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Place Scrutiny Committee - 16 June 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON THURSDAY, 16 JUNE 2016

PRESENT

County Councillor K W Curry (Chair),

Officers: Paul Griffiths, Strategic Director, Place, Fay Smith, Partnership Analyst, Lyn Hall, Project Manager and Wyn Richards, Scrutiny Manager

1.	ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR	PLSC22-2016
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RESOLVED that County Councillor M J Dorrance be elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

2.	APOLOGIES	PLSC23-2016
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An apology for absence was received from County Councillor R G Thomas.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	PLSC24-2016
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There were no declarations of interest.

4.	DISCLOSURES OF PARTY WHIPS	PLSC25-2016
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There were no disclosures of party whips.

5.	MINUTES	PLSC26-2016
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 December 2016 as a correct record.

The Strategic Director, Place was welcomed to the meeting and gave a presentation regarding the major pressures facing the Directorate to assist Members in developing the work programme for the ensuing year.

Discussions regarding work programming have been held with the Joint Chairs Steering Group and Cabinet and new processes are being developed. The Cabinet have agreed that more pre scrutiny should take place and this will be factored into their work programme. It has been suggested that each scrutiny committee undertake one item of pre decision scrutiny per month

The Strategic Director suggested that scrutiny should be of high value items or those with substantial political consequences. A list of services and potential savings was circulated – once finalised a further copy containing all financial details would be emailed to Members.

In his opinion the following areas were of significant importance and could be considered for inclusion in the work programme:

- Highways, Transport and Recycling savings of £5M over the next two years - initial consideration is being given to options going forward with a decision on which options to pursue being taken by the autumn. Given the timeframe it is critical progress is at pace and decisions based on evidence
- Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) – rationalisation of the larger sites will be required to deliver savings of £100K in 2017/18
- Youth Service – in percentage terms, the youth service is experiencing the largest cut in funding. The consequences of alternative methods of delivery may not become apparent for several years
- Leisure and Sports – the contract to operate leisure centres seems to be operating well but further savings have been approved by Council
- Libraries – libraries are effectively community hubs and are the subject of a consultation exercise to realise savings of £250K over the next two years. The challenge remains to deliver enhanced services with reduced budgets
- Regeneration and Property – to date the committee have considered the regeneration strategy and Joint Venture Company (JVC). Earlier this year planning performance was poor but has improved significantly recently and the Local Development Plan (LDP) is now at a critical stage.

6.	CRIME AND DISORDER	PLSC27-2016
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Documents:

- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Update

Discussion:

- Dog fouling – a scrutiny working group had considered the issue and made a number of recommendations. The Police and Crime Commissioner had not been able to pursue one recommendation regarding Police Community Support Officers issuing fixed penalty notices as not all authorities in the region wish to proceed on that basis. A report on strategies to tackle the problem will be considered by Cabinet in July.
- Crime data – Members were concerned to note that there had been an increase in a number of types of crimes particularly sexual offences, burglary and violence against the person. There had been a decrease in drug offences and vehicle offences. The statistics differed from the part year figures and the reasons for them not being comparable are being investigated. It was thought that the increase in sexual offences could be attributed to reporting of historical offences following high profile media reports. People have a greater degree of confidence in reporting offences. The Committee asked if a breakdown could be provided identifying the level of historical cases. The possession of weapons were 26% alcohol related but the Partnership Analyst assured Members that there was not significant gun crime in the County.
- Members challenged the impact of budget cuts on crime statistics – there had been reductions in preventative services. It was suggested that graphs could be prepared showing funding reductions and crime data. It was noted that there had also been reductions in analytical capability

impinging on the ability to report to Committee. On a more positive note, the CSP was receiving more response from other agencies and it was hoped to draw on other areas for data.

- Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) – this area had seen a drop in reporting but it was acknowledged that some ASB could be being reported as crime. There are no significant hotspots with low level reporting across the area.
- Road Safety – despite reductions in staffing which have resulted in the Senior Road Safety Officer and Analyst posts being deleted, the Road Safety Partnership remains active. A new referral scheme for drivers over 70 who have been stopped by the police, is to be introduced. Targets showing ongoing reductions for those killed or seriously injured in road accidents have been imposed but this could be more dependent on the road infrastructure and weather than drivers themselves.
- Domestic Abuse – A Member reported a gap in training relating to Housing Officers' awareness where domestic abuse may be occurring. This would be reported to the Domestic Abuse Project Board
- Substance Misuse – the recommissioning of the service has been concluded and two new posts are being advertised
- Acquisitive Crime – Ringmaster has been replaced with the Dyfed Powys Community Messaging Service
- Community cohesion – this is a Welsh Government initiative. The Coordinator post has been extended for another year but the outcomes have not changed significantly.
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 - the Wales Contest Board is to be refreshed with one representative from the Dyfed/Powys area being invited to attend. Powys has received its first referral to the Channel Panel which is a multiagency group involved in prevention work.

Outcomes:

- **An anonymised case study will be circulated to the Committee for information.**

7.	JOINT VENTURE COMPANY (JVC)	PLSC28-2016
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Documents:

- Presentation slides

Discussion:

- Pressure regarding savings across the Council
- Need to ensure resources are used as effectively as possible
- Outcomes for clients to be improved
- A number of options considered with agreement being reached to proceed to a JVC
- The JVC when established, will be based in Powys
- Members were concerned that the final approval of the preferred bidder rested with Strategic Directors rather than Members. This was in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules which prohibits Members from evaluating tenders.

8.	REGENERATION WORKING GROUP	PLSC29-2016
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Documents:

- Scrutiny summary report

Discussion:

- The report had been circulated previously
- Members queried the current status of the Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV) project in Brecon as this was a major regeneration project.

Outcome:

- **Noted**
- **Further details on the current status of the LABV to be circulated**

9.	WASTE STRATEGY	PLSC30-2016
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Documents:

- Scrutiny summary report

Discussion:

- The report had been circulated previously

Outcome:

- **Noted**

10.	JOINT CHAIRS STEERING GROUP	PLSC31-2016
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Documents:

- Notes of meetings held on 22 January, 18 March, 12 April and 24 May 2016

Outcome:

- **Noted**

11.	WORK PROGRAMME	PLSC33-2016
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Document:

- Forward Work Programme

Discussion:

- Reference was made to the detail relating to Cabinet and Scrutiny work programme development within the Joint Chairs Steering Group notes.
- Joint Chairs will evaluate topics for scrutiny, including pre decision scrutiny, and intend to allocate one piece of scrutiny per committee per month
- It is proposed that reporting processes are improved
- Scrutiny resources are limited and must be used effectively
- It was proposed that the Committee be divided into three working groups and be allocated pieces of work as they arise

- There were vacancies on the Committee and this was under discussion with Group Leaders
- An issue was raised regarding the grass cutting contract

Outcomes:

- **The work programme be noted**
- **Three working groups were formed and would be finalised once the membership of the Committee was complete**
- **A written question be submitted to the Portfolio Holder regarding the issues raised with the grass cutting contract**

12.	CO-OPTION TO WORKING GROUPS	PLSC34-2016
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RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Chair to seek expressions of interest from Members not on Place Scrutiny Committee to join working groups and make any such appointments to working groups that are deemed necessary.

13.	CORRESPONDENCE	PLSC35-2016
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There were no items of correspondence.

County Councillor K W Curry (Chair)

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