

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
By Zoom

Meeting Date
Monday, 30 October 2023

Meeting Time
10.00 am

For further information please contact

Rachel Pugh - Scrutiny and Democratic Support Officer
01597 826496
rachel.pugh1@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG
24.10.2023

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod. Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.

You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting. Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days before the meeting.

AGENDA

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| 1. | APOLOGIES |
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To receive apologies for absence.

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| 2. | DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST |
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To receive any disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

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| 3. | DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS |
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

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| 4. | MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING |
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held as follows as a correct record: 11.09.2023.

(Pages 5 - 12)

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| 5. | HTR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN - UPDATE |
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To review the Action Plan Update.

(Pages 13 - 20)

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| 6. | SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS |
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To receive the Cabinet's response to Scrutiny Recommendations.

1. Q1 Performance Report - Cabinet 19.09.23
2. Powys Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028 – Cabinet 01.08.23

(Pages 21 - 26)

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| 7. | WORKING GROUP UPDATES |
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To receive updates from the Working Groups:

1. County Farms
2. Heart of Wales Property Services
3. Leisure Review (Joint Scrutiny)

(Pages 27 - 28)

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| 8. | SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME |
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To note that future meetings of the Committee will be held as follows:

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| Monday - 11-12-23 | Committee – Public Housing Service Update |
| Friday - 19.01.24 | Committee - Public |
| Monday - 29.01.24 | Budget |
| Thursday - 08.02.24 | Alternative Budget |

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| 9. | EXEMPT |
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The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following items. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information.

Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

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| 10. | ECONOMY UPDATE |
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To receive the Economy Update Presentation.
(Pages 29 - 104)

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to take 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on today's meeting.

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Public Document Pack

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Monday, 11 September 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

County Councillors B Davies, A Jones, E A Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, J Charlton, R Church, D Selby, D A Thomas, P James, C Kenyon-Wade, G Preston and L Rijnenberg

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S L Williams

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| 1. | EXEMPT ITEM |
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following items of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

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| 2. | APOLOGIES |
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Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S L Williams.

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| 3. | DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS |
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

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| 4. | DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST |
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There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

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| 5. | WINTER MAINTENANCE |
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Background:

- Phase two of the project includes the criteria for winter gritting routes, it was noted that the review would focus on county roads. (Powys County Council provides a gritting service on behalf of the Welsh Government for all trunk roads through the County).
- The presentation provided outcomes of customer engagement along with other factors considered to build the matrix for gritting routes.
- A precautionary network monitors and receives weather reports and actions are taken when required.
- Further details including road details and maps would be circulated to Councillors for consideration with a set deadline for additional feedback to inform the final report.

A debate took place regarding the documentation provided to the Committee, the outcomes of the discussion would feed into and finalise the Cabinet Report (phase 2).

The Committee noted:

- The explanation of the gritting matrix provided clarification which the Committee found helpful.
- It was proposed that the final report would be with Cabinet later in the autumn.
- It was felt that the public engagement exercise outcome was quite poorly received.
- It was asked how the Powys County Council strategy compared to other local authorities and comparisons may be beneficial.

The Committee expressed concern around:

- The savings target set on the service and if it was achievable.
- The environmental elements of the plan and the additional provision of salt bins which would need to be communicated to the local members and communities.
- Vehicle usage considerations would reduce fuel consumption, supporting the Council's net zero carbon targets but felt that the Council needed to ensure that the correct equipment was available for significant weather events.
- Having enough resources and HGV drivers to perform the duties involved within the gritting matrix. Additional training had been undertaken with staff to ensure cover was provided.
- The prioritisation of school routes and how they were planned.
- The consideration for vulnerable members of the community throughout the planning process and links to the Winter Plan.

Resolved: The Winter Maintenance Report be reviewed.

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| 6. | DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS |
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

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| 7. | DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST |
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There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

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| 8. | MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS |
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The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the previous meetings as a correct record 17 July 2023.

