



POLICY AND RESOURCES (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON THURSDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David - Chairman
Councillor Mrs J. Summers - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

J.E. Fussell, Ms. J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, R. Saralis, J. Taylor

Also Present:

Cabinet Member: Councillor D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management)

Together with:

N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Governance), P.S. Evans (Head of Information, Communications and Technology), J. Pearce (PMU Officer), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, D.G. Carter, C.J. Cuss, Mrs. D. Ellis, C. Hawker and D. Rees; together with Cabinet Members Councillor K. Reynolds (Corporate Services) and Councillor D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 6 MONTH UPDATE

Mr Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property, opened proceedings by giving a brief description of the performance management framework and of the important role Members played.

He reminded Members that a number of organisations monitor the progress made by each authority against their key Improvement Objectives and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) publish an Annual Improvement Report, which tells the public how each local authority is performing. In addition, and where appropriate, Regulator confidence in the council's ability and preparedness to self assess its performance can lead to reduced external audit fees. Last year the Authority received a 6% reduction, placing greater responsibility on the authority to manage its improvement journey. This helped the Council financially and was a boost to its reputation.

In closing, Mr Jones explained the format of the monitoring documentation and welcomed Members to challenge any areas of under performance.

3. CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Chairman thanked Mr Jones for his introduction and referred Members to the report that gave an update on Improvement Objective (IO1) Quarter 2 – Ensure the citizens of Caerphilly County Borough understand why, when and how to engage with us and the impact their engagement will have in helping us to improve services.

Mr Phil Evans, Head of Information, Communications, Technology and Customer Services, reviewed the progress summary for the outcomes within his service area as listed below:

1. We will improve the way we engage and feedback to citizens.
2. Our citizens will have a better understanding of their engagement role with the council and understand how they can influence and shape policy and services by their engagement.
3. In 2013 the Council's Household Survey will show an improvement in customer perception of our services.
4. We will have a good representative mix of citizens that take part in our consultation/engagement activities which match the local population demographics.

Challenges to realising the necessary service delivery targets were explained, including the substantial stakeholder consultation in regard to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (undertaken earlier in the year), preparing for citizen engagement in January and the creation of a strategic document linked with the Local Service Board Framework.

Members were also informed of activities, ongoing and planned, to improve service delivery such as the introduction of various citizen engagement strategies, the review and refreshment of the current view point panel, increased usage of new media (Twitter/Facebook) and ongoing liaison with the Youth Forum.

Mr Evans gave an apology for the previous lack of progress in regards to a comprehensive public engagement and participation strategy, and he asked Members to note that it was now near completion. The strategy would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee to consider, in the New Year.

In addition, Members would be consulted on the Household Survey. For further information, officers recommended that Members view the report entitled "Results of the February/March 2011 Household Survey" that was presented to Cabinet on 20th September 2011.

Mr Daniel Perkins, Head of Legal and Governance, then reviewed the progress summary for the outcome within his service area: 'Through our corporate complaints process, we gather intelligence and citizens understand this helps us improve the way we do things'.

An apology was given for the delay in progressing the Improvement Objective. Mr Perkins advised that the Ombudsman wanted a consistent approach in the way all twenty-two local authorities managed complaints, and that there was to be just two stages to each complaint. Officers were in the process of drafting a new complaints procedure. A further report on this subject would be brought forward.

Members thanked the officers for their presentations and a full discussion ensued. Officers responded to general questions and agreed that, where possible, the Authority's performance would be benchmarked against other local authorities in Wales. Members also highlighted the difficulty in searching for committee documents. Mr Evans welcomed comments on the system and confirmed it could be amended.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report and welcomed further updates at future meetings of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 6.35 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 22nd January 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN