

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

15 December 2016

Chairperson: Councillor D.W.Davies

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.Jenkins

Councillors: A.Carter, M.Harvey, Mrs.D.Jones, A.Llewelyn,
A.R.Lockyer, L.M.Purcell and S.Rahaman

Officers In Attendance H.Jenkins, Mrs.J.Banfield, Mrs. N. Sparkes,
Mrs. R. Headon, Miss.C.Davies and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.H.Thomas and A.N.Woolcock

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr. Mrs D Jones – Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on Third Sector Funding – Award of Grants 2017/2018 as she is a trustee on Age Connect NPT and a CVS Trustee.

Cllr. A Carter – Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on Third Sector Funding – Award of Grants 2017/2018 as he sits on the board of CVS

Cllr. A Llewelyn – Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on Third Sector Funding – Award of Grants 2017/2018 as he is a Committee Members of Ystalyfera Development Team.

2. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2016

The Committee noted the minutes.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017**

The Committee noted the work programme.

4. **CUSTOMER SERVICES SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the Customers Services Report Cards in relation to the One Stop Shop and the Contact Centre.

Members asked why there had been a decrease in overall demand for services mainly via the telephone and it was confirmed that this was mainly because of the increase in online service requests particularly in relation to Environment services with residents ordering refuse/recycling equipment online and Members were advised that this is in keeping with the Digital by Choice agenda).

Members asked for an update on the progress being made on the services priorities. Officers confirmed that steady progress was being made on all the priorities including the introduction of a business continuity process that now allows staff to interchange between the 3 different sites.

Officers advised that customer satisfaction is recorded by contacting customers after they have contacted the Council to obtain feedback and establish whether they are satisfied with the service they have received.

It was suggested that in the current economic climate there was no need to employ two specific welsh speakers but officers stated that the demand was there and the decision justified.

Members welcomed the fact that the main Council Contact Centre number was now one number with callers being able to select whether they wishes to progress the conversation in English or Welsh

Members asked why there were 4,000 abandoned calls a year. It was confirmed by officers that the reasons are not known as customers may just hang up because they do not wish to wait at that busy time and/or will ring again later.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **SCRUTINY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD**

Members considered a report that sought to get the Committees thoughts on how it wished to undertake Scrutiny of the Public Services Board (PSB).

Members were advised that the current work of the PSB was in relation to undertaking a Wellbeing Needs Assessment that will be circulated for consultation in 2017.

Members stated that in the first instance they would welcome sight of the draft Wellbeing Needs Assessment as part of the consultation process. Once this has been considered the Committee will decide how it wishes to proceed with scrutiny but it was agreed that there will be a requirement to scrutinise the key partners of the PSB to ensure a consistent approach in the implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations legislation.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

Cabinet Board Reports

The Committee scrutinised the following items:

6.1 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2016/2017 – Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2016 – 30th September)

Members considered the quarterly performance management report.

Members asked what was meant by the statement relating to exceptions and Officers stated that the exceptions were cases where there were issues outside of the Council's control. In addition Members asked what period was referred to when issuing new statements and it was confirmed it was a calendar year.

Members noted that there had been an increase in personal callers at both Civic Centres and what the reason was for this. Officers stated that generally it was mainly attributed to environment related service requests such as recycling equipment and it was suggested that this figure could increase again next April or May depending on when the next phase/roll out of Recycle Plus takes place.

Members asked whether the figure for school exclusions was true as it was a zero. It was confirmed that this was in relation to permanent exclusions and not temporary exclusions.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

6.2 Welsh Language Standards

Members considered a report that provided an update on a response received from the Welsh Language Commissioner to the challenge submitted by the Council in respect of the standards the Council considers being unreasonable.

Members stated that they still had concerns about the standard in relation to road signs and it was potentially dangerous. Officers confirmed that the response from the Commissioner was that every type of road was potentially a health and safety issue and did not agree with the Council's thoughts on this issue.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

6.3 Strategic Equality Plan 2015/2016

Members consider the Annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan.

Members noted that there appeared to have been a 20% reduction in Domestic Abuse and asked whether this was because awareness had risen. Officers confirmed that they have no evidence as to what the reason was.

Officers continued that a Domestic Violence Strategy will come forward for consideration in the New Year that has been developed by a group that now also considers violence against women and sexual exploitation. Members were advised that there had been a change in attitude towards Domestic Abuse and people are now more willing to report it.

Members asked were Equality Impact Assessments being completed fully across the Council and it was confirmed that there is still work to be done on this area and there may be a need to undertake additional staff training but this is budget reliant.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

CHAIRPERSON

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