9. FREEDOM LEISURE ANNUAL REPORT

Background:

- The Annual report for 2022-2023 was presented to the Committee.
- A not-for-profit leisure trust, Freedom Leisure have entered the eighth year of the contract.
- Powys County Council have provided support to Freedom Leisure throughout the challenging times of the energy crisis whilst recovering from the Covid pandemic.
- Participation, activities, and membership figures showed a positive increase, which continues for the current year.
- A workforce structure took place last year throughout the organisation which continues to invest in staff training and development.
- The National Exercise Referral Scheme is delivered by Freedom Leisure on behalf of Powys County Council.
- Investment continued across sites; however major capital projects are on hold pending the outcomes of the Council's Leisure Review.

| Points raised by the Committee: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members: |
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| Would Freedom Leisure consider changes to the free swim sessions. | A review took place in 2018 due to the free-swimming grant being cut, and the delivery of free-swimming sessions for the over 60's and under 16's was restructured. |
| <p>Confirmation was requested around the financial support the Council provided to Freedom Leisure.</p> <p>And if the deficit was due to the recent energy crisis.</p> <p>Does Freedom Leisure have deficits with other contracts held with other local authorities.</p> <p>Freedom Leisure were asked if their current energy contract was the correct choice.</p> | <p>It was confirmed that Powys County Council have provided £287k to support the significant rise in energy costs experienced by the leisure industry.</p> <p>Freedom Leisure confirmed that financial data would be significantly different if the energy crisis did not occur.</p> <p>Each partnership and contact were different, Freedom Leisure have been proactive obtaining utility supplies and continue to do so. Partners had been extremely supportive throughout the energy crisis and Quarter1 is showing positive signs of recovery.</p> <p>It was explained that advice was sought from consultants and the organisation is able to be flexible and buy ahead to obtain competitive prices.</p> |

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| Freedom Leisure were vocal in the press around the energy crisis and what is meant to the leisure industry, has there been any update. | The Government offer schemes to the leisure industry which were split between England and Wales (currently in the application stages), which are not expected to provide a substantive impact. |
| Were Freedom Leisure noticing a recent decline in footfall in centres due to the cost-of-living crisis. | Significant growth continues in casual usage of centres and membership is being maintained which was credit to the teams within centres providing services to the community. |
| It was asked if Freedom Leisure was an accredited living way employer and to explain the pension scheme. | Freedom Leisure confirmed they had adopted the national minimum living wage. Those staff transferred to Freedom Leisure at the start of the contract carried over their local government pensions. New employees are automatically opted into the organisation pension scheme, but also have the local government scheme as an option. |
| Reported accidents figures within the report were questioned. | The Committee were reassured that the figures provided were correct and reflected the size and activities held within each centre. A high percentage of accidents are slips, trips and falls were around swimming pool-based activities. |
| Freedom Leisure were asked to explain the remedial backlog maintenance fund. | The fund was in place from year one of the contract to clear the backlog of historical projects that require completion for the 13 sites. Freedom Leisure work with colleagues in PCC to |

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| | <p>conduct the outstanding work needed. Freedom Leisure have a robust maintenance programme with an allocated budget, along with a capital programme bid submission. Capital work at Brecon and Maldwyn was on hold but stressed that any urgent essential work was discussed immediately with council colleagues for urgent consideration.</p> |
| <p>The survival of leisure centres was depended on customers and asked if community management groups would be re-considered.</p> | <p>It was felt that community groups could be reinstated, and customers are encouraged to chat with staff and always open to all ideas and suggestions.</p> |

Resolved: The Freedom Leisure Annual Report be noted.

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1

Background:

- The new scorecard is part of the Council's Corporate strategic and Equality 5-year plan.
- It presented the 3 wellbeing objectives for the Council which support the 7 national wellbeing goals of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015.
- The system follows an outcomes-based approach focused on how much, how well and what difference or impact has been made.
- It was noted that only Q1 data was available within the new system, however as the year progresses, we will be able to understand our performance over time (using comparative data).

| Points raised by the Committee: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members: |
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| Objective 1 | |
| A query was raised around the number My Powys Account holders. | It was explained that more than one member of a household could hold an account and duplicate accounts may occur, which will elevate the number above the population. |
| Objective 2 | |
| The number of vacancies was questioned. | It was noted that the vacancies at that point in time was 366 which equates to a 6% vacancy rate, the figures showed in the scorecard were cumulative. The data was checked and verified before submitting to the scorecard. |
| Concerns were raised around the | Staff survey banding was explained |

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| wellbeing of staff, as the report showed a figure of 50%. | which has improved from the previous year. (If the neutral banding were included the figure would show as 80% plus). |
| It was asked if the number of ethnic job applicants not being successful was a concern to the Council. Also, under the disability act, how many applications do the council receive, to ensure the Council is open to all. | Figures were monitored to ensure equality throughout the process, the service year on year have been obtaining the equalities data for a greater number of staff as new staff commenced. This figure now stands at 60% for the current workforce employment, which will help with measuring ongoing performance. A new application process and website have been introduced. The Head of Workforce and Organisation Development would provide application figures to the Committee. |
| Objective 3 | |
| A comment was made that the narrative around child poverty was unclear and would need to be corrected to reflect the way the Council calculates the outcome. | It was noted by officers to rectify. |

The Committee noted that:

- The scorecard was easier to navigate and provided detailed information which was an improvement to the previous system.
- The Committee were assured anomalies identified within the report would be resolved by the officers.
- It would have benefited the Committee to have comparable data from last year.
- Colour coding and rating status system within the scorecard was not distinguished and considered confusing.

Recommendations:

1. The Council have a standard consistent approach to rating status (for easy visibility and understanding e.g., traffic lights)
2. Comparable data for benchmarking be available from previous years for context.
3. Ensure clear and precise narrative information is available.

Resolved: The Performance Report Q1 be considered

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| 11. | MARCHES PARTNERSHIP |
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Background:

- The partnership includes four neighbouring authorities to Powys, which will join to support and work on major projects.
- The aim of the partnership was to increase overall government investment and unlock opportunities for agreed initiatives.
- The geographical profile would support mutually beneficial goals for all parties. Including transport links, retail, and education.

| Points raised by the Committee: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members: |
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| It was asked how the relationship with Ceredigion would be affected. | The partnership with Ceredigion would not be affected as the Marches Partnership is flexible, collaborative, and regional working will continue. |
| Concerns were raised around government differences of cross border working and the demand finances and stretched Council resources. | It was felt that many opportunities including transport links and education were available across the Marches and challenges around resources would be considered. |
| It was noted that the Council are leading on Housing and asked if the Service had capacity for additional projects. | It was explained that differences have been identified in cross border working regarding legislation and guidance and many local authorities are no longer landlords. |
| The presentation shows Powys would be taking the lead on Skills, and referenced a cross border skills offer, would that lead to losing people across the border. | If was felt that the Marches Partnership would enhance and extend opportunities with the Regional Skills Partnership to support educational needs. |

Resolved: The Marches Partnership Presentation be noted.

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| 12. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME |
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Resolved: The Work Programme be noted.

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

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TRANSPORT & MOBILITY- ACTION PLAN

Focus

| WHAT (Current actions/projects) | WHO (Who's leading the work? Name and Governance) | WHEN (Target end date) | COST | PROJECTED C02 EMISSION SAVINGS | DIFFERENCE MADE | MEASURE | RAG |
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Dept Infrastructure

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| Implement EV charging points at HGSS depots, (linked to PCC EV strategy) Linked to buildings action plan and building asset review/sustainable Powys) | MP/NC/JPW | Very dependent on Funding Works been commissioned for both Abermule and Brecon hope to have substation in place by late Autumn. | Potential Feasibility required to look at Highway Depots. | As this is a corporate action plan, we need to identify the full use of existing premises and future modelling of services to determine the requirements for 2030 ie is home charging of council vehicles going to be permitted and sanctioned in terms of output costs. | Potentially both fleet and some staff vehicles can be charged at Council buildings. (Payment metres for staff vehicles) | Number of chargers need to be introduced. | |
| Identify the Investment in infrastructure required to support switch to green vehicles (linked to fleet asset review) | MP/NC/JPW | 2025 for LGV/ 2029 for HGV | Vehicle Transition Plan has been produced. Costs to be worked up. | | Most suitable pathway to a decarbonised fleet | | |
| Develop green infrastructure dept capital programme. (Linked to action above and fleet review) | MP/NC/JPW | 2025 for LGV/ 2029 for HGV | | | Most suitable pathway to a decarbonised fleet | | |

