



POLICY AND RESOURCES (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON THURSDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Taylor - Chairman

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D. Bolter, J.B. Criddle, L. Hughes, D.V. Poole, K.V. Reynolds, A.S. Williams

Also Present:

Cabinet Members Councillors: C. Hobbs (Performance, Property and Asset Management) and C.P. Mann (Corporate Finance, Procurement and Sustainability)

Together with:

N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), P.S. Evans (Head of Information, Communications, Technology and Property Services), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Policy), D. Perkins (Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer), N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), R. Roberts (Performance Manager), A. Bray (Performance Co-ordinator), J. Jones (Scrutiny and Members' Services Manager), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, Mrs A. Blackman, D.T. Davies, Mrs V. Jenkins, G. Jones, D. Rees, Mrs M.E. Sargent and Cabinet Member Councillor A.J. Pritchard

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

2. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that the Heads of Service would present each service area's performance report. A review of the monitoring and reporting arrangements was given and Members assured that the Ffynnon system was well used and interrogated.

The Head of Performance and Policy introduced the report and advised that the performance information has been reported from a series of service scorecards, for the reporting year April 2010 to March 2011, Quarter 2, with supporting comments.

A brief explanation of the abbreviations used within the report and appendix was given and confirmation given that the 'actual' figures detailed, demonstrated performance up to 30th September 2010.

Legal Services

An overview of each performance indicator was given. Members were reminded of past performances from the service area, and of the achievements made since the introduction of local targets. Members were asked to note however, that the 'actual' figures quoted were for one month only, rather than the last 6 months. The correct figures were given verbally at the meeting.

Changes to the services' clientele were highlighted and the movement of staff to take this into account demonstrated. Targets had previously been revised, and Members were informed that from the new year, Land Charges will be transferred from Legal Services to the Planning Division.

Members discussed the service area's targets and sought clarification on the current target levels. Concerns were raised that due to the fluctuating levels of incoming work, the performance indicators, and targets, were not fully reflective of the actual work undertaken. In particular the following comments were made:

- (1) the possibility of reducing the 15 working day target due to high compliance levels;
- (2) the need to amend the target to take into account the number of summons requests received, in addition to the numbers issued; and
- (3) the possibility of combining and/or having new targets to reflect changes in the business and clients' needs.

Performance and Policy

An overview of each performance indicator was given. Members were informed the Wales Audit Office (WAO) routinely take samples of the data produced by the service area and whilst irregularities had been found previously, this year the WAO had approved all sample performance indicator data. It was recognised across Welsh authorities that data collated and used by CCBC was accurate. Following recent legislation updates, the Equalities team have been busier than anticipated and the importance of the service area's collaborative work with other departments was stressed.

Members discussed the service area's targets and sought information regarding underperforming department(s). Officers confirmed that data was to initiate debate and challenge working practices, however Managers and Cabinet Members were informed of any areas to be improved upon. The following was highlighted:

- (1) the possibility of increasing the target and intervention figures in regard to the percentage of reports considered by Scrutiny Committees on the dates published in the forward work programme; and
- (2) to review the target for the number of service areas visited for equalities advice, to better reflect the raised profile of the Equalities team.

Corporate Finance

An overview of each performance indicator was given, together with confirmation that significant improvements had been made regarding current sickness levels. Members were advised that the percentage of overall spend was within budget and while the target to pay invoices was within 30 days, officers did try to achieve payments within 15 days. This was now completed by a number of staff across the Authority with the purchase ledger team providing quarterly late payment reports to Head of Services.

Members discussed the service area's targets and sought clarification in regard to the performance indicator for the percentage of overall spend within budget (CCBC). A Member asked that this performance indicator be reviewed to make it more meaningful. The Head of Corporate Finance agreed to review this and to consider changing the indicator to show forecast spend instead.

Procurement Services

An overview of each performance indicator was given.

Members discussed the service area's targets and sought clarification as to the current performance indicators and target levels. In particular, a Member requested sight of the monetary value of savings on the total procurement spend, to better understand the performance indicator. Officers advised this may need to be split between revenue and capital savings and that a further report will be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee at the end of the financial year. The Head of Corporate Finance also agreed to check and advise Members of the number of suppliers awarded contracts and whether they are framework agreements.

In addition, the need to review performance indicators were raised as follows:

- (1) the number of products or specifications changed due to environmental alternatives being available to be reconsidered as this requirement is now automatically built into new contracts;
- (2) the need to review the target for the number of suppliers awarded contracts, to include the number of contracts awarded.

HR & Organisational Development

An overview of each performance indicator was given. Members were advised that the majority of the performance indicators were nationally set and were a mixture of percentages and metric figures.

Members discussed the service area's targets and were informed that although the trend for the last 3 to 4 years showed an increase in the number of employees disabled under the DDA, it was believed that this was due to a growing willingness of people to declare themselves disabled. Similarly, the number of employees from ethnic minority groups had increased. There was a concern however, that this trend could be halted due to the existing policy of advertising vacancies internally. Unless the economy improved, this trend could reverse.

A Member asked for the actual number of women in leadership posts and the impact of the recent senior management restructuring on this figure. The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development agreed to provide this information at a later date.

ICT & Property

An overview of each performance indicator was given, together with confirmation that significant improvements had been made regarding current sickness levels. Primarily as a

result in the reduction in numbers of staff on long-term sick (five in total) but also from improvements in short term sickness levels.

Members discussed the service area's targets and highlighted the need to review the order of the performance indicators to ensure like functions are shown together. Members were reminded that the regular Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information report brought before the Scrutiny Committee gave greater detail. The next report will be brought forward for consideration in the new year.

Sickness Absence / Complaints

An overview of each performance indicator was given and officers highlighted the positive trend in the reduction of sickness levels across the directorate. This was attributed to the Authority's new Managing Sickness Absence Procedures. A further report will be brought before the next Scrutiny Committee to consider. Officers will now review the target to reflect the downward trend.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised Members that officers were also looking to identify those members of staff who took no time off, to enable the Corporate Management Team to congratulate and recognise these individuals.

The Chairman thanked all members present for attending the meeting, and to the officers for responding to the questions raised.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN