

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

7 January 2016

Chairperson: Councillor D.W.Davies

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.Jenkins

Councillors: A.Carter, M.Harvey, Mrs.L.H.James,
Mrs.D.Jones, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer,
Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell, J.Warman,
I.D.Williams and Mrs.A.Wingrave

Officers In Attendance Mrs.K.Jones, S.John, D.Rees, Mrs.J.Banfield,
S.Brennan, Ms.C.Furlow, I.John, J. Chapman,
Ms.R.Gadd and Ms.C.Gadd

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and A.N.Woolcock

Observers S.Barry and Mrs.S.Clements

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor M.Harvey Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: CCTV Appraisal – Consultation Outcome, as he is employed by South Wales Police.

Councillor A.R.Lockyer Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re: Welsh Church Act Funds Applications, as he is a trustee of Llewellyn Almshouses.

Councillor J.Warman Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re: Welsh Church

Act Funds Applications, as he is a trustee of Llewellyn Almshouses.

2. **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Minutes were noted by the Committee.

3. **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2015**

The Minutes were noted by the Committee.

4. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Forward Work Programme was noted by the Committee.

5. **CORPORATE PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received the report on the current work programme and continued developments within the Corporate Procurement Service, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that there had been some upheaval in the Procurement team with the departure of a number of senior staff and a small restructure had been required with a realignment of responsibilities. Officers reassured Members that there was sufficient experience in the team to continue delivering the standard of work required. Senior management would be ensuring that the team were not overburdened and that capacity of the team could meet demand.

It was highlighted that the team had engaged with various collaborative bodies including the National Procurement Service (NPS). It was noted that the NPS had identified that by using the frameworks put in place the Council had realised almost £80k of cash savings for the 2014/15 financial year. However, officers had been unable to reconcile the figures and had requested a breakdown from the NPS but the breakdown had not been received. Members expressed concerns that the NPS had not provided a breakdown of figures. Members recommended that the Chairperson write to the

NPS, on behalf of the Committee, and invited them to a future meeting to provide a clear explanation.

Members queried whether previous contracts with the Welsh Purchasing Consortium would be transferred over to the NPS and how those savings could be measured. Officers confirmed that the existing frameworks had been transferred and the savings would remain the same. In addition, the reports that had been requested for the breakdown of savings should outline this information. Members highlighted that there was a membership fee for the consortium and a levy with the NPS and it was queried whether there was a difference in costs. It was confirmed that the levy for the NPS was charged to suppliers and that this levy was not to be passed on to local authorities. It was asked if all local authorities in Wales had signed up to the NPS. It was explained that at some level all local authorities had and there were mechanisms for opting out but each organisation had to be clear about this from the start. It was noted that it would be difficult to know if local authorities did not use the frameworks in purchasing goods.

It was noted that the NPS was expected to undertake an all Wales approach regarding the bulk of collaborative procurement, which should reduce the amount of associated work currently met by the team, allowing them to concentrate on more complex work.

Members queried whether in the procurement processes, for example the outsourcing of care services, the Council's in house services were put in contention. Officers explained that if local authorities had sufficient provision in house they would not look outside. It was also noted that local suppliers should be used where possible. It was highlighted that local businesses were encouraged to put themselves forward and recognised that some required assistance in competing at a higher level, for example with the paperwork.

It was highlighted that the Team had been implementing a Purchase to Pay system (Oracle iProcurement) over the last 12 months. The system was currently being rolled out to all outstanding departments. It was explained that a new reporting system was being developed which would provide improved analysis of the procurement and payment processes. It would allow greater degree of clarity and understanding for departments of where their budgets were being spent.

Members were provided with a demonstration of the system. The level of information that could be obtained was outlined and that personal dashboards could be created for managers so the exact budget situation could be seen in real time. It was noted that top suppliers and the highest spend could be easily identified and the system could drill down to payment status. Members asked if it was compatible with the systems used by neighbouring local authorities. It was confirmed that the City and County of Swansea used the same financial system and they were very interested in the Neath Port Talbot development. Members queried if a section overspent their budget were there processes in place to flag this and would they be prevented from spending more money. It was explained that the system provided real time data and it would be flagged to the relevant managers if there was a concern.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed the report be noted. The recommendation to invite the National Procurement Service to a future meeting of the Committee to explain the savings figures was supported and agreed by the Committee.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

(i) Welsh Audit Office – Performance Management Arrangements

The Committee received the report by the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) on the findings of the follow up of the Council's performance management arrangements, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were reminded that the outcome of Corporate Assessment of the Council, which identified the need to strengthen the performance management framework. It had been acknowledged that the Council had already recognised this and was addressing it. It was highlighted that during the summer of 2015 the WAO undertook a follow up review to assess the Council's progress in implementing its new performance management arrangements. It was noted that Social Services was not included in the Assessment as Children and Young People Services were coming out of the Care and

Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) Serious Concerns Protocol.

It was highlighted that the WAO follow up review had found that the Council had improved the corporate performance framework and managers were committed to using the new processes. Members had a better picture of performance and reporting arrangements had improved. There was evidence of strong support by the corporate team and they had not been too prescriptive in their approach.

Members asked who was responsible in ensuring that each directorate included mandatory corporate measures in business plans and was this being checked. It was explained that the Chief Executive was clear when setting objectives for Directors that mandatory measures were included and this would be fed down to Heads of Service who would take responsibility for their areas. Members also played a role in assisting with this through the scrutiny process. Members queried how they could ensure that underperformance was reported so it could be addressed. It was explained that officers would address this through the business planning guidance and support. It was explained that examples of good practice would be referenced in guidance. Members queried when the results from the proposals for improvement to further refine report cards would be reported back to the Committee. Officers informed them that they were in the process of undertaking an audit, which was anticipated would be completed by the end of January and the results would be reported to Members following the analysis of this work. Members highlighted that there were inconsistencies in report cards and it was queried if all sections followed the same framework. It was confirmed that the same framework was used and officers recognised this issue and explained that support from the Corporate Strategy team would be tailored and targeted to suit need. It was noted that in developing a new style of presenting information it took time to implement consistently. Members highlighted that the report card for Customer Services had been a good example and suggested it could be used as a template by other services.

The Welsh Audit Office highlighted the example of Public Protection having low compliance with corporate guidance but had embedded business planning arrangements and were described as positive practice on which the Council could build.

It was asked which was more important. It was explained that it was a question of balance and the team had a positive approach but there was a gap that needed to be addressed.

Members queried that in developing a clearer connection between priorities, actions and measures how it would be known that the alignment between the three components was being adhered to. Officers explained that report cards included information on staffing, financial resources, experience of service users and efficiencies. This information would assist officers and Members in ensuring that there was alignment, as well as assessing impact.

Members asked when report cards were available to the public and what happens to enquiries regarding them. Members were informed that report cards were available on the Performance Hub on the intranet. Members had access to this hub and reports card would be in the public domain when they were reported to Scrutiny Committees. Officers would consider making the performance hub public through the internet to make it easier for the public to view them.

Members recommended that training on report cards and performance management was made available to Elected Members. It was highlighted that the WAO and internal officers could deliver training in this area.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board. Including the additional recommendation that training on report cards and performance management was made available to Elected Members.

(ii) Proposed National Indicators Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Committee received the report on the Council's formal response to the Welsh Government consultation on the proposed national well-being indicators for Wales, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Future Generations (Wales) Act was passed in 2015 and included seven wellbeing goals. The Welsh Government had issued the public consultation on a

set of 40 proposed national indicators and the Council's draft response was put forward for consideration by Members. The response identified indicators that were supported, indicators that were not and additional indicators for inclusion. Officers highlighted that the response recommended that Welsh Government undertook further development work in some areas. For example, some indicators would be hard to measure and there were inconsistencies with which groups of the population would be included in measuring the indicators.

Members queried why the Council was not supporting indicator 17 – People feel involved in local decision making. Members gave examples of being involved in local decision making had improved the well-being of individuals and motivated them to go into politics, in addition the public being involved added value to the work of the Council. Officers recognised the points raised and explained that the difficulty with the indicator was it was not easily measured. It was agreed that the consultation response could better reflect this.

Members highlighted Indicator 18 – People who volunteer. It was agreed that the term 'volunteer' was too broad, however, it was felt that it was an important indicator and was related to indicator 21 – people feeling lonely. Members also felt that Indicators 28 – looking after our cultural heritage and 29 – properties at risk of flooding could have an impact on well-being. Officers took on board the comments and suggested clarity was required on what was being proposed and how it would be measured. Members agreed that for an indicator to add value it had to be measurable and in addition if something was measurable it did not necessarily result in it adding value.

Members asked where these indicators were likely to fit in with existing indicators and what was value added. Officers agreed that these were good points and outlined that the consultation response suggested further development was required, especially with areas moving from Local Service Boards to Public Service Boards and the associated changes. It was highlighted that the focus of the indicators were long term and would not have much of an impact at a local level in the short term.

In regards to the proposed additional measure put forward by the Council – people feel safe and are safe, it was explained

that both reported crime and perception of crime would be measured and correlated. Members suggested that the indicators should include the percentage of people being paid the living wage, as this would improve well-being and would be goal to work towards. Members highlighted that there were no indicators on contentment as this could indicate how people felt. However, it was recognised that this would be subjective. It was noted that there had been a happiness index trialled in England; it was not known how successful it had been.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board subject to the wording of the consultation response was amended to reflect the points raised during the discussion.

(iii) CCTV Appraisal – Consultation Outcome

Cllr.M.Harvey reaffirmed his interest and left the meeting for this item.

The Committee received the final recommendation regarding the short and medium term options for sustaining CCTV public space provision across the county borough whilst delivering the savings targets identified for the Service in the Forward Financial Plan, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed of the background of the report and that a further period of public consultation on options for the future of public space CCTV had been agreed in October 2015. Twenty eight responses had been received and further dialogue was undertaken with key partners and staff. Members were provided with a summary of the consultation activity. It was highlighted that the number of cameras had to be reduced to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the guiding principles of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner. It was recognised that the Service had to be demand lead.

Members were supportive of the planned feasibility exercise with the City and County of Swansea to develop a full business case to test the benefits of establishing a joint CCTV Service. Officers highlighted that a joint service may result in an increased service but in the interim changes needed to be made to the existing Service. A further report on the potential of

a joint service would be brought to the Committee at a future meeting. It was noted that the Police Crime Commissioner for South Wales had sent a specific response stating that the future of CCTV services should be on the basis of a collaborative approach with neighbouring authorities in the short term with a view to a wider collaboration covering the whole of the South Wales Police Area in the longer term. Members asked if it was recorded how CCTV contributed to crime prevention and it was confirmed that this information was not currently recorded.

Officers highlighted that there was little value for money in having a monitored service during the week and it had to be needs based. Members had requested, in a previous meeting, a response as to whether or not the security guards and concierge in Council buildings could be utilised in providing an elements of the CCTV service. Officers informed them that efficiencies were being made in this area and the concierge had already moved towards a single shift and they overlapped into providing different functions so this option was not viable.

Members queried whether the CCTV cameras that were no longer going to be in use would remain in situ and could they be used again in the future if crime figures identified a negative impact from the service being removed from an area. Officers informed them that the Surveillance Commissioner guidance did not allow for non-working cameras to remain in place. Members queried whether the two decommissioned cameras in valleys areas could remain in situ for a trial period until the impact had been determined. Officers would seek advice from the Surveillance Commissioner on this matter. It was also highlighted that the cameras being there may still be a deterrent as it would not be known that they were decommissioned. It was noted that Community Councils were unwilling to contribute to the costs of CCTV Services in their areas.

Members highlighted that reducing the number of cameras could add extra pressure to the Police. Officers informed them that they were in discussions with the Police about having a direct feed to them during times that the cameras were not monitored. It was queried if the Police paid for footage that was used in prosecutions and it was noted that this was not possible as it would be an obstruction to them obtaining evidence. However, if the link was feed directly to them they could copy what they needed directly.

It was highlighted that when monitoring of CCTV during the day was removed, the stores in Neath also simultaneously withdrew their security. There had been an increase in shop lifting at this time, however, it would be difficult to identify what impact the removal of CCTV monitoring had. It was noted that the Police and local businesses were not prepared to make a financial contribution to CCTV services. It was highlighted that stores had to take responsibility for securing their own stock and retail made adjustments in prices for losses. It was noted that the Committee would be receiving an update report on the Community Safety Partnership and it was suggested that shoplifting could be considered as part of this report.

Officers noted that the proposals were the lower risk option and the development of a possible joint service with Swansea would offer opportunities to provide an increased service in the future. Members recognised that the matter had been considered in depth and the most viable options had been put forward.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board, with the caveat that officers investigated whether or not decommissioned cameras could remain in situ during the transition period until the impact had been determined.

7. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Resolved: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

8. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

(i) Valley Loans

The Committee received the report detailing the sundry debtors invoices write offs in relation to Valley Loans, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members queried if financial checks were made before the loan was agreed. Officers confirmed that financial checks were part of the application and approval process.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

(ii) Write Off of Council Tax

The Committee received the report outlining Council Tax write offs, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members queried what an attachment of benefit was. It was clarified that attachments could be made to earnings and benefits to pay back Council Tax. However, it was noted that these tend to be relatively small amounts.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON