POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Walker(Chairperson)
               Councillors Berman, Bowen-Thomson, Henshaw, Mackie and
               McKerlich

19   :   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lister.

20   :   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Members
Code of Conduct:

Mackie   Item 4 and 5 Personal   Sister is Head of Integrated Care

21   :   MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 were approved by the Committee
as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

22   :   CAPITAL AMBITION DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report on the governance of the Capital Ambition Delivery
Programme.

Members were advised that the Committee at its meeting in May considered a Wales
Audit Office (WAO) report published following a review of the governance
arrangements for the programme undertaken between September 2018 and March
2019. A key proposal for improvement from the review was that the Council needed
to 'strengthen the role of scrutiny in engaging with, and challenging the delivery and
impact of, the programme to increase accountability and provide momentum'. In
order to address this proposal the Committee was offered a six-monthly overview
report.

Members were invited to agree the future format of the six-monthly review report,
and the level of information required to allow effective oversight and scrutiny of the
programme.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader of the Council; Chris
Lee, Corporate Director Resources; Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and
Communities; and Dean Thomas, Portfolio Manager, Capital Ambition Delivery
Programme to the meeting. The Leader was invited to make a statement.

Councillor Thomas stated that the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme underpins
the top level ambitions for the administration by delivery of services in the most
effective and productive way possible. The Leader considered that the Committee
has an early opportunity to shape the content of the programme.

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

Officers were invited to deliver a brief presentation. The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- The Committee considered that the report should include an overview of the progress made in relation to the project aims, including timeline and target dates. Officers advised that key milestone dates are included in the reports. Comments on any slippage can be captured and reported. Each programme board has their own 'dashboard' and these include up to date comments on progress and emerging risks. The dashboards are similar in format but are targeted towards individual programmes. Officers asked whether the Committee would prefer to receive reporting on individual programmes or one overarching report.

- Members considered that it was difficult to comment on the format of future reporting because it was not possible to determine the format of the reports as there was no detail included. The Corporate Director Resources stated that officers were intending to build in the detail needed as part of the discussion. Officers accepted the point made. The finalised reports to be presented at the November meeting of the Committee will include full details.

- Members considered that it was critical for scrutiny to be aware of known and emerging risks and what has been learned in terms of those pinch points. Officers advised that these points can be incorporated into the report.

- Officers stated that behind each dashboard there lies considerable amounts of data. The Leader asked whether the Committee would like to receive in-depth level of detail for each project or whether the level of detail provided would be sufficient for scrutiny. Members considered that it was not possible to provide a judgement as there was no quantifiable data provided. The Leader agreed and asked officers to reflect on the Committee's comments.

Members felt that the detailed reports to be presented at the November meeting would give a better indication. The Committee may consider to scrutinise issues further or refer them to another Scrutiny Committee. Officers stated that a high level report on each project and could look in detail at red-rated risks. The Committee considered that learning and critical reflection provided an opportunity outside those red-rated risks. The Committee could choose to 'deep-dive' beyond the visible.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments and observations.

23   :   CAPITAL AMBITION DELIVERY PROGRAMME - SMARTER WORKING PROJECT

The Committee received a report on the Smarter Working project which sits within the Service review strand of the Modernisation portfolio.

Members were advised that the Council operates from predominantly fixed desk working, with an element of agile working in some directorates. The Smarter

Working project aims to increase productivity and deliver services more efficiently by making flexible working the favoured option of working styles.

The project mandate makes it clear that implementing Smarter Working will require effective liaison between senior managers, the Strategic Estates and Corporate Landlord functions, ICT, Digital Services and HR People Services.

The outcomes of adopting Smarter Working principles are:

- Greater productivity and services delivered more efficiently
- The costs of environmental impacts are reduced as space is shared and used more intensively
- People have more choice and autonomy about when, where and how they work, supported and connected by effective and appropriate use of technology
- People having an opportunity to lead more balanced and healthy lives

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader; Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources; Phil Bear, Head of ICT, Dean Thomas, Portfolio Manager, Capital Ambition Delivery Programme; and Nicola John, Business Analyst to the meeting. The Leader made a brief statement.

Officers were invited to deliver a presentation. The Chairperson invited the members of the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members considered that the culture of the authority would be key to delivering smarter working practices. Officers were asked to comment on the culture and whether any external advice has been sought. Officers considered that how managers engage with staff would be key to delivering the project. The Agile Working Policy will be reviewed. In terms of external advice, officers have consulted with HMRC who will be moving to a new headquarters in the City in the near future. HMRC staff will be moving from fixed desks and it was anticipated that lesson will be learned. The HMRC project will take 3 years but the culture of the organisation is very different to that of the Council.

- Moving forward the project will be internally led with no external engagement. The Corporate Director Resources advised that there would be a greater emphasis place on outcomes. The challenge is not only around providing new technologies but in changing working practices.

