

# **CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 18 October, 2021**

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

Councillors John Griffith, Richard Griffiths, Bryan Owen, Gary Pritchard,  
Alun Roberts, J. Arwel Roberts

### **Portfolio Members**

Councillor Llinos Medi Huws (Leader and Portfolio Member for Social Services)  
Councillor Richard Dew (Portfolio Member for Planning and Public Protection)  
Councillor Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Major Projects and Economic Development)  
Councillor R. Meirion Jones (Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth)  
Councillor R.G. Parry, OBE, FRAgS (Portfolio Member Highways, Waste and Property)  
Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Corporate Business)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer  
Director Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer  
Head of Service (Housing Services)  
Head of Service (Highways, Waste and Property)  
Head of Service (Regulation and Economic)  
Head of Democratic Services  
Head of Profession (HR) & Transformation  
Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager  
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)  
Committee Officer (ATH)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Richard Owain Jones, Nicola Roberts, Mr Keith Roberts, Mrs Anest Frazer, (Co-opted Members), Councillor Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr Gareth Williams (Local Democracy Reporter)

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Prior to commencing the business of the meeting the Chair referred with regret to the death of Sir David Amess, MP who was fatally stabbed during a constituency surgery in Essex on Friday, 15 October, 2021; the Committee's thoughts were with his family and friends during this very sad time. A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect for the late Sir David Amess.

## **1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bryan Owen declared a personal but not prejudicial interest with regard to any matter that may arise in connection with the Authority's small group homes (Cartrefi Clyd) on the grounds that the Authority had bought a property to be utilised as a small group home close to where he lived.

At the request of the Chair, the Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer confirmed that the interest was not prejudicial unless the Committee was to enter into full discussion with regard to the specific small group home nearby Councillor Owen's own home.

Likewise Councillor Aled Morris Jones declared a personal but not prejudicial interest on the basis that the Authority is in the process of purchasing the next door property for conversion into a small group home (Cartref Clyd).

Councillors Dylan Rees declared an interest with regard to item 3 on the agenda as a volunteer with Bwyd Da Môn; Councillor Alun Roberts in also declaring an interest in respect of item 3 having volunteered during the pandemic said that he understood that that did not prevent him from taking part in the discussion.

At the request of the Chair, the Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer confirmed that an interest of the kind was neither personal nor prejudicial unless a specific body/organisation in which a Member(s) had an interest was to be the subject of discussion.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 13 September, 2021 were presented and were confirmed as a correct record.

## **3 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21**

Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business presented the draft Annual Performance Report for 2020/21. The Annual Performance Report is a statutory document which analyses the Council's performance over the preceding financial year against the improvement priorities outlined in the Council's well-being objectives as set out in the Council Plan, and it must be published by 31 October annually. The Council wants to ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realise their long-term potential; it seeks to support vulnerable adults and families and keep them safe, healthy and as independent as possible and it endeavours to work in partnership with the Island's communities to ensure that they can cope effectively with change and developments whilst protecting the natural environment.

The Portfolio Member for Corporate Business reported that the draft Annual Performance Report looks at the output and outcomes against what the Council said it would achieve under its three specific well-being objectives in what was an extraordinary and challenging year where the Council had to change and adapt its services to deal with the evolving regulatory expectations related to mitigating the effects of the worldwide pandemic. The report highlights the Council's achievements as well as identifying areas where further improvements are needed which is equally important in terms of making progress and reaching targets. The Council's main aim during this period was to keep residents, visitors and the Council's workforce safe whilst continuing to maintain key frontline services. In doing so the Council succeeded in delivering over and above what was essential and the report gives numerous examples of new initiatives/services either as a direct response to the pandemic crisis or as a progression of planned projects. The Portfolio Member concluded his presentation by acknowledging that the last 18 months have been difficult for the people and communities of Anglesey as well as the Council's

staff and that further challenges are expected this coming winter. He thanked all those who had helped support the Council through this most challenging of periods.

The Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation acknowledged that the period which the Annual Performance Report covers was extraordinary and unprecedented in the history of the Council. Whilst the pressure on staff has been significant and still continues for some services, the level of achievement which the Annual Performance Report reflects is testament to the efforts of staff at a time when many were re-directed or re-assigned to work on pandemic related matters.

The Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager advised that the Annual Performance Report must be adopted as a fair reflection of the year's performance by 31 October, 2021 and that this will be the last time this statutory requirement applies. It is hoped that the Annual Performance report will be seen as having accurately captured the year's performance and that it will be acknowledged that although a number of new work areas emerged as a result of the pandemic to which the Council had to respond, the report shows the impact of that response on the performance against the Council's historic and more traditional PIs.