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| Consider solar panels and battery storage for depots (to feed into capital programme) | MP/NC/JPW | Very dependent on funding | | Very little scope for EV Chargers may just run the office buildings | Reduced reliance on the grid and part of the pathway for a decarbonised fleet | | |
| Conversion of lights to LED to reduce energy costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County wide part night and/or part night dimming Removing non-critical lighting | SJ | ongoing renewal programme | | A 10-year programme commencing from 2020 is well underway. | £66,350 projected savings for financial year 2023/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of streetlights converted to LED Reduction in energy use Financial savings | |
| Internal Fleet | | | | | | | |
| Undertake fleet review to consider a range of low carbon options, upfront, operational/maintenance and lifecycle costs (in parallel to infrastructure review above?) | JF/JPW | Ongoing feasibility looking currently at the use of HVO in short term (Business Case been produced for consideration) | Approx additional £500K annual revenue expenditure | 90% reduction in CO2 | Most suitable pathway to a decarbonised fleet & Potential Hydrogen in larger vehicles by 2030?? & Worse Case Scenciro all Electric | | |
| Develop fleet transition/replacement plan and business case (informed by fleet and infrastructure reviews) for EMT/Cabinet to consider options and costs of fleet and infrastructure reviews | JF/JPW | 2024 | Costs currently being worked up | Potentially at least 90% if HVO introduced. | Most suitable pathway to a decarbonised fleet | | |
| Implement LPG into all LGV vehicles that cannot be replaced by an ULEV equivalent (does this match corporate ambition? LPG could feature in fleet review and business case as an option for EMT/Cabinet to | JF/MP/JPW | N/A | Business case being awaiting decision for capital funding. | Potentially 23% carbon reduction on our LGV Fleet plus a 9.5% fuel reduction. | Reduction in emissions for parts of the fleet that can't immediately be transitioned to ULEV | | |

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| <p>consider alongside other options)</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>Review telematics data for council fleet stock to inform fleet review. Help identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we need like for like vehicle replacement • Identify opportunities to reduce vehicle size if they aren't using full capacity X% of time • Identify opportunities for route planning efficiencies (Reimaging link) • Opportunities to reduce fleet stock numbers through efficiencies (reimaging link) • Calculate collective and individual vehicle milage requirements to inform route planning and fleet replacement plan/business case | <p>JF</p> | <p>ONGOING (2024)</p> | | | <p>Reduced mileage and therefore fuel use of fleet</p> <p>Potential savings through reduced vehicles/smaller vehicles where possible</p> <p>Reduced CO2 emissions from fleet</p> | | |
| <p>Develop fleet portfolio commissioning plan outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle by type, size • Vehicle contract/lease end dates etc to inform review and | <p>JF/JPW</p> | <p>ONGOING (2024)</p> | <p>A computer software package has been purchased to help provide</p> | | | | |

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| engagement timetable with commercial services/corporate decision making | | | required evidence. | | | | |
| Fleet manager to work closely with commercial services to enact the portfolio commissioning plan and when tendering new vehicles to ensure sustainable procurement. | JF/RS | CONTINUALLY ONGOING | | | | | |
| Implement electric carpool (informed by fleet review – actions could then be split by vehicle type, how many and when so we can measure progress) | JF | 2026 | | | Reduced CO2 emissions from pool cars | | |
| INFORMED BY FLEET REVIEW Vehicles purchased to be lowest carbon emitting within available budget. | JF/JPW | ONGOING | | Aspirations of WG is that any new LGV's purchases from 2025 to be EV/Ultra Low and 2029 for HGV's | Reduction in CO2 emissions from new vehicles as they will either be ULEVs or lower emission fossil fuel vehicles | | |
| INFORMED BY FLEET REVIEW Electric as first choice, providing they are suitable for the task. | JF | 2025 | It needs to be noted that current costs for LGV Electric equivalent is plus 50% and 100% for HGV's | | Reduction in CO2 emissions from new vehicles as they will either be ULEVs | | |
| Green scheduling of work/jobs to reduce carbon emissions through travel, winter maintenance. | MP | Winter Maintenance Review awaiting members. | | | Reduced number of journeys and therefore reduced emissions from fleet | | |