- Members agreed that changing the culture of the organisation was crucial. Members asked what was being done to lead the change necessary and what lessons can be shared. The Corporate Director agreed that language, culture and branding were important elements to the transformation if we want staff to positively engage in the process. Members considered that it would be useful, therefore, to have milestones built in that demonstrate how staff are 'buying-in' to the process.

- Members considered that some staff will adapt to smarter working practices, whilst others may struggle. There may be a reason why some members of staff choose not to stay at home and this will need to be recognised. Officers stated

that staff will have a choice. Service areas will be consulted and will have an opportunity to shape how they want to work. There will be a variety of locations and 'touchdown points' across the City.

- The Committee recognised that there will be some positives to flexible working, but there may also be some downsides which must be guarded against. For example, it may be possible that some staff loose contact with their Teams and this may be demoralising. Officers advised that this issue has been considered. Employees will be able to spend time in the office if they choose to do so and managers must recognise the level of contact needed.

- Members asked whether staff who chose to work from home will be entitled to claim back tax and whether staff will be given any guidance regarding this. Officers indicated that though this entitlement has applied to permanent home workers the HMRC position has possibly changed. Officers gave an undertaking that they would seek clarification and report back to the Committee regarding this. As the Smarter Working Project will centre on flexibility rather than fixed homeworking, different rules may apply.

- A Member raised concerns that staff who choose to work from home will incur additional expenses such as the cost of broadband provision and heating/lighting and that this would amount to a small pay cut. The Corporate Director Resources indicated that the focus of the Smarter Working project would be on those staff who are agile and use touchdown points infrequently, rather than specifically homeworking. The Leader considered that any additional expense incurred may be offset by not having to commute.

- Members asked whether smarter working would have a positive impact in terms of sickness absence levels. The Corporate Director Resources advised that there was clear evidence that sickness absence improved. During the heavy snowfall in the winter of 2017 some service areas were impacted less and had fewer absences. Approximately 1500 staff were able to connect to Council ICT infrastructure during the event.

- Members asked whether the ICT infrastructure capacity was in place. The Head of ICT stated that the building blocks were in place. At present there was a 60/40 split between fixed and mobile devices. The authority would need to move to a position where mobile devices are provided by default. The authority is well-served by Wi-Fi and 260 Council buildings are Wi-Fi-enabled. The print smart project has provided 149 printers in 61 locations.

- The Committee asked whether the employer would be prepared to meet or help with the cost of broadband installation. The Head of ICT stated that the cost of broadband is coming down. 97% of the City has superfast broadband coverage. The authority is not looking to meet these costs.

- Members were advised that as part of the roll out of smarter working principles in Social Services, touchdown sites were assessed against 45 criteria. Examples were leisure centres, hubs and schools. The facilities were put on a map and staff were provided with a list of the facilities available at each site.

- A Member asked whether the authority would have fewer buildings in the future as a result of smarter working, or would they be looking to deliver services with fewer staff. The Corporate Director Resources stated that the cost benefit would be opportunities around the use of space. The project was not aiming to reduce staffing levels but to be more efficient. There was a need to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in hubs etc and a booking system is being piloted at present. It was evident that there would be an opportunity not only to rationalise office space, but also to provide a better work/life balance for staff and better services to customers. The Head of ICT stated that the smarter working project is also aiming to leverage existing spending and utilise assets better.

- Members asked whether improvements in productivity would lead to lower staff numbers if achieved. The Corporate Director Resources stated that improvements in productivity may also lead to improvements in services and less reliance on agency staff.

- A Member asked what training has been provided to address inclusion issues and staff with specific needs, and what lessons have been learned to date. The Corporate Director welcomed the point made and advised that this issue will be considered. Officers stated that both accessibility and equality issues will be picked up as part of the review of the project. It was suggested that this issue may merit further scrutiny.

- The Committee considered that managers will need to be more creative and flexible. The roles of staff will be redefined and outputs clarified. Mechanisms will be required to measure the outcomes and this will require a different set of skills for managers. This would provide a challenge for managers. A Member commented that in their experience of flexible working managers struggled with put in place a monitoring system. Consideration should be given to building this in. The Corporate Director Resources stated that some activities are more measurable and can be clearly monitored. Members felt that team meetings and 'one to ones' were still needed.

- Members asked whether there were any collaborative opportunities with statutory partners or 3rd sector organisations with a view to sharing touchdown points, etc. The Leader advised that there were opportunities and these are being explored.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments and observations.

24 : ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMING 2019-20

The Committee considered items for the 2019/20 Work Programme. Members were asked to note the list of major issues for possible inclusion in the Work Programme. The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided an explanation of how the list was devised.

Members were requested to email the Principal Scrutiny Officer providing their assessment of the topics to be included on the Work Programme by 2 October 2019.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer agreed to circulate proposed dates for the Committee's Performance Panel to Members.

25 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

26 : CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee correspondence was noted.

27 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were presented.

28 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 16 October 2019 at 4:30pm.

29 : CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm