

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS STEERING GROUP HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT: County Councillor Mr J Brautigam (Chair)
County Councillors D R Jones, JG Morris, G I S Williams and E Durrant

Officers: Jeremy Patterson (Chief Executive), Liz Patterson (Scrutiny Officer), David Powell (Strategic Director - Resources), Lisa Richards (Scrutiny Officer), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services) and Ian Budd (Director of Education)

1. APOLOGIES

Members: County Councillors Pete Roberts and Matthew Dorrance.
Officers: Clive Pinney (Solicitor to the Council), Peter Jones (Professional Lead – Corporate Insight) and Emma Palmer (Strategic Business Manager to the Chief Executive)

2. DRAFT NOTES - FOR CONSIDERATION

Documents Considered:

- Draft Notes – 11th July, 2017.

Issues Discussed:

- The Scrutiny Manager was asked to follow up the response on Chairs' attendance at the Commissioning and Procurement Board and the report on the Capital Programme.

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Scrutiny Manager to follow up the response on Chairs' attendance at the Commissioning and Procurement Board and the report on the Capital Programme	10/10/17	WR <u>Update:</u> Chair of Procurement and Commissioning Board discussing with Board on 3/10/17. Capital Strategy and programme – to be considered at Joint Chairs in November.

3. RISK BASED ASSESSMENT OF CORPORATE ARRANGEMENTS

Documents Considered:

- Slides from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) arising from the risk based review of corporate arrangements.

Issues Discussed:

- The WAO review was split into 3 sections and was a light touch approach.

- Slides provide Green / Amber / Red indicators on the following aspects of the Council:
 - Vision and Strategic Direction;
 - Governance and Accountability;
 - Use of Resources;
 - Collaboration and Partnerships;
 - Managing Improvement;
 - Key Corporate Strengths and Challenges.
- The Council's capability in terms of numbers and skill sets is an issue as are the costs of the current social services model which are unsustainable and the schools financing model. However there are some strengths identified by the review.
- The report authors Colin Davies and Justine Morgan have offered to speak to scrutiny and the cabinet about the points raised in the review.
- Powys is driving greater change than anyone else in Wales which has identified needs in terms of capability at officer and Member levels including the need for objective scrutiny.
- WAO raised concerns about how the previous Cabinet operated, the clarity of those meetings and that too many operational issues were being considered with a need for a Cabinet to be more strategic.
- The roles of the Strategic Overview Board (SOB) and the Commissioning and Procurement Board were also the subject a comment that the Cabinet was scrutinising itself rather than scrutiny undertaking that role. Work programming was also an issue raised.
- The Council has addressed the issues regarding the operation of the Cabinet and there is now scrutiny involvement in the SOB. Work was also being undertaken on behaviours and values for Cabinet and scrutiny.
- The delivery of savings in social services remained a concern.
- In relation to schools financial compliance was being addressed with a follow up on a monthly basis and escalation where needed.
- A review of the social services base budget was being undertaken with phase 1 completed. Another phase was underway and the service was tasked with an action plan to achieve savings as well as looking at issues such as the costs for services for those under 65 which were out of kilter with the rest of Wales. Consideration was being given to how long it would take to transfer funding from the under 65s to over 65s budget.
- Concern had been expressed by Management Team and the SOB regarding Children's Services with a red RAG status. There were also concerns that changes in Children's Services were not on track.
- Financial resilience – whilst the balance sheet was strong there were risks which underlie this. The Council was 21 out of 22 in terms of delivering savings.

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Colin Davies and Justine Morgan (WAO) to be invited to attend a meeting of the Joint chairs to discuss the review report.		WR <u>Update:</u> WAO being invited to make presentation to all Members - November

4. REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY SERVICE

Documents Considered:

- Report by the Strategic Director – Resources.

Issues Discussed:

- Members had discussed with representatives of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regarding honoraria for leaders of working groups. It would be for the Council to submit a case to the IRPW for consideration.
- When establishing reviews Working Groups should set timescales within the scope of the review.

Outcomes:

- **Noted.**

5. DISCUSSION WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, STRATEGIC DIRECTORS REGARDING POTENTIAL SCRUTINY ITEMS

Documents Considered:

- None

Issues Discussed:

- The Chief Executive outlined an issue with Children's Services arising from a recent CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales) inspection which would require a programme of work by scrutiny to review the action plan initially followed by scrutiny of individual elements of the action plan.
- A serious concern letter had been received from the Chief Inspector following receipt of the draft report and there was a risk of Ministerial intervention.
- An action plan was being drawn up and an Improvement Board established.
- This had identified a need to strengthen corporate oversight as well as corporate support. Savings and income targets as well as base budgets would need to be reviewed.

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Scrutiny of the Children's Services Improvement Plan to be included in the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme	10/10/17	WR

6. WORK PROGRAMME

Documents Considered:

- Cabinet Work Programme.
- Scrutiny Work Programme

Issues Discussed:

- Request from Radnorshire and County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, Portfolio Holder for Highways that the forthcoming Revised Policy on Car Parking be reviewed by scrutiny – the Steering Group decided that in view of other priorities it did not have the capacity to review this item.
- Request that the Vision 2025 Action Plan be reviewed – accepted.
- Absenteeism in the HTR Service is above the norm and costing around £800k per annum. This needs to be considered under workforce issues. It had also been raised at the meeting of the SOB.
- SOB – there was a need for more challenge across directorates. There was an improvement in the report presented to the SOB on issues.
- 2 issues arising from the SOB which would need to be reviewed – adult services budgets and the delivery of savings. It was suggested that the Audit Committee or the Finance Scrutiny Panel could undertake this review. However both items would need to be considered in light of the revised MTFS.
- It was suggested that minutes of the SOB should be available to all Members of Council.
- The Scrutiny Forward Work Programme (FWP) was a new version where it was being developed alongside a revised Cabinet FWP and also with Management Team and Corporate FWPs with a view that there would be a holistic view of all work programmes by the organisation.

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
That the request for the scrutiny of the revised car parking policy be declined due to other urgent items being included in the Forward Work Programme.	10/10/17	WR
That the Vision 2025 action plan be added to the Forward Work Programme for review.	10/10/17	WR
Adult Services budgets and the Delivery of Savings to be reviewed by the Audit Committee / Finance Scrutiny Panel in light of revised MTFS.	10/10/17	WR
Comments on items to be removed from the Forward Work programme to be send to the Scrutiny Manager	10/10/17	All Steering Group Members.

7. PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

7.1. Arrangements for the Scrutiny of the Public Service Board in Powys

Documents Considered:

- Draft document – Arrangements for the Scrutiny of the PSB in Powys
- Welsh Government Guidance regarding the Scrutiny of PSBs
- Short Version of the Guidance regarding the scrutiny of PSBs

Issues Discussed:

- As the Draft document regarding arrangements was handed out at the meeting the Steering Group was asked to send comments to the Scrutiny Manager with the final document being considered for approval at the next meeting.

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Comments to the Scrutiny Manager on the Draft document	10/10/17	All Steering Group Members
Draft report for further consideration at the next meeting	10/10/17	WR

7.2. Draft Notes of Previous Meeting(s)

Documents Considered:

- 20th July, 2017

Issues Discussed:

- None

Outcomes:

- **Noted.**

7.3. PSB Dates - For Information

- 21 September 2017
- 26 October, 2017
- 21 December, 2017

8.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - FOR INFORMATION
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- 10 October, 2017
- 7 November, 2017
- 5 December, 2017

County Councillor Mr J Brautigam (Chair)