

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 11 April 2013 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Bill Cowie, Meirick Davies, Richard Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Colin Hughes (Chair), Arwel Roberts (Vice-Chair) and Gareth Sandilands

Observers: Councillors Raymond Bartley, Jason McLellan and Huw Williams.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Improvement Manager (TW), Audit Manager (BS), Head of Planning and Public Protection (GB), CCTV Supervisor (GS), Corporate Improvement Officer (NK), Democratic Services Manager (SP) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Dewi Owens and the Corporate Director: Economic and Community Ambition, Rebecca Maxwell.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 21 February, 2013, were submitted.

Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies requested that actions be added to minutes where appropriate for ease of reference. It was suggested and agreed that a footnote be added where appropriate.

[SP to action]

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February, 2013 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 CORPORATE PLAN QPR: QUARTER 3 2012/13

[A pre-meeting training session had been held for Committee Members on the Corporate Plan Performance Measures, to aid with their scrutiny of this item]

The Corporate Improvement Manager (CIM) submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the Corporate Plan Quarterly Report 2012-2017. The purpose of the report was for the council to understand the progress of its contribution to the delivery of 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.

The Chair confirmed a meeting had recently taken place between himself, the Vice-Chair and the CIM to peruse the report prior to the meeting.

Within the Plan, each indicator and performance measure had been given a coloured status which described the current position. Each outcome also had “improvement activities” which were projects and actions designed to contribute to the delivery of the outcome. These were monitored by providing a “delivery confidence”. The same four colours were used for the Delivery Confidence Status.

The report had highlighted areas of concern to the Committee as follows:

4.1.1 – the work to formalise plans for dropped kerbs had not progressed and had, therefore, been flagged as “red” (priority for improvement). It had been agreed at Council to action work to be carried out where dropped kerbs were needed and not to delay. The Head of Environmental Services would be requested to circulate a progress report to Committee members on the development of the dropped kerbs.

4.1.2 – the percentage of pupils leaving school without an approved qualification had been flagged as “red”. Continued efforts were required from the service to improve this to an “acceptable” status.

4.1.3 – fixed penalty notices for dog fouling had been flagged as “red”. The issue was raised that the fixed penalty notices were not being applied throughout the whole of the county. It was recommended fixed penalty notices should be applied throughout the county.

4.1.4 – also identified as a “red” was the percentage of initial core group meetings held within 10 days of the initial child protection conference. Performance had to improve by approximately 10% to ensure “acceptable” status. It was recommended the Head of Children’s Services be requested to circulate a progress report to members of the Performance and Partnerships Scrutiny Committees in respect of initial core group meetings being held within 10 days of the first child protection conference.

4.1.5 – The timely determination of householder planning applications had been identified as “red”. The Development Control Manager, Paul Mead, was currently assessing changes to the Planning Committee in a way which would improve the decisions.

Points 4.1.6 and 4.1.7 were noted.

Councillor Huw Hilditch Roberts stated that he could not endorse this report as he felt the process for collecting and evaluating information was not a true reflection of actual performance.

The CIM clarified that for the indicators and measures, the evaluations were robust. The issues raised by Councillor Hilditch Roberts included how activities were monitored and assessed and evaluations in the report might not indicate the project had been completed but was an assessment of whether activities were progressing on track or not. The progress of activities was evaluated by officer(s) responsible for the activity. It was recommended by the Committee that the process be reviewed in order to maximise the transparency, validity and evidence-base of the Quarterly Update Reports.

The Committee agreed that the lead contacts of the Committee should be using their role to question and challenge the services on any areas or issues where performance was a concern. The Chair agreed to assist when appropriate.

RESOLVED that :

- (i) The Committee request Cabinet and Corporate Improvement Officers to review the process for monitoring and assessing the status and progress of activities (which currently depend on the evaluation of the officer(s) responsible for the activities) and to consider the depth of information on the outcomes in order to maximise the transparency, validity and evidence-base of the quarterly update reports.*
- (ii) The Committee agrees that, as the Performance Scrutiny members had been nominated as lead contacts with individual services, the lead contacts should use this role to question and challenge those services on any areas or issues where performance was a concern. The chair of the Committee to assist when appropriate.*
- (iii) The Head of Environmental Services be requested to circulate a progress report to Committee members regarding the development of dropped kerbs.*
- (iv) The Head of Children's Services be requested to circulate a progress report to members of the Performance and Partnerships Scrutiny Committees in respect of initial core group meetings being held within 10 days of the first child protection conference.*

[RhE to pursue above]

6 REVIEW OF SERVICE CHALLENGE PROCESS

The Corporate Improvement Manager (CIM) submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the Draft Proposal for Improving the Service Challenge Process.

