



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Pritchard - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, L. Harding, G. Johnston, C. P. Mann, B. Miles, R. Saralis,
G. Simmonds, J. Taylor, L. G. Whittle

Cabinet Members:

C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services), Mrs E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for
Finance, Performance and Customer Services)

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), S. Harris (Head of
Financial Services & S151 Officer), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services),
S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy), V. Camp (Transformation Manager),
K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), S. Hughes
(Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be
made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential
or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead,
Mrs D. Price and Mrs M. E. Sargent.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During the course of the meeting Councillor L. Whittle declared a personal interest in relation to
agenda item number 7, as Chair of the Aber Valley Heritage Group. As such there was no
requirement for him to leave the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 29TH SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 29th September 2020 (minute nos. 1 – 9) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report which outlined details of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period November 2020 to May 2021 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 29th September 2020. The items scheduled on the Forward Work Programme for the meetings to be held on 12th January 2021 and 23rd February 2021 were highlighted. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

In addition, it was recommended that the special meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Flexible Working Update report, be held on 21st January 2021.

The Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer provided an update on the current position in terms of the financial settlement for the next financial year. Members were advised that notification has been received from Welsh Government informing that details of the provisional settlement will be not be received until 22nd December 2020.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report it was agreed that:-

- (i) A special meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee be added to the Forward Work Programme for 21st January 2021.
- (ii) The Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. PROPOSED ICT STRATEGY – PRESENTATION

Members received a presentation from the Head of Customer and Digital Services which outlined the vision, process, strategic priorities and new steps of the proposed ICT Strategy. It was highlighted that back in 2019 the authority agreed an aspirational customer and digital strategy. Members were informed that the mechanics of delivery of the ICT infrastructure

elements of that strategy was difficult to pin down at that time. Therefore, the ICT presentation and ICT Strategy document were proposed to develop ICT, infrastructure, governance around systems and also staff.

Points of clarification was requested on various aspects of the presentation and Officers responded to the points raised. During the course of discussion, a Member raised concerns in relation to withdrawing from the Caerphilly Tourism Website and the Caerphilly Visitors Guide. In response, it was agreed that the appropriate Officer would be contacted and asked to provide an explanation in writing to the Member. Officers highlighted that in terms of linking to the IT Strategy, it is not only to make staff able to work in more agile ways but also to make the organisation much more accessible.

The Head of Customer and Digital Services assured Members that the proposal is not to withdraw services but to enhance services and provide a continuity of service. Assurances were also given that all members of the public will be able to access the full range of services, whether it is face to face or by a digital means.

8. COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which presented Members with the draft Commercial and Investment Strategy and associated action plan detailing the priorities for the work stream for the following twelve months. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider and comment on the content of the Strategy and Action Plan prior to submitting and presenting the information to Cabinet for endorsement. Members of the Scrutiny Committee was also asked to consider and comment on the governance framework and allocation of seed money to launch the Licence to Innovate scheme, prior to consideration by Cabinet on 9th December 2020.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised. The Scrutiny Committee highlighted the importance, going forward, that any proposals have detailed cost implications showing the commercial imperative for any investment proposals. Members were advised that any proposals will have fully costed business cases and will be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. It was highlighted that the report is the starting point for this strategy with the proposal to allocate £50k seed money to begin the process and examples of some of the initial ideas submitted were outlined.

Members asked for further detail on the 10 corporate service reviews and it was explained that these have been allocated to Heads of Service. Their progress will depend upon the type of review and workloads, and it is hoped that recommendations will be made on each by March 2021. The project plans that come out of the reviews will, however, take much longer and it was suggested that the proposed workshop for all Members in January could provide more detail on each of these reviews.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

Having noted and commented on the content of the Strategy and High-level Action Plan, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee:-

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:

- (ii) the recommendation of £50,000 allocation of seed money from Education & Corporate Reserves to be made available to progress ideas and concept, prior to consideration by Cabinet.
- (iii) a core budget allocation for this initiative will need to be considered as part of the 2021/2022 budget setting process. The seed money will be allocated by the Regeneration Board following assessment panel process.

9. THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY IN STRENGTHENING TEAM CAERPHILLY

Consideration was given to the report which sought the view of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed changes to strengthen the framework and governance arrangements for the 'TeamCaerphilly-BetterTogether' transformation strategy. It was noted that the programme management arrangements for transformation were agreed on the 12th June 2019 and confirmed on 22nd July 2020, when a series of Corporate reviews linked to the Team Caerphilly transformation strategy were approved by Cabinet.

It was highlighted that the role of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has been to receive updates on progress against the 'Team Caerphilly' Strategy on a six-monthly basis prior to presentation to Cabinet. The first of these was considered by the Committee on 12th November 2019. A second six-monthly update was due on the 26th May 2020 but was not considered by the Committee due to the coronavirus crisis. In addition to the six-monthly updates to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee the report proposed that a Members workshop is held early in 2021 to brief all Members on the elements of transformation that the local authority is working towards and that subsequently workshops are offered on a six-monthly basis following the regular updates to Cabinet.

The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy welcomed the opportunity to talk about the work of the Transformation Team over the last year. Members were informed that the Transformation Team was developed towards the end of 2019 with a full team being in place by January 2020. However, at the start of March 2020, the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, the team were tasked with an insurmountable challenge to set up a support system for the vulnerable within our Communities, involving shopping, pharmacy pick-ups and friendly contact. Within 2 weeks the team had addressed the obstacles and had a plan in place. Additional successful outcomes for the team were also highlighted.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:-

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the ten Corporate Reviews and agreed:

- (i) to reinstate the six-monthly Team Caerphilly updates into the Forward Work Programme of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- (ii) to the suggestion for a member's workshop on the transformation programme early in 2021 and made suggestions as to content.
- (iii) that workshops are offered after each update report has been presented to Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 7.35 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 12th January 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR