

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Chair)
Councillor Dylan Rees (Vice-Chair)

Councillors John Griffith, Richard Griffiths, Alun Roberts, J. Arwel Roberts.

Portfolio Members

Councillor Llinos Medi Huws (Leader and Portfolio Member for Social Services)
Councillor Alun Mummery (Portfolio Member for Housing and Community Support)
Councillor R. Meirion Jones (Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth)
Councillor Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Major Projects and Economic Development)
Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Corporate Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Social Services
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Head of Children and Families' Services
Head of Housing Services
Head of Profession (HR) & Transformation
Head of Democratic Services
Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager
Committee Officer (ATH)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Lewis Davies, Richard O. Jones, Bryan Owen, Mr Keith Roberts, Mrs Anest Frazer (Co-opted Members), Councillors Richard Dew (Portfolio Member for Planning and Public Protection) Councillor Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance)

ALSO PRESENT: None

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September, 2019 were presented and were confirmed as a correct record.

Arising thereon –

With regard to the second bullet point under item 3 the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Planning Authority is required to notify town and community councils of every planning application in their area; the LPA's new administrative system has been adapted to ensure that this happens and planning officers have been advised of the need to comply with this requirement. Town and community councils are now able to track the progress of applications by ward on the Council's website and there is a standing offer to town and community councils to provide training and/or guidance to the councils' clerks or members should that be their wish.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the update and asked that the information above be publicised.

3 MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD QUARTER 2 2019/20

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the second Scorecard of the 2019/20 financial year portraying the Council's position against its operational objectives at the end of Quarter 2 was presented for the Committee's consideration and scrutiny.

The Portfolio Member for Corporate Business reported that since the Quarter 1 Scorecard report was discussed by the Committee in September, 2019 further Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) have been published by Data Cymru specifically with regard to Waste Management and that he was pleased to be able to confirm that once again the Authority in Anglesey has the highest recycling rates in Wales, putting it amongst the world leaders in the volume of household waste which is recycled. The Portfolio Member said it was also encouraging to be able to report that the majority (71%) of the corporate health indicators monitored are continuing to perform well against targets (Green or Yellow RAG) as was the case at the end of Quarter 1. Some points to note include –

- Attendance at work where performance at the end of Quarter 2 is Green against its target at 3.96 days lost to absence per FTE against a target of 4.48 days per FTE. This is an improvement both on Q2 2018/19 levels and Q2 2017/18 levels which was the best performing year for absence since monitoring was undertaken in this way.
- The digital strategy continues to make progress; the majority of indicators under the digital service shift subheading are on an upward trend compared to Q2 2018/19 with 83% of the indicators showing an increase. The number of registered users has more than doubled from 5,000 at the end of Q2 2018/19 to 11,000 which is a positive development since studies have shown that digital transactions are more cost effective than face to face contact.
- The majority (75%) of indicators are performing well against targets under the customer service charter sub-heading. The only indicator which is Red against target is Indicator 04b – the percentage of written complaints responded to by Social Services within 15 days.
- On the basis of the financial position at the end of the second quarter, the Council will overspend its revenue budget for the year ending 31 March, 2020 by £1.410m due mainly to cost pressures and growing demand especially in Adults' Services. The late announcement of the 2020/21 provisional budget settlement for local authorities is making planning ahead more difficult. More detailed budget reports on Quarter 2 financial management performance are to be presented to the Executive at its 25 November, 2019 meeting.
- The majority (85%) of performance indicators continue to perform above target or within 5% tolerance of their targets with only 5 indicators underperforming across the three strategic objectives (in Housing, Children's and Planning Services).

The Portfolio Member concluded that the data indicates that in terms of overall performance, Quarter 2 2019/20 represents a high point since the Council began to systematically review and monitor the performance of its services. The performance information at the end of Quarter 2 is encouraging and shows that the Council is on the right track with regard to improving performance and achieving its objectives.

