



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
6TH APRIL 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Pritchard - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Councillors: M. A. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, L. Harding, G. Johnston, C. P. Mann, B. Miles, R. Saralis, Mrs M. E. Sargent, G. Simmonds and L. G. Whittle.

Cabinet Members:

Cllr. C. Gordon (Corporate Services) and Cllr. Mrs E. Stenner (Finance, Performance and Customer Services).

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), K. Williams (Customer Services Digital Hub Manager), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director, Head of Children's Services), V. Camp (Transformation Manager), J. Penfold (Transformation Manager), H. Lancaster (Senior Communications Officer), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs D. Price, J. Taylor and L. Phipps (Cabinet Member for Housing and Property).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 23RD FEBRUARY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd February 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 10) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the reports planned for the period April 2021 to February 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23rd February 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

It was proposed that the report on the Employee Volunteering Scheme be brought forward to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 25th May 2021. It was also proposed that the Workforce Development Strategy and the Wellbeing Strategy be added to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting to be held on 6th July 2021.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the amendments proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Councils' website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. TEAM CAERPHILLY-BETTER TOGETHER TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY 6-MONTH UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Customer Services introduced the report to update the Scrutiny Committee on progress under the Team Caerphilly-Better Together Transformation Strategy and to allow Members the opportunity to scrutinise and make comments on the progress against the strategy prior to its presentation to Cabinet. Reference was made to the report which provided Members with details on how the ten Corporate Reviews are progressing and a summary of progress against the strategic actions, including the well-being and place-shaping framework. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to note the Members Seminar, which will be delivered on 19th April 2021, where Members will be presented with the progress that has been made on the Transformation Strategy.

The Corporate Policy Manager advised Members that the report was one of the regular updates for the Scrutiny Committee on the Team Caerphilly-Better Together Transformation Strategy, as part of the programme management arrangements. It was highlighted that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on actions to deliver the strategy to date and, in particular, to give some more information on the current series of Corporate Reviews. Members were advised that relevant Officers and Project Leads were in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions on the Corporate Reviews.

The Corporate Policy Manager and Officers delivered a presentation on Team Caerphilly-Better Together, which provided Members with an outline of the Corporate Reviews, a summary of the Audit Wales involvement in the transformation programme, the Wellbeing and Place-shaping Framework and links between the governance of the various programmes, the Commercial and Investment Strategy as part of the overall transformation, and community engagement with staff, residents and the Trade Unions.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised.

A Member requested an update on the Flexible Working Review. The Head of People Services advised Members that a revised report is going to Cabinet on the 7th April with an update following the Flexible Working Update report presented at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January 2021. Members were informed that Heads of Service have carried out preliminary work on categorisation and a further staff survey will be circulated imminently. Members stressed the importance of adequate technology to allow agile working and were assured that discussions were ongoing to ensure that adequate equipment was distributed to staff. It was also highlighted that senior IT staff were part of the Flexible Working Group. In response to a Member's request for the number of staff that are members of a Trade Union, it was agreed that this information would be provided after the meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding the Remote Contact Review in relation to options for a single contact number for all telephone enquiries. In response, the Scrutiny Committee was informed that positive feedback has been received from staff and customers. The Customer Services Digital Hub Manager advised that this review relates to the high transactional calls received by the Council and a single contact number service would not cover other more bespoke services. Members heard how feedback from the pilot scheme was showing greater efficiency and fewer abandoned calls. In response to a query regarding best practice, Members were advised that as part of the Customer Focus Wales group, best practice was assessed with other local authorities. It was highlighted that Caerphilly County Borough Council was one of the few local authorities in Wales that does not have a centralised approach. In response to a query regarding the Walk-in Services Review, Members were advised that the Council is considering different models but a final decision would not be made until all the data has been analysed.

A question was raised on the 'Destination Caerphilly' aims in relation to the aim to reduce subsidy by £0.5m over the next 3-5 years. The Transformation Manager outlined that the subsidy is currently £1.2m and that the aim was to reduce this to £700,000 per year. One Member observed that it was important to ensure that assets identified for Community Asset Transfer were in a reasonable condition prior to the transfer. The Corporate Policy Manager advised Members that assets would be assessed on a case-by-case basis but at this stage there is no list of assets associated with the policy. It was highlighted to Members that the Policy Framework was in place should assets be identified in the future. Reference was made to the Transformation Capacity Update and Members were provided with an update on the current situation.

Members noted the contents of the report and made comments on the progress against the strategy prior to the update being provided to Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR