

**Minutes of a meeting of the CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held remotely by video conferencing on
Wednesday, 07 July 2021**

Present: Councillor Ivor Williams (Chairman), Councillors Peter Davies MBE, Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Ifan Davies, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Evans. John Adams-Lewis, Dai Mason, Dan Potter, Rowland Rees-Evans, Lynford Thomas, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Wyn Thomas.

Also Present: Councillors Gareth Lloyd and Ray Quant MBE.

Officers present: Ms Marie-Neige Hadfield, Complaints and FOI Manager, Mr Clint Middleton, Principle HR Officer, Ms Lucy Barratt, Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer, Mrs Caroline Lewis – Corporate Director, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, (Overview and Scrutiny Officer); Mrs Diana Davies- Partnership and Performance Corporate Manager - Miss Lowri Edwards- CLO – Democratic Services; Mrs Dana Jones, (Democratic and Standards Officer).

(10:00am – 11:35am)

1 Apologies

Mr Alun Williams , CLO – Policy and Performance and Mr Geraint Edwards – CLO- People and Organisation apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of Personal / Prejudicial Interests

None.

3 Revised Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms Marie-Neige Hadfield, Complaints and FI Manager to present the report on the Revised Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures. The report had been presented to the committee in order to ensure that the Council had a robust and up-to-date Concerns and Complaints Policy (corporate) which is compliant with the requirements outlined by the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA).

The Complaints and FI Manager reported that the Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures had been reviewed and updated for the following two reasons:-

- (i) to incorporate the vast organisational and operational changes which had taken place since the last policy review in 2015, which included the centralisation of the Complaints and FOI Service; and
- (ii) to ensure that the Council's arrangements for managing corporate concerns and complaints was compliant with the requirements stipulated by the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA), which was introduced under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act.

In line with the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) the Policy document provided complainants with information about how their concern/complaint would be managed by the Council. This includes guidance on the timescales of the two-

stage policy, how members of the public can make a complaint if they were unhappy with the services provided (or not provided) by the Council and how they can refer their complaint for independent, external consideration by the PSOW or the Welsh Language Commissioner.

It was reported that the Concerns and Complaints Procedures document was an internal document and provides guidance for staff with regards to the operational arrangements that must be followed upon receipt, and during the investigation, of a concern or a complaint. This includes information on the escalation of a complaint from Stage 1 (informal resolution) to Stage 2 (formal investigation) and the role played by Services and the Complaints and FOI Service in resolving and learning from complaints.

In the main, the arrangements outlined within both the Policy and Procedures documents were reflective of current working practices, particularly since the formation of the central Complaints and FOI Service in late 2016. However, due to recent changes to legislation, these documents also comply with Council's statutory obligations to ensure an effective mechanism of governance to oversee all complaints activity within the Council – as detailed below:

- i. Bi-annual reporting to the Cabinet of Elected Members (including the Council's Annual Report); as per the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act.
- ii. Information on complaints performance and the Council's ability to handle complaints effectively would be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee at least twice a year; in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Whilst the Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures being reviewed at this time relate only to the Council's corporate services (i.e. Planning Service, Highways & Environmental Service, Finance Services etc.) separate policies exist for the management of Social Services Complaints received by the Council.

Following questions from the floor and discussion on the Clic service in relation to complaints, it was AGREED:-

- (ii) to congratulate the service on an excellent report;
- (ii) to note that an appropriate mechanism to record compliments within services was being developed;
- (iii) the need to remind all Officers of the need to adhere to the Customer Charter in relation to acknowledging correspondence; due to the number of complaints received by Members that this was not the case;
- (vi) to recommend the draft Concerns and Complaints Policy and the accompanying Procedures be presented to the Council Meeting for approval on the 23rd September 2021.

4 **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Clint Middleton, Principle HR Officer, Ms Lucy Barratt, Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer and Mrs Caroline Lewis – Corporate Director to provide the Committee upon the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2026.

It was reported that this strategy had been developed following one employee survey conducted just before the Covid-19 pandemic started and one in December 2020. The aim of the strategy was to improve not only individual health and wellbeing but also, as a result, that of the Council's teams and services.

The Strategy sets out key goals, under five separate areas identified as 'pillars of wellbeing':

- Positive Environments
- Policies and Practice
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Culture and behaviour

The initial focus would be on promoting healthier lifestyle behaviours, a commitment to sign the Time to Change Wales Pledge (working towards removing mental health stigma), a programme to introduce Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions across the Council, and the creation of a Health and Wellbeing Steering Group with the aim of achieving The Corporate Health Standard (Bronze) within the first two years.

The strategy would be driven the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer in People & Organisation, but with collaborative working across the Council.

Members emphasised the need for Managers to recognise the early signs of mental health issues in order to provide early intervention. Also the need to address the pressure on employees if the service was not at full capacity, as this would lead to stress and pressure on the remaining employees in the service.

Following questions on the floor, it was AGREED:-

- (i) to congratulate the service on an excellent strategy;
- (ii) to recommend the approval of the Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2026 at a future Cabinet meeting; and
- (iii) a report on sickness absences be presented at a future meeting

5 Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the Forward Work Programme as presented subject to the following:-

- (i) Sickness absence report as agreed under item 4 above, be presented at a future meeting;
- (ii) Clic service report – to include the Clic protocol in addressing referrals/enquires received and referred to the relevant service for a response. It was suggested that an officer from one of the services attend the meeting to facilitate the discussion on this matter; and
- (iii) that the Scrutiny Support Officer following the meeting would discuss with the Scrutiny Officer responsible for Thriving Communities Committee that the Committee had recommended that this committee consider a report on Covid; in include information on the implementation of the Safe zones within the Towns; due to the number of complaints received by Members.
- (iv) an update report on County Farms following on from the Task and Finish Group that would be held next week

6 Minutes from previous meetings

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meetings held on the 25 November 2020, 19 February 2021, 18 March 2021 and 13 May 2021.