

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 20 June, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Douglas Fowle (Chair)
Councillor Sonia Williams (Vice-Chair) (for this meeting)

Councillors Geraint Bebb, Aled M. Jones, R. Llewelyn Jones, Jackie Lewis, Llio A. Owen, Dafydd Roberts, Keith Roberts, Arfon Wyn.

Portfolio Members

Councillors Neville Evans (Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience), Nicola Roberts (Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change), Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property), Robin Williams (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Director of Education, Skills, and Young People
Head of Regulation and Economic Development
Head of Highways, Waste and Property
Head of Housing Services
Head of Adults' Services
Head of Democracy (DS)
Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation
Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager (GM)
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Alwen Watkin, Dyfed Wyn Jones, Llinos Medi (Leader), Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Adults' Services and Community Safety)
Mr Fôn Roberts (Director of Social Services)

ALSO PRESENT: Bethan H. Owen (Accountancy Services Manager)

In the absence of Councillor Dyfed Wyn Jones, the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Sonia Williams was elected to serve as Vice-Chair for this meeting only.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Douglas Fowle declared a personal but not prejudicial interest with regard to item 4 on the agenda as an employee of Grwp Llandrillo Menai.
Councillor Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience), (not a member of the Committee) likewise declared an interest regarding item 4 as an employee of Grwp Llandrillo Menai.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on the following dates were presented and were confirmed as correct: -

19 April, 2023

23 May, 2023 (election of Chair/Vice-Chair)

3 MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD Q4 2022/23

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the Corporate Scorecard for Quarter 4 2022/23 was presented for the Committee's consideration. The scorecard report portrayed the Council's end of year position against matters relating to customer service, people and financial management and performance management.

The report was presented by Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience who provided a summary of the contents confirming that 91% of indicators were performing to, or within 5% of target. The report highlighted a number of positive performance stories in relation to homelessness prevention, Adults' Services, timeliness of planning decision-making, improvements in road condition, street cleanliness, the number of empty homes brought back into use and the recovery of visitor numbers to leisure centres to pre-pandemic levels. The contribution made by the Council's staff to this positive performance over the year is recognised and commended. Where performance remains off target, those areas, specifically the percentage of FOI requests dealt with within timescale, average number of days taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grant and percentage of planning appeals dismissed are being investigated and monitored by the Leadership Team to secure improvements into the future. To close, Councillor Carwyn Jones said that he hoped the report provided Scrutiny with assurance that performance is important to the Council, that it is being managed robustly and is being given due attention both politically and operationally.

The Committee welcomed the report as reflecting positive progress over the year overall as well as consistency of performance. Members discussed the Scorecard report in detail and challenged the Portfolio Members on several issues including how to raise awareness of good performance both internally and externally, customer service in relation to telephone call monitoring and quality of responses, the delivery of Disabled Facilities grants and adaptations, and management of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) – specifically performance against Indicator 23 and how this can be reported to reflect the true situation and whether it should be a matter for the Social Services Scrutiny Panel to look into. Consideration was also given to financial management, specifically the projected underspend on the 2022/23 budget and how that might help the Council in addressing expected additional service pressures in 2023/24. Further questions were asked about the performance management framework in general including how actions to tackle underperforming areas/indicators are monitored to ensure they are meeting performance aims and objectives. The Portfolio Members and Officers responded to the issues raised as follows –

- Explained that the best way of demonstrating that the Council is performing well and delivering services that improve outcomes for the people of Anglesey is through regulators' reports many of which have been positive for the Council recently and testify to the progress and improvements made. Recognising, promoting, and celebrating successes is also a matter of informal internal communication and should perhaps be the starting point. It is the intention to incorporate such messages in the publicity process for the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28 in the coming weeks highlighting that the Council's new strategic aims for the period are based not only on

sound performance, but also on the commitment and resilience of the workforce who have maintained performance in a difficult and challenging year which has seen the Council facing additional demands due to the cost-of-living crisis. External messaging needs to be proportionate recognising that whilst performance is good across many services there is room for improvement in others. From an elected member perspective, opportunities to raise awareness of good performance are provided by the town and community councils where good practice can be shared and promoted.

