

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 in the Committee Room and on Zoom

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

Councillors Geraint Bebb, Aled M. Jones, R. Llewelyn Jones, Jackie Lewis, Llio A. Owen, Keith Roberts, Ieuan Williams, Sonia Williams, Alwen Watkin, Arfon Wyn.

Portfolio Members

Councillors, Robin Williams (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing), Neville Evans (Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime), Dyfed Wyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Children Young People and Families), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience), Dyfed Wyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Children, Young People and Families), Dafydd Roberts (Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language), Nicola Roberts (Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change), Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer (for item 3)
Director of Social Services
Director of Education
Head of Regulation and Economic Development
Head of Housing Services
Head of Democracy (DS)
Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation (CE)
Corporate Planning Programme and Performance Manager (GP) (MH)
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)
Webcasting Officer (FT)

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Ifan Jones, Gary Pritchard (Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development), Mr John Tierney, Wendy Owen, Gillian Thompson (Co-opted Members), Mr Rhys H. Hughes (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr Arwel Owen (Head of Adults' Services).

ALSO PRESENT: Leisure Manager (OJ), Housing Service Manager (Strategy, Commissioning and Policy (ELI), Housing Strategy Officer (LD), Corporate Programme Manager (ATR), Senior Corporate Procurement Officer (CF)

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 16 October, 2024, were presented, and were confirmed as correct and progress in respect of the actions agreed was noted.

3 MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD Q2 2024/25

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience presented the report by the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the Corporate Scorecard which portrayed the Council's performance against the strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan at the end of the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

Councillor Carwyn Jones gave an overview of the scorecard report highlighting the inclusion of quarterly trend information and comparison with Q2 2023/24 performance. While the majority (85%) of the indicators with targets monitored during the quarter performed well against their targets (Green or Yellow RAG), six indicators in relation to Education, Housing, Economy, Climate Change and Whole Council Health (the percentage of FOI requests responded to within timescale) are shown to be underperforming. A detailed analysis of these indicators is provided in the report along with mitigations and they are being monitored and investigated by the Leadership Team to secure improvements into the future. Councillor Carwyn Jones also referred to examples of good performance in the quarter in areas relating to business support, social care and wellbeing, school attendance, the timely determination of planning applications, empty properties brought back into use and ongoing electrification of the Council's fleet vehicles.

In scrutinising the scorecard report, the Committee's members discussed the following matters -

- The reasons for the 9% decline in performance on Quarter 1.
- Given that six indicators currently have RAG status of Red or Amber against their targets, whether assurances can be given that the Authority will see a sustained improvement in performance by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.
- The risk that failure to meet recycling targets might incur a Welsh Government penalty
- The extent to which the financial position at the end of the second quarter (a projected year end overspend) creates a risk for the Council going forward into 2025/26.
- Clarification of Social Care and Wellbeing indicators (07) and (08) was sought in relation to children re-registered on the Child Protection Register within 12 months of previous removal from the register and the percentage of referrals of children that are re-referrals within 12 months. *A request was made to include numerical as well as percentage information to provide context and aid understanding.*
- The decline in performance in quarter 2 with regard to the timely turnaround of properties (Housing indicator 02). A question was asked about the availability of a follow up action plan to the scrutiny review of performance against this indicator.
- The extent to which capacity and recruitment are barriers to improvement and how those can be facilitated to help the Council meet its business needs.

- The arrangements for monitoring school suspensions and exclusions and the support provided for children who have been suspended or excluded from school.
- The decline in the percentage of Welsh language responses to official consultations.
- The number of businesses receiving support as part of the ARFOR programme.

Officers responded to the matters raised above with the following advice and guidance –

- That the decline in performance is due to six indicators having underperformed in quarter 2 compared to two indicators in quarter 1. The report details the context, circumstances and reasons for the missed targets and sets out current and planned actions to ensure improvements going into the next quarter and beyond.

The Chief Executive advised that the committee can be assured that the target setting progress is rigorous and that the targets set are considered and challenging and are designed to generate positive progress over time. Directors and service managers have reviewed the indicators to ensure they are relevant and appropriate and are sufficiently challenging to incentivise staff and services to go beyond their comfort zone and aim for new levels of performance. The scorecard reflects the position at the end of the second quarter which means there is scope for improvement in the second half of the year.

- That with regard to two of the six underperforming indicators – Climate Change indicator (02) the percentage of domestic waste reused recycled or composted, and Whole Council Health indicator (12) the percentage of FOI requests responded to within timescale, it is envisaged that improving the performance to Green against target will take until the end of the financial year. A kerbside intervention team has been established to reduce general waste and increase recycling by working with local communities to educate residents and a programme board will consider whether any further mitigations can be put in place. In respect of FOIs, while the Council remains committed to increasing the response rate the need to make savings and reduced capacity within services mean that the 90% target remains a difficult one.
- That it is unlikely the Council will reach the 70% recycling target for 2025 set by Welsh Government. The Corporate Planning Programme and Performance Manager advised that it was his understanding that rather than imposing a penalty forthwith, Welsh Government is willing to work with councils who miss the target but are able to demonstrate that they have in place a specific plan to achieve it.
- That any overspend on the 2024/25 revenue budget will have implications for the Council moving forward into 2025/26. The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer advised that it has been the Council's strategy to utilise reserves in the short term to achieve a balanced budget. An overspend at the end of the current financial year would have to be met from the Council's reserves thereby reducing the scope for utilising the reserves to meet any funding shortfall in 2025/26. Additionally, any overspend by services in 2024/25 as a result of increased demand will have to be reflected in an increased budget allocation for those services in 2025/26. Although the Council's financial position is more robust than that of many other councils, it is not without risks and a change in circumstances and/or conditions over the coming winter months could lead to extra costs for the Council.
- That Social Care and Wellbeing indicator (08) refers to families who have had a referral to Social Services and have been re-referred for additional or different support after the original intervention has been closed. The Director of Social Services confirmed that indicator (08) is not linked to the Child Protection Register.
- That the Housing Service is aiming to respond to the scrutiny review of the performance with regard to the time taken to re-let units of accommodation (excluding DTLs) by the end of the calendar year and to report back at the next meeting. The Head of Housing

Services clarified that the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2023 rules came into effect in November 2023 and the service took the opportunity to undertake property upgrades at the time but was hampered by a lack of available contractors, especially painters which led to delays and resulted in an increase in the number of days that properties are unavailable to let. The Head of Housing Services confirmed new contractor framework arrangements that will help clear the backlog and lead to an improvement in performance against the indicator by Quarter four 2024/25.

It was suggested by a member of the committee that tracking the Council's progress in implementing the new WHQS 2023 rules be incorporated as an addition/appendix to the corporate scorecard especially as the Council was the second authority in Wales to achieve the first set of standards. The Chief Executive advised that consideration needs to be given to where within the Council's governance arrangements it would be most appropriate to report on performance against the WHQS 2023 given that it is a programme for the long-term and given also the pressures on the scrutiny work programme.

- That recruitment remains a challenge. While the Council has invested in a new system to facilitate the job application process and has adopted work life balance initiatives such as flexible and hybrid working arrangements, the Council's commitment to bilingualism as well as the salary levels it is able to offer may limit the applicant pool. The Council has also a focus on workforce planning and on strategies to make the Council more attractive to potential employees. Financial constraints means that consideration has to be given to reducing and restructuring the workforce in some areas which is especially challenging in statutory service areas where the demand is growing. Senior Leaders are however keeping the matter under constant review and are ensuring that managers are proactive in their approach to filling posts and ensure also that the right talent is in the right roles. While the challenges vary from service to service, staff recruitment and retention have been identified as a strategic risk on the strategic risk register.
- That the number of school exclusions are monitored on a weekly basis and are discussed with schools and education officers. While there has been a widespread rise in suspensions and exclusions, the data for Anglesey shows a decrease in the numbers this year compared to the previous year. Inclusion and behaviour issues remain a challenge and are a priority for the service which will be reporting on the relevant data to the Education Scrutiny Panel and the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People confirmed that most suspensions are for a temporary period and in those circumstances the school provides work for the pupils for the duration of the suspension. In cases of permanent exclusion where a pupil has been excluded more than twice from schools, an alternative curriculum/qualification will be required and arrangements are made to that end taking into account individual needs.
- That respondents to the Council's consultations can do so in the language of their choice be that Welsh or English and it can be difficult to analyse the reasons for the choice. The decline in the percentage of Welsh language responses to official consultations may be a matter of fluctuating numbers within the quarter; the Council strives to ensure consultation language is as clear as possible to enable people to respond in the Welsh language if they so wish.
- That the ARFOR programme distributes business grants to Welsh businesses and the data reflects the number of grants processed in the quarter. *A request for information regarding the ARFOR programme and grants allocated was made.*

Having reviewed the Corporate Scorecard for Q2 2024/25 and having noted the responses of Officers to the matters raised it was resolved –

- **To note the Corporate Scorecard report for Q2 2024 including the areas which the Leadership Team is exploring and investigating to manage and secure further improvements into the future as outlined in the report**
- **To recommend the scorecard report and mitigating measures as outlined to the Executive.**

Additional actions –

- **Officers to consider where within the Council’s governance arrangements it would be most appropriate to report on the Council’s progress in implementing the WHQS 2023.**
- **That numerical as well as percentage information to be provided with regard to Social Care and Wellbeing indicators (07) and (08)**
- **That the committee be provided with information about businesses in receipt of grant support under the ARFOR programme.**

4 MÔN ACTIF STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime presented the report by the Head of Regulation and Economic Development incorporating the Môn Actif draft Strategic Plan for the period 2025 to 2029.

The Môn Actif Strategic Plan provides a clear direction and identifies key priority areas and vision for creating healthy communities over the next five year period. The five priority areas of the Plan link into the wider principles in the Council Plan 2023-28 and focus on Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Workforce Development, Facilities Management, Financial Sustainability and Collaboration. In developing the Plan, the Council’s financial situation has been considered including the decline in core and grant funding coupled with increasing demand for services. The Plan highlights the importance of attracting external funding and the need for appropriate and timely investment in the Council’s leisure centres. A variety of data sources were used to prepare the Plan and they provide strong evidence of the Island’s needs and they will be assessed on an ongoing basis during the five years to ensure the Council makes correct and informed decisions to help improve people’s health and promote being active within communities. Progress will be monitored by the Môn Actif Management Team and Mon Actif Subgroup.

The Head of Regulation and Economic Development and Leisure Manager were on hand to respond to questions by the committee. The main points of discussion were as follows:

- The reasons for preparing a strategic plan for Môn Actif and the ways in which the plan connects with the Council Plan
- The availability of local data to evidence that children on Anglesey are overweight/obese. It was noted that the strategic plan states that 11.2% of children aged 4 and 5 are obese and 14.5% are overweight. Questions were asked about the source of the information, the accuracy of the data and how obesity levels are determined and what follow up support/programmes are therefore available to help address the issue.
- Whether Mon Actif collaborates with schools to promote healthy eating.
- Whether the Council’s leisure centres and Mon Actif activities within and beyond them are sustainable
- The Council’s approach through Môn Actif to persuade more of the population to exercise and to become more active.
- Whether there are ways of extending Mon Actif activities to increase the number of children who participate in those activities and whether also the number all weather pitches on the Island can be increased
- The availability of Mon Actif supported evening activities within the community

In response to a request by a member, the Head of Housing Services gave a brief outline of the various means of support which Housing Services provide for the vulnerable especially over the Christmas period and confirmed in further response to the member that members are welcome to pay a visit/have a chat with the team about the provision if they so wish. It was agreed that information about the services available would be shared with members.

Officers responded to the points raised by the committee as follows:

- Explained the aim of the strategic plan as being to create healthy communities it having been shown that being physically active has short and long-term health benefits for people. The Leisure Service Manager referred to the recommended levels of physical activity for children and adults in guidelines issued by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales and he highlighted the Mon Actif Strategic Plan as an important preventative strategy in this context. In drawing together other agencies, organisations, and council services the strategy maximises the opportunities for participation in physical activity thereby reducing the pressures on the Health Board and helping to tackle age and obesity related issues. The strategy also provides a vehicle for essential investment in the leisure centres which host 500,000 visits annually. The Plan supports one of the aims of the Council Plan under its social care and wellbeing objective to deliver healthier, safer and fairer communities through a range of preventative, curative and supportive services.
- Confirmed the availability of Anglesey specific data with regard to children aged 4 to 5 with 643 children having been measured under the Child Measurement Programme 2022/23, 91.2% of children aged between 4 and 5 from Anglesey with 25.7% having been found to be overweight.
- While capacity issues means that Mon Actif does not work with schools on healthy eating initiatives the Pipyn Ynys Môn Programme is operating in fourteen areas across the Island and supports families with healthy eating choices to maintain healthy weight. The Director of Social Services highlighted the Mon Actif Strategic Plan as a plan which spans a range of services thereby adding value and able to draw on specific resources and skills within those services to engage with schools, families and communities on issues such as healthy eating.
- The Chief Executive in confirming that the data regarding childhood obesity is derived from Public Health Wales emphasised the importance of health and wellbeing in enabling people to contribute and to achieve their full potential. Given the complexity of the subject and in order to do it justice, he suggested that it be included for discussion at a future member monthly briefing session with an invitation to Public Health Wales and/or Health Board partners to attend to clarify the data sources and explain the data collection process and availability of local programmes and interventions.
- That given the challenges in managing the leisure provision in the current financial climate, the importance of maximising external funding opportunities is recognised with over £2.6m having been invested in the leisure provision since 2017. The objective is to ensure that the leisure centres are flexible, that they continue to meet the needs of customers and communities and that they remain popular and well used.
- Confirmed that from April 2025 sports development plans will be replaced by a plan based on a play space approach which means using the data available to focus on children who do not participate in physical activities and to also increase the use of community facilities. Collaboration with partners is essential in ensuring that the right individuals are targeted. The Leisure Service Manager advised that this approach builds on the existing work to extend leisure provision/activity beyond the leisure centres and into community venues to increase accessibility and participation.

The Chief Executive advised that the Council reports to Welsh Government annually on its performance against a national performance indicator on the use of leisure centres. The KPI does not however include people who participate in leisure service activities within the community. He suggested that it might be appropriate for the committee to consider asking the Leader and Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime to write to Welsh Government to request that consideration be given to extending the scope of the KPI to include individuals who access leisure service provision within the community thereby providing a fuller representation of all the work being undertaken in this area.

- That the number of visits to leisure centres has remained consistent with 500,000 visits annually which is testament to their popularity and 12,000 children having taken part in school holiday activity this year. To increase activity and participation levels it is important that service quality and customer care are maintained and that the leisure provision keeps pace with industry developments and continues to evolve and modernise and remain responsive to customer needs. With regard to all weather provision the Leisure Service Manager advised that while there are a number of all weather (3G) facilities on the Island, the Service would look at extending the provision if funding and opportunities to do so arose.
- That Mon Actif provision is currently focused on daytime activities. In this context the Director of Social Service referred to the weekly sessions for sufferers of dementia on the Island supported by collaboration between services and reflective of the range of work within the community.

Having scrutinised the Môn Actif draft Strategic Plan and received assurances with regard to the matters raised, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved to accept the content of the Môn Actif draft Strategic Plan and to recommend the Plan to the Executive for approval.

Additional actions:

- **Anglesey child obesity data sources and data collection process to be included for discussion at a future member monthly briefing session. Public Health Wales and/or the Local Health Board be invited to attend.**
- **The Leader and the Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime be asked to write to Welsh Government to request that consideration be given to extending the scope of the national KPI on the use of leisure centres to include people who access leisure service activities within the community.**
- **Officers to provide members with information about the services and support available for the vulnerable over the Christmas period.**

5 LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT 2023-2028

Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing presented the report by the Head of Housing Services incorporating the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023-2028.

The Council is statutorily required to undertake a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA). Every five years, local authorities are required to rewrite their LHMA and refresh their LMHA during that five year period. The purpose of the LHMA is to provide a broad analysis of the Isle of Anglesey housing market, considering the long-term requirements for housing on Anglesey. The evidence base within the assessment will also be used to inform the Anglesey Housing Strategy as well as part of the Local Development Plan. It also informs strategic housing priorities and local service planning such as education and transport.

The Head of Housing Services guided members through the detail of the report including the data collection process, consultation, and engagement and referred to some of the challenges involved in the process. As part of the assessment Anglesey is divided into nine housing areas which are defined based on where people currently live and are likely to move. The Head of Housing Services referred to the LMHA results highlighting that the demand for affordable housing, particularly one bedroom social rent units remains exceptionally high.

The matters raised in the subsequent discussion were as follows –

- It was noted that the assessment identifies the need for 1 bedroom dwellings. Questions were asked about how this conclusion was reached as well as how unmet housing need would be resolved given that demographic changes could add to the need.
- The extent to which the assessment will influence future housing policies in formulating the Local Development Plan. Questions were asked about the degree to which the data will be reflected in the LDP especially in relation to the need for 1 bedroom dwellings so that this need is reflected in approved developments.
- The risks and challenges facing the Council and its delivery partners
- It was noted that the assessment provides a snapshot of the local housing market at a point in time only and that the Council needs access to “live” data to help plan for its housing needs. It was suggested that Welsh Government be asked to ensure the data is kept up to date and current. It was further noted that while the document provides a factual and numerical assessment of the housing market and highlights the demand for housing, it does not provide answers as to how the issues identified are to be addressed.
- Whether use of the LHMA data can be made to influence policy more widely.
- The impact of second homes on the affordability and availability of housing for local people in popular tourist areas locally and nationally. A suggestion was made regarding increasing the Council Tax premium on empty homes and second homes to the maximum level allowed and questions were asked about other ways of addressing housing supply and affordability as well steps taken to alleviate the impact of second homes on the Welsh language within communities.

Officers responded to the points of discussion as follows –

- That the document provides a snapshot of housing need at the time at which the assessment was made based on the number of individual/families on the housing register at the time and projects that unmet need from the period will be resolved. However, it is also recognised by Welsh Government that it is unlikely that all unmet need will be addressed within this timeframe.
- That the local housing market assessment forms one of the evidence bases that will shape housing policy within the new Local development Plan and determine whether any amendments need to be made to current policies. Assurance was provided that the LMHA data will feed into the housing policies within the LDP including with regard to housing mix. The committee was informed that eighty four one bedroom dwellings are in the pipeline as part of developments but that any such further need that is identified will take time to come through in properties for rent or purchase.
- That the main risks to delivery include not being able to provide the right homes in the right places, the supply of affordable housing being delayed or reduced by rising costs while demand continues to grow; the unavailability of suitable development land in areas where people want to live e.g. rural areas; wider economic factors such as interest rates may affect the pace of development and there may be local objections to proposed developments.

- That Welsh Government could via the Executive be requested to ensure that the relevant data remains current and that similarly, Heads of Housing in Wales could via the Executive be invited to discuss how the data can be used to influence national policy.
- That Welsh Government recommends that local authorities consult on raising a premium to above 100% and that any such consultation should be undertaken at least six months before the beginning of the financial year to which the increase relates which means the timescale does not allow the Council to make a determination to raise Council Tax premium above 100% for the 2025/26 financial year.

In response to the comments made, the Portfolio Member for Finance said that increasing the Council Tax premium is an option that can be considered in addressing the issues arising as a result of second homes and long term empty homes and could form part of the budget setting discussion for 2026/27. The Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change referred to provisions within the planning process to safeguard the Welsh Language which will be reviewed with a view to their being strengthened in the new Local Development Plan for Anglesey and she referred also to ongoing discussions with the Commission for Welsh speaking communities.

Having scrutinised the Local Housing Market Assessment document 2023-28 and received assurances with regard to the matters raised, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved to recommend –

- **That the Executive approves the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023-28**
- **That the Executive approves the consultation process.**
- **That the Executive delegate authority to the Head of Housing Service in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder to agree any minor editorial changes required to the draft Local Housing Market Assessment prior to its submission to Welsh Government.**

Additional Actions –

To recommend the following to the Executive -

- **That Welsh Government be asked to ensure that the data on which the LMHA is based is “live,” up to date and current.**
- **That ways in which the data can be used to influence national policy be discussed with Heads of Housing in Wales**
- **That consideration be given to reviewing the level of the Council Tax Premium applied to second homes and long term empty homes.**

6 PROCUREMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029 AND NEW CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing presented the report by the Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer incorporating the draft Procurement Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules for comment by the committee prior to their submission to the Executive for approval.

The UK Government has revised the legislation in respect of procurement in the public sector and the Procurement Act 2023 will come into force on 24 February 2025. Also, Welsh Government has passed the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 which places additional responsibilities and duties on public sector organisations in Wales in relation to procurement. The Council commissioned an external company to review the Council's preparedness for the change in legislation and to provide the Council with an action plan to ensure compliance which covers a number of areas including the overall strategy. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's approach to procurement and ensures that the way in which the Council commissions and sources its services, supplies and works

is compliant with legislation, internal policies, and processes, is ethical, open, fair, transparent and includes economic, social, labour and environmental factors in the process.

The change in procurement legislation required the Council to update its Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) which set out the process on how to undertake a procurement exercise, the different procurement methods and when they should be used. The revised CPRs have been drafted to ensure they are flexible enough to allow officers to undertake procurement exercises in the most efficient and effective way while still ensuring that any procurement exercise is controlled and ensures that the Council achieves value for money.

The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer advised that the Strategic Plan could mean more opportunities to contract with local firms thereby leading to greater local economic benefits.

The subsequent discussion focused on the following points –

- Whether the Council has the capacity to take a more innovative approach to procurement and to seek different solutions and models of delivery including internalising contracts where feasible and using technology to reduce the administrative burden.
- Agreement by members about the importance of contracting with local firms and suppliers thereby increasing the spending that goes into the local economy on Anglesey.
- Whether there is engagement with local businesses and how and where contracts are advertised.

In responding to the points raised, Officers advised as follows –

- That while capacity is a consideration, the Council is committed to innovating where it can within the resources available to it and will explore doing things differently where to do so means increased effectiveness, efficiency, and value. The Director of Function (Resources)/ Section 151 Officer cited examples where the Council has internalised contracts but advised that it is not feasible to review all of the Council's many contracts.
- That local companies can sometimes view private sector work as more advantageous than working for the public sector and need to be persuaded of the benefits of bidding for contracts with the Council. In addition, local firms are not always able to deliver the Council's contract requirements. The new procurement legislation does allow for flexibility in the way that contracts can be packaged which may make them more attractive to local firms. The Chief Executive advised that while modernising approaches is important, the primary consideration must be ensuring that the Council remains compliant with the legislation and with regulations thereby preserving its reputation.
- That further work needs to be done on initiatives such as meet the buyer events. Council Tax premium revenue was used to engage an officer in the Economic Development service to undertake this type of work and further consideration may have to be given to ways in which the premium can be used to strengthen the local economy the premium having been levied to counter the effects of the rising number of second homes within communities and to help local people buy local homes which will contribute to the local economy. The new procurement legislation requires councils to advertise future pipeline contracts which may also provide an opportunity to engage the interests of local firms early on in the process.

Having scrutinised the draft Procurement Strategic Plan and Contract Procedure Rules, it was resolved to accept the draft Procurement Strategic Plan for 2024- 25 and Contract Procedure Rules and recommend the same to the Executive.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager presented a report incorporating the current version of the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 2024/25 for review and comment.

It was resolved –

- **To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2024/25 as presented.**
- **To note the progress thus far in implementing the forward work programme.**

**Councillor Douglas Fowlie
Chair**

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