

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held via video conference on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Martyn Holland, Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Bob Murray, Pete Prendergast, Arwel Roberts (Chair), Peter Scott, Andrew Thomas and David Williams

Also in attendance –

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets for Items 5 and 6

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement for Item 7

Councillor Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment for Item 8

Observers –

Councillors Graham Timms, Tony Thomas, Gwyneth Kensler and Meirick Lloyd Davies

ALSO PRESENT

Nicola Stubbins, Corporate Director: Communities; Emlyn Jones, Head of Planning and Public Protection; Liz Grieve, Head of Customers, Communications and Marketing; Iolo McGregor,, Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader; Mike Jones, Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager; Peter Daniels, Passenger Transport Section Manager; Ffion Angharad, Service Improvement Manager; Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator; Rhodri Tomos-Jones, Committee Administrator; and Sharon Walker, Committee Administrator.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive, Graham Boase.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

None.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 14 October 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE, QUARTER 2, 2021 TO 2022

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Corporate Plan Update, Quarter 2, 2021 to 2022 report (previously circulated).

Information was provided regarding the Council's progress as at the end of quarter 2 (July to September 2021), 2021 to 2022, in delivering the Corporate Plan outcomes.

Regular reporting was an essential monitoring requirement of the Corporate Plan to ensure that the Council exercised its duty to improve. Quarterly performance reports were routinely shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Cabinet and the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

At the end of Corporate Plan period the vast majority of what was hoped to be delivered was expected to be successfully done so. Some projects overran due to impact of covid but would be delivered. It was an ambitious plan. Lessons would be learnt and lead members and officers were starting to look forward to what a new corporate plan might look like for a new council.

Two measures, Connected Communities and Young People, remained as priority for improvement due the fact there had been a reliance on other parties.

In terms of the other projects all of those were at a status of good or higher. The Corporate Plan Board continued to monitor the delivery of the Plan going forward, and to transition into the new Corporate Plan.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader, Iolo McGregor gave a brief overview of the Plan. The last annual performance report which was brought to Scrutiny, introduced new elements due to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which made the current report far more comprehensive.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- It was confirmed that the SARTH register was a concern which could be scrutinised. Also Education and Young People was a concern for which Scrutiny had previously received reports from the Education Department.
- Clarification was requested, regarding Dementia and whether staff were trained to observe any issues residents may have and how would they report the same. The Corporate Director: Communities confirmed she would provide an update to members.
- It was confirmed that 150 rural properties would not be able to access Superfast Broadband and work was continuing with the Digital Officer and BT Openreach to solve this issue. Funding had been secured in conjunction with Cadw and Welsh Government (WG) to employ a second Digital Officer.

- Affordable Housing was to be included within the new Corporate Plan to assess all issues regarding the difference in salaries across the county.
- Project Risks – Welsh language or Welsh culture, had that been considered a risk due to covid? The Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader clarified that if there had been a degradation of Welsh language and culture due to covid then that would be an issue for a Community Risk Register which was monitored by the Public Services Board. He also clarified that work had taken place to update the Conwy and Denbighshire Wellbeing Assessment, in which there were sections that specifically focussed on culture and heritage and he would consult with his colleague to ascertain whether the impact of covid on Welsh language had been reflected in there.
- It was asked whether the journey to carbon zero would be at risk. It was confirmed it was a risk to the Council as it was such a large and very costly programme of work, it was also a very long programme of work. It was reflected on the Corporate Risk Register which was to be presented to the Committee as the next item on the Agenda.

The Committee –

RESOLVED *subject to the above observations and having considered the report and any further actions required to respond to any performance related issues highlighted within the report, to receive and confirm the content of the report.*

6 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2021

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Corporate Risk Register Review, September 2021 (previously circulated).

The Corporate Risk Register was developed and owned by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) alongside Cabinet. It was formally reviewed twice yearly by Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing. It had also been presented the previous day at the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor Thompson-Hill stated that two new risks had been escalated to the Corporate Risk Register and summarised the Risks within the Register.

Risks 18 and 35 were to be merged going forward and the likelihood score would be increased from D2 to C2 score.

At this juncture the Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader expressed his gratitude to Emma Horan, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer for all her work meeting with Risk Owners and SLT to put together the very comprehensive update.

A recent internal audit review regarding risk management had taken place and recommendations from the audit had been put forward. One of the recommendations had been to include a direction of travel for each of the risks. There was still an amount of work to be done in that regard which would be taken forward in the next review.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- Recruitment and retention of staff – It was confirmed recruitment and retention of staff had become a major issue not just within Denbighshire County Council but across the country. Covid had had a significant impact on staffing. A piece of work was currently being undertaken for each Service to have a Workforce Planning Action Plan which would feed into the Denbighshire Action Plan. There had been issues recruiting in certain Services particularly in Social Care and Domiciliary Care. The Authority would be looking at the ability to create career grade posts to develop in-house talent. In some areas it could take time to train employees which would cause issues in the short term. A report was to be provided early in the New Year.
- A new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform Act had placed on the Council a number of additional requirements. There had been delays in receiving detailed guidance which underpinned the new expectations and ways of working which moving forward would require developing policies and procedures. Unfortunately, there would be no additional funding available for undertaking the new requirements and therefore the Risk rating was accurate.
- It was suggested that cyber crime should be highlighted as a risk. Currently it was not listed separately as a risk but included under whether the Council had the capacity to respond to major events, including disruptions caused by adverse weather events etc.. Action: Iolo McGrgeor will ensure that Cyber Crime is discussed with the risk owner during the February review of the register to give it more prevalence.
- Risk 44 – Ash Die Back – this risk was rated highly due to not understanding the scale of the problem. Since it had become a risk, a piece of work had been undertaken to understand better what the council was facing. It had been downgraded due to officer confidence and knowledge that the risk was coming more within the risk appetite. However, a B2 risk was still a critical risk.
- The termination of Civica contract with Denbighshire County Council, was considered a risk. It was confirmed Civica had taken the decision to withdraw from the type of partnership contract they had with Denbighshire and would be on the Finance Service Risk Register, but was also picked up in Risk 13 of the Register.
- The loss of European funding would be covered under a separate Brexit Risk Register which was closely monitored by the Corporate Executive Team (CET). It was expected that the risks within this separate register would be subsumed into the main Corporate Risk Register during the next review in February.
- Risk 47 relating to the powers to establish regional Corporate Joint Committees was of concern to all local authorities across North Wales.