In recognising the tremendous effort put in by the Council's staff from the top down in dealing with and managing the pandemic, the Committee raised the following points on the Annual Performance Report for 2020/21 –

- Although recognising that the Council has assisted over 2,000 businesses on the Island to secure financial support as a result of the pandemic by distributing approximately £40m in grants by the end of the 2020/21 financial year, the Committee referred to reports in the national media about business failures and it wanted to know whether data is available on the number of businesses on Anglesey that have closed as a direct result of the pandemic believing it important that the Committee has an up to date picture of the economic position on the Island.

The Portfolio Member for Major Projects and Economic Development and the Head of Service (Regulation and Economic) confirmed that although those statistics were not immediately to hand they would endeavour to obtain the information and circulate it among the Committee's members subsequently. The Chair commented that it would be appreciated if the information could be made available within the next seven days ahead of the presentation of the Annual Performance Report to the Executive.

- Following on from the above enquiry, the Committee referred to the recruitment and/or staffing difficulties which some businesses and organisations are experiencing in the wake of the pandemic which also applies to the County Council in some areas in relation to social care. The Committee wanted to know what approach the Council is taking to recruit to key posts in the current very challenging employment context.

In acknowledging that a number of local authorities and other organisations are finding recruitment a challenge at present and confirming that there are vacant positions currently within the Council, the Chief Executive advised that the Council's recruitment process comprises a range of media to publicise job vacancies and reach potential candidates including social media channels. With regard to recruitment to care positions the Council together with the other North Wales councils have collectively written to Welsh Government to seek ways of sourcing the best people for positions within care services both regionally and nationally including by relaxing regulations and modifying guidelines where appropriate.

The Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation advised that the number of vacant positions within the Council is at present no more nor less than usual and that recruitment is currently an issue across Wales in both the public and private sectors.

What is most challenging is extending the reach of job vacancies in order to attract a range of suitable candidates which is especially true for some services given that councils are competing in the same service areas for the same individuals. Anglesey Council's rates of pay are competitive with the Council being committed to paying the Living Wage. Currently the Council is engaged in a targeted recruitment drive in Social Services and a walk-in Recruitment Day has been arranged for the next week which if successful will be extended to other areas. Work is therefore being undertaken to bolster recruitment and efforts are being supplemented by the local knowledge held across the Council to proactively identify candidates for jobs available.

- With regard to the impact of the pandemic in terms of the Council's ability to deliver its strategic well-being objectives, reference was made to the current Covid 19 case rate which is well above the 92.8 cases per 100k population over a 7 day period quoted at the time of the report's writing. The Committee wanted to know what action was being taken in response to the increased Covid 19 caseload to assure the public that the situation is being contained bearing in mind the rapid response approach taken in relation to the Covid 19 outbreaks at the Two Sisters meat processing plant in Llangefni and subsequently in the town of Holyhead in 2020.

Councillor Llinos Medi, Leader of the Council assured the Committee that the framework and structures that were put in place to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic at the outset remain in place; the Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) which met weekly at the start of the pandemic did ease to fortnightly meetings as cases decreased but has met weekly once again as the number of positive cases has risen; it continues to monitor the situation closely and to respond accordingly. Likewise the multi-agency prevent group continues to meet and share information; within the Council the Public Protection Service is monitoring adherence to current rules within the business sector; the Learning Service has been providing support to schools since they've re-opened and Adults' Services are in regular contact with the Health Board and with the private care sector. The challenge now is balancing business as usual with the ongoing management of the Covid situation.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the data is being scrutinised daily to pinpoint any developing clusters in what can be a rapidly changing situation. Information continues to be shared and messages disseminated widely in an attempt to get people to take responsibility for their behaviour in order to limit the spread of the virus. The Council continues to work with its partners to see what can be done to protect the public.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the position has changed in terms of how the effects of Covid 19 are measured. By now over 53,000 individuals on the Island have received either the first or both vaccinations, and in the region of 4,000 individuals have received a booster jab; consequently although the case rate is high the number of people requiring hospital treatment for Covid 19 is relatively low and remains constant. The hospitalisation rate is now therefore the key metric in monitoring the effect of the virus and this rate has not changed. It must also be remembered that the relaxation of restrictions make it easier for the virus to spread. There is a high percentage of Covid cases currently in schools although these remain open. It is hoped that the Island will turn a corner sooner rather than later and that the case rate will begin to decrease, the important point being that because of the vaccination programme, the number of hospital admissions for Covid 19 is not increasing despite the high case rate. Additionally, Welsh Government last week published its Coronavirus Wales Control Plan for the coming autumn and winter which sets out the measures for the period nationally and how these link into the ongoing regional and local response across

Wales. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/coronavirus-control-plan-autumn-and-winter-2021-update.pdf>. To ensure that people remain safe over the coming months, they need to take up the offer of vaccination and they also need to respect the current health advice with the emphasis now being on taking personal responsibility for one's health.

- The Committee referred to the position with regard to young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) where the performance against the indicator was Red resulting in the Council being placed in the bottom quartile for this indicator for the year. The Committee in noting that due to circumstances beyond its control, the Council was not made aware of many of the individuals until November when the snapshot was taken sought clarification of how this had happened and whether it applied to other authorities as well.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People clarified that the lack of information was due to data reporting and timing issues; the matter has been raised with Careers Wales by the Principal Youth Officer and appropriate arrangements have now been put in place; the issue which was procedural in nature has affected other councils as well. In addition there has been discussion about what the data represents and whether in its current form it meets the requirements. In response to a further question about the number of young people affected by the delay in the Council being made aware of those not in employment, education or training, the Officer said that whilst this data was not immediately to hand he would forward the information to the Committee's members after the meeting.

The Chair requested that that be done in the next seven days.

Councillor Llinos Medi, Leader of the Council confirmed that she as Portfolio Member for Social Services and the Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth had met with the Director of Education, Skills and Young People and the Director of Social Services to discuss the matter when it emerged as part of the 2020/21 Quarter 3 Corporate Scorecard reporting process after which it was pursued. Whilst a conversation with Careers Wales to ensure the timely reporting of data in future has now taken place, it should be noted that once the Council was in receipt of the information it acted upon it and made contact with the young people concerned. An update on the outcomes for these young people in terms of their progression or otherwise to employment, further education or apprenticeships was then provided by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People in June, 2021.

**It was resolved to recommend to the Executive that the final version of the 2020/21 Annual Performance Report be published by the statutory 31<sup>st</sup> October deadline and that Officers in collaboration with the Portfolio Member for Corporate Business complete the said report to be published as part of the Full Council papers for the 26 October, 2021 meeting.**

#### **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS –**

**The following information to be forwarded to the Committee's members within the next seven days by the Head of Service (Regulation and Economic) and the Director of Education, Skills and Young People respectively:**

- **The number of business failures on Anglesey as a result of the pandemic.**
- **The number of young people affected by the delay in the Council being made aware of those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).**

#### **4 WASTE STEERING GROUP WITH WRAP CYMRU**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager with regard to nominating a member of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Waste Steering Group with WRAP Cymru was presented for the Committee's consideration.

The Head of Service (Highways, Waste and Property) in providing background information reported that in discussing the Council's Quarter 1 2021/22 performance against national and local indicators at its 13 September, 2021 meeting, the Committee highlighted indicator 32 on the Corporate Scorecard 2021/22 – the percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted – as underperforming (64.5% against a target of 70% for the quarter). The Committee was informed at the time that a steering group has been established to mitigate the current underperformance whose membership includes senior members, officers and partners from the Welsh Local Government Association and WRAP Cymru (details provided at Appendix 1 to the report). Subsequently, the Executive at its meeting on 27 September, 2021 in considering the Corporate Scorecard resolved that a member of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee should be nominated to sit on the newly established Waste Steering group. The Committee is therefore invited to consider making a nomination to the said group.

**It was resolved to nominate Councillor John Arwel Roberts to serve as a member and Scrutiny representative on the Waste Steering Group with WRAP Cymru.**

#### **5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager incorporating the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 2021/22 was presented for consideration.

The Scrutiny Manager confirmed that following discussion with the Director of Function (Resources)/ Section 151 Officer it is recommended that the Committee's proposed budget meeting on 1 November, 2021 be deferred to after Christmas.

The Chair highlighted the very full agenda for the Committee's scheduled 16 November, 2021 meeting and asked that where appropriate, consideration be given to deferring some of the items listed to the January, 2022 meeting.

**It was resolved –**

- **To agree the current version of the forward work programme for 2021/22 subject to noting the deferment of the 1 November, 2021 meeting and to re-considering the scheduled business for the 16 November, 2021 meeting.**
- **To note progress thus far in implementing the forward work programme.**

**ADDITIONAL ACTION: Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Chair and relevant officers to reconsider the business of the 16 November, 2021 meeting with a view to where appropriate, deferring some of the items to the January, 2022 meeting.**

**Councillor Aled Morris Jones  
Chair**