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| (Linked to telematics review) | | Decision. 2024/25 | | | Potential cost savings | | |
| Transition PCC equipment / plant and tools to electric. | MP/JPW | CONTINUALLY ONGOING | | | % Reduced carbon emissions from tools | Amount/percentage of tools that have been exchanged for an electric equivalent | |
| Active Travel | | | | | | | |
| Implement E bikes in conjunction with Sustrans (E-MOVE) cv within Communities (Pathfinder in Newtown being Pilot scheme). | VG | Ongoing | | | | Work underway. 15 E Bikes used for Domiciliary Care. Project outputs with Vincent Goodwin. | |
| Potential School Behavioural change. (Cycling and repair training) What are the tasks or activities which will fall out of this action? | VG | FUNDING REQUIRED | | | National Stats but no local stats available. Limited surveys undertaken. COST NEEDS TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR | Discussed and developed the importance of changing behaviour when implementing Active Travel. Need to do this with Welsh Gov as well. | |
| Integrated rural active travel (Tier 3) (can we elaborate or identify additional actions/targets aligned to this action?) Comms & engagement etc | VG/JF | FUNDING REQUIRED | | Powys in conjunction with stakeholders have identified over 500 future routes within designated localities (Towns with pop over 2k of which there are 11 in Powys) Current funding covers approx. 3 schemes per year. LONG WAY TO GO! | No resources currently available to plot any rural active routes. Additionally, no funding is currently available. | Need to raise awareness of different travel culture in rural communities such as tourism and leisure for wellbeing agenda. | |

Public Transport

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| Implement demand responsive Transport-Community hubs, voluntary sector etc. to include infrastructure investment | JF | Ongoing | | Already have services within the towns of Rhayader, Llandod and Llanidloes. Minimum booking time of 2hrs | | Crucial to look at timetables, bus stops and marketing of public transport. Integrated transport and Active Travel. Extent concessionary offer to young people. | |
| Provision of transport hub for 20 Minute Communities Are we planning to replicate PACE work beyond 3 communities? Page 18 | JF | Ongoing | | | | Work has been undertaken on 20 minute communities in three communities in Powys. This work was undertaken by PACE. Would link with Community Transport. | |
| Boost EV car clubs (How will we boost EV Car clubs? What tasks/activity will we undertake? Will we develop a project or have targets for no of clubs by what date?) | WG | | | | | Work undertaken by Welsh Government | |
| Develop public transport corridor schemes to connect growing communities to employment hubs. | JF | Ongoing | | | <i>Needs to link into Sustainable Powys Model</i> | Input into Local Development Plan | |
| Support development of a regional Transport plan? | SJ/JF | Ongoing | | | <i>CJC – Awaiting clarification from WG in relation to the National Transport Plan</i> | | |

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| Powys will develop an EV charging strategy and action plan | SJ/TC | Spring 2024 | | | | | |
| Continue to bid for grant funding to build EV infrastructure that supports communities, businesses in Powys | SJ/TC | Ongoing | Dependent on funding received. | | | | |
| Staff business and commuting travel | | | | | | | |
| Work with public transport operators to see if PCC staff discounts can be arranged to encourage staff to use public transport on morning/afternoon commutes. (Scheme already exists for PCC staff going to meetings?) | JF | ONGOING | | <i>Loss of income and tax implications for the staff needs to be considered.</i> | Reduction in emissions from staff commuting | | |
| Increase the uptake of the use of pool cars when travelling outside of Powys | TBC | ONGOING | | | | | |
| Sharing of vehicles when staff are travelling to the same destination. | TBC | ONGOING | | | Reduction in emissions from staff commuting | | |
| Encouraging of virtual meetings and remote working as a default. | TBC | ONGOING | | | | | |
| Actively encourage the use of cycling, public transport and car sharing for any commutes and support remote working | VG | ONGOING | | <i>No Resources currently allow publicity/promotion for sustainable modes</i> | Reduction in emissions from staff commuting | | |

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Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

The following Committee met on: 11.09.2023

And considered the following document: Quarter 1 Performance Report

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 19.09.2023

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder and Officers for providing the report.