In discussing the report the Committee requested further analysis and explanations from the Officers in relation aspects of performance in Housing, Children's and Planning Services which were off-target. The Committee was advised that –

- With regard to Indicator 17 – Landlord Services: average number of days to complete repairs which was RED with a performance of 15.14 days against a target of 12 days, a change in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy in October, 2018 which saw the introduction of new time classifications for the completion of work orders, is a factor in the underperformance. When setting the target of 12 days for 2019/20 the Service did not have a full 12 month period available to compare previous performance against the new classifications and the target set may well be too low in terms of the average number of days. Nevertheless, 93% of work orders have been completed on time. The Housing Services Board will continue to monitor this indicator with a view to improving performance. Additionally the Service does also seek to improve efficiency which means grouping work as close as possible to the target date to ensure a full diary in terms of works to be completed thereby minimising travel from one place to another.
- With regard to Indicator 36 – Landlord Services: percentage of rent lost due to properties being empty which was RED on the scorecard with 1.57% lost against a target of 1.15%, the poor performance of Indicator 35 on the scorecard in Q1 (the average number of days to let lettable units of accommodation) directly impacted on Indicator 36 and despite the improvement in letting units in Q2 it has not been possible to claw back as much as hoped. A small number of properties have also been deliberately kept vacant for a longer period of time than normal to be considered for inclusion as part of Children's Services' Small Group Homes scheme and some properties that required adaptations prior to re-letting were kept back pending Occupational Therapist instructions. In addition, major improvement works have been undertaken on some properties that were classed acceptable fails under the WHQS as the former tenants had not wanted improvements carried out at their properties. All these factors have influenced the performance of the indicator. The new streamlined process identified in Q1 will continue to be implemented.
- With regard to Indicator 27 – the percentage of referrals of children that are re-referrals within 12 months which was AMBER on the scorecard with a performance of 14.29% against a target of 10%, a review of the re-referral case files has found that they were all appropriately re-referred into the service the objective being to avoid repeated re-referrals. The Social Services Improvement Panel continues to closely scrutinise all aspects of performance.
- With regard to Indicator 53 – percentage of planning appeals dismissed which was AMBER with a performance of 33% against a target of 65%, the indicator deals with very small numbers and at the end of the quarter the underperformance is due to 2 out of 3 appeals being upheld after the interpretation of new policies was challenged The interpretation of the new policies will improve.
- With regard to Indicator 43 – percentage of planning enforcement cases investigated within 84 days which was AMBER with a performance of 69% against a target of 80% the Service has benefitted from increased capacity and expertise with the appointment of a Senior Manager; additionally, the post of Enforcement Assistant is also currently being advertised. Whilst the performance over Quarters 1 and Q2 is 69%, for Q2 alone the performance is 87% which is above target and is a significant improvement. Although it is anticipated that the improvement will continue into the year ahead, it is worth noting that some cases can be complex and can take time to resolve.

- With regard to complaints, assurance was provided that the 4 responses in Social Services that were late without agreement have now been resolved. In terms of improving the complaints process, the Social Services Complaints Officer has been given greater latitude to follow up responses and to ensure that written responses are sent out in a timely way or where necessary that a time extension is agreed. Responding to complaints can often involve conversations with a number of officers/professionals and this process can take time but is necessary in order to ensure that responses are accurate and address the issues raised.
- With regard to other matters assurance was provided that performance in Adults' Services is good particularly within the Carers and Safeguarding services; the Service will continue to focus on supporting and facilitating the timely discharge of individuals from hospital with regard to which performance has improved; the Service is also working to strengthen capacity and review the marketing of re-ablement services.
- With regard to budgetary pressures in Adults' Services, the Committee noted that the Finance Scrutiny Panel had received a presentation by Social Services at one of its recent meetings. The Committee was happy to place reliance on the Finance Scrutiny Panel to continue to scrutinise financial performance in this area.

Having considered all the information presented as well as the clarifications provided by the officers at the meeting on the points raised, it was resolved to recommend that the Executive accepts the mitigation measures as outlined in the report in relation to –

- **aspects of performance in Housing, Children's and Planning Services;**
- **ongoing scrutiny of financial performance with emphasis and support for services under pressure.**

4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Forward Work Programme was presented and was noted without amendment.

**Councillor Aled Morris Jones
Chair**