

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee held in Conference Room 1A, County Hall, Ruthin on Wednesday, 20 November 2019 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Mabon ap Gwynfor, Tony Flynn, Martyn Holland (Vice-Chair), Alan James, Barry Mellor (Chair) and Joe Welch

Lay Member Paul Whitham

Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Well-being and Independence was in attendance.

ALSO PRESENT

Solicitor - People Team Leader (NG), Chief Accountant (SG), Chief Internal Auditor (LL), Senior Auditor (SD), Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Head of Community Support Services (PG), Service Manager - Client Services (KN), Committee Administrator (RTJ)

Wales Audit Office Representative – Gareth Evans

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following members declared a personal interest –

Councillors Joe Welch and Mabon Ap Gwynfor – Agenda item 10 – because they had children who attended schools in Denbighshire.

Lay Member Paul Whitham – Agenda item 10 – as he had grandchildren attending schools in Denbighshire.

3 URGENT MATTERS

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 11 September were submitted.

Matters Arising:

- Page 9 – Internal Audit Update – members queried whether there was any additional information for agenda management training. The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) informed the committee that discussions were still ongoing between Democratic Services and WLGA to obtain possible training dates.
- Page 10 - Approval of the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 – the method of monitoring spreadsheets was raised and whether the deadline had been reached, and whether anything had been implemented. The Chief Accountant (SG) responded stating that the process had been delayed however the process was ongoing with the Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation leading on the project, and was currently going through the tendering process.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on the 11 September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

5 CARE INSPECTORATE WALES - LOCAL AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Corporate Director: Communities (CDC), introduced the Care Inspectorate Wales - Local Authority Performance Review (previously circulated), which updated members on the key issues arising from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) review of Denbighshire County Council's performance in carrying out its statutory social services functions.

The CIW annual letter provided feedback on inspection and performance evaluation activity completed during the year; reports on progress the local authority has made in implementing recommendations from inspections and/or child and adult practice reviews; and, outlined CIW's forward work programme. The letter provided a summary of strengths and areas for improvement. Areas identified as requiring improvement were in line with the Director of Social Services' Annual Report and would be embedded within Service Business Plans for 2019 – 2020.

The following matters were discussed in more detail following the introduction –

- Welsh language provisions which were in place were queried and whether there was enough provision to allow vulnerable people to converse in their first language. Responding the CDC understood the importance of the Welsh language however it was a challenge especially with recruitment. There had been methods implemented to encourage staff to use more Welsh to improve their skills.
- The quarter of responders to the survey reported difficulty with receiving the right information and advice when they needed it, caused concerns for the committee it was queried why it was such a high number. The CDC informed the committee that it was a complicated issue, the information which was given was accurate and good, however the gateway to that information was challenging. This was due to people's perception of the information they required was not always the information they required therefore would go searching for the information in the wrong area, however when they were in contact with the Council they would receive the correct information.

Members praised the work which had been carried out, all agreed that it would be beneficial to have another Care Inspectorate Wales - Local Authority Performance Review report in a year's time.

RESOLVED - that

- i. *the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee receive the Care Inspectorate Wales - Local Authority Performance Review and note its content,*
- ii. *the report be returned to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in November 2020.*

6 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Corporate Director: Communities (CDC), introduced the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding (previously circulated), set out the key issues arising from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) review of Denbighshire County Council's (DCC) Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding, the report was to ensure that the Committee was aware of the review of the corporate arrangements for safeguarding including areas of progress, areas for improvement and risk.

Members were reassured by the CDC that there were no surprises within the report. The committee were reminded of the WAO Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils report which was carried out in July 2015, and whether any of the recommendations from 2015 report were still outstanding.

All of the recommendations had been carried out, with one having being partially met. The CDC praised the strong governance which was in place for allowing for the recommendations to be met, however also expressed gratitude towards the lead members for their support.