The Committee –

RESOLVED having considered the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register (appendix 1), including the status of each risk against the Authority's Risk Appetite

Statement (appendix 2) and the assurances provided during the discussion, to receive the Corporate Risk Register review of September 2021.

**At this juncture (11.10 a.m.) there was a 10 minute break.
The meeting reconvened at 11.20 a.m.**

7 C360 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM UPDATE

The Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts introduced the C360 CRM System Update report (previously circulated).

Councillor Hilditch-Roberts provided an overview of the implementation of the C360 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and its performance relevant to the product specification. The report also outlined council services' use of C360 as a corporate CRM or integrated customer contact solution, and their continued demand for new customer enquiry forms.

Training for the system had taken place at which 90% of staff and 14% of Councillors attended.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- Members received a weekly report but there had been complaints as there were items included on the report which had been closed for over 12 months. Also some items which were reported were not included in the weekly reports councillors received. The issues raised were some of the issues highlighted for addressing going forward, others where items involving contractors. It was clarified that the system should be used rather than contacting the relevant Service directly.
- Some members confirmed they were not technically literate and did admit to struggling with the system and any refresher training would be welcomed.
- If an enquiry is closed, the system does not allow any further access which could cause frustration and that issue would be hopefully amended in the future.
- When an enquiry is closed, there is no further information contained on the report received. An explanation as to the consequence of the enquiry would be useful. Again, this was agreed by officers and would be looked at going forward.

It was:

RESOLVED *subject to the above observations and the areas identified for improvement and strengthening to receive the report on the C360 CRM System's implementation and performance.*

8 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN

The Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment, Councillor Brian Jones, introduced the Sustainable Transport Plan Report (previously circulated).

In 2019 the Council passed a Motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency.

In the current Corporate Plan, the Connected Communities priority included the project “Better enable people to travel to work, education and services”. The scope of the project was very broad which had made it difficult to identify specific interventions that would make a difference, despite further research that had been undertaken.

Following discussion at the Corporate Programme Board in October 2020 and July 2021, it had been decided that because of the issues with the above project and the need to make carbon reduction central to any transport-related projects then focus should be on developing a Sustainable Transport Plan.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- People with disabilities needed to be considered within this plan.
- Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging points – next phase in March/April 2022 was phase 1 and was seen as a learning opportunity and there would be 30 charging points made available in 8 locations which would be a significant increase. Officers would be looking at the usage data to collate information regarding the uptake. This analysis would help inform the planning for future need in relation to EV charging points. There were potentially different delivery models in future also e.g.: if more interest from the private sector in terms of renting the space was also something to be looked at. Members were also made aware that the Welsh Government with Transport for Wales were also looking at the wider network so in terms of longer distance journeys and the trunk road network, they had a project where they would have charging points appropriately spaced along the trunk road network. With regards to charging points in new development properties that was something which would be looked into for the future in partnership with the Planning Service.
- Were there any figures to show changing to electric vehicles saved money and was much better for the environment? Officers confirmed they were not aware of any figures as it was probably too early in the scheme for figures to be obtained.
- Where these active travel measures were going to impact on a community would there be an assurance from officers that the relevant communities would be consulted and receive information and that information could be provided to Member Area Groups (MAGs) for discussion. Officers confirmed that local Members and MAGs would be involved from an early stage.
- Discussions could be initiated with Countryside Services in future with regards to exploring the potential of have EV charging points in car parks managed by them. However, the rural nature of these locations may potentially be a barrier to having sufficient power availability for EV charging points.
- It was emphasised that Active and Sustainable Travel incorporated all modes of travel, not just cars and aspired for integrated travel solutions i.e. walking, cycling, buses, trains and cars

- Planning for sustainable travel solutions was still in its infancy. It was important that local sustainable travel plans, dovetailed with regional and national plans. Transport was a function for which a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) could be established in order to secure deliverable solutions. All potential solutions would be explored during the coming years.

The Committee –

RESOLVED:

- Subject to the above comments and observations on the contents of the draft Sustainable Transport Plan to support the aims and objectives of the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Plan; and*
- In supporting the Plan confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment in Appendix A as part of its consideration.*

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking Members' review of the Committee's Work Programme and providing an update on relevant issues.

Discussion focused on the following –

- Report on Corporate Plan - SARTH may form part of the report on work programme for 27 January 2022 on the Council's wider Housing Strategy
- Councillor Martyn Holland raised BT issues during this meeting, if the item was to be added to a future meeting, a form would be required to be completed and could be discussed at the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting taking place later that day.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.