

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE  
26<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor James Gibson Watt  
Leader and Portfolio Holder for an Open and  
Transparent Powys

**REPORT TITLE:** Transition from Improvement Boards

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**REPORT FOR:** Decision

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The new Administration have several priorities within their Progressive Partnership Agreement, one being 'an open and democratic Council'. For the past 2 years, the Council has had additional governance by way of Improvement Boards following the step down of the Improvement and Assurance Board in summer 2020.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a transition to effective Scrutiny Committees will provide the necessary assurance without the need for additional governance in the form of Improvement Boards for Education and Housing.
- 1.3 At this time, it is felt that further corporate oversight and support is required for Highways, Transport and Recycling (HTR) as there was a delay in obtaining the additional support required for this area.
- 1.4 This report recommends the cessation of the Education and Housing Improvement Boards with immediate effect and the continuation of the HTR Improvement Board.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Summer 2020, the Council stood down, with approval from the Minister, the Improvement and Assurance Board and put a revised framework in place to facilitate the delivery of Transformation and Improvement within the Council. The revised framework provided a mechanism for the Council to effectively manage its own improvement journey.
- 2.2 November 2020, the Council stood down the Social Services Improvement Board but continued with Improvement Boards for Education, Housing and Highways, Transport and Recycling. Education and Housing continued to be supported by an independent expert adviser who was appointed by and reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

- 2.3 The Council moved from enhanced monitoring by Care Inspectorate Wales October 2020 and Estyn October 2021. Housing have also seen significant improvements with the recruitment of a permanent compliance and quality assurance team, a full Housing staffing restructure, and the return to in house delivery of staff and services previously with the Heart of Wales Property Services.
- 2.4 May 2022 elections resulted in a new Administration (Cabinet) who have a clear set of priorities within their Progressive Partnership Agreement, one being 'an open and democratic Council'. There is a strong desire from the Cabinet that Scrutiny performs an assurance role, creating an environment for greater accountability across the organisation and operating as one Council.

### **3. Advice**

- 3.1 Cabinet is advised to transition from Improvement Boards to effective Scrutiny Committees that will provide the necessary assurance without the need for additional governance in the form of Improvement Boards for Education and Housing.
- 3.2 At this time, it is felt that further corporate oversight and support is required for Highways, Transport and Recycling (HTR) as there was a delay in obtaining the additional support needed for this area.
- 3.3 That Scrutiny performs an assurance role, creating an environment for greater accountability across the organisation and operating as one Council. Utilising Scrutiny effectively will:
- Drive improvement in public services; Better Services
  - Support democratic decision making, which is accountable, inclusive and robust; Better Decisions, and;
  - Ensure that the public are engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.
- 3.4 That Scrutiny use two main methods to achieve this: 1) pre-decision and 2) performance monitoring.
- 3.5 The Transformation Delivery Board membership currently consists of Cabinet and Executive Management Team. The Board is chaired by the Leader and it meets once a quarter. The purpose of the Board is to ensure:
- strategic corporate ownership and visibility of the Council's key transformational change initiatives
  - governance and alignment to the Council's corporate objectives, and;

- ensuring that change is driven forward at pace and that risks and dependencies are effectively managed.
- 3.6 It is suggested that Scrutiny Chairs are given the opportunity as observers to attend the Transformation Delivery Board. Attendance may inform the Scrutiny Chair's understanding of the Transformation Portfolio and influence items for the scrutiny work programme.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There will be no additional resource implications.
- 4.2 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and can support the recommendations.

#### **5. Legal implications**

(State here any legal implications and confirmation that the report has been approved by the Monitoring Officer)

#### **6. Comment from local member(s)**

- 6.1 Not Applicable.

#### **7. Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Assessment is not required.

#### **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the;
- Improvement Boards for Education and Housing are stood down with immediate effect
  - Appropriate Scrutiny Committees include within their forward work programmes sufficient capacity to undertake effective scrutiny of the service performance and risk (or more broadly Corporate Health) at least quarterly
  - Scrutiny Committees submit their findings and any recommendations to the Cabinet at least quarterly
  - HTR Improvement Board continues and that a further review is undertaken in 6-12 months or earlier if deemed appropriate.

- An invite is extended to Scrutiny Chairs to observe the Transformation Delivery Board.

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