

SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July, 2012 (11:00am)

- PRESENT:** Commissioner Gareth Jones (Chair)
- Commissioners Alex Aldridge, Margaret Foster;
Councillors W.J.Chorlton; K.P.Hughes; R.LI.Hughes,T.Lloyd
Hughes; Eric Roberts (as Vice-Chair of the Audit
Committee);Selwyn Williams (as Chair of the Corporate
Scrutiny Committee);Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive;
Interim Director of Community.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Interim Head of Resource and S.151 Officer
Head of Service (Finance)
Business Planning and Programme Manager
Committee Services Manager
Mr. Andy Bruce (WAO)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Tom Jones
- APOLOGIES:** Commissioners Byron Davies, Mick Giannasi
Councillors Bryan Owen, G.O.Parry,MBE

In view of the possible transfer of power back to the Executive this Autumn, the Chair invited discussion upon the status and future role of the Sustainability Board as a means of monitoring the corporate performance of the Authority. Commissioners would continue to monitor decisions taken and could intervene if necessary.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare

2. APOLOGIES

As above

3. MINUTES

Submitted and confirmed as a true record, the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement Board held on 28th May, 2012.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION AND INSPECTION OF THE ASSESSMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES 2011

Reported by the Interim Director of Community – That Children Services in Anglesey had been the subject of detailed scrutiny throughout 2011/12 with concerns about the capacity and quality of services being the focus of the CSSIW inspection and

review. The Department's strategy in response had firstly been to stabilise the services along with a rigorous focus upon performance and the injection of a sense of pace and ambition to succeed and secondly, to improve quality and bring about transformation to create a service fit for purpose over the next decade.

As part of the Improvement Objectives for 2012/13, the Improvement Board had continued to meet and key work streams had been commenced or completed in respect of the following:-

- Corporate responsibilities
- Policy, procedures and protocols
- Assessments and case management
- Assessments and case management services for children with disabilities
- Monitoring, quality assurance and management information systems.
- Workforce induction, training and professional development

Performance over the past 6 months had showed good progress and the service had worked exceptionally hard to achieve these improvements. The focus on child protection assessment timescales recovery had been excellent but there remained a concern about the sustainability of good performance without strengthening the structure for quality and to address the need for stable permanent staff, reducing reliance on agency staff support.

A new structure had been set out, which was fit for purpose and which struck a balance in strengthening the front line for assessment and protection whilst at the same time addressing the investments needed for quality improvement. Sustainability of the improvements achieved depended on recruiting the right people with the right skills to these posts.

Some of the Members enquired as to the number of agency support staff employed by the Service and whether or not it would be possible to make more use of Council staff. The issue of retaining staff within the Service was also raised.

The Chief Executive in response stated that the SLT were keen to lessen dependability on specialist agency staff, however, that would need to be done in a piecemeal fashion. The SLT had also agreed to look at the pay structure which was not attractive at the moment. This placed this Authority at a disadvantage since it could not compete with neighbouring authorities. Introducing a market supplement policy might be the way forward and would be investigated further by the Department.

The Chair requested the Director to take on board the comments made and provide an update to the Board on possible ways to address these issues.

The Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report and requested that the Director of Community submit a further report to the September meeting of this Board on the use of agency staff within the Service.

5. (a) RISK MANAGEMENT – RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Reported by the Interim Head of Function (Resources) and S.151 Officer – Upon a draft risk management strategy for the Authority, the purpose of which was to establish a framework for the effective and systematic management of risk, which would ensure that risk management was embedded throughout the Council and made a real contribution to

the achievement of the Council's visions and objectives. There was a detailed risk management guidance document that accompanied this Strategy and provided further detail on how the risk management process should be carried out.

The Strategy would set the foundation for integrating risk management into the Council's culture. It would also formalise a process to be applied across the Council to ensure consistency and clarity in understanding the role and benefits of strategic risk management.

The quarterly reporting and escalation of risks should interlock with the existing quarterly arrangements for performance reporting. The intention being that the management of risks is incorporated into business plans so that reporting on performance naturally reports progress on the mitigation of risks. The adoption of the strategy would formalise the risk management work undertaken to date and would move the Council towards meeting the requirements of recognised best practice and inspection.

The Interim Head of Function mentioned that a further report would be submitted to this Board or to the Board of Commissioners on the guidelines for operating the strategy.

The Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.

5. (b) RISK MANAGEMENT – CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Interim Head of Function (Resources) and S.151 Officer tabled at the meeting a copy of the Corporate Risk Register which identified the main corporate risks across the Authority and their risk level. Further work was required as regards completing the Action Plan, naming the responsible officer and completion target date.

Commissioner M.Foster stated that the system appeared to be clear and robust. The next issue to be addressed would be to finalise the mitigation columns within the spreadsheet which would then provide an opportunity to assess what the residual risks were. Similarly, some of the triggers listed might be out of date by now. The register would need to be a 'live' document and revisited often to ensure that everything was up to date.

Councillor R.LI.Hughes hoped that the register would give the Authority the confidence to be less risk averse than it had been in the past as an Authority.

Councillor Tom Jones considered that the register needed to be streamlined and that the Board should only concentrate on the 10 or so most important risks, otherwise the task of addressing each risk would become impracticable. He considered that some of the risks could be addressed at Service level.

The Chair enquired as to how the Authority could ensure that training in this respect became embedded at all levels within the Authority?

The Deputy Chief Executive in response stated that she needed to identify what the training needs were in order to sustain the new culture being developed within the Authority. Risk management was one of the key elements as were project and performance management. Over the next few months she would be assessing what training had already been undertaken and what else was required in order to ensure a sustainable change.

The Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report and requested that a further update be brought back to the Board in due course on training requirements in this respect.

6. ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2012 – PROGRESS TO DATE

Reported by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Business Planning and Programme Manager – Upon progress made against the WAO's Annual Improvement Report for 2012 for the Isle of Anglesey County Council.

As part of establishing a platform for a strengthened governance structure it was acknowledged as vital that the Council and the Sustainability Board considered the wide range of external evaluations undertaken by the range of statutory and non statutory bodies, organisations and individuals that had been involved in assessing the performance and underlying governance arrangements of the Council.

The Council had been and would be the subject of a range of statutory evaluation and reporting from external audit and inspection bodies that as part of their remit had considered governance and support service arrangements. The implementation of actions emanating from these reports following sign-off by Council was a pre-requisite of mature organisational governance structures.

This report was in response to the WAO annual report and dealt with issues identified by the Council's Commissioners when appointed and a number of the recommendations/ proposals for improvement were documented as part of the Council's Improvement Priorities for 2012/13. For the purpose of this report their status was risk ragged accordingly.

The Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.

7. REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12 PROVISIONAL OUT-TURN

A presentation was submitted by the Interim Head of Function (Resources) and S.151 Officer drawing attention to the following matters arising out of the Revenue Out-turn for 2011-12:-

- Balances and reserves
- Responding to demand
- Responding to changes in the economy
- Delayed savings
- Unforeseen expenditure
- Response

The presentation also provided the main messages that needed to be taken into account for the 2012-13 budget together with an extract from the 2011/12 Statement of Accounts relating to transfers to/from earmarked reserves.

The Chair mentioned that the Interim Head of Function (Resources) had earlier mentioned that there was a need to set aside more money under general reserves. He enquired whether there was any scope in this respect as regards selling some Council assets?

Commissioner Alex Aldridge in reply stated that there were a number of assets in the pipeline for sale but that some of the prime sites needed to be managed very carefully in order to get the best value at the right time. But certainly, asset sales could increase balances significantly.

The Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.

8. FUTURE MEETINGS.

It was noted that future meetings of the Sustainability Board would be held at 11:00am on 17th September and 29th November, 2012.

The meeting concluded at 1:00p.m.

**COMMISSIONER GARETH JONES
CHAIR**

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