



## **REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH JUNE 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.**

---

**PRESENT:**

Councillor D.T. Davies - Chairman  
Councillor Mrs. E.M. Aldworth - Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, Mrs. E. Forehead, R.W. Gough, A.G. Higgs, Ms. J.G. Jones

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

Also in attendance to observe: Councillors H.A. Andrews, Mrs. D. Ellis, K. James, Mrs. J. Summers, T.J. Williams

**Together with:**

A. O'Sullivan (Chief Executive), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), P. Mears (Head of Regeneration and Planning), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), M.S. Williams (Head of Public Services), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), I. Raymond (Performance Management Officer), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Tenant Representatives: Mrs. S. Jones, S. Mark and Mrs. O. Skym

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.T. Davies, S. Kent, M.J. Prew, Mrs. D. Price and L.R. Rees

#### **1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee and thanked Councillor C. Elsbury for his Chairmanship of the former Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

#### **2. 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.

### **3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY (PRESENTATION BY COLIN JONES, HEAD OF PERFORMANCE AND PROPERTY)**

Mr Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property, opened proceedings by saying that this was the first of two meetings held each year to carry out a forward looking review of corporate arrangements to support improvement and retrospectively assess improvement in services.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, states each local authority has to have effective arrangements in place to secure improvement. A number of organisations, in particular the Wales Audit Office (WAO), monitor the progress made by each authority. Additionally, the WAO publish an Annual Improvement Report, which tells the public how each local authority is performing. Members were advised that a Wales Audit Officer had attended the last Health, Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny Committee to observe how the Authority challenged itself and held local decision and policy makers to account. Positive feedback was received and the Officer had stated that he had been impressed with the level of scrutiny shown at CCBC.

Specific key areas are chosen, selected from both local performance measures, by heads of service, and National measures, as prescribed from the Performance Indicator Guidance for Wales. Data is collated using the Performance Information Measurement System (PIMS - Ffynnon), and extracted from the PIMS scorecard on a regular basis for analysis. The Head of Performance and Property attends Corporate Management Team meetings to keep everyone abreast of developments and challenges.

Members were informed that Cabinet identifies the key Improvement Objectives and publishes a 3 - 4 year Improvement Plan. This is revised annually to ensure its relevance. Mr Jones highlighted that the Authority has seen significant improvement in its performance and showed an example of that improvement in the national performance indicators since 2007/2008.

In addition, a 3 yearly Outcome Agreement is agreed with the Welsh Government. Improvements made ensured that the Authority received grants of £5.4m over a 3 year period, as all targets had been met in the last 6 years.

In closing, Members were introduced to Ffynnon and advised of their role in performance management.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his presentation and welcomed comments and questions from Members. Mr Jones confirmed that the local performance indicators were management driven.

### **4. SERVICE PRIORITIES – ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**

Mr Anthony O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, introduced the Environment Directorate and gave an overview of financial matters affecting the service.

Members were asked to note the excellent service delivery, despite depleting Welsh Government settlements and rising fuel and food costs. This had been, and continued to be, accomplished by the reduction of some services, becoming more efficient and generating income from services offered. Further opportunities to reduce costs had arisen by taking advantage of new technologies and the contract retendering process. Collaborative working and procurement as part of a consortium, had also had a positive effect.

Mr O'Sullivan suggested holding an open day in each service area and he encouraged Members to attend. He emphasised that the Environment Directorate affects all communities and covers a wide range of services.

Members thanked Mr O'Sullivan for his introduction and received further clarification regarding staff management and well-being and the potential use of additional collaborative arrangements.

Members were then introduced to the head of each service area.

## **5. Public Services**

Mr Mark S. Williams, Head of Public Services advised Members of the four service areas within his section which housed circa 1000 members of staff and a budget of £23m. An outline of each service area was given (Waste Strategy and Operations; Parks, Bereavements and Outdoor Facilities; Building Cleaning; and Fleet Management and Maintenance) together with some of the initiatives being undertaken and the challenges each faced.

In particular, Members were informed of the ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with Welsh Government targets in regards to waste and recyclables, and the need to develop new burial grounds.

The Chairman thanked the officer and welcomed comments and questions from Members.

## **6. Regeneration and Planning**

Mr Pat Mears, Head of Regeneration and Planning informed Members of the four service areas within his section; Countryside and Landscape Services; Development Services; Economic Development; and Strategic Planning and Urban Renewal. The managers within these sections were introduced and a brief summary of their responsibilities given.

Members were advised of the many successful accomplishments of the Authority including being the first in Wales to adopt its Local Development Plan (LDP) and holding prestigious events such as The Big Cheese, BBC Proms in the Park and the cycle Tour of Britain. Additional initiatives giving support to local businesses and the urban renewal strategy were confirmed.

The Chairman thanked the officer and welcomed comments and questions from Members. Clarification was given as to available funding arrangements for town/village improvements and the methods used to assess the success of advice and assistance given to local businesses.

## **7. Public Protection**

Mr Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection advised Members of the four service areas within his management; Community Safety; Catering; Environmental Health; and Trading Standards, Licensing and Registration. A highlight of the activities carried out within each service was given.

In addition, Members were informed of initiatives undertaken such as the publication of Trading Standards and Environmental Health prosecutions in Newline and on the website enforcement activity, fixed penalty notices for dog fouling/littering, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and "Tell Us Once".

Members were asked to note the recent reductions in crime within the county borough, as officers worked in unison with the Police and utilised technology such as CCTV.

The Chairman thanked the officer and commented on the reduced numbers of Community

Safety Officers within the county borough. Mr Hartshorn advised that while numbers had been reduced due to a combination of sickness absence and vacancies, the team would shortly be back up to full establishment. Members were also advised that the Police had received additional funding from Welsh Government and there were now circa 40 Community Support Officers in the county borough.

Further clarification was then given regarding the Street Pride initiative, in particular in relation to cross working relations.

## **8. Engineering Services**

Mr Terry Shaw, Head of Engineering Services circulated a handout to all persons present that detailed the key personnel in the Highways Operations Group, Engineering Projects Group and Transportation Engineering Group. The handout also demonstrated the work undertaken within each of these groups, together with officer contact information.

Members were informed of additional funding arrangements for resurfacing of carriageway works and they were advised that further bids in regards to this would be made in October. Officers were also working hard to renegotiate tender arrangements and reviewing options in regard to bus contracts and the services' sustainability. Alternative methods of pothole repair were also being considered to complete works within the allocated target period and the restricted resources available.

The Chairman thanked the officer and welcomed comments and questions from Members. Clarification was given to the methodology of carriageway maintenance and the general criteria regarding the dropping of curbs and installation of speed bumps.

Members suggested that comprehensive officer contact sheets for each service area be distributed to Scrutiny Committee Members.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6.45 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 17th July 2012, they were signed by the Chairman.

---

CHAIRMAN