The new Service Challenge processes had been discussed by CET (Corporate Executive Team) and SLT (Senior Leadership Team). A presentation had also been before Council Briefing.

The new proposal would be a more detailed annual process. It was proposed that the Chief Executive, all Corporate Directors, Lead Members and Scrutiny representative Members attend every Service Performance Challenge Assessment Panel. A representative of the Welsh Audit Office would also be involved. The new process would be based on self-evaluation. The Service Challenge would be supported by Members of the Corporate Improvement Team.

The discussion covered the following:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Documents to support the service self-assessment
- Process timeline and
- Meeting schedule.

RESOLVED that Members accepted and agreed the draft proposals for a new Service Challenge process, which would include:

- (i) A more detailed review with a renewed focus on self-evaluation
- (ii) An annual rather than a bi-annual programme with increased flexible links with the business and budget planning process
- (iii) The development of a new and separate process for agreeing efficiencies.

[TW to note the above resolution]

At this juncture (11.20 a.m.) there was a 5 minute comfort break

The meeting re-convened at 11.25 a.m.

7 PROVISION OF CCTV IN DENBIGHSHIRE

The Head of Planning and Public Protection (H:P&PP) submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting information regarding the operation of the Council's CCTV function and its partnership working with other agencies, including North Wales Police.

The H:P&PP introduced Graham Smith, CCTV Supervisor (CCTV:S). The CCTV control room was based in Rhyl Police Station.

The Council used public space CCTV provision as part of Denbighshire's contribution to activities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The service provided by Denbighshire County Council was highly regarded by North Wales Police as providing an excellent and essential service.

Council Officers staff the CCTV control room, working shifts to provide 24 hour cover, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. The control room consists of 10 staff comprising of 1 full-time CCTV supervisor, 5 full-time and 4 part-time CCTV operators. 2 full-time operators left in 2012 and were not replaced due to the need to make significant savings in the region of £113,000 by 2014/15.

58 permanent cameras cover Rhyl, 18 cover Prestatyn and 4 cover Rhuddlan.

The control room also has remote access to CCTV at Lon Parcwr, Ruthin, Highways Depot, Kinmel Park Depot and the Marsh Road , Rhyl Recycling Centre as well as 4 external school cameras.

The CCTV control room can also remote connect to view the Town Council owned CCTV system in Llangollen. Denbigh Town Council also has a CCTV system.

There are 6 re-deployable cameras which can send limited quality pictures back to the control room via the airwaves. The 6 re-deployable CCTV cameras are due for renewal over the next 6 months. A management decision had been taken not to renew the cameras and to encourage Council departments and outside agencies to make their own arrangements for Re-deployable CCTV with the CCTV control room willing to accept and monitor the pictures for a modest charge.

There were a number of CCTV recorded offences during 2012. The H:P&PP agreed to email a breakdown of incidents to all members of the Committee for clarity.

The CCTV Department also provide secondary services for the Council by being the Emergency Out of Hours Customer Service Contact Centre. (ie:the Council's main point of contact after 6 p.m. weekends and public holidays).

The fact the unit employs only 10 members of staff led to problems during times of sickness absence and holidays. The implications were, cameras were not being monitored for several short temporary periods but were all left recording, and arrangements were put in place to allow out of hours phone calls during these periods to be seamlessly transferred to a pre-approved third party facility, in Conwy County Borough Council.

The H:P&PP referred to the project for developing a North Wales regional CCTV service which now appeared not to be viable. The Committee endorsed the retention of both CCTV provision and control centre in Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Committee supports the existing CCTV arrangements within the CCTV Team and recommends that consideration also be given to how other towns in Denbighshire could access CCTV services in the future.*
- (ii) The Head of Planning and Public Protection be requested to circulate a breakdown into areas of offences and incidents recorded by CCTV; and*
- (iii) A update report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection on the CCTV service be presented at the October 2013 meeting.*

[RhE to pursue the above]

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report by the Scrutiny Co-ordinator was submitted (previously circulated) seeking Members' review of the Committee's future work programme.

The Corporate Improvement Manager (CIM) informed the Committee an additional risk had been identified since the last review. The Corporate Improvement Officer (CIO) clarified that Denbighshire County Council were working with the Welsh Government regarding the modernising school plan. The risk would be if the funding was not aligned with the project plan. This was Phase 1

RESOLVED that the forward work programmes be accepted and noted.

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 p.m.