Members queried the following points –

- Members who were not attending training and how the numbers could be improved, it was suggested that political party group leaders be notified of members who had not attended training events, and to ensure that members of their groups would attend future events.
- Contractors who work for the DCC were highlighted and whether they required any additional safeguarding training prior to working for the DCC. The CDC responded informing the committee that it would only be asked if required, it was also clarified that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) would only required for officers they deemed necessary to be checked, and the choice was not up to DCC. The questions were also included within the procurement process.
- The committee were notified that the E-learning modules for Councillors could not be completed as there were compatibility issues with the iPad's they used.
- Training for staff in schools was raised, the report stated that it was 76%, it was also queried whether there were any methods in place to increase the

numbers. The CDC responded that the figure had increased since the report was produced however was unsure of the numbers. Members were assured that methods were in place, emails would be circulated to the staff who had not completed the training, and then meetings would be organised if the training had still not being completed following the email, enquiring why the training has not been fulfilled.

RESOLVED – that Corporate Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the WAO Review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding and note its content.

7 CARE INSPECTORATE WALES - INSPECTION OF OLDER ADULT SERVICES

The Head of Community Support Services (HCSS), introduced the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Older Adult Services report (previously circulated), which summarised the inspection by the Care Inspectorate Wales' (CIW) into Denbighshire County Council's (DCC) Older Adult Services, alongside the findings and associated actions, following the inspection.

Members were informed that in May 2019 CIW, as part of a national review of how well local authorities and health boards promoted independence and prevented the escalation of needs and in collaboration with the Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW), lead an inspection of DCC's older adult services.

The inspection team reviewed 60 individual case files, and also interviewed DCC managers, staff and Elected Members. They also interviewed key partners and stakeholders across health and social care, and met citizens and carers who used the services. The inspection focused on people's experiences and outcomes on their journey through health and social care services. The findings by the CIW were divided into 'strengths' and 'priorities for improvement' and were listed under 4 headings:

- i. Well-being
- ii. People – voice and choice
- iii. Partnership and integration - co-production
- iv. Prevention and early intervention

Member's attention was drawn towards point 4.9 on page 44 which highlighted the lack of domiciliary care services availability, this issue was a nationwide issue and not just within DCC. The HCSS informed members that overall the report was positive and was pleased it recognised the hard work which was carried out by the staff.

The following points were discussed in more detail –

- The strengths of wellbeing was highlighted, it was praised the promoting of independence however with the increase with Dementia, were their measures in place to ensure people had the capacity to make their own decisions. Responding the HCSS informed the committee that there was an act in place. The Mental Capacity Act, the purpose of the act was to provide a legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of adults who

lacked the capacity to make particular decisions for themselves, however DCC could do nothing until the relevant forms within the act were completed.

- The Safeguarding Audit which the CIW would carry out in January 2020 was queried to which committee the report would be discussed. It was clarified that the committee would be selected at a Scrutiny chairs and vice chairs meeting.
- The difficulty of recruitment was raised, the committee were made aware that Social Care Wales and the Welsh Government were proactively trying to make the vocation of care more appealing to hopefully attract more into the sector.

RESOLVED that, the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee receive the report, note its contents.

At this juncture Agenda item 11 was moved up to be discussed next.

8 RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS REPORT - REGULATED SERVICES

The Service Manager - Client Services (SMCS), introduced the Responsible Individual Annual Report on Regulated Services (previously circulated). The report highlighted the progress of regulated services in meeting requirements and obligations set out in the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017, the report covered the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. For the purpose of these regulations, the regulated services were, Residential Care Homes, Domiciliary Care and Shared Lives (also known as Adult Placement).

The report was the first annual report provided by the responsible individual on the regulated services. The responsible individual for Denbighshire County Council (DCC) Adult Services was Katie Newe, Service Manager for Client Services. The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017 set out specific duties in respect of this role. These included ensuring systems and processes were in place for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of the service provided. Members were informed that following the closure of Awelon it would not be included in future reports.

The committee were informed that there were multiple good practices in place, the quality of food, citizens also had contact with a variety of outside bodies including: hairdressers, chiropodists, school visits, religious services, and therapy dogs. There were also visits to garden centres and the theatre together with quiz nights and visits from entertainers.

Recruitment which was highlighted as an issue in the care sector, however a recruitment package which included videos from staff had been produced to encourage people to come into the care sector, open days had also been carried out.

