

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2017

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
County Councillors Hunt, Murphy, Sanders, Huw Thomas and Walker

61 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Goddard.

62 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

63 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

64 : CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND SAP SYSTEMS: PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance; Paul Orders, Chief Executive; Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources; and Sarah McGill, Director Communities, Housing and Customer Services to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement which was followed by a presentation during the course of which Sarah McGill updated Members on the progress of Phase 1 of the Council's Customer Relationship Management system.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members were advised that a full review of Phase 1 compliance is currently ongoing with an anticipated completion date of April. Whilst there are some grounds for confidence, the results of the review will provide a clearer picture.
- Members raised concerns as to how those less technically able, or those without access to technology would manage but were advised that advice would be provided by phone and also face to face via at the various Hubs.
- Members expressed concern that the various Councils use different systems to the same end and queried whether there was scope for technological collaboration. The Chief Executive held a similar view but recognised that technical abilities varied across the various Councils.
- Whilst Members asked whether migrating to a single system was an option Officers advised that they were confident that the solution lies in the integration layer, but that it needed to be both robust and reliable.

- Members noted that Quarter 3 performance reports the implementation of phases 2/3 as being red/amber and queried whether in fact those phases could be implemented by March 2018 as described. Members were advised that the learning from the difficulties faced in the implementation of phase 1, which has still not been achieved, has been invaluable, but the status has now to be red.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members.

65 : PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2016-17

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance; Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources; Leon Goddard, Operational Manager Performance and Improvement; Nick Batchelar, Director Education & Lifelong Learning; and Jackie Turner, Assistant Director Education and Lifelong Learning to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement, the Quarter 3 Performance Report was then presented by Leon Goddard.

The Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members:

- Members queried the consistency of performance reporting and were advised that for the next financial year there is to be a dual reporting process; reporting against the Corporate Plan and how Directorates are delivering on a day to day and week to week basis. Performance information will be published in report form on the internet and via social media.
- Members noted that service areas have not delivered all the savings expected. Members were advised that there are mechanisms in place to challenge senior management. The budget contingency currently stands at £4m. Officers are confident that Planning Status improvements will result in the Council being in a better position during the course of the next year.
- Members commented that there is no mandate to overspend on budgets set by Council.

The Chairperson invited Nick Batchelar, Director Education and Lifelong Learning to make a statement in which he stated that the pattern of sickness absence across the Directorate had been reviewed over a 3 year period. The head count for schools had remained fairly static however for non-schools the head count had reduced. It was felt that this was a factor in relation to days lost. Further, with the reduction in staff there has been an increase in the instances of work related stress. Jackie Turner, Assistant Director provided Members with the presentation.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked whether all sickness absence is taken into account and included in the figures and referred specifically to instances where staff have

to remain home for a period of 48 hours. Members were advised that Public Health Guidance has been sought and confirmed that such absences have to be recorded as sickness absence.

- Members asked for clarity in relation to the definitions of sickness absence; officers advised that in some context all stress related sickness absence can be work related – is it work or coming to work? Definitions are always open to interpretation.
- Members queried what actions are being taken to aid staff in their return to work. The Director advised that action is being taken to raise the profile of stress related sickness with both teachers and governors. HR case workers regularly send out briefings and proactively follow up . There is a pattern in relation to some sickness absence, and the level is high in part time staff – there has been a growth in short term absence. There needs to be more immediate accountability.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members.

66 : PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2017-2020

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance; Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources; and Steve Robinson, Operational Manager Commissioning and Procurement to the meeting.

Steve Robinson presented the report to Members after which the Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members:

- The Committee were advised that the new strategy aims to deliver four broad organisational outcomes, but were concerned that the Delivery Plan should also look backwards.
- Officers advised that to achieve improvements it is important that there is collaboration between service areas and that they are encouraged to take ownership.
- Members were advised that it is important that the strategy and teams work to support service improvement through the budget process and ensure that arrangements are fit for purpose within Directorates.
- The Committee was informed that a Community Benefits Board had been established and the inaugural meeting had taken place to develop a Social Responsibility Policy and Charter.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members.

67 : COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Committee received its Annual Report 2016/17 prior to its consideration by Full Council

RESOLVED: To approve the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2016/17 for presentation to Council.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg