

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 22 November, 2022

- PRESENT:** Councillor R. Llewelyn Jones (Chair)
Councillor Dyfed Wyn Jones (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Geraint Bebb, Neville Evans, Aled M. Jones, Jackie Lewis, Llio A. Owen, Dafydd Roberts, Keith Roberts.
- Co-Opted Member – Mr John Tierney (The Catholic Church)
- Portfolio Members**
- Councillors Llinos Medi (Leader of the Council), Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Adults' Services – Social Services), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism), Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer
Director of Social Services
Director of Learning, Skills and Young People
Head of Adults' Services
Head of Housing Services
Head of Highways, Waste and Property
Head of Regulation and Economic Development
Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation
Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager (GM)
Commercial Leisure Manager (GR)
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Douglas M. Fowlie, Alwen Watkin, Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr Rhys Davies and Mrs Sharon Warnes (Members of the Standards Committee (present as observers))
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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 the 19 October, 2022 were presented and were confirmed as correct subject to including Councillor Geraint Bebb in the list of attendees.

3 MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD Q2 2022/23

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the Corporate Scorecard for Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year was presented for the Committee's consideration and comment.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism in presenting the report highlighted a number of positive stories with respect to Quarter 2 performance as detailed within the report. In saying that the performance monitoring Key Performance Indicators are aligned to the Council's current three well-being objectives he confirmed that all indicators related to well-being Objective 1 where the Council is working to ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realise their long-term potential, are performing at a green level against their targets. Likewise, the indicators for Objective 2 where the Council is supporting vulnerable adults and families to keep them safe, healthy and as independent as possible are also performing well against target with only one of the 16 indicators shown to be underperforming. However, although performance against targets is overall green or yellow decreasing trends are emerging against a number of performance related indicators especially in relation to Well-being Objective 2. It is recognised that particular attention will need to be given to those indicators and the associated processes and work streams as winter approaches especially given the cost of living challenges and increasing food and fuel poverty within communities. The performance of indicators which monitor well-being Objective 3 where the Council works in partnership with communities to ensure that they can cope effectively with change and developments whilst protecting the natural environment has also been good with 70% above target.

In reviewing the performance data for Quarter 2, the Committee raised the following matters with the Officers and Portfolio Members –

- The downward trend against a number of performance related indicators especially with regard to well-being Objective 2. The Committee in seeking further clarification of the areas where the challenges were expected to be greatest and the steps being taken to address and/or mitigate those challenges, also noted the need to monitor the areas ragged Yellow to ensure no deterioration in performance takes place.

The Committee was assured by Officers that performance monitoring happens on a number of levels via the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Services and the Transformation Service, and that it takes many forms. The Council also takes account of what is happening in the wider context which is a part of its strategic planning. Whilst performance indicators and targets are set for the year, mitigating measures such as additional resources for example can be introduced where the need has been identified and where it would help improve performance.

As many of the Yellow rated areas were in Children and Families Services, the Director of Social Services advised that it was difficult to predict how the Service's PIs would perform come the winter period given that referrals are on the up and are becoming increasingly complex in nature while the number of social workers to undertake the resulting assessments remains the same. Regular internal meetings are held to monitor pressures and the service response as well as the performance of service specific PIs and a flexible approach is taken to ensure service users' needs are met. It is however envisaged that the coming months will be challenging.

- Referring to PI 23 (the average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year and who were de-registered during the year) which was ragged Red, the Committee in accepting that the raw data does not always convey the whole picture especially in relation to complex areas such as child safeguarding and protection, queried whether alternative and fairer means of analysis are available.

The Director of Social Services advised that this indicator was introduced at time when the number of children on the CPR was higher and the children remained on the register for a significant length of time. While the situation is now much improved, the Service is giving attention to this indicator both in terms of improving performance and in terms of the way in which performance under the indicator is measured with a view to better reflecting the position and the factors influencing performance in this area. It is anticipated that performance against the indicator is likely to remain Red for the remainder of the year and that the indicator will be re-assessed for next year in order to arrive at a more meaningful evaluation of performance .

- In response to a question regarding what needs to happen to bring the Corporate Scorecard into alignment with the new Council Plan, the Chief Executive advised that having been out to consultation once the new Council Plan has been adopted, a new Corporate Scorecard and suite of indicators will be developed to correspond with the Plan's priorities and strategic aims; PI 23 will be part of that process and will be assessed to see whether it can be adapted for the new scorecard.
- The financial situation was discussed both as regards the pressures on Social Care with Adults' and Children's Services forecast to overspend by £1.361m by the year end and as regards the wider impact on frontline services, and questions about mitigating measures were asked. The Committee was advised that although every Social Services budget line has been examined for economies and/ or efficiencies, the demand-led nature of the Service as well as statutory obligations mean that managing spending is a challenge. The Council will continue to work with partners and with the Health Board to seek to manage demand and will also continue to explore alternative more economical ways of service provision that still allow statutory responsibilities to be met. The issue will be scrutinised more closely by the Finance Scrutiny Panel at its meeting next month. With regard to the wider context, a report on the Quarter 2 Revenue Budget position is to be presented to the 29 November meeting of the Executive and while this shows a projected underspend at the end of the current financial year, a number of areas of concern will also be highlighted which may affect the Council's financial position going forward. Seasonal factors may also impact on budget performance with winter traditionally seeing a rise in demand. The 2023/24 financial year is expected to be yet more challenging meaning that consideration will have to be given to the services that are being delivered and the way they are being delivered in order to reduce costs.

In further discussions, the Committee was informed that the Adults' Services budget had increased by 20% over the past 3 years and the Children and Families' Services budget by 19%. Councillor Alun Roberts, Portfolio Member for Adults' Services also brought to the Committee's attention Welsh Government's requirement that councils in Wales make care provision arrangements to enable the discharge from hospital of 1,000 patients which will cost Anglesey in the region of £400k with no indication that supporting funding will be provided by Welsh Government to cover the expenditure. A member of the Committee suggested that in light of the financial challenges the Council is facing, Welsh Government should be approached to provide additional resources to help meet the cost of this provision.

- Whether capacity is an issue in terms of there being not enough posts or because of difficulties in recruiting to posts. The Committee was advised that the recruitment process means there are always posts in the system waiting to be filled in an organisation such as the Council although the flow of jobs from services has decreased with current circumstances and also the winter period leading to fewer people moving jobs. Given that capacity has not increased in line with demand, services have to look at doing things differently for example by making greater use of technology.

- The application of the second homes premium was raised with a request being made that in circumstances where local taxpayers are renovating an empty property and completion of the work is delayed or is going beyond the discretionary relief period because of the ongoing impact of the pandemic and shortage of materials etc., a facility in the form of a portal be provided at the same time that Council Tax bills are issued to allow people to explain and provide evidence of their situation to the Council so they are not subject to the empty homes premium. The Committee was advised that having been engaged with distributing business support grants, the Finance Service is now looking to progress and extend the use of the CRM system to interact with citizens which allows them to access and provide information online including Council Tax exemptions; the empty homes premium exemption form can be made part of that process.

Having considered the Quarter 2 2022/23 scorecard report, the points raised and the additional information provided by Officers and Portfolio Members verbally at the meeting, and having acknowledged the positive stories with regard to Quarter 2 performance, the Committee resolved to accept the report, and to recommend the report to the Executive along with the mitigation measure with regard to monitoring decreasing trends in relation to Well-being Objective 2 indicators.

4 CENSUS 2021 ANGLESEY POPULATION DATA

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating information about the Council's population demographic following the release of the 2021 census was presented for the Committee's consideration.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism in presenting the report said that it is based on the census first release on 28 June, 2022; future census releases will be evaluated and the report will be updated accordingly. The data presented highlights the changes in Anglesey's population between 1981 and 2021 with regard to population density, number of households, population by age and regional changes and differences and is valuable in helping shape and plan services for the future. The headline statistics for Anglesey show that the Island's population has decreased since the last census in 2011; the proportion of the population aged 65 or older has increased as has the size of the population aged 85 years or older and is forecast to continue increasing. While the proportion of the population aged 15 or under is currently stable it has declined since 1981; a more marked decrease is reflected in the size of the working age population which is down 4.2% on the 2011 census figure.

In considering the census data and its implications for service provision the Committee discussed the following –

- The extent to which the data influences the structure and nature of the Council's services in the long-term

The Committee was advised that the Council will need to adapt and recalibrate its budgets in order to prioritise funding and resources to those areas where the census data indicates they will be needed most e.g. an increasing older population as well as expanding its provision as regards housing, transport and community support. The challenge lies in achieving those changes incrementally so that current day to day provision is not impacted by long term strategic decisions. Of vital importance in countering the trend towards a predominantly ageing population is the Council's drive to grow the economy of Anglesey by attracting investment and employment to the Island.

- The ways in which Social Services will use the data to prepare for demographic changes

The Committee was advised that the increase in the 85+ population poses the greatest challenge as regards the type of provision that will need to be made as well as how and

where it will be made. The Council continues to develop and expand its extra care provision as well as providing suitable housing for older people that is adaptive to their changing needs. The increasing number of older people with dementia for whom community provision is a risk, and the lack of family support as the population has become increasingly dispersed are factors which Social Services have to deal with meaning there is no one solution; addressing the situation requires a combination of different approaches and also means being clear and honest about what the Council can and cannot do.

- The challenges in trying to provide suitable affordable housing for young people which is a Council priority at the same time as meeting the housing needs of an increasingly ageing population at two ends of the age spectrum.

The Committee was advised that the census data provides useful baseline information regarding the Island's population and the trends going forward. The Housing Service is also required to undertake a local housing survey every five years which sets out the housing needs for that period and it is expected that the age profiles provided by the census will be reflected in the survey. Extra care housing schemes as well as a scheme to develop more bungalow accommodation are designed to help older people live independently for longer as well as freeing up larger family homes; the council house building programme mitigates some of the housing supply risks and in addition a range of tenancies is being developed including general social rent housing, intermediate social rent housing and a shared equity scheme. Three housing associations also operate on the Island which provides valued support in meeting housing needs.

- The extent to which the increase in the older population is reflected in the funding formula for Anglesey and the need to make representations to ensure a fair settlement for the Island.

The Committee was advised that the funding allocation formula takes account of the population profile including the number of older people as well as other factors including school pupils; people in receipt of benefits and children in receipt of free school meals. In response to a comment about the need to use the census information about Anglesey's ageing population to make a case through the WLGA for fair funding for the Council, assurance was provided that the matter would be escalated for discussion to the WLGA's Rural Forum which deals with issues specific to rural counties and communities.

- Planning for school places and the degree to which the Schools' Modernisation Programme needs to be reviewed in light of what the census statistics say about the decreasing 15 years old and under population

The Committee was advised that the school modernisation plans are under discussion and will as a matter of course take account of population data and trends as revealed in the 2021 census data release. Plans for school places have to reflect current as well as future needs and given the financial context, they will also have to have regard of the financial challenges facing the Council.

It was resolved to accept and to note the information set out in the census data report

5 YNYS MON LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT ON SCHOOL SPORT SURVEY – SPORT WALES

The report of the Head of Economic Development and Regulation incorporating the findings of the Sport Wales school sport survey was presented for the Committee's consideration. The report provides information about Anglesey's response to the survey in terms of pupils' experiences of sport and compares regional and national data.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism provided a summary of the report which showed that Anglesey's responses exceed regional and national averages across a number of themes including

frequency of participation in sports, membership of a community or sports club and enjoyment of PE and extracurricular sport.

The Committee considered the survey findings and welcomed the positive response of Anglesey's pupils to the survey and their enthusiasm for participation. The Committee discussed the following matters with the Portfolio Member and the Commercial Leisure Manager who advised that the survey provides a good basis from which to take matters forward following the pandemic confirming also that the pandemic had increased awareness of the value of sporting activity and participation in keeping fit and healthy. Assurances were provided about current and planned activities to encourage and further increase pupils' participation in sports:

- The need to build on Anglesey pupils' experiences of sport to further improve the sporting offer and increase participation
- The existence of barriers in terms of responding to the needs and desires of pupils especially given that 94% of Anglesey pupils would like to do more sport including sporting activity that they have not tried before.
- The need to find ways of reaching those pupils who do not enjoy participating in sports and PE as well as those who only participate infrequently.
- Finding ways of improving young people's confidence to engage in new sporting opportunities
- The importance of working in partnership with other organisations. The input of the Urdd organisation was recognised and a suggestion made that collaboration be extended to include the Young Farmers' Association.

It was resolved to note the contents of the report.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager incorporating the Committee's updated Forward Work Programme for 2022/23 was presented for the Committee's confirmation.

The Scrutiny Manager advised that the exact timing of the 2023/24 Budget related items provisionally scheduled for consideration at the Committee's 19 January, 2023 meeting is to be confirmed and is subject to Welsh Government's timetable for announcing the initial local government financial settlement for 2023/24.

In response to a suggestion that in light of the number of items for the January meeting, an additional meeting be scheduled in the month, the Chief Executive advised that an additional date will be earmarked to consider the 2023/24 budget items.

It was resolved –

- **To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/23.**
- **To note the progress thus far in implementing the Forward Work Programme.**

**Councillor R. Llewelyn Jones
Chair**