

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.