and address any issues or shortcomings raised with a view to improving service delivery in future.
Similarly, the feedback could be used to identify best practice and to convey praise and personal gratitude to individual advisors;
- undertook to investigate why some elected member queries were still registered a ‘pink’ on the members’ queries tracking system (EMMA)
- advised that whilst EMMA was an effective way for checking progress in dealing with enquiries, it was important that officers responded to enquiries via Emma. The new CRM system would replace EMMA for member queries;
- confirmed that all outstanding queries on EMMA were report to the Council’s SLT on a weekly basis;
- reassured that whilst the aim in the long-term was to increase the number of electronic interactions with the Council via the website, this did not mean that residents etc. would not be able to contact the Council by telephone or face to face if that was their preferred communication method. By increasing opportunities for residents and others to contact the Authority electronically at time which was convenient to them the Council could make more effective use of its resources i.e. releasing capacity within telephone and customer facing environments to help more vulnerable, and those needing support to transact with the council ;
- advised that the Council’s Customer Services Department conformed with all Welsh Language Standards which were applicable to its services;
- confirmed that Society for IT Managers in the public sector (SOCITIM) audited the Council’s website on an annual basis and under its standards it consistently received a 3 out of 4 star rating – Cardiff City Council being the only one in Wales to be given a 4* rating.
Denbighshire’s website was managed and administered by an internal team of officers and not outsourced, therefore the Team’s focus was permanently on the Council’s website and Council services’ micro-sites;
- confirmed that residents, officers and councillors alike were all regarded as customers when raising enquiries with the Customer Services Department. The new CRM system will refer all enquiries directly to the relevant service;
- acknowledged that elected members were often approached by residents with day to day enquiries which could easily be resolved if they contacted the Council directly.
The Authority had a presence on a number of social media platforms and whilst officers could not trawl for individual queries left on social media sites elected members could direct residents to those platforms for general information, telephone numbers or updates on issues etc.; and

- advised that discussions were currently underway with ICT and the company responsible for supplying the visitor registration terminals called 'Entrysign' in Council offices' reception areas on ensuring that the information displayed on the terminals was entirely bilingual.

At the conclusion of a detailed discussion the Committee:

Resolved: -

- (i) subject to the above observations and the actions identified above being progressed to receive the report; and***
- (ii) to request that a report be presented to the Committee in twelve to fifteen months' time reviewing the implementation of the new Customer Relationship Management System and its performance in delivering efficient and effective customer focussed services in line with the product specification and the Council's expectations***

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator (SC) introduced the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' views of the Committee's work programme and providing an update on relevant issues.

A copy of the "Member's proposal form" had been included in Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator requested that any proposals be submitted to herself. The Cabinet Forward Work Programme had been included as Appendix 3, the table summarising recent Committee resolutions, advising on progress with their implementation, had been attached as Appendix 4.

The SC advised the Committee that the Chair was attending the Education Reform Conference in Cardiff along with the Head of Education, therefore the item on Provisional External Examinations and Teacher Assessments (originally scheduled for that day's meeting) had been deferred to November's Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The SC also informed the Committee that the anticipated Waste Management report had not been published by the Welsh Audit Office yet and therefore that item would be deferred to the meeting scheduled for 31st January 2019.

Following the earlier discussion on the CRM it was agreed to provisionally schedule a review of the system in 12 months (November 2019).

The SC reminded members that if there were any items they felt needed scrutinising they should complete and return the proposal form attached (app 2) which could go to the next Scrutiny Chair and Vice-chair Group in October.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the Forward Work Programme be approved.

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

There was no feedback to be reported.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reminded Committee members that it was important that the same person attended both the Lines of Enquiry meetings and the Service Challenge meetings.

Councillor Martyn Holland highlighted that Scrutiny pre-meetings were not highlighted on the agenda link (unlike the paper copies).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Davies, Huw Jones, Arwel Roberts and David Williams