

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 8 September 2020

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Watkins (Chair), S Marshall, T Watkins, C Townsend, J Cleverly and W Routley

In Attendance: Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation)

1 Apologies

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2020 were **accepted** as a true and accurate record.

A member queried the last paragraph on page 7, has the Fairness and Equalities been published? The Head of Law and Regulations advised the committee that the actions from this meeting would have been completed before the Budget, so they would have been published.

4 Draft 2020-21 Annual Forward Work Programme

Attendees

– Gareth Price (Head of Law and Regulations)

The Chair presented the item to the committee. It was suggested that the committee look at the Covid Strategic Recovery Aims report that was agreed at Cabinet on 24 June 2020. Members would be able to scrutinise the Council's response in the areas that concern the committee.

Members asked the following:

- When will the committee receive the six monthly service plans?

Members were advised that they will be received by November 2020 at the latest. They are currently going through a lot of updating. It is hopeful that one or two plans will be ready in October.

- Members voiced concern that Members were advised that the agenda for the 16th September 2020 Cabinet meeting will be published tomorrow. It will contain the Covid report which will give more details on what service areas have done. Members were reminded that they are able to view the live broadcast of the meeting.
- Members advised that they would like to see how the placements for children who cannot attend mainstream schools, and looked after children that have been placed out of area have fared during the pandemic.
- Members commented that on the Covid Strategic Recovery Aims report there are no dates on when they are aimed to be completed. Are there going to be dates issued or is it a document on what the Council is hoping to achieve?

The Head of Law and Regulation advised the committee that the documents are high level strategic aims that are linked into the Corporate Plan and the Well-being objectives so against these particular objectives there are no target dates. However, if the committee drill down into service plans so that within each of these strategic aims, there will be actions and objectives for each of the service areas.

Within those service plans, service areas will put a target date and a deadline for completion of those actions. All details will appear in the service plans and performance plans for this year.

- Concern was raised about residents being unable to access help and information as the Information Station during the pandemic and the reception desk at the Civic Centre being closed, and being faced with long call wait times. What plans are in place to reopen these channels?

Members were advised that these details will be given when other service areas report back on how this translates into what action they are delivering, which will feed into the strategic aims that will go to Cabinet about the New Normal and New Ways of Working. There will be a detailed report on this in regards to what Customer Services intend on doing what is planned for the reopening of public buildings and the Information Station, acknowledging that things can never go back completely to the way they were. There will be an opportunity for Scrutiny to have input and to challenge the basis of that proposal.

- Over the next couple of months, are the committee going to look at each of the strategic aims in separate meetings or will they be scrutinising all of the strategic areas within one meeting and seeing how they develop through?

Members were advised that the committee won't be going through each of the strategic aims, but take the various objectives that sit below them, how they relate to the People based services and pick them up through the service plans. The committee will then have an opportunity to raise questions to Heads of Service and Cabinet Members about the impact on their particular services and what they propose doing in the recovery stage.

Members were then advised that if something comes out of those questions in terms of wanting more detailed reports on specific issues whether it relate to schools or adult Social Services, then the Scrutiny Team can put those in the work programme.

- It was suggested that the committee do as what had normally been done in the past, which is to split the performance reviews over two meetings, with one meeting looking into Education services and the other looking at Adult and Children Services. This would allow the committee the opportunity to look more in depth.
- Members were advised that Housing Services and homelessness issues, start up business grants and support for the unemployed fall under Regeneration Investment and Housing service plan which is reported to the Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate. However, the committee could ask in terms of any sort of social adult care issues that arise out of housing concerns, such as support services to help those moving into accommodation, and if any issues arose that have impacted on people's health and social care then Members could pick it up as part of the remit of the People committee.
- Members asked are the committee able to receive an immediate update on the readiness of digital inclusion with schools for those that might not have access to Wi-Fi, internet or computer facilities. There is a concern that if a school or class had to go into lockdown, how ready are the Council to enabling our children and young people to have full access to computers and equipment.
- Members were advised that this was already in place during the four months that schools were closed. Back in March, Education had ordered a large number of devices that could be made available for digitally excluded families during this period. Members were then advised that the Chief Education Officer can provide more information on this when she presents her service plan to the committee. The committee are free to submit a question to the Chief Education Officer if they wish to receive information.
- Query was made about air quality, affecting the health and wellbeing of residents and what measures are in place. Members were advised that this falls under the remit of the Place and Corporate committee, however Members are able to submit a Question At Any Time to Cabinet Members to find out what measures are in place. Members were then advised that there is a report on Sustainable Travel and Air Quality that is going to Cabinet on 16th September 2020 which will provide an update on what measures have been put in place to improve sustainable travel which will have an impact on air quality.
- Where would the committee be able to go to receive information on Mental Health services for adults and children during the lockdown situation, specifically how it has been and will be in the recovery stages?

Members were advised that they receive the Adult Social Care service report, they can ask the Head of Service and Cabinet Member. A written question can also be made by Members if they would like to get the information sooner. A committee member then advised that the Community Adult Mental Health team have been working all the way through lockdown.

Conclusion

The committee agreed to accept the Annual Forward Work Programme 2020 – 21.

The meeting ended at 10:50.

