

IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th December, 2012 (11:00am)

- PRESENT:** Commissioner Alex Aldridge (Chair)
Commissioner Mick Giannasi
- Councillors W.J.Chorlton; K.P.Hughes; R.LI.Hughes; T.Lloyd Hughes; Bryan Owen; Bob Parry,OBE; G.O.Parry,MBE; Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive; Director of Community; Director of Sustainable Development; Director of Lifelong Learning.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Committee Services Manager
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr.Steve Pomeroy (Welsh Government); Messrs. Andy Bruce and Huw Lloyd Jones (Wales Audit Office); Mrs.Tanis Cunnick (Project Manager Anglesey Education Recovery Board)
- APOLOGIES:** Commissioner Byron Davies; Councillor O.Glyn Jones.

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 and Sustainability Board held on 29th November, 2012.

4. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Submitted – An updated draft version of the Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures for the Improvement and Sustainability Board which would provide a formal mechanism for the Commissioners to discharge their responsibility to oversee the ‘Improvement and Sustainability’ phase of the Welsh Government’s intervention at the Isle of Anglesey County Council. This Board would continue to meet for the duration of the Improvement and Sustainability Phase of the Ministerial intervention which currently ran until 31 May 2013.

The Chief Executive mentioned that he had taken on board the comments raised at the last Board meeting and had incorporated them within the revised draft Terms of Reference.

He sought clarity as regards two particular matters within the document, namely:-

1. The role and contribution of the scrutiny side of the Council within the proposed terms of reference, since at present there was no opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the Board.
2. It was strongly suggested in the document that the Education Recovery Board and the CSSIW should present their findings to the Board so that it had a complete overview of the Authority's performance and how it reacted to the corporate governance risks. He was strongly in favour of such course of action. Those reports could then go before the Minister and this Board so that both parties were aware of progress. If the Terms of Reference were accepted he considered that the Chairs of the Education Recovery Board and the CSSIW should be approached seeking their acceptance of such course of action.

The Chair suggested that perhaps the Corporate Scrutiny Committee could scrutinise matters, once each 90 day cycle had been completed and that the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive be invited to report to that meeting.

Mr. Huw Lloyd Jones, WAO, had a slight reservation in that if the Corporate Scrutiny Committee wanted to question the deliberations of this Board, the end of the 90 day cycle may be too late. He enquired as to whether the minutes of this meeting could go to the next available meeting of the Scrutiny committee as a compromise? The response of the Scrutiny committee could then come back to the earliest meeting of this Board.

The Chair was agreeable to such course of action and suggested that an extraordinary meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee could be convened if deemed necessary. He asked the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive to come up with a formula where these minutes could be subjected to scrutiny and the outcome reported back to this Board.

The Leader stated that he was happy with such course of action. He queried what the make up of this Board meeting would be post the 2013 election?

The Chief Executive in response stated that the purpose of the Board at the moment was to take the Council to the end of the intervention period. After that time, the Council would need to assess the contribution of this type of meeting in the future running of the new Council.

The Chair concurred with the Chief Executive in that it was hoped by the end of May 2013, that the work of the Board would be dovetailed into the normal working process of a fully engaged Executive and SLT.

The Chief Executive went on to state that this needed to be seen as part of the overall structure of the Council going forward. This meeting was very much about monitoring and assessing performance and holding officers to account. Regular informal meetings were now being held between the Executive and the SLT, the rationale behind it being that a conversation and an exchange of views could take place regarding strategy and policy development. There were also regular meetings with Group Leaders with information being disseminated back to the backbenchers.

The Chair mentioned that Commissioners would be meeting the Leader and the SLT on the second Thursday of the month. As part of that dialogue, he requested the Chief Executive to examine the detail within the Improvement and Sustainability Board so that everyone were fully aware of the direction of travel. Apart from day to day issues, a substantive part of that dialogue would revolve around the work of this Board. He also

requested officers to consider the appropriateness of Scrutiny involvement and feedback from the CSSIW and Estyn Recovery Board. It was important for this Board to examine issues that were live and current.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi referred to the integration between the work of this Board and the CSSIW and Estyn Recovery Board. These Terms of Reference had been drafted based on specific comments made by Ministers at the time that the CSSIW and Estyn intervention was put in place. He felt that there was a need to integrate the work of those bodies into this Board's deliberations. There was a danger that the Authority could end up with two different agendas if such integration did not take place.

The Chief Executive stated that the professional officer supporting the Education Recovery Board had been invited to this meeting today as an observer with the intention of reporting back to the Recovery Board.

Councillor R.LI.Hughes drew attention to Para 5 of the Terms of Reference, namely "*to receive progress reports and assessments from the Education Recovery Board and the CSSIW which will enable the Commissioners to consider how effectively the Council is responding to recommendations from statutory regulators and auditors.*" He suggested that the words '*and Executive*' be added after the word '*Commissioners*' to that paragraph.

The Chair agreed to such request and that the SLT should also be added.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi mentioned that under Phase 1 of the Intervention, the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees were actually members of the Board. The reason why they were not included under Phase 2 of the Intervention was because this was a fixed term Board with a very specific purpose, i.e. to monitor, assess and report to the Minister on progress in respect of the delivery of the two 90 day cycles of work against the transformational change programme.

Because of that, Commissioners had kept the membership and the terms of reference tied around those types of issues. Probably after 31st May, 2013, this Authority would require something very similar to ensure sustainability. Bringing back the Chairs of Scrutiny was possibly an option after this date, feeding the Board's minutes through to the Scrutiny Committees was another option or aligning the cycle of work so that the process of the Board was interlinked with Scrutiny.

