



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 12TH JULY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnston – Chair
Councillor B. Miles – Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, C. Cuss, G. Enright, D. Ingram-Jones, C. P. Mann, A. McConnell, D. Preece, J. Reed, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L. G. Whittle, and C. Wright.

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Mrs. E. Stenner (Finance and Performance).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Councillors N. George, J. Jones, and J. Pritchard.

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and a recording 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

No apologies received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 22ND FEBRUARY 2022

A Member queried whether the Minutes, going forward, could include a list of Action Points. Members were advised that in the future, they would be copied into the email circulated to Officers, listing all the Action Points, following each meeting.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2022 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 7 for, 0 against and 8 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd February 2022 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

This item was deferred to the end of the meeting agenda, in order for Members to receive the presentation from Mr. R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services) prior to considering the Forward Work Programme.

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 report.

7. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – KEY CHALLENGES AND ISSUES (PRESENTATION).

The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services gave a presentation to Members. Members were informed of the scheduled meeting dates for the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23 and advised there is a maximum of 4 main agenda items per meeting, plus information items.

Members were advised of the proposed high priority items, which included Workforce Capacity, Agile Working, Customer Services, Procurement Reform, Policy on Cash Collection, Community Empowerment Fund, Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives, Corporate Services Directorate Performance Assessment, and Transformation Programme 6 monthly updates.

Members were also advised of other potential main agenda items, which included Whole-Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (annual report), Capital Strategy Report (annual report), Treasury Management Strategy (annual report), Reserves Report (annual report), IT

Security, Digital, Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Update Report, Development of a new CCBC intranet (which includes Members portal), and ICT.

Members were informed of potential information items, which included Workforce Development Strategy Progress Update, Employee Wellbeing Strategy Progress Update, 12-month update on the impact of the Councils Volunteering Policy, Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (x 3 per annum), Capital budget monitoring reports (x 2 per annum), and Treasury Management monitoring reports (x 2 per annum), and were advised of the process by which Members could request that an information item be considered and discussed at the main meeting.

Members were advised of the Forward Work Programme from September 2022 onwards and their view were sought on the proposed main agenda items and information items for each meeting. Members agreed that 3 main agenda items for each meeting were ample, as there was more potential for these reports to be discussed in depth. Members noted that consideration could be given for guest speakers/relevant Officers to be invited to specific meetings in relation to reports due to be considered. Members also discussed whether any proposed information items could become main agenda items. The proposed timetable for future reports outlined in the presentation was accepted by Members.

A Member requested that the presentation be circulated to Members following the meeting, and this was agreed. In addition, advice was sought as to whether there were any future plans to provide IT equipment in the meeting rooms, to avoid Members having to bring in items, such as laptops, for each meeting. Members were advised that the system was currently being implemented and that this would hopefully be resolved by the end of recess.

A Member queried the Transformation project and the duration of completing the work. Members were advised that it was a large-scale project and hence the reason for the 6-monthly update reports.

A Member noted his support for the proposed items for the next meeting scheduled in September, in particular, the Workforce Policy report which he noted, needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Members were informed that the report was due to be considered in the current meeting, however it was thought timelier to be dealt with in the September meeting. Members were also informed that other Authorities were experiencing the same workforce issues as Caerphilly.

A Member requested that a review of the Reserves Strategy be brought before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, as it hasn't been reviewed since 2016, and enquired if this could be done before the end of the calendar year. Members were advised that this could be possible and proposed this be scheduled for the meeting in November. Members were also advised that if this was not possible, there may be a possibility of an additional meeting scheduled in December just for this item.

A Member queried whether any main agenda item could be re-scheduled for consideration at a future meeting, if required. Members were advised that by scheduling 3 main agenda items on the Forward Work Programme, for each meeting, this allowed for more flexibility to add another item if required and have a maximum of 4 main agenda items, where necessary.

A Member sought clarification on the Recruitment and Retention Policy and queried whether the proposal to include this in the next meeting agenda in September was too long to wait for this information. It was also requested that future reports on recruitment and retention challenges include any associated costs to the Council. In addition, clarification was sought as to whether any emergency issues could be referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for earlier consideration. Members were again advised that recruitment and retention of staff was not just an issue for Caerphilly, and that it was a country wide issue.

Members were advised that the extra time until the next meeting in September would allow for full information and evidence to be provided to Members.

A Member requested that when the reports on workforce capacity and sickness absence figures come before the Committee, information also be provided that would show a comparison with the top 6 authorities and to also include a response from the trade unions. A request was also made for more clarity on the additional revenue that was being received by the authority and a proposal that this information be provided more frequently than the current annual report. Members were advised that the trade union representatives could be invited to the next meeting and that Members would be provided with as much information as possible in relation to sickness absence. Members were also advised that the requested financial information was available within the current finance reports.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the reports planned for the period July 2022 to March 2023 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22nd February 2022. 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, Members were requested to consider the proposals included in the presentation in agenda item 7 and the additions to the Forward Work Programme, as discussed in the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR