

**Minutes of the Meeting of OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
held at the Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via
video conference on Wednesday, 23 November 2022**

PRESENT; Councillor Keith Evans (Chair), Councillors Wyn Evans, Marc Davies, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Rhodri Evans, Geraint Wyn Hughes, Ceris Jones and Caryl Roberts.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member.
Councillors Catrin M S Davies and Alun Williams, Cabinet Members.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Paul Hinge, Member Champion for Armed Forces.
Councillor Gareth Lloyd and Councillor Euros Davies.

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Diana Davies, Corporate Manager, Partnerships and Performance, Rob Starr, Performance and Research Manager, Naomi McDonagh, Partnerships and Civil Contingencies Manager, Cathryn Morgan, Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer, People and Organisation, Rob Starr, Performance and Research Manager, Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead and Monitoring Officer, Harry Dimmack, Governance Officer, Lynne Walters, Partnership Officer, Nia Jones, Corporate Manager Democratic Services, Lisa Evans, Standards and Scrutiny Officer and Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer; Rhidian Jones and Carol Thomas, Translators.

(10.00 am - 12.34 pm)

5 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Councillor Endaf Edwards apologised for his inability to attend.
Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer, Policy and Performance, also apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

**6 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**

There were no disclosures of personal or prejudicial interests.
Councillor Rhodri Evans wished it noted that his wife is employed by the Authority.

7 Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) meeting held 20th September 2022 & Draft Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-28.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, attended to present the PSB agenda item with Diana Davies and Naomi McDonagh, the relevant Officers in attendance.

The Leader explained that under Section 35 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Local Authorities are required to ensure that their Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the power to scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Public Services Board for the Local Authority area in the exercise of its functions. Section 39 also states that each PSB must share a copy of its Local Well-being Plan with the Local Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The statutory guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act) sets out a requirement for each Public Services Board (PSB) to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area no later than a year before it publishes its Local Well-Being Plan. The guidance also requires that the Local Well-being Plan must be published no later than 12 months following each local government ordinary election. Ceredigion PSB published its Assessment of Local Well-being on 4th May 2022 and it was presented to this Committee on 15th June 2022. The Assessment of Local Well-being has been key to informing and establishing the four Local Well-being Objectives which were agreed at PSB meeting on the 7th March 2022 and presented to this Committee on 15th June. The Leader explained that it is these objectives that will form the basis of the next Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan and are as follows:

1. Work together to achieve a sustainable economy that benefits local people and builds on the strengths of Ceredigion.
2. Work together to reduce inequalities in our communities and use social and Green solutions to improve physical and mental health.
3. Work together to deliver decarbonisation initiatives within Ceredigion to protect and enhance our natural resources.
4. Work together to enable communities to feel safe and connected and will promote cultural diversity and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language.

It was also agreed that a cross-cutting objective to tackle hardship and poverty would be incorporated into the plan to reflect the current and future implications of the cost-of-living crisis and that it is recognised that this will have the potential to impact across the four well-being pillars - economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being and working together collaboratively across PSB organisations will help maintain a focus on this area of work.

Committee Members were advised that the content of the draft Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 had been developed through on-line and in person surveys, input from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for

Wales and a task and finish group consisting of representatives from Ceredigion PSB organisations.

The PSB approved the draft Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 at their meeting on the 20th September and subject to minor amendments have gone out to a 12 week public consultation; commencing on the 7th November 2022 and concluding on 29th January 2023. The responses received during the public consultation will be considered and fed into the final Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan that will be presented to the PSB at their meeting in March 2023. All PSB member organisations will then be required to approve the Plan through their usual governance arrangements before the PSB can give final approval to publish the Plan in April 2023.

Officers advised that this will then be the main work-plan and focus of the Ceredigion PSB and its performance will be scrutinised by this Scrutiny Committee.

The minutes of the Ceredigion PSB meeting held on the 20th September 2022 were also presented to the Committee.

During discussion, the main points raised were as follows:

- In response to a question regarding 'Warm Hubs' it was confirmed that there is a Community Grant Scheme whereby voluntary, non profit organisations are able to apply and register their interest to open warm hubs for the benefit of others in the county. Many village halls could be used for this purpose. The warm hub task and finish group was established via the PSB Poverty sub-group and reports back to the PSB through the sub-group.
- It was confirmed in response to a question that work would be undertaken throughout the 12 week consultation period to promote and encourage contributions.
- In response to a question, the Leader confirmed that he is content that there is appropriate representation from all Organisations present at the PSB meetings,
- In response to a question, Naomi Mc Donagh advised Members that Co-Production Wales are working with Ceredigion PSB, as well as Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire PSBs as part of a West Wales cluster to assist the PSBs with their engagement activity. It was noted that engagement is a key element of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Naomi sighted an example of them assisting with designing a workshop for school pupils as part of the consultation as well as other elements to help inform the process.
- It was confirmed following a question that Ceredigion is very much on track for the document to be published in May 2023.

Following discussion, Committee Members were asked to consider the following recommendations:

- i. To receive the draft minutes of the Ceredigion PSB meeting held on 20th September 2022

- ii. To receive the draft Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 and to consider what feedback, if any, the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee wish to provide to the current consultation on the Plan.

Members agreed to accept both recommendations in order to carry out their role of taking an overview of the overall effectiveness of the PSB.

The Chair thanked the Leader and the Officers for presenting the information and answering any questions.

8 Strategic Equality Plan Monitoring Report 2021-22

Councillor Catrin MS Davies, Cabinet Member and Cathryn Morgan were welcomed to present the Strategic Equality Plan monitoring report 2021-22.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to consider the needs of all individuals when carrying out our day-to-day work. The Act includes specific Public Sector Equality Duties for Wales which require the Council to set Equality Objectives within a Strategic Equality Plan, which must be reviewed every four years.

The promotion and use of the Welsh Language is set out in the Welsh Language Measure 2011, rather than the Equality Act. However, we consider Welsh language requirements alongside the protected characteristics of the Equality Act to encourage a holistic approach.

An action plan ensures the delivery of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24, grouped under five Equality Objectives.

It was reported that this is the second annual report on progress of the 2020-24 Plan and that a BRAG system shows how well an action is performing or being delivered, compared to the previous year.

Points highlighted as follows:

• A revised pregnancy risk assessment has been introduced. This now better

Reflects the current Public Health Wales guidance on pregnant people in the workplace.

• The regional Community Cohesion team continue to work with partners to

Encourage people to raise awareness of, and report hate crime. Events and awareness raising campaigns to tackle hate crime included Hate Crime Awareness Week, a 'Blue Light' event for refugees, Online Hate Pilot Sessions and Small Steps Right Wing Training.

• Lloyd Warburton, a Penglais School pupil, was elected as the new Member of

Wales Youth Parliament for Ceredigion and was also an active member of the Ceredigion Youth Council.

• The Accessible Housing Register and Accessible Housing Policy have been in

Place since June 2016. As a result, the number of people using the accessible Housing register and subsequently receiving offers continues to increase.

• Performance of Ceredigion pupils with Special Education Needs/Additional

Educational Needs is good. There is an increase in the number of pupils who are diagnosed with severe autism in the early years, and in the pupils with complex needs.

• The Covid-19 pandemic has had a big impact on the progress of learners with

English as an Additional Language (EAL), although we have exceeded targets:

9.5% of pupils moved up a level (target = 5%). 3.4% made 2 or more levels of progress (target = 1%). 77.7% of EAL pupils are on codes C-E. Of these, 56.9% are competent (D) or Fluent (E).

Following discussion, Members agreed to receive the Council's Strategic Equality Monitoring Report 2021-22 and recommend that Cabinet endorse the report on the 6th December 2022.

9 Gender Pay Report 2022 and Workforce Equality Report 202

The Leader of the Council along with Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer, were welcomed to present the Gender Pay Report 2022 and the Workforce Equality Report 2022.

Ceredigion County Council, along with all listed public authorities in Wales, is required to carry out gender pay reporting and publish employment information on an annual basis.

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, which forms part of the Equality Act 2010, Requires that the Council publishes a range of data relating to our workforce under each of the protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act.

During discussion, the following was noted:

- In response to a question regarding encouraging more women to apply senior officer roles, the Officer advised Members that the Work/Life Balance Policy is due for renewal early 2023 and will be presented to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at that time.

Following discussion, Members agreed to receive the Gender Pay Report 2022 and receive the Workforce Equality Report 2022.

10 Self-Assessment Report 2021/22

The Leader was once again welcomed to report the Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22. Part 6 of the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 replaces the old Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009 and introduces a new Self-Assessment based performance regime for Principal Councils. The new performance regime is intended to build and support a culture in which councils continuously seek to improve and do better in everything they do, regardless of how well they are performing already. It is the expectation of the Act that councils will always be striving to achieve more and seek to ensure best outcomes for local people and communities. One way of doing this is to continuously challenge the status quo and ask questions about how they are operating.

There are 5 specific duties for Councils introduced by the Act:

- Duty to keep performance under review
- Duty to consult on performance
- Duty to report on performance
- Duty to arrange a Panel Performance Assessment
- Duty to respond to a Panel Performance Assessment

The focus of self-assessment is on outcomes rather than process, and requires local authorities to take a different approach to assessing their performance than previously. This requires greater self reflection.

Since May 2022, Ceredigion County Council has been undertaking the first round of Self-Assessment, in which the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has played an integral part:

- On 15 June 2022 the Self-Assessment process that has been developed for use in Ceredigion was presented to the Committee. (The Council’s approach uses a set of Key Lines of Enquiry or key questions to help focus on the requirement of the Local Government and Elections Act).
- On 29 July 2022 a workshop was held with the Committee to record Members’ perspectives on Council performance and opportunities for improvement to feed into the Self-Assessment Matrix. (The Matrix is a table that captures all of the evidence, future challenges, proposed actions and scores).
- On 10 August 2022 a further workshop was held with the Committee to review the draft scores and key lines of Enquiry Matrix.

Since then, the evidence collected has been used to produce the Self-Assessment Report which the Officer referred to as Appendix 3 of the agenda papers. This is the main output from the Self-Assessment process and sets out how the Council is currently performing and the actions it intends to take going forward.

The Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22 discharges the requirements of both:

• The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – to set and review progress against our Corporate Well-being Objectives

• The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the duty to keep performance under review, consult on performance, report on performance, arrange a Panel Performance Assessment and respond to a Panel Performance Assessment.

The Governance and Audit Committee has a statutory responsibility to consider the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations on the findings and the actions that the Council proposes to take. The Report was considered at its meeting on 27 September 2022 and approved the report to proceed to publication. No formal recommendations to change the conclusions or the actions that the Council intends to take were made. However, minor formatting amendments were requested and a number of points raised on how to improve the next round of reporting. The Committee were advised that these amendments have been made and shown in Appendix 3 of the agenda papers. Following approval by Governance and Audit Committee the process of producing the 2021/22 Self-Assessment Report is now complete and cannot be amended further.

Committee Members were advised that the Self-Assessment Report is scheduled to proceed to Cabinet on 6 December and Council on 15 December, before being submitted to Ministers, Estyn and the Auditor General for Wales, as well as being published on the website.

During discussion, the following were noted:

- Ensure that community benefits continue to be secured and that they prove beneficial,
- Support local contractors to work together on tenders for bigger contracts,
- Members suggest investigating establishing arms-length services.

Following discussion, Committee Members agreed to receive the Self-Assessment Report 2021/22 including the Annual Review of Performance and Well-Being Objectives.

11 The Armed Forces Covenant Duty, as laid out in the Armed Forces Act 2021

Councillor Paul Hinge, Member Champion for the Armed Forces was welcomed to present the report. Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

Councillor Hinge advised the Committee that the Armed Forces Act 2021 clause 8 introduced a new requirement for certain public bodies, including Local Authorities, to pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. He advised that the Council will need to comply with the new law which came into force on the 22nd November 2022. The relevant council functions are Housing, Education and Drug and Alcohol services.

The Armed Forces Act 2021 enshrines the Armed Forces Covenant into law placing a legal obligation on public bodies to prevent service personnel, reservists and their families being disadvantaged when accessing public services. The Armed Forces Act 2021 received Royal Assent on the 15th of December 2021.

The draft Statutory Guidance for the Armed Forces Covenant Duty was laid before parliament in July 2022.

The Committee were advised of the current situation in that delivering its current commitments, the Council does pay due regard to the requirements of the Armed Forces Community, and it has sought to positively build upon its commitment since its initial pledge. This has led to direct amendments being made to Council policies as part of its commitment to the Covenant. This is particularly evident in the Work-life balance policy that supports flexible working options and recognises the clear need for armed service personnel and reservist to have additional authorised periods of absence to support their additional commitments. Councillor Hinge gave two excellent examples of where the Authority had supported a reservist and their families recently.

Also, through the provision of a secretariat function, Ceredigion County Council has also led on the establishment of the Ceredigion Armed Forces Community Forum which works with an extensive range of partners to continually raise the profile of the Armed Forces Community. Through direct interventions and partnership working Ceredigion County Council have recently endorsed their commitment to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and its positive interventions have successfully achieved both Bronze and Silver Recognition Awards. In addition to the above, arrangements are being made to promote additional training and awareness via on-line training which will prepare services for this legislation. This will be promoted through Learning and Development. Consideration will also be given to reviewing Education and Housing policies to ensure consistency with the Armed Forces Covenant. The Statutory Guidance will be considered along with any advice and good practice examples which will be utilised to further enhance provision and ensure compliance.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

In addition to the work that the Council already undertakes, it is proposed that the following additional steps are taken to prepare for the duty:

- Explore opportunities to improve data capture by services. The Regional Armed Forces Liaison Officer will advise on the categories that individual services will need to be using.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- There is grant funding available for children of up to £2,000 per child depending on requirements,

- Employees and Elected members to be encouraged to book the Armed Forces Covenant awareness sessions via CERINET.

Following discussion, Committee Members agreed to note the obligations of the Armed Forces Act 2021.

12 **Report on the review of the RIPA Policy and the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office Inspection**

Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer and Monitoring Officer presented the report in relation to the review of the RIPA Policy and the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office inspection.

It was noted that the Committee received the previous report on the 26th September 2022.

It was highlighted that Paragraph 4.47 of the *'Home Office Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Revised Code of Practice'* (2018) states that elected members of a local authority should review the authority's use of RIPA and set the policy once a year. RIPA Activity was reported in the previous report to this committee on the 26th of September 2022. Amendments to the RIPA Policy were most recently presented to this committee on the 15th of September 2022.

At the 26th of September 2022 meeting of this committee, it was reported that meetings with IPCO had taken place as part of their inspection. Following these meetings, the Council has received a letter from the IPCO summarising the key findings of the inspection which was attached to the agenda papers. Ms Prysor stated that in response to the discussions which took place during the inspection regarding the frequency of nil-returns for online surveillance, a new template email has been created which will be used when requesting quarterly returns of online surveillance activity from Designated Officers. The intention of this updated template is to provide more clarity with regards to the information requested. The email template was also attached to the agenda item. It was also advised that the IPCO have published their quarterly newsletter for Autumn 2022 which is available to view on their Website.

Following discussion, Committee Members were asked to:

- 1) Notes the contents of the Draft Amended Corporate RIPA Policy and Procedures Document,
- 2) Notes the contents of the IPCO Inspection Report,
- 3) Notes the contents of the SRO's response to the IPCO Inspection Report,
- 4) Notes the contents of the Updated RIPA Activity Request Email, and,
- 5) Notes the contents of the IPCO Quarterly Newsletter Autumn 2022.

Committee Members agreed to note and accept recommendations 1-5 listed above so as to ensure the committee is kept up to date with amendments to the RIPA Policy and the outcome of the Council's recent RIPA Inspection by the IPCO.

13 CYSUR/CWMPAS Combined Local Operational Group Safeguarding Report Qtr 1 2022/23

Alun Williams, Cabinet Member, attended to present the CYSUR/CWMPAS Combined Local Operational Group Safeguarding Report for quarter 1, 2022/23.

During discussions, the following key points were highlighted:

- In Quarter 1, there was a decrease in the overall number of contacts/reports received compared to Quarter 4-with 943 contacts/reports received in Q1 and 1010 received in Q 4.
- However, there was an increase in the overall number of contacts/reports which proceeded to actions needing to be taken under Child Protection Procedures, 221 in Q1 compared to 154 in Q4.
- The percentage of reports that proceeded to a Strategy Discussion in this quarter was 23.4% compared to 21.8% in Quarter 4. 11.5% of those went on to a Section 47 enquiry compared to 6.49% in Q4 and 1.4% went on to an Initial Child Protection Conference compared to 0.99% in Q4.
- The total number of children placed on the Child protection Register in this quarter following conference was 12 though, compared to 21 in the previous quarter.
- The total number of children removed from the register was 14 compared to 12 in the previous quarter.
- The total number of Section 47 enquiries undertaken in this quarter was 109, 92 were undertaken jointly with the Police, 17 were undertaken as a Social Services Single Agency. In Q4 the number of Section 47 enquiries undertaken were 65, 64 were undertaken with the Police.
- The main category of abuse that led to a Section 47 enquiry in quarter 1 was Physical Abuse (47) and then sexual exploitation abuse/exploitation (44), compared to Q4 where physical abuse (22) was the second main category and sexual abuse/exploitation (29) was the main category of abuse.
- The main Risk Factors for the 40 children who were on the Children Protection Register as of the 30/06/2022, were Domestic Abuse (38), Parental Mental Health (28), Adult Offences of Violence (27), parental separation being a factor in the household (27) and parental substance misuse/alcohol misuse (25), parental non-co-operation with the CP Plan (17).

- In terms of Adult Safeguarding, there has been a decrease in the number of adults suspected being at risk of abuse and/or neglect with there being 120 in Q4 and 107 in Q1, with the actual reports received being received in Quarter 1 being 120 and 154 in Quarter 4.
- The most reported category of abuse this quarter was emotional/psychological abuse, with 58 reports stating that this was the main category of abuse. This category of abuse was also the main category of abuse reported in Q4 where there were 61 reports. Neglect was the second main category of reported abuse (46), then financial abuse (34) and physical abuse (26).
There were 9 reports of sexual abuse.

Following discussion, Committee Members agreed to note the contents of the report and the levels of activity with the Local Authority so that governance of the Local Authority and its partner agencies are monitored.

Committee Members congratulated Elizabeth Upcott and her team for their hard work.

14 To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those minutes

The minutes of the Coordinating meeting held on the 27th October 2022 were confirmed as a true record of proceedings and there were no matters arising from those minutes.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their Patience and apologised for the technical issues experienced during the meeting. The Chairman asked the Leader and the Deputy of the Council to refer the committee's concerns to the appropriate person/s as this morning's meeting experienced 14 disruptions.

15 To receive a update from the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to consider the draft Forward Work Programmes

Each Chair in turn gave an update on their respective Committee's Forward Work Plans.

Councillor Keith Evans, Chairman, requested an update at the 18th January 2023 Committee meeting on the Hybrid System. It was also confirmed that a report on Cylch Caron would be requested at the same meeting.

The Chairman thanked Committee Members for attending and closed proceedings at 12:34pm. He also wished everyone Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating
Committee held on 18 January 2023**

Chairman:_____

Date:_____