Councillor R.LI.Hughes referred to Par 8 of the Operating Procedures, "*where all the performance information would reach the Commissioners and the Chief Executive ten days prior to the date of the Board meeting.*" He enquired as to whether all members of the Board and the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee would receive the same information?

The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be the case.

The Chair left the points raised at this meeting to the Deputy Chief Executive to develop by the meeting between Commissioners, Executive and SLT on 10th January 2013.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi referred to Para 2 of the Operating Procedures. The wording therein needed to be amended since on that Thursday, Commissioners would be meeting the Minister in Cardiff. It was therefore necessary to re-schedule that informal pre-meeting with the Chief Executive and Programme Manager to discuss the forthcoming Board meeting and to agree the agenda, content and format.

There was also reference within the report to specific requirements as regards timescales and reporting. If these terms of reference were accepted today, it would mean that by 31st January, the Authority would need to have its first highlight report, the highlight reports from the CSSIW and the Estyn Recovery Board and their first self-assessment. On that basis, Commissioners would then report to the Minister within 10 days of that date.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board resolved to accept the Terms of Reference subject to the amendments raised at this meeting.

5. ISLE OF ANGLESEY TRANSFORMATION PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a revised draft version of the Transformation Plan which had been updated since the previous meeting of the Board meeting on 29th November, 2012.

Reported by the Deputy Chief Executive – That since the last meeting, a workshop had been held with the Heads of Service to discuss the Transformation Plan. Originally there had been 9 key themes to underpin the way in which the Council would work. Following discussion with the Heads of Service, this had been reduced to a more manageable 6 themes and to also reduce an element of duplication that had previously existed. It was these 6 themes that members, managers and staff needed to think about when they carry out their day to day work and also in setting out their strategic and operational plans.

In addition the SLT had worked through the first 90 day agenda and also reviewed some other areas of the report. The Deputy Chief Executive sought guidance as to where this document should now go for member ownership, the Executive or Council or both?

In terms of the Programme Boards that were envisaged, she envisaged that there would be members of the Executive, Scrutiny and SLT being represented on those Boards in order to oversee progress and then reporting back to this Board meeting so that it could receive an overview of the work of those programme boards.

In the New Year there was an intention to organise communications sessions for staff where members of the SLT and Heads of Service would be involved in explaining the Transformation Plan with the workforce. It was also intended to talk through the plan and the efficiency agenda with middle managers since they would be key to ensuring implementation of the new culture.

There were a number of adopted plans that already set out key objectives, values and themes for the Council. The election of a new Council in May 2013 for a period of 4 years provided the Authority with the opportunity to clarify and align plans and to take account of the priorities of the new Council. Developing a corporate plan was therefore a key activity to be achieved by October 2013, within 6 months of the election.

In order to focus work between now and April 2013, the Commissioners would like to focus improvement activity on two 90 day cycles. Work had already been undertaken by SLT in conjunction with Commissioners and Hay to map out a number of key components to get this Transformation started. These were included at Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 outlined the two 90 day cycles of work that the SLT had set out and agreed.

Progress on establishing the Transformation and the two 90 day cycles would be reported monthly to this Board meeting up to May 2013. After this date and as part of preparing for the new Council, the Council needs to ensure appropriate reporting and accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that the momentum was not lost.

The Deputy Chief Executive drew the Board's attention to specific matters of importance within the report in order to drive the Plan forward.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi was of the opinion that officers had now successfully translated this high level generic transformational change agenda that Hay had produced into something which was now relevant, practical, meaningful and most importantly in the ownership of the Council. Commissioners were comfortable with the Plan going forward as the basis for the Transformation journey and were prepared to say that to the Minister when they next reported to him on 31st January. The Plan would be included as an appendix to their report to the Minister and it was a document that the Commissioners could hold to account in achieving the two 90 day cycles of delivery.

All Commissioners would then require a highlight report supported by evidence against those two 90 day cycles. They needed to know what had or had not been delivered, what was intended for the next period, what risks Commissioners needed to be aware of and what blockages and issues that needed to be addressed. Commissioners required enough information to convince the Minister that the recovery journey was on track. If Commissioners could agree within the next 14 days what that highlight report looked like, it would be a big step forward. Commissioners then needed to agree what the self-assessment process looked like on a quarterly basis.

Members felt that if the Transformation Plan was to work it needed to cascade down through all members of staff and some also questioned whether the Authority had sufficient resources and capacity to meet the challenge?

The Chair in reply stated that it would now be a team effort to implement a very challenging agenda. He stressed that not everything had to be completed by 31st May 2013. This was a programme that went beyond that date and up to 2016.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi stated that the first two 90 day cycles were fundamental building blocks that needed to be in place to enable the change to take place. All the matters referred to by members were already built in to those cycles. However, one of the key principles that probably wasn't explicitly translated, was around looking at the processes and where the costs lay and then systematically seeking to drive out waste. He asked the Council to consider whether it should explicitly have as one of its principles, a systematic review which asked '*what this Council is about, what does it seek to achieve, what are its key processes, are they as efficient as they might be, how much does it cost, where do we put our money and where do we start to drive out those costs*' because the Council faced a challenging situation of delivering increasingly better services, increasing demand for its services within a decreasing budget. He urged the Council to consider such course of action.

Councillor W.J.Chorlton enquired as to whether the Plan needed to go before the Executive or Council?

The Chair in response stated that the matter should go before the Executive as a policy decision. Commissioners would provide a process by January to be inclusive with Scrutiny. He asked the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive to work with the members to consider the role of Scrutiny, Estyn and the CSSIW in the reporting mechanism.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report as a basis for moving ahead with the Transformation Plan early in the New Year.

The meeting concluded at 12:40 p.m.

**COMMISSIONER ALEX ALDRIDGE
(CHAIR)**