

Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held remotely via video-conference on Thursday, 13 January 2022

PRESENT; Councillor Keith Evans (Chair), Councillors Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Gareth Davies, Ifan Davies, Peter Davies, Endaf Edwards, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Rowland Rees-Evans, Lynford Thomas, Wyn Thomas, Ivor Williams (Vice-Chair), Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd and Ray Quant MBE and Matthew Woolfall Jones

Also in attendance: Councillor Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd and Ray Quant (Cabinet Members)

Officers in attendance: Mr Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer- People and Organisation, Mr Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager, Growth and Enterprise, Mr David Owen, Digital Development Officer, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Scrutiny Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer.

1 Apologies

Councillor Elizabeth Evans and Dan Potter apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations) **Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

Councillor Bryan Davies declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 3, Council Fleet and Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicles

3 Council Fleet and Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicles

Consideration was given to the development of the two new policies by People & Organisation Service that had been in collaboration with Highways and Environmental. Following initial consideration by Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 27 October 2021, both policies had been redrafted to incorporate a number of suggested amendments. These policies had been subject to consultation with the relevant Trade Unions and their amendments had been incorporated where appropriate.

The purpose of all staff policies and procedures was to clearly set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required of staff, how they can gain advice or support and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure.

Driving at Work- Council Fleet Policy

A Fleet and Driver Risk Management review had been conducted by a consultant on behalf of Zurich, the Council's insurance company. Its main purpose was to review the Council's policies and arrangements against best practice standards and to provide recommendations that assist with ensuring compliance, protecting our workforce from harm, and reducing the risk of incidents.

A key recommendation of the Review was the introduction of a Driving at Work Policy with embedded Driver Agreement which provides "clear unambiguous expectation as to driving standards". The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy was one of a suite of initiatives aimed at standardising recording and compliance across the vehicle fleet and achieving driving standards which improve driver and passenger safety, the number of fleet related incidents and accidents. Other initiatives include the introduction of a driver training e-learning module and robust checking systems for vehicles and licences.

The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy introduced:-

- Driver/Plant Operator Agreement to be signed on an annual basis;
- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in health or physical/sensory impairments and an annual health assessment
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee paying up to £250 contribution to insurance excess costs, following a disciplinary procedure, if the damage is caused as a result of their negligence or driving without due care and attention

Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy

The Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy set out the expectations of those employees who use their private vehicle for Council business purposes. An e-learning module would also be developed to complement the policy.

The Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy introduces;

- Private Vehicle user Declaration to be signed on an annual basis;
- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in circumstances which may affect the use of a private vehicle for work purposes
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee confirming that their vehicle is roadworthy, is MOT certificated (where appropriate) and correctly insured for business purposes.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to recommend the approval of the Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy and Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles (Grey Fleet) Policy by Cabinet subject to considering checking that private vehicles were roadworthy on the DVLA website.

4 Sickness Absence update

An update was provided on the Sickness Absence Update at the request of the Committee at a previous meeting. It was reported that the policy sets out procedures of managing sickness absence in the Council.

For the corporate workforce the Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy & Procedure had been in place since autumn 2017. The processes outlined within the document had been fully implemented and were by now well established.

For the school workforce, a revised model Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy & Procedure was approved by Cabinet in December 2021 and was being offered to Governing Bodies this term for adoption.

The following procedures were broadly the same for both policies.

In relation to Sickness Absence monitoring, it was reported that the monitoring of sickness absence was split into two distinct parts:

- a) Short term sickness absence – short period of absences, often only a few days as a result of minor ailments
- b) Long term sickness absence – continuous absence of longer than 28 days

Details of the policy in relation to the Short term absence monitoring, Long term sickness absence monitoring, Care First, and the Dying to Work Charter and Absences due to Covid-19, and the role of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer was provided.

A presentation was also provided on the Sickness absence and the following information was provided:-

- Number of Staff
- Number of days lost
- Number of days lost per FTE
- Benchmarking – Number of days 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
- Word Cloud - Long Term Absence Reasons
- Number of Occupational Health Referral
- Number of staff whose employment ended on ill health
- Covid-19 Absences as at 07/01/2022

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to accept the report for information.

Also consideration be given to comparing sickness absence in the private sector and with Powys County Council in future data presented to Committee.

5 Digital Connectivity

Consideration was given upon the report on Digital Connectivity. The report had been presented in order to provide Members with an overview of the initiatives and projects that Ceredigion County Council were currently undertaking to support the levels of digital connectivity across the County.

The following information was provided by a power point presentation:-

- Background
- Current Situation – Broadband, Mobile
- Current Projects/Initiatives – Broadband, Fibre Projects, Project Gigabit. Open Market & Reviews (OMR) 2021

Mobile – Shared Rural Network, Extended Area Service (EAS), County wide LoRaWAN Network, Ceredigion SMART Towns, Digital Website, Digital Connectivity Mapping

- Conclusion

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the update report upon the digital connectivity agenda in Ceredigion and the work of the Council to help improve connectivity, in order to assist Members raise awareness and promote opportunities within their communities.

6 Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Plan was agreed as presented subject to the following:-

- A report on County Farms with recommendations on the way forward to be presented in the 17 March 2022 meeting
- That the new Digital officer be invited to attend a future meeting
- A report upon Smart Town grants and other monies granted to reinforce Towns would also be presented at a future meeting following the elections

7 To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 14 October 2021 and 27 October 2021 subject to noting that Councillor Endaf Edwards had tendered his apologies in the meeting on the 27 October 2021.

Matters Arising

Councillor Lyndon Lloyd MBE requested that a telephone number for CLiC was provided on consultation /public documents; as not all members of the public did not have access to respond to consultations on line. This request would be sent to the relevant officers.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 February 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____