

# Minutes



## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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Date:	15 November 2018
Time:	10.00 am
Present:	Councillors J Guy (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, G Berry, C Ferris, M Spencer and K Thomas
In Attendance:	L Davies, E Blayney (Scrutiny and Governance Manager), N Barnett (Governance Officer), R Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change) and T McKim (Partnership Policy & Involvement Manager)
Apologies:	Councillors C Evans, M Evans and L Lacey

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### 1 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Kate Thomas declared an interest in item 3, Public Engagement Review, as an employee of GAVO.

### 2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20/09/2018 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 3 **Public Engagement Review**

Attendee:

- Rhys Cornwall – Head of People and Business Change
- Tracey McKim – Policy Partnership and Involvement Manager

The Head of People & Business Change presented a brief overview to the Committee and highlighted the key areas for consideration.

Members asked the following:

- Members asked about the short and long term approach to Public Engagement, highlighting the need to be proactive rather than reactive in the Council's approach. The Officer explained that a SWOT analysis had been carried out with groups outside of the Council and with Stakeholders to establish what facilities Newport currently had. Other methods of engagement could be unpredictable, however Newport had Bus WIFI which reached around 8000 citizens, and there had been an online survey. The Authority needed to be more intelligent with the questions asked so as to ensure it was not overlapping with what it asked, and that the data collected was being used effectively and reused for appropriate purposes. The statutory duties on Public Bodies under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFG) meant that there was now statutory obligation to work in accordance with the 5 ways of working within the act, including involving its citizens in its decision making. The uncertainty around Budget and Brexit impacted the Council's ability to do this and cause barriers for the Authority.

- The Annual Budget cycle was discussed, and Members reiterated its comments made previously that the process needed to start early to enable more meaningful consultation on the budget. Officers noted that the timescales of the annual budget process were set by the Welsh Assembly when they released the settlement, and the development and engagement of budget proposals earlier was a matter for Cabinet to determine.
- When asked about engagement methods, The Officer explained that the Authority currently had a well-established Engagement Group which included Police, Health and Housing and were often able to collaborate with other organisations such as Newport City Homes, receiving feedback and views from residents, but that going forward more work was needed to be done on shared intelligence.
- Members discussed how to target hard to reach groups, particularly to reflect the diverse community in Newport, and what the authority was doing to improve this and empower citizens in its decision making. The Officers replied to members explaining ways in which the Authority empower citizens of Newport, this includes:- Online Surveys, a Citizen Panel, Events, Ward Meetings and a Youth Panel – Where young people plan 100% of the project, an example of this was St Pauls Walk.
- Members discussed good practices how the Council was ensuring it was consistent in how it approached public engagement. The Committee were advised that the Council had offered training on fairness to all staff including senior management; it was also providing training about the implications of Future Generations Act.
- Members commented on the younger generation being technology lead, and asked if there would improvements necessary in this area to continue and develop engagement with this group. It was explained that the use of digital technology as a method of engagement would reach the youth of the City and that the Authority was currently utilising those methods, using WIFI on Newport buses which currently reached around 8000 citizens. Officers also explained that the Authority had previously used segmentation when conducting large consultations such as the Well-being Plan. The use of Social Media could be both positive and negative, and the Authority was good with some aspects of Social Media, some progress was needed to move forward in other aspects to keep up to date and develop in growing areas.
- Members asked if it would be possible to build the requirement to report on engagement into the Service Level Agreements (SLA's), asking if Development Officers in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport were actively engaging to gain opinions of the people of that area. The Officer explained to Members that training had been conducted to remind people of the statutory obligations under the WFG act. Within the Corporate Plan, there was an action to develop the Newport Intelligence Hub; information was gathered on issues such as Social Services, Education and Crime. This information was gathered by the Office of National Statistics, and the data produced used in Partnership with other organisations.
- Members discussed that they feel face to face interaction with the citizens of Newport was very important part of the Public Engagement and would ensure that certain groups who would not respond well to forms, or questionnaires could be engaged with. It was felt that with questionnaires and forms, there was no interaction and questions could be unclear or interpreted a different way. Sometimes not all questions were clear. The Officer discussed that young people were not always willing to engage unless they were in a group scenario whilst experience of face to face events, whilst resource intensive, were very good at having a more detailed conversation about an issue. The costs of providing resource for face to face engagement was high and the was no

budget for this, the cost of employing a market research company is around 1k per day to undertake similar work. Officers also discussed that the result from using a market research company compared to using Council employees.

- Members asked what the significant differences will be this year when setting the budget, as the Authority need to balance the budget, but in doing so will affect stakeholders. Officers replied to the members explaining that the system of Cabinet agreeing the proposals for consultation in December, with the meeting being held in February to review the outcomes of the consultation and agree the final budget. Members felt that this approach was unsatisfactory as it did not allow sufficient time for engagement with the public. The Officer explained to Members that every local Authority worked within the timescales from the settlement from the Welsh Government and that changing this process to release proposals earlier was not within the control of Council officers. A program of activities would soon be released regarding consultation and there would be a higher level of engagement compared to previous years. This would include face to face engagement including a series of sessions, generally around budget priorities rather than individual proposals,
- Members commented about the introduction of parking charges, were there going to be consultation with those affected. The Officer explained that Engagement would have to happen as it would be a requirement for a proposal; recommendations would go to the Head of Streetscene.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending.

### **Conclusion - Comments to the Cabinet**

The Committee noted the detailed and comprehensive report from the Head of People and Business change, and noted the positive progress being made towards improving the levels and quality of public engagement within the Council.

Specific mention had been made during the meeting to the training provided to the Council Employees on the both the Future Generations Act (5 ways of working), and relating to Fairness in the context of the Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIA). The Committee agreed that these sessions were essential to cascade the message of the importance of engaging with the right people at the right time in the right way. The Committee agreed that these should be continued to be offered regularly to staff, and that attendance should be encouraged.

The Committee ask that the Officer investigate whether it would be possible to include a requirement to report on engagement within Service Levels Agreement's with partner organisations to promote and encourage public engagement.

The Committee agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.

Regarding the Annual Budget Proposals, the Committee agreed to reiterate to the Cabinet the comment it made during last year's budget that the public consultation specifically on proposals that were being considered should be an all year round process rather than limited to the statutory consultation in the December / January period on proposals that have already been fully developed. By allowing the consultation to be held all year, citizens would be able to contribute to all stages of the development and implementation of the savings.

## **4 Annual Information Risk Report**

Attendee:

- Rhys Cornwall – Head of People and Business Change

The Head of People and Business Change presented a brief overview to the Committee and highlighted the key areas for consideration. This included the completion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Information Risk Report. This report was not a statutory requirement but was best practice for accountability to ensure that the Authority had assurance of data and is managed across the Authority.

Members asked the following:

- Members asked what the Authority was doing in the long term to keep ahead of emerging developments and trends that would affect information security. The Officer explained that New Data Protection Act came into effect this year. The Council holds highly sensitive data, and that the Authority was effective at holding and managing that data. Officers explained that new regulations were not a fundamentally different to what was in place and was in line with how the Council was operating.
- Members commented that Newport was the first Authority to issue its Members with computers, more recently Members participated in a survey regarding the use of tablets. Members felt that this was a positive way forward. The Officer explained the background to this; a previous scheme in operation allowed Members to opt to use their own devices and use this with the Council system. However at the time, this was deemed to be a security risk. The Council was currently looking at other options, such as tablets for Members. The benefit of providing a tablet was that it was linked to a secure network, the data was encrypted, it could be remotely wiped of data if it were stolen. Another benefit was it was more sustainable as it could reduce the need for paper copies. There was no cost to the purchase of the tablets as it had been funding by a Tec fund made available through a renegotiation of a contract, and there was a minimal ongoing cost of the 4G provision.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending, and thanked the Officers for the detailed and comprehensive report.

The Committee were reminded that Information Security Training was being provided to Members over the coming weeks, to update the Members on their obligations with the new General Data Protection Regulations. Members were encouraged to attend this session, a reminder would be sent to all Members.

## **Conclusion**

The Committee commended the Officers for a comprehensive report and provided the Committee assurance of the comprehensive management of data within the Council.

## **5 Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

Attendees:

- Elizabeth Blayney - Scrutiny and Governance Manager

### **a) Forward Work Programme Update**

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next two committee meetings:

- 31 January 2019**, the agenda items;
- Draft Budget Proposals 2019/20

**7 March 2019**, the agenda item;

- Corporate Safeguarding Report;
- Performance Management Strategy.

The Committee were advised that following their request for the Leader to be invited to attend for the recommendations monitoring of the Corporate Plan, an additional meeting had been arranged for **10am on Thursdays 20 December**. The Leader and the Chief Executive had confirmed their attendance for this meeting.

**b) Action Arising**

The Committee noted the action sheet provided from the last meeting, and asked for an update on how the recommendations would be reported back to the Committee relating to the Wales Audit Officer Report. The Scrutiny and Governance Manager advised the Committee that the Committee comments would be reported on as part of the update on the Scrutiny Annual report next year.

**c) Information Reports**

There were no information reports.

**d) Scrutiny Letters**

The Committee noted the letter attached from the Leader in response to the Committee's comments. The Committee commented that the response was useful the new approach being taken with the Scrutiny Letters was welcomed to facilitate feedback from the Cabinet on the comments and recommendations from Scrutiny.