- Confirmed that a customer experience project is ongoing which covers several aspects of customer care including the telephone system. Whilst the number of telephone calls are capable of being recorded, there is currently no means of monitoring quality in terms of how the customer is dealt with and the responses given. Ensuring this capability is a key consideration in upgrading the system. However, the Council does also receive direct feedback from customers through the Complaints and Compliments process which reflects people's experiences of the service they have received and whether they have been treated well or not so well.
- Reported that the decline in performance with regard to delivering a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is attributable to difficulties in gaining access to some properties, increased workload due to a post-Covid increase in applications as well as a lack of contractors to undertake the work. The Head of Housing Services clarified that whilst it is likely that the target days will need to be increased in 2023/24, the DFG Policy and process will be also reviewed in 2023/24 including operational practices along with the agreement with the Care and Repair agency mindful of the fact that numbers have increased but that the service needs to manage resources to meet the demand.
- The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer explained that the forecast £1.212m underspend for the 2022/23 financial year includes a number of one-off items such as grants, better than budgeted for income from various sources, staff vacancies and the utilisation of reserves to ease pressures on Social Services as contributing to the projected end of year outcome without which the position would have been different. He referred to the Council's reserves position which at £13.9m has been bolstered by the underspend but reminded the Committee that £3.8m of reserves has been committed to balancing the 2023/24 budget and that once reserves have been used, they are gone and cannot be used again. He outlined the risks around the 2024/25 budget setting process especially in relation to pay increases, energy costs, general inflation and pressure on specific service budgets and said that the underspend would provide a financial cushion for the Council in facing the challenges ahead.

Further questions were asked about the significant underspends in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the increases in Council Tax for those years with a point being made that consideration needs to be given to the rate of Council Tax increase going forward in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis and when there are people who are struggling but who are not eligible for Council Tax support. The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer clarified that the underspends for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years were due to the additional funding provided by Welsh Government to cover Covid-19 related expenditure which created significant additional income for the Council. Councillor Robin Williams, Portfolio Member for Finance said that Anglesey has for some years been among the lowest charging councils in Wales for Council Tax and remains so; he reiterated that his position as Portfolio Holder for Finance was to keep Council Tax increases as low as possible for the people of Anglesey while ensuring that the Council's budget is managed in a prudent and responsible way.

- The Head of Adults' Services confirmed that children are only removed from the Child Protection Register (CPR) when it is appropriate and safe to do so and when the risk of harm is considered to no longer apply. Indicator 23 is historic and refers to a time

when children remained on the CPR for a length of time without consideration being given to individual cases. The Safeguarding Officer has not expressed any concern about the performance in relation to the indicator which raises the question of whether it adds value with the key consideration being the welfare of children meaning that they should be removed from the CPR for reasons of safety and not to meet a target. He would be happy for the Social Services Scrutiny Panel to look at the indicator and/or suggest an alternative or it could scrutinise the Child Protection Annual report with the most recent report having raised no concerns in this regard. Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance emphasised that setting the data in context and providing a narrative explanation are important in understanding the true situation and that such targets should not be set arbitrarily.

- That the Performance Management process and approach includes setting and implementing a plan along with monitoring and reporting on progress and achievement. Whilst targets within the Corporate Scorecard are based on historic performance they are also informed by knowledge of current risks and the Council's own aspirations which taken together ensure that targets are appropriate, that they are challenging but are also achievable. Underperforming areas are investigated by the Leadership Team including how they can be rectified. Measures to improve performance and implementing them are discussed with Heads of Service. The Chief Executive emphasised that measures must be connected and have regard of the local context including forces outside the Council's control which must be considered when reporting on performance against the KPIs. To ensure that indicators are meaningful, they are challenged by the Executive and Portfolio Members in informal discussions. Currently a new corporate scorecard is being developed which links into the Council's new Corporate Plan taking account of how external influences feed into the process so that the Council is not looking at areas that are red because of factors beyond its control, and taking account also of trends over time which can highlight events e.g. cost of living crisis, that can explain changes in performance.

Having reviewed the Corporate Scorecard for Q4 2022/23 and having noted the responses of Portfolio Members and Officers to the issues raised it was resolved –

- **To note the Corporate Scorecard report for Q4 2022/23 including the areas of improvement together with the areas which the Leadership Team is exploring and investigating to manage and secure further improvements into the future in relation to FOI requests, DFG grants and planning appeals and,**
- **To recommend the scorecard report and mitigating measures outlined therein to the Executive.**

Action: Social Services Scrutiny Panel to look in detail at whether Performance Indicator 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) remains an appropriate and relevant measure of performance.

4 MODERNISING LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY – CONSULTATION REPORT

The report of the Director of Education, Skills and Young People setting out the findings from the public consultation on the "Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy" was presented for the Committee's consideration and comment. The consultation report and summary of responses from all sources was provided at Appendix 1.

Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance presented the report saying that it reflected the responses to the public consultation process. The views of the Scrutiny Committee are sought including any recommendations and/or amendments it

may wish to make in relation to the Strategy in light of the responses and ahead of their being considered by the Executive.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that the public consultation process took place between 31 March and 18 May, 2023. A total of 298 responses were received via the online survey and in the form of letters and e-mails most of which (55%) were in agreement with the reasons for change, the vision and leading principles (58%) and the drivers for change and strategic objectives (53%) contained in the draft strategy. He referred to the consultation arrangements as set out in the consultation report and confirmed that the process had been comprehensive and robust and had involved engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. Whilst a summary of respondents is provided within the report in Appendix 1, a more detailed analysis is provided in appendices 2 to 8 including the consultation with children and young people which was conducted through meetings with children of both primary and secondary school age in which 150 took part from 28 schools. In terms of the substance of the responses, this can be grouped into 4 main themes around the number and sufficiency of schools and school buildings, the Welsh Language, clarity and detail and the Net Zero Agenda. There is a clear connection between these themes and the strategic aims of the Council Plan. A number of valid points were raised under each theme and these will be further considered when developing specific proposals in future. In response to the feedback received the report recommends that the three amendments outlined be made to the draft strategy relating to the implementation timetable, sources of information and governance model. These changes do not affect the strategy's vision. An Equalities Impact Assessment was also conducted and is included in the documentation under Appendix 9.

The Committee considered the documentation and raised a number of issues regarding the strategy and consultation including the robustness of the consultation process as conducted, specifically whether the process had sufficiently captured the views of children and young people and whether it could be improved for the future, the ways in which the consultation had influenced the draft strategy, how the strategy will help deliver education provision and a learning environment of the highest standard for Anglesey's children and young people, the risks and challenges in realising the strategy's vision, links with the Council Plan and the arrangements for monitoring its implementation. Also discussed was the appropriateness of the vision in terms of its approach to small schools with questions being asked about where the definition of a small school as one with fewer than 91 pupils had come from, and the justification for it. A minority of Members saw the strategy as a restatement of the previous plan and as "setting the scene" for potential school closures – especially those in rural communities with the Net Zero agenda although a serious issue in itself, being added to the strategy to provide answers for the process going forward. Those Members thought that greater consideration should be given to alternative approaches and referred to the response of the Welsh Language Society to the consultation in which it supports the plan put forward by Anglesey's Education Commissioner in 2013 as a "superior strategy to modernise learning communities, co-ordinate education provision and ensure financial savings" which involved savings being made in administrative arrangements rather than in education provision within communities.

In response to the matters raised above, the Director of Education, Skills and Young People advised as follows –

- That while the consultation process ran for seven weeks, prior notice of its going live was given to stakeholders – headteachers, school governors, town and community councils, Estyn, GwE, Welsh Government, Menter Môn, unions and local and regional Members of Parliament. Headteachers were also asked to share the information with parents. The consultation was accessible on the Council's website and messages were disseminated through social media throughout the consultation period. Briefing

sessions were held for primary and secondary headteachers as well as elected members, and five full consultation meetings were held with pupils from the primary sector, one full consultation meeting with pupils from the secondary sector and one meeting with pupils from Canolfan Addysg Y Bont, and an additional session was arranged for those who were unable to attend their allocated sessions. Further information about the arrangements and feedback from schools is provided in Appendix 5 of the report which also sets out the questions put to pupils at each of the sessions. A total of 150 pupils from 23 primary schools, 4 secondary schools and Canolfan Addysg y Bont participated, and compared with the consultation on the 2018 Isle of Anglesey Education Strategy, the process was more focused on consulting with children and young people and drew a greater response from them. As regards making improvements for future consultations the consultation period could be extended, more briefing sessions could be held and a specific session held for post-16 pupils. However, Officers are satisfied the consultation did capture the range of pupils from age 5 through to sixth form and post-16 provision.

- That in terms of influencing the strategy, in response to the feedback received from the consultation process, Officers are recommending that changes be made to the Implementation Timetable for Stage 3 2025 onwards, that the sources of information used to populate the data within the strategy be included in a new section to be added to the strategy, and that the governance model be updated to reflect governance changes specifically in relation to strengthening accountability and monitoring arrangements. A number of valid points were raised during the consultation and informative and interesting comments and ideas were put forward by school pupils, and whilst these have not directly influenced the updated strategy document, they will be considered further in formulating any specific proposals. Although the number and volume of responses can always be improved it is considered that for the purpose of the consultation, the response and the views captured were sufficient and appropriate.
- That the strategy as a whole is about ensuring education provision and a learning environment of the highest quality with several of the drivers for change – ensuring the best outcomes for learners, developing strong leadership on all levels, ensuring high quality and fit for purpose buildings and learning environments, improving access to ensure wellbeing, care and health within schools, ensuring that schools have the resources and capacity to drive the Curriculum for Wales forward successfully, ensuring that schools are sustainable and can operate effectively within the available budget - all geared towards delivering an education provision of the highest standard within buildings that are fit for purpose.
- That achieving Net Zero is a key Council commitment and is one of the strategic objectives in the Council Plan for the next five-year period. As part of this commitment, the Council will be reviewing its assets and as much of the Council's buildings estate is made up of schools some of which are not in the best condition, the drive towards achieving Net Zero and decarbonisation has to be an integral element of the modernising learning communities strategy.
- That the Authority considers a small school to be one with fewer than 91 pupils in the context of the challenges they face as set out in the report. This is in line with Welsh Government's definition through the Education (Schools) (Wales) Order 2014 which defines small schools as schools with fewer than 91 pupils. Whilst the Authority notes and respects the views of the Welsh Language Society the purpose of the strategy is to identify at a high level, the challenges facing the Council and the principles for driving change forwards. More detailed information will be presented as part of specific proposals to be brought forward in future.

- That one of the main challenges to achieving the aims and objectives of the strategy is the need for capital investment. The cost of building new schools has risen and is expensive and although Welsh Government has contributed 50% of the cost of projects under Band A and 65% of the cost of projects under Band B, the Council has had to fund the remaining costs. Attracting external grants to improve the condition of the educational building estate is also a challenge. Additionally, implementing the strategy will likely involve difficult and unpopular decisions when considering the future of school organisation, any such proposals will involve open and transparent consultation and discussions.
- That the Strategy chimes with several of the strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan including Net Zero, social care and wellbeing in the context of community schools and developing the Welsh language. It envisages the provision of the best education for both this and future generations ensuring effective schools of the right size in the right locations. The Strategy also accords with many of the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in terms of collaboration, communication, sustainability, modernisation, and consultation.
- That the monitoring, management, and governance arrangements are set out in Appendix 10 of the Strategy with close compliance with the School Organisation Code 2018 a key requirement. Those arrangements will be amended to reflect the recommendation that accountability and monitoring aspects be strengthened. Accountability is set at three levels with the Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive providing overall oversight, a Steering Group responsible for setting a direction for the programme and an Executive group responsible for active decisions and day to day problem solving. Regular updates will be provided via the Programme Board.
- In response to an additional question about the sufficiency and availability of play/recreational areas in schools being considered a factor across the county, the Director of Education, Skills and Young People advised that there are examples of such facilities within community schools being available for wider use outside of school hours. The mindset behind community focused schools is the availability of school buildings and facilities for use by the extended community, and in terms of the strategy the promotion of play can be considered an important aspect of pupils' well-being and learning as well as promoting pupils' social interaction.

At the end of the discussion a proposal was made and seconded that the Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy along with the amendments as set out be recommended to the Executive. A counter proposal was made and seconded that the Strategy be rejected because of the concern for the future of small schools and that consideration be given instead to alternative approaches such as that advocated by former Education Commissioner Gareth Jones as highlighted by the Welsh Language Society's response. In the ensuing vote, the proposal to recommend the Strategy to the Executive was carried.

Having scrutinised the Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy and having noted the responses to the public consultation and the further information and advice provided by the Director of Education, Skills, and Young People in response to the issues raised at the meeting, it was resolved to recommend the Strategy together with the amendments proposed to the Executive.

5 AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development on the outcome of the public consultation on the Draft Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan was presented for the Committee's consideration and comment.

Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime provided some background information saying that the AONB Management Plan is a statutory document which must be reviewed every five years according to set guidelines. The Plan, although it is focused on the special qualities and significance of the AONB and presents a vision for its future, is cross departmental in that it also has social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and educational significance and as such it aligns with the relevant objectives and priorities set out in the Council Plan. The draft AONB Management Plan was subject to a six-week public consultation which ran from 28 April to 9 June, 2023 and has been updated to reflect the comments received. A total of 73 responses was received which are analysed in the consultation response report many of which reference the Penrhos development which was under consideration at the time. A user-friendly version of the Plan will be produced once the consultation period is completed and changes made, as will an Action Plan which will be monitored to ensure that the vision for the AONB is implemented and that communities and stakeholders are engaged in that process.

In the ensuing discussion on the Strategy and the public response to it, a number of matters were considered including the reasons for preparing an AONB Management Plan and its links to the Council Plan, the robustness of the public consultation process given that there were only 73 responses and the ways in which that process influenced the final document, the relationship between the AONB Management Plan and the planning development process, the need for a communication plan, the relationship with services internally within the Council especially with education and the youth service, and improving engagement and collaboration with landowners and farmers. Specific issues around the situation in Llanddwyn and Newborough were also raised in connection with protection and conservation.

The Portfolio Member and Officers present provided further information as follows –

- That local authorities which administer AONBs are required by law to prepare and publish management plans for their area and to review these plans every five years. Although the Management Plan review is 3 years behind schedule because of the Covid pandemic, the additional time as well as the experiences gained in responding to the pandemic has allowed the Service to ensure that the contents and priorities of the Plan are appropriate and robust and capable of meeting the challenges which the Island faces. The AONB is a living, working landscape and as such the needs of communities and people's ability to earn a livelihood from the areas in which they live are important. While the AONB designation relates to landscape, ensuring community and economic benefits is important and is acknowledged as is nature and addressing climate change. The Welsh Language is recognised as a special characteristic within the designation. In capturing all these themes the Plan aligns closely with the priorities and strategic objectives of the Council Plan.
- That an online methodology was adopted for the public consultation as best practice and affording greater accessibility to the public. While the questions set as part of the consultation were focused on key areas of the Plan, they were framed in such a way as to provide an insight into people's priorities in moving forward thereby informing future work. The 73 responses most of which were observations were assessed and were considered informative and constructive in terms of providing an insight into people's thoughts about the AONB as well as areas in which improvements could be made. The most pertinent comments have been incorporated within the consultation report. In terms of the volume of responses, the response is considered reasonable and has given the Service a good perspective on what people think and it compares favourably with many previous consultations. Open days have in the past been arranged with previous versions of the Plan

but with mixed results. The thinking this time was that continued messaging via the website and/or social media throughout the six-week consultation period would elicit a good response. While there is always room for improving aspects and this will be looked at over the next five-year period, the Service is confident that the consultation process was comprehensive.

- That the AONB Management Plan is a material consideration within the planning development process and as such AONB Officers are consultees in relation to planning applications. As a living working landscape, development does take place within the AONB as communities need to remain viable within the designation. The AONB will be afforded specific attention in the work of formulating a new Local Development Plan in the coming months.
- That the consultation process has highlighted the need to improve and expand the opportunities for communication regarding the significance of the AONB and the importance of nature in people's lives as well as the work of the Council in managing the AONB. Comments showed that people feel strongly about protecting nature for the future but that its role in the health of people and that of the community is not so well understood. The AONB Unit works with other services within the Council with recent discussions having taken place with the Learning Service about how the work of the unit can tie in with the curriculum and how the unit can collaborate more closely with schools.
- That discussions are afoot with Natural Resources Wales as the responsible agency with regard to resolving issues in Llanddwyn and Newbrough with the Council being part of a group established to consider the future. Working in partnership with NRW, communities, farming and others is considered the way forward in trying to address complex issues such as the crisis in nature and climate change. The Council has sought to bring influence to bear on NRW for a number of years in relation to Llanddwyn which has been challenging. The Council considers that a plan is essential both for managing the reserve as one of the most environmentally important sites in Wales, and for managing the impacts on the people and local community more widely. Further discussions with the Chief Executive of NRW are planned this coming August.
- That partnership is also recognised as important in the relationship with landowners and farmers and that improved communication of the work of the AONB also entails highlighting opportunities to work collaboratively with stakeholders. The AONB Joint Advisory Committee is a forum which brings those partners and stakeholders together to discuss the management of the AONB. Additionally, the Action Plan that will follow on from the Management Plan will identify opportunities for engagement and collaboration in preserving and managing the landscape of the AONB whilst being mindful of the interests of businesses, communities, farmers and landowners, and local people.

The Portfolio Member for Leisure Tourism and Maritime made closing remarks on the consultation saying that although the number of responses at 73 may appear low, it is a good outcome when compared with many consultations and did include key partnerships. He referred to the Management Plan's reach extending well beyond nature and landscape alone and its close link to the Destination Management Plan. He noted the points raised during the discussion and the complex nature of some of those issues and agreed with the need to improve communication about the AONB in terms of its significance and what it means in practice.

Having reviewed the scope and content of the draft Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, it was resolved to recommend the Plan to the Executive for approval and adoption.

6 ANNUAL DELIVERY DOCUMENT 2023/24

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the Annual Delivery Document for 2023/24 was presented for the Committee's consideration and comment.

The Annual Delivery Document was presented by Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience as an outline of the Council's annual work programmes for 2023/24 which are designed to deliver the expectations of the Council Plan. He referred to the six strategic objectives of the Council Plan under which were listed the specific work streams that would be undertaken during 2023/24 to help achieve those objectives. The Delivery Document has been collectively developed with services across the Council and will be implemented within the resources determined as part of the budget set for 2023/24 alongside the Council's day to day activities. All front line and support staff will be integral to the document's successful delivery.

The Committee in discussing the document raised questions about the challenges and risks in seeking to realise the priorities set for 2023/24, the arrangements put in place to monitor the progress in delivering the work streams as outlined, the extent to which the Plan accords with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as well as ensuring that staff are fully engaged in its delivery.

The Chief Executive and Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager responded to the matters raised as follows –

- That to ensure successful delivery, it is important that none of the strategic objectives or work streams are considered in isolation but are considered within the local context. One of the main challenges and risks is the significant additional pressures under which some key services are operating most of which the Council is statutorily required to deliver on a day-to-day basis which makes planning for the future in terms of remodelling more challenging. The financial context is also concerning and is a risk with increasing pressure on services on the one hand against the need to modernise, to create greener buildings, to invest and create jobs whilst also protecting the environment on the other hand which makes achieving a balance between these competing claims very challenging. Capacity and staff retention are foremost priorities in ensuring that the aspirations of the Council Plan, and the specific objectives of the Delivery Document for 2023/24 are achieved. The Council is confident that those are realistic and can be met, and to ensure their delivery and to identify and address any risks along the way, it will be putting in place performance management arrangements mindful of the fact also that some of those risks may come from external sources and will need to be mitigated.
- Regular updates on progress on delivery are provided to the Corporate Programme Boards and the new corporate scorecard for 2023/24 will be aligned with the Council Plan. Additionally, the Delivery Document is closely aligned with the Council Plan in that it sets out the details around the critical activities that will be prioritised in 2023/24 to help deliver the objectives of the Plan. Reports on day-to-day actions will be made to the Programme Boards whilst improvements, impact on people and performance against indicators will be reported via the corporate scorecard.
- That the Well-being of Future Generations (Act) Wales sets seven well-being goals for Wales which all public bodies are expected to work towards. These are focused on a Wales that is more prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, a Wales of more cohesive communities, of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a Wales that is globally responsible. It is hoped that the Council is able to demonstrate through the six strategic objectives of its Council Plan that it is working towards achieving these goals. The Act also expects public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle to all their activities which means taking a longer-term view when making

decisions, taking a preventive approach, taking an integrated approach, working collaboratively, and including people in all that they do. The Council is confident that it can demonstrate that it is meeting the expectations of the Act.

- That it is essential that staff are aware of and know what is expected of them in helping to deliver the priorities of the Delivery Document thereby contributing towards fulfilling the objectives of the Council Plan. Service and Line Managers are responsible for making sure that this information is passed on to their staff in team meetings and on a one-to-one basis and that activities are delivered effectively.

Having considered the documentation and the additional information provided by the Officers, it was resolved to recommend the Annual Delivery Document to the Executive for adoption for 2023/24.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager incorporating the Committee's Forward Work Programme to April, 2024 was presented for consideration.

It was resolved –

- **To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/24.**
- **To note the progress thus far in implementing the Forward Work Programme.**

**Councillor Douglas Fowlie
Chair**