

Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Monday, 03 October 2022

PRESENT; Councillor Rhodri Evans (Chair), Councillors Councillor Rhodri Evans (Chair), Councillors Euros Davies, Ifan Davies, Elaine Evans, Eryl Evans, Geraint Wyn Hughes, Hugh R M Hughes, Ceris Jones, Caryl Roberts

Also in attendance: Councillors Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council, Catrin M S Davies, Clive Davies and Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Members) together with Councillor Wyn Evans and Gareth Lloyd

Officers in attendance: Mr Russell Hughes-Pickering , Corporate Lead Officer – Economy & Regeneration, Mr Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager – Growth and Enterprise, Mr Andrew Harries- Estates Officer, Mrs Joanna Shaw, Project Development & Conservation Officer, Mr Alun Williams – Corporate Lead Officer – Policy, Performance and Public Protection, Mrs Diana Davies, Corporate Manager- Partnerships & Performance, Ms Marie Neige-Hadfield, Corporate Complaints and Freedom of Information Officer, Ms Kay Howells, Community Cohesion Co-ordinator Mid and South West, Ms Cathryn Morgan, Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Mrs Dwynwen Jones- Scrutiny Support Officer, Mrs Nia Jones, Corporate Manager- Democratic Services and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Services Officer

(10:00am-12:30pm & 1:30pm- 2:55pm)

1 Apologies

Councillor Endaf Edwards and Carl Worrall apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal/prejudicial Interest

Councillor Caryl Roberts declared a personal interest in item 3 on the agenda.

Councillor Ifan Davies declared a personal interest in item 3 on the agenda.

Councillor Wyn Evans declared a personal interest in item 3 on the agenda.

3 County Farms Update

Consideration was given to the County Farms update. The following information was provided:

- Introduction
- The County Council Farm Estate

- Previous Conclusions
- Current issues on the Council Farm Estate
- Approach for future tendencies

It was reported that the new Pollution control regulations were likely to place further challenges on the viability of the County Farm structure. Further work was required to understand the extent of the challenge. This paper sets out the latest progress, options for projects involving the Council farm network to inform the discussion and enable Scrutiny Committee to give feedback into the process.

Following discussion and questions from the floor, it was agreed that a Task and Finish group would be established to consider specific issues within the County Farms in depth and report back to the Committee accordingly. The Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate an email to all Members of the Committee requesting if they wished to be a member of that group. Consideration should also be given to a timescale to complete this work.

4 Asset Development/Empty Properties report

Consideration was given to the Asset Development/Empty Properties report. The following information was presented:-

- **BACKGROUND: Strategic Context & *Approach and Resources***
- Work since March 2020
- Demand
- Empty Properties Action plan
- Future workstreams- Strategic Projects, Re-balancing of assets, *Disposal / Development of assets. Assessment of priorities.*

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED

- (i) to note the report for information;
- (ii) to retain the Asset Panel;
- (iii) that a report on the purchase of the Cardigan car park be presented at the December meeting;
- (iv) a progress report upon the work going forward on Assets of the Council be presented to a future meeting, and
- (v) to consider an outside agent to sell the Council Assets in order to gain a greater audience of purchasers

5 Complaints/Compliments and Freedom of Information Annual Report 2021-2022

Consideration was given to the Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information (2021-2022). The report had been presented in order to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with a comprehensive overview of the Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) activity (including Environmental Information Regulations - EIR) received by the Authority during 2021 - 2022. This report also provided information about

complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during the reporting period.

It was AGREED

(i) to note and endorse the contents of the Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Activity – 2021/2022 and note the Ombudsman’s Annual Letter for 2021-2022; and

(ii) that greater detail in Section 4 on lessons learnt be provided in the next report

6 Victim Support Hate Crime

Consideration was given to the Victim Support Hate Crime report. It was stated that Victim Support developed a Hate Crime Charter for organisations to sign up to, to create a network of allies to support its work with victims, and to raise awareness of Hate crime and methods of reporting across Wales.

Hate crime can have a devastating effect on victims and the charity had seen a stark increase in demand for its hate crime support services, up to 70%, during the pandemic. This rise was driven largely as a result of racial and homophobic related incidences. In response to this rise in demand, Victim Support launched the Hate Crime Charter, which commits organisations to deliver rights for victims, as well as supporting them in identifying and reporting hate related crimes and incidences.

It was reported that Ceredigion County Council were already committed to raise awareness of Hate Crime and how to report it. Work undertaken through the Community Cohesion team and many council departments underpins a desire to ensure that hate crime is not acceptable, that people understand what hate crimes were, and what action victims, bystanders and communities should take when they happen. Signing the Victim Support Hate Crime Charter would consolidate the good work already undertaken by the local authority and provided a framework to ensure that a full commitment at all levels of the organisation is achieved. No person in Ceredigion should have to tolerate prejudice or hate crime.

Currently, organisations that adopt the charter were committing to ensuring that staff and volunteers are all expected to abide by the charter's promises whenever they come into contact with those affected by hate crime and work to build strong and inclusive communities. Organisations would also be required to undertake some key actions related to Hate Crime Awareness. These were not prescribed and could be developed in appropriate ways according to the needs of the organisation and the communities they serve. Examples of the work that organisations who sign the Charter were provided.

It was reported that the next steps if Ceredigion County Council chose to sign up to the Charter was that a meeting would be set up with Victim

Support to discuss relevant steps. Some organisations had focused on staff training, some on dissemination of information, others on a mixture of the two. Upon becoming an 'active' partner, organisations are able to use the Trustmark on their websites, promotional materials etc.

It was AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that the County Council sign up to commitments listed in the Victim support Hate Crime Charter.

7 Tackling Hardship Strategy

Consideration was given to the report upon Tackling Hardship Strategy. The report sets out the steps taken by Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) to provide a co-ordinated response to the increased risk of hardship in Ceredigion due to the impact of Covid-19. Progress was monitored by the PSB Poverty sub-group. It had been agreed that the Tackling Hardships Strategy 2020-22 be extended to 2023 to bring it into line with CeredigionPSB Local Well-being Plan which comes to an end in 2023.

Three key objectives of Ceredigion Tackling Hardship Strategy were:-

- To develop a shared understanding with partner agencies of the evolving impact of COVID-19 on hardship in Ceredigion through the collation and analysis of data.
- To co-ordinate and consolidate collaborative efforts with partner agencies in order to promote and take advantage of all available help and assistance
- To identify gaps in support and evolving hardship needs in order to develop early effective intervention that will strengthen individual and community resilience as we adjust to the impact of COVID-19.
- A progress report on this strategy was reported annually, measuring the Red, Amber, Green status of actions that were under the responsibility of the PSB Poverty Sub-group. The Action Plan was divided into three separate pillars: Essential living costs. Physical and emotional well-being and Community resilience

Any update was provided on the currently, progress together with the conclusions and findings of the Tackling Hardship action plan report; and that the next steps were to:-

- Continue to develop the data dashboards to ensure that the Council had a shared understanding of the evolving impact of hardship in Ceredigion.
- Review the list of partners that contribute to the action plan.
- It was anticipated that poverty levels would continue to rise in Ceredigion, but because of the rising cost of living rather than the direct impact of Covid. This was likely to require a change of focus and the action plan would be reviewed to reflect this.
- Ensure that the work of this sub-group feeds into the Local Well-being Plan 2023-28.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note and endorse the Tackling Hardship Plan

8 Engagement and Participation Strategy - Talking, Listening and Working Together

Consideration was given to the 'Talking, Listening and Working Together', Ceredigion County Council's Engagement and Participation Policy that sets out the corporate approach to engagement and participation with the people of Ceredigion. The Committee considered the previous draft Policy on the 14th October 2021 and it was approved for public consultation during the winter period that year. However, the consultation was delayed due to the requirements of Part 3, section 41 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, pertaining to consultation and review of the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

The draft Engagement Policy was subsequently revised to include Participation and presented to Cabinet in July 2022. Cabinet agreed public consultation during Summer 2022. The final policy had been revised to reflect the findings.

Following discussion and consideration of the policy, Members agreed the following and recommend that Cabinet:

Receive and endorse the Engagement and Participation Policy – Talking, Listening and Working Together.

9 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 of the previous meeting as a true record.

10 To consider the Forward Work Plan 2022/2023

It was AGREED to note the content of the Forward Work Plan 2022/23 subject the following being presented :-

- A report upon the purchase of Cardigan car park be provided at the December meeting
- A report on the Premium tax on second homes be presented at a future meeting
- At the December meeting specific questions in relation to concerns regarding the Clic service be collated from members of the Committee in order for the officer to address them at the following meeting
- An update report on the number of desks booked at Penmorfa and Canolfan Rheidol for staff since its introduction, and if there was sufficient space during the winter months to cater for staff who wished to work in an office due to the increased cost of living

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____