



POLICY AND RESOURCES (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON THURSDAY, 4TH JULY 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David - Chairman

Councillors:

L. Binding, D.G. Carter, C.J. Cuss, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann,
S. Morgan, D. Rees, R. Saralis

Also Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillor Mrs. C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager)

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), L. Jones (Acting Head of ICT and Communications), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), D. Titley (Customer Service Manager), E. Rogers (Organisational Development Manager), J. Thomas (Client Liaison Officer – Corporate Property), J. Pearce (PMU Officer), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. D. Ellis, Mrs. J.G. Jones, Mrs. J. Summers, and J. Taylor, together with Cabinet Members Councillor D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), Councillor G. Jones (Housing) and Councillor K. Reynolds (Corporate 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. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The report highlighted a single Improvement Objective relating to the Scrutiny Committee “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”. Item 3(2) provided a summary of how the Council has performed against this Improvement Objective and item 3(3) provided an update of Quarter 4 performance for the key indicators in Corporate Services. Members noted the report and discussions followed. However, as Members requested more information on a number of the issues raised in the discussions during the course of the meeting, they did not reach a conclusion on the recommendations in this report.

3. IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 1

Mr. S. Pugh, Communications Manager, presented an overview of Improvement Objective 1, and the progress made over the last 12 months. The Viewpoint Panel is being re-established, with a corporate Consultation Database being created, new Citizen Engagement Strategies being adopted, the development of training and learning for staff is ongoing, and the 2013 Household Survey is underway. The Improvement Objective also outlined action plans, implementation progress, and displayed evidence of key performance indicators.

Members were invited to ask questions and a detailed discussion followed. Members queried the response rate and the advertising of the household survey and the Public Engagement Strategy. Members also asked what groups and ages were included in the strategy and whether this included children and young people. It was confirmed that sampling is based on demographic and geographic modelling and that established methods are utilised. Members were also positive regarding the progress made in social media, and an update was provided on the progress of the new Caerphilly Library and Customer Service Centre.

The revised Corporate Complaints Process has only recently been implemented, so performance data will become available in the coming months.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES Q4 FFYNNON PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Heads of Service or the appropriate Officers provided a verbal update on the key indicators within their service areas for the period January 1st to March 31st 2013 and members were invited to ask questions regarding performance, with the aim that they look at the results, seek explanations behind them and satisfy themselves that progress is being made.

Corporate Finance - Performance is generally on target or just below, with only one performance measure (value of bills outstanding for more than 3 months) below target. It was explained that it is important to pay invoices as quickly as possible, hence the high target. Members queried what is being done in terms of improvement, and it was confirmed that whilst the target was higher than 12 months ago, disputed invoices are being proactively managed, with increased payment runs and identification of problem areas. Discussion took place as to the relevance of the indicators and whether some may be too ambitious.

HR and Organisational Development - Amendments to the handouts circulated to members show sickness absence for the Authority at 4.08% and sickness absence within Corporate Services at 4.12%. There is therefore a slight increase in sickness compared to last year. 44.96% of CCBC employees had no sickness absence at all during the last year, slightly lower than the previous year which was 45.77%. Members discussed the low percentage of employees who are disabled or from ethnic minority groups. It was confirmed that these figures are in part dependant on whether employees actually declare a disability or whether

they belong to an ethnic minority. Changes are currently being made to iTrent so that employees can update their personal information and add this information if they wish, so these percentages may increase in the future. Members requested whether CCBC figures could be benchmarked against regional figures on a number of key indicators and the relevant officers will ensure that this information is provided.

Performance and Property - Members considered and noted the contents of the report.

Performance Management Unit - 21 out of 61 actions for the Wales Audit Office Action Plan Recommendations have been completed. Members discussed the outstanding items, and it was confirmed that more actions have been completed but not closed down by the Wales Audit Office yet as they require backing evidence. It was explained that as some actions would be removed from the action plan when completed, new actions may also be added as and when new reports are issued. Members queried the target of 100% for this key indicator as they felt that this would be impossible to achieve. It was confirmed that the 3 outstanding SIPs were because of interim and acting arrangements within the Senior Management Team, and these should be concluded by the end of July.

Legal and Governance - Members noted their reduced attendance levels at members seminars and there is concern amongst them that they are not seen as committed to members training. They requested that Members seminars be held at different times to allow Members the opportunity to attend. Officers advised that committee dates are always checked prior to booking Members training, but that they are not able to view meeting dates for outside bodies and school governing bodies. Officers will look at the possibility of scheduling seminars prior to meetings of Council or committees, so that Members are able to avoid future clashes

ICT, Public Engagement and Customer Services - The volume of Subject Access and Freedom of Information requests are growing and requests are taking longer to process. Officers confirmed to Members that this is why the performance is down for these key indicators. Another member of staff has been brought in to cover the increased workload. The average time for the Contact Centre to answer calls is slightly below target. This has been caused by staff shortages, due to sickness, maternity absence and staff turnover. It is expected that results will improve once vacancies are filled.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their attendance and their reports and for responding to queries raised during the course of the debate.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN