

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 JUNE 2021

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday, 10 June 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Clive Carver (Chairman)

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Geoff Collett, Mared Eastwood, Patrick Heesom, Richard Jones, Richard Lloyd, Kevin Rush, Paul Shotton, Andy Williams and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGY: Councillor Ian Roberts - Leader and Cabinet Member for Education

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Billy Mullin - Deputy Leader (Governance) and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets, Councillor Paul Johnson - Cabinet Member for Finance, Social Value & Procurement, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Manager for Human Resources & Organisational Development, Strategic Performance Advisor, Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Democratic Services, Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Head of Democratic Services advised that it had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the Conservative Group. The Committee was advised that Councillor Clive Carver had been appointed to this role for the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor Clive Carver as Chairman of the Committee be noted.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Paul Shotton nominated Councillor Geoff Collett as Vice-Chair of the Committee and was seconded by Councillor Richard Lloyd. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Geoff Collett be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021 were approved, subject to an amendment to record Councillor Patrick Heesom's apology due to connectivity issues.

On that basis, the minutes were moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Geoff Collett.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

5. ACTION TRACKING

The Head of Democratic Services presented the update report on progress with actions arising from previous meetings.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Geoff Collett and Mared Eastwood.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress which has been made.

6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Democratic Services presented the current forward work programme for consideration, with meetings focussing on five major strands: Strategy, Finance, Performance, Partnerships and Regulatory. The Audit Wales report on financial sustainability would be included for September.

As raised previously, Councillor Richard Jones requested an earlier report on the Poverty theme on which the Committee was now responsible, given the importance of this topic. He welcomed the Chief Executive's suggestion for a special meeting on this topic at the end of July, and moved this as an additional recommendation.

The Chief Executive said that Overview & Scrutiny Committee forward work programmes would require some flexibility to accommodate additional issues and risks which may be referred from the new Recovery Committee.

Councillor Patrick Heesom requested a report on the outcome of the Welsh Government (WG) consultation on Combined Joint Committees and its implications for local government in Wales. The Chief Executive said that no firm proposals had yet been received from WG and that any future reports would be shared with Cabinet and the respective Committees.

Subject to the addition of a special meeting, the recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Richard Jones.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved, as varied at the meeting; and
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

7. RECOVERY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chief Executive presented a report on the Terms of Reference of the new Recovery Committee which had been set up to co-ordinate the second phase of recovery by referring risks and issues to the respective Overview & Scrutiny Committees. The updated set of corporate recovery objectives would be recommended to the Recovery Committee for adoption at its first meeting.

Councillor Richard Jones - who was to chair the Recovery Committee - spoke about its remit and cross-party membership.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Jones and Patrick Heesom.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the report and awaits guidance from the Recovery Committee on risks and issues to review in more detail within its Terms of Reference as part of its forward work programme.

8. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Executive introduced the end of year monitoring report to review year-end progress against corporate priorities relevant to the Committee as set out in the Council's Reporting Measures 2020/21. Overall this was a positive report given the challenges from the emergency situation, with 67% of performance indicators meeting or exceeding targets.

In presenting the report, the Strategic Performance Advisor spoke about the impact from the emergency on targets and trends. He said that the data demonstrated that the Council had maintained a good track record on performance and effective planning whilst remaining ambitious.

Councillor Richard Jones said that the effects from the emergency period made it difficult to compare performance to that in previous years.

The Chief Executive said that some performance targets had been adapted during the period and that one of the objectives for recovery was to re-set all targets and to resume forward planning.

Following positive comments from Councillor Patrick Heesom on the format of the published report, officers thanked the Strategic Performance Advisor for his work in collating and presenting the data in a readable format.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Heesom and Shotton.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee accepts the End of Year Performance Monitoring Report and will monitor areas where there is under performance and request further information as appropriate; and
- (b) That the Committee is assured by the explanations given for under performance, which in the main are explained by the interruption of the pandemic.

9. COMMENCEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

The Chief Executive introduced a report on the Council's preparations for the commencement of the socio-economic duty. This was a statutory requirement upon relevant public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager gave a joint presentation covering the following:

- What is the Socio-economic Duty and what does it do?
- Key terms
- Inequalities of outcomes
- Examples of poverty
- Demonstrating due regard - audit trail
- Meeting the duty - what we are doing
- Better outcomes
- Case study

The presentation highlighted the broader examples of poverty which linked to one of the priorities within the Council Plan. The report was being shared with all Overview & Scrutiny Committees to raise awareness of the new obligations. Amongst the actions, the inclusion of Integrated Impact Assessment outcomes on committee reports would help to demonstrate consideration of potential impacts of poverty in strategic decision-making. As requested, copies of the presentation would be circulated by email to the Committee.

In response to comments from the Chairman on the impact of digital poverty, the Chief Officer (Governance) spoke about work to improve digital

connectivity and would share the relevant contact officer's details. He took the opportunity to highlight the forthcoming Member briefing on the Digital Strategy.

Councillor Patrick Heesom acknowledged the importance of the report in having regard to these issues, and the responsibility on Welsh Government to instigate change and make a difference to people's lives.

As requested by the Chairman, officers would provide a separate response on the take-up of vaccinations in Flintshire.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Paul Shotton thanked the Benefits Manager for her work in tackling food poverty. In response to a query, she spoke about the importance of working with communities to fully understand the impact of inequality to residents and identifying actions to address that.

Councillor Richard Jones welcomed consideration of the duty at strategic level and proposed an additional recommendation that the Committee receives a quarterly report to demonstrate how this was being done. This was seconded by Councillor Paul Shotton.

On that basis, the recommendations were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty;
- (b) That the Committee is assured of the Council's preparedness in meeting the new duty; and
- (c) That the Committee receives a quarterly report to demonstrate how the requirements of the legislation are considered for strategic reports.

10. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 11.10am)

.....
Chairman