

Minutes



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 20 December 2018

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Guy (Chair), G Berry, C Evans, M Evans and C Ferris

In Attendance: The Leader, Councillor Debbie Wilcox

D Cooke (Scrutiny Adviser), E Blayney (Scrutiny and Governance Manager), W Godfrey (Chief Executive), J Harris (Strategic Director - People), B Owen (Strategic Director (Place) and R Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change)

Apologies: Councillors M Al-Nuaimi and L Lacey

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor K Thomas declared an interest in relation to item 3 Corporate Plan – Recommendations Monitoring, as the report references the work of boards undertaken by GAVO.

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 November 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3 **Corporate Plan - Recommendations Monitoring**

Attendees:

- Councillor Debbie Wilcox – Leader of the Council
- Will Godfrey – Chief Executive
- Bev Owen – Strategic Director – Place and Corporate
- James Harris – Strategic Director – People

The Leader provided an overview of the Scrutiny process and the importance of engage answer and reply to the Scrutiny. The ground-breaking Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) had made it a requirement for the Council to have a long term plan, and that it delivers on the wellbeing goals. In 2017, 5-year corporate plan, setting out vision and commitment, whole of Council plan, all included, all have a responsibility to make this corporate plan work. Working collaboratively, and across sectors, to deliver our aims. Plan and budget carefully in this difficult financial time.

Members asked the following:

- The Committee requested information on the proposals or projects that were intended or aimed at engaging the local community in Stow Hill, to enable community regeneration and meet the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

The Leader stated that it was not intended to exclude any area of Newport would, but this was not possible due to the significant financial constraints placed on the Council. The Strategic Director – Place and Corporate would feed back to the Committee on the specific proposals and projects in the Stow Hill area. The Director continued to inform the Committee that the four Community Investment Zones were chosen based on their placement on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. The NCC Information Hub had been essential in collating, analysing data to ensure the best quality information was used to adapt the Corporate Plan.

- A Member enquired the Hubs that were referenced in the report and raised concerns about the number of different types of 'hubs' in Newport, and how this might of caused confusion to the public. The Leader agreed and asked the Officers to look into badging them differently to avoid confusion. The Leader continued to inform the Committee of the pilot Hub that was being developed in Ringland, from funding obtained by the Welsh Government.
- The Committee were concerned about a 'sticking plaster approach' to service delivery. The example given was the declining partnership with Linc Cymru. The Leader agreed with the sentiment of the Members comments, and drew the Committees attention to how the Council must work inside the confines of setting a balanced budget. This meant that each service had to be delivered in the best possible way with the funds available.
- The Chief Executive explained that partnership working had become more and more prevalent over the past few years, and was a trend that was set to continue. It was the Officers job to evaluate the options to get the best outcome, regardless of politics and present this to the Councillors.
- A Member enquired as to why the Partnership Boards and partnership working had not been mentioned in the Corporate Plan recommendation monitoring update. The Leader responding by explaining how the Corporate Plan was a live document and was subject to change and that information could be included.
- The Committee requested that in future updates were more measurable and include indicators. The Committee found that it was harder to hold the Executive to account with qualitative data alone. The Chief Executive explained that Officers were working on Performance Indicators that would allow for this level of scrutiny and informed the Committee of the link between the Corporate Plan and the Service Plans.
- The Committee stated that they had made recommendations in 2017 that had not been followed up in the monitoring update. This included how the Plan would be monitored, because this recommendation had not been addressed then it would be difficult for Scrutiny to monitor the Plans achievements. Members wished to know why this had been?
- The Leader explained that this was a five-year strategic plan and significant changes had been made to the final Plan, based on the recommendations of the Committee. The annual report will be presented to Scrutiny at the end of the financial year. Performance and Financial information would be continued to be presented to Scrutiny through the year as Service Plans. The Chief Executive went onto state that the Plan had changed and four Programme Boards, led by the two directors, had been developed to manage the four themes outlined in the Plan.
- The Committee agreed that it would have been more useful if there had been Beginning, Middle and End Key Indicators to highlight the Councils progress towards completion. The example given was the Purple Flag status for the Cities night time

economy. The Committee stated that without additional information, such as figures and timescales, they were unable to carry out their scrutiny function.

- The Chief Executive disagreed with the Committees points, stating that the information was included in the report. The Chief used Point 7 as an example where in the progress column it provides further details for information.
- A Member requested more information on how the Council aimed to the final four apprentices to achieve the fifteen set out in the report. The Member also wanted to know if the Councils partners were committed to doing the same.
- The Leader reminded the Committee that as the Skills Lead on the Cardiff City Deal she was proud of the Councils Pilot programme at recruiting, developing and retaining high quality staff, especially in high demand areas like IT and Digital roles. The continued to remind the Committee that the Meeting was to monitor the recommendations made and not to monitor performance.
- A Members asked for more information on how the Heritage Centre was being redeveloped, and if the Newport Medieval Ship would be included? The Officers explained that there has been a successful grant awarded for the Transporter Bridge, which will be the main focus of the centre, but it was important to build upon this success and not lose other aspects of the cities heritage.

The Chair thanked the Leader and Officers for attending.

Conclusion - Comments to the Cabinet

The Committee noted the Corporate Plan – Recommendations Monitoring and agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.

The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet:

1. The Committee accepted that the Corporate Plan was a constantly evolving document and it was also being monitored through performance and financial scrutiny of the Service Plans, but the previous recommendations could not be met until the Annual Report was published.
2. The Committee requested that the Corporate Plan Annual Report needed to be clear and measurable.
3. The Strategic Director – Place would provide the Committee with information on the projects and proposals focusing on the Stow Hill ward.