The following points were discussed in more detail –

- Members endorsed the work which was carried out by the Responsible Individual and the care homes, local member for Cysgod-y-Caer, praised the care and the use the Welsh Language was excellent.
- The elderly who live at home and whether any support was given to them to ensure they were not isolated. There was good work being carried out in communities, and it was identified that talking points were the best location for the elderly to attend to find what was available.
- The Dolganog Care home in Rhyl was queried, it was clarified that DCC did not run the care home, however DCC did inspect these care homes.
- Members with any concerns were invited to visit care homes with the Responsible Individual.

RESOLVED that

- *The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee considered the content of the Responsible Individual Annual Report on Regulated Services*
- *The report be brought back annually to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.*

9 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA), introduced the Annual Governance Statement – Improvement Update (previously circulated) updated members on progress in implementing the improvement plan contained within the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19.

The committee were informed that the Improvements identified within the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 were making good progress. Two improvement actions are complete and the remaining five were due to be completed by 31 March 2020.

Members discussed the following –

- The committee commented on the actions which broadly referred to the Council, and whether schools would be included, it was highlighted to ensure that schools were not missed.
- The e-learning modules were outlined, members referred to the last meeting were managers would receive reports on members of their team who had not completed the training. However it was stated about timescales with training and what would occur if someone would not finish the training. Members were informed that there is training included in the probation period, if it were not completed they would not continue with council. However the whole system was being audited within the ethics audit which was currently being carried out.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Governance Audit Committee receive Annual Governance Statement – Improvement Update and note its content.

10 BUDGET UPDATE

The Chief Accountant (CA) introduced the Budget Update report (previously circulated) which was to provide information regarding the current budget process for 2020/21 and the key medium term financial planning assumptions in order to help inform the Corporate Governance Committee's oversight role in respect of the council's budget process.

Members were informed that the report had changed substantially since the report had been produced. It was clarified that the 2019/20 year had been difficult to obtain certainty with the political instability, due to this the proposed budget process timetable had been altered to accommodate the instability. An amended timetable was circulated to members, which was still liable to change.

The council decided to implement savings of 5.5%, despite the uncertainty, this was to further quantify the pressures in Community Support Services, Education and Children Services, School Transport and Waste.

Members queried whether the budget workshop which was organised for the 3rd of December was queried whether it was still worth holding the workshop especially with the uncertainty with the budget. Members were assured the workshop would continue and the members would discuss the most up-to-date information available on the budget.

RESOLVED *that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee note the content of the report.*

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS PROGRESS REPORT

The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) and Senior Auditor (SA), introduced the Health and Safety in Schools – Internal Audit Update (previously circulated). The report provided an update on progress with implementing the action plan that accompanied the Internal Audit report on Health and Safety in Schools in June 2018 and following the first progress update which was brought to the committee in June 2019.

The follow up report highlighted that that some progress had been made with rolling out and promoting health and safety training to school staff. The development of an action tracking system had been delayed due to limited capacity within the ICT team – a developer post was currently being advertised.

As the two action remain partially addressed, the assurance rating remained as medium. Internal Audit would continue to monitor the outstanding actions to ensure that they were completed.

Members discussed the following in more detail –

- HR were working closely with schools to ensure that staff completed training courses.
- Infection control in schools, it was going well with schools, last of the schools had implemented the plans.
- Attendance statistics with teachers was queried, and whether there was any method to monitor the attendance. The committee were informed that

sickness was included on the TRENT system and could be monitored countywide.

- The policies that schools were queried, and whether they have their own policies. It was clarified that schools can have their own policies, however they can adopt corporate policies.
- The committee believed that any Health and Safety training in schools should be extended to include governors.

The officers advised the committee that the Health and Safety in schools would be monitored closely, and would be returned whether officers thought it would be appropriate.

RESOLVED *that*

- The Corporate Governance and Audit committee review the progress in Health and Safety report.*
- The Corporate Governance and Audit committee agree for a follow up report to be produced whether officers deem it appropriate.*

12 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate Governance and Audit committee's Forward Work Programme (FWP) was presented for consideration (previously circulated).

Member agreed that the Responsible Individual Annual Report on Regulated Services be brought back in a year's time to monitor the progress. It was also clarified the Annual Health and Safety and the Fire Safety report be brought to the Corporate Governance and Audit separately in September 2020.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Corporate Governance and Audit committee approves the Forward Work Programme.*