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The scorecard was easier to navigate and provided detailed information, which was an improvement to the previous system.
- The Committee were assured that anomalies identified within the report would be resolved by the officers.
- It would have benefited the Committee to have comparable data from last year.
- Colour coding and rating status system within the scorecard was not distinguished and considered confusing.

| Scrutiny's Recommendation | Accept (plus, Action and timescale) | Partially Accept (plus, Rationale and Action and timescale) | Reject (plus, Rationale) |
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| 1. The Council have a standard consistent approach to rating status (for easy visibility and understanding e.g., traffic lights). | | <p>The Council is due to launch its replacement Performance Document imminently, which details the agreed organisational approach to rating status and with its implementation, will be seeking to embed this model consistently.</p> <p>However, there may be instances where a traditional BRAG status will be used if it relates to an external or regulatory action plan.</p> | |
| 2. Comparable data for benchmarking be available from previous years for context. | | <p>The measures contained within the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan have been defined for 2023 onwards. Where there are examples where historic information might be available, this may not be consistent with the methodologies defined for the new Plan.</p> <p>As the plan matures on a quarterly basis, they will be able to explore the trend over time on a quarterly basis and see if the Plan is delivering.</p> <p>However, it is important to note that measures may not see immediate impact due to the longer-term nature of the plan.</p> | |

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| 3. Ensure clear and precise narrative information is available | | Officers who provide this information are supported and challenged at various stages throughout the process to ensure the information presented is clear, precise and understandable to the general public. This will be reiterated to officers in the next quarterly update. | |
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Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 08.09.2023: County Councillors A Davies (Chair), B Davies, A Jones, E A Jones, G Mitchell, K Lewis, P James, C Kenyon-Wade, G Preston, and L Rijnenberg



Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 01.08.2023

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee completed a virtual Scrutiny and considered the following documents:

Powys Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028 and associated minor policy amendments to the 'Homes in Powys' housing allocations policy (& Appendices)

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder and Officers for providing the reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

Committees Comments:

- An excellent report was produced with proactive and ambitious plans.
- [2.7] – It was felt that the targets for a typical stay within a triage centre is essential but ambitious and fully dependant on having the right 'next step' accommodation available. Having all three options (Supported /Modular interim accommodation and the option for flipping) will be essential to help meet the proposed targets. Concerns were raised on how the homeless triage system would be made available, and how the homeless would access the service. Key locations for the triage centres must ensure they meet demand, with easy access to all, including supporting services.
- [3.1.5] – Concerns were raised that those on the Homes in Powys waiting list would be disadvantaged, and more accommodation would be needed.
- [4.6] - It was felt that the success of the projects 24/7 triage, emergency housing and the change from temporary to permanent accommodation falls to ensuring that skilled dedicated support staff are made available.
- Concerns were raised on how the Council propose to recruit the staff needed due to the current recruitment challenges within the care sector.
- And what steps are being taken to ensure the availability of qualified/ trained employees to run the proposed triage centres and provide client support.
- [4.7] – Support was felt if the Council were to provide modular interim accommodation it would have a positive immediate impact.
- Repurposing existing Council buildings for accommodation could also go towards meeting needs greatly in demand, it was asked if this had been considered.
- Concerns were raised over the modular interim accommodation locations, as it is vital to ensure that all the relevant support services were easily available, with the aim to provide help and support residents towards the next step.
- It was felt that modular interim accommodation was an excellent way to provide a multi-pronged approach to meeting the homeless housing need.
- [5.1.1] - proposed policy amendment - Homeless Duties Section 75 (S75) - was supported:
 - that suitable temporary accommodation could become permanent.
 - to minimise the need for homeless households to move twice.
- However, the impact of flipping would leave the housing stock depleted and would be reliant on more suitable accommodation being sourced in the area.

- It was noted that the change (S75) may lead to abuse, with tirage centres having to act swiftly to action any abuse.
- [5.2.1] – proposed policy amendment – due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant was supported.
- It was asked that the areas below were noted, and plans were appropriately monitored:
 - the allocation of housing to ensure that being homeless is not seen as a fast-track route to housing.
 - to ensure equality is evidenced throughout the waiting list.
 - to promote the right home, right place, right time.
 - to ensure all relevant and appropriate support is available to help residents.

The ultimate aim is to reduce the cost (Financial and social) of homelessness and repeat homelessness by supporting residents back to meaningful lives.

| Scrutiny's Recommendation | Accept (plus Action and timescale) | Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale) | Reject (plus Rationale) |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| 1 To plan and monitor the allocation of housing to ensure that being homeless is not seen as a fast-track route to housing. | Accepted – Allocations to homelessness households will continue to be considered as part of the quarterly review of all allocations by the Homes in Powys Working Group to ensure that they are proportionate to those made to other households in housing need. | | |
| 2 Ensure equality is evidenced throughout the waiting list. | Accepted – Allocations to all households will continue to be considered as part of the quarterly review of all allocations by the Homes in Powys Working Group to ensure that they effectively reflected the proportion of households on the Common Housing Register with protected characteristics. | | |
| 3 To promote the right home, right place, right time. | Accepted – Each household on the Common Housing Register is routinely made aware of the | | |

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| | availability of social housing stock. In addition, homeless households are actively supported to explore securing a tenancy in the Private Rented Sector as part of maximising their housing options. | | |
| 4 Ensure all relevant and appropriate support is available to help residents. | Accepted – An assessment of both housing and support needs is completed for households threatened with homeless/homelessness and where needed individually tailored support is subsequently provided. At more a general level, households on the Common Housing Register are signposted to partners that can provide appropriate advice and support. | | |

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e., by 20.10.2023

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Members that participated in the scrutiny process:
County Councillors: A Davies, A Jones, A E Jones, L Rijnenberg, C Kenyon-Wade

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Working Group Update for
Economy, Residents and Communities (ERC) Committee
30.10.2023

County Farms Working Group:

- The Working Group was established in in late 2022. The group has a good cross party (and independent) mix of councillors.
- The aim of the group is to have a full understanding of the Council Farm and Woodland Estate. To offer advice, support and recommendations to the portfolio holders and senior officers on best practice through learning drawn from within the group and from other outside bodies.
- The group has met on several occasions on farm estate holdings and has met with representatives of the Farm Estate Tenant liaison panel members to learn firsthand how the estate benefits those living and working within it.
- The group has also most with senior leads within the finance team to gain the best insight into the needs of the council from the farm estate.
- The working group has cross representation on the Climate and Nature working and steering groups allowing the two to support mutual aims.
- To scrutinise the current Farm Estate Delivery Plan.
- The group continues to grow, and still meets on a regular basis, however developments have caused the need to separate out scrutiny from development work. Therefore, the Working Group wish to seek approval from the ERC Committee to disband.
- The scrutiny of the farm and woodland estate could therefore be undertaken by the ERC Committee as a whole.
- And a proposal will be presented to Cabinet to establish a County Farms Estate Cabinet Advisory Group to explore options for the future of the county farms estate.

Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) Working Group:

- The Working Group was established in March 2023.
- The purpose of the Group is to scrutinise the process and outcomes of the transition from Kier HoWPS to the Council.
- The Group have heard from numerous services/officers involved with the process to determine and be satisfied that an open and honest reflection of the transition was received.
- Group members took part in a Toolbox talk to speak directly to operatives to find out more about staff experiences around the transition and determine current levels of morale.
- Key performance data has been shared with the group to compare statistics from different timelines, in which challenge and queries were answered comprehensively by officers.
- The Working Group is aligned with the Governance and Audit Working Group which has provided valuable information and share lessons learned.
- The group continue to investigate and scrutinise the transition from HoWPS back to the Council. With the next meeting investigating ICT systems involved that assist the services in day to day running.

Leisure Review Joint Scrutiny Working Group:

- The Working Group was established in May 2023.
- The Group has and continues to examine, scrutinise, and seek assurance around the various aspects of the Leisure Review including financial, communications and alternative delivery models.
- The group has received information in respect to the work being undertaken on the Condition surveys of the individual leisure centres together with some information on the works required to undertake required works in the short, medium, and longer term to bring the centres up to the required standards in terms of both the physical structure of the building and in relation to working towards the net zero aim of the council.
- The Group have met on a regular basis in alignment with the Officer Working Group to ensure updates and progress can be monitored and will continue until the Council have completed the Leisure Review.
- Comprehensive data has been provided by officers around the Leisure Review including the initial analysis of the engagement survey and building condition surveys, although the group has yet to receive the final versions of any of the analysis of the data collected or any figures in relation to the overall backlog of maintenance and improvement works required.
- The group has received presentations from and questioned invited speakers in respect to a school run leisure facility and a community run small swimming pool. In addition, officers have provided some information in respect to the different options and opportunities for consideration.
- Some members have expressed the lack of pace and finalised evidence that has been shared with the group and it is evident that the main bulk of the work of the working group is yet to be undertaken.
- The working group is coming to the end of its work, and this will include receiving and commenting on details of each strand of the programme of work undertaken by the officers and their conclusions and recommendations.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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