

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 11 JUNE 2015

Present:

Councillors: Elwyn Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Aled Ll. Evans, Annwen Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Dyfrig Jones, Michael Sol Owen, W. Roy Owen, Eirwyn Williams and R. H. Wyn Williams

Also present:

Apologies: Lesley Day, Gwynfor Edwards, Sian Gwenllian, June Marshall, Gethin Glyn Williams and John Wyn Williams

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor John Wyn Jones

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Dyfrig Jones as Chairman of this committee for 2015/16.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Jason Humphreys as Vice-chairman of this committee for 2015/16.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillors Lesley Day, Gwynfor Edwards, Sian Gwenllian, June Marshall, Gethin Glyn Williams and John Wyn Williams.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Annwen Hughes declared a personal interest in item 9(B) on the agenda – Holiday Homes and Taxes Investigation – as she owned a holiday home.

The member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and she withdrew from the chamber during the discussion on the issue.

5. URGENT ITEMS

6. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting, held on 26 March, 2015, as a true record.

7. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2014/15

Submitted –

- (a) Final draft of the Strategy from the Cabinet Member for Economy.
- (b) The questions raised at the Preparatory Meeting on 23 April.

The Cabinet Member set the context and she responded to questions of the Preparatory Meeting in relation to:-

- Success of the previous Procurement Strategy in terms of achieving all its objectives.
- General ambition of the Council for procurement.
- Striking a balance between ensuring value for money by procuring and keeping the benefit local.
- Outcomes of engagement with stakeholders on a local level.
- Resources to realise the new Strategy.
- Suitability of the measures for the draft Strategy.
- Ensure commitment and understanding across the Council to realise the new procurement arrangements and the objectives of the Strategy.
- The contribution of procurement towards finding financial savings for the Council.
- Category management as a method of offering the best opportunity to ensure robust control of the Council's procurement arrangements and value for money / financial savings.
- Activation of e-procurement across the Council.
- Methods that are in place to measure compliance with the requirements of the Council's Language Plan.

Members were given an opportunity to ask further questions and offer their observations. During the discussion, the Cabinet Member, the Senior Manager – Democracy and Delivery and the Corporate Procurement Manager responded to questions / observations relating to:-

- The amount of £185 million spent by the Council during 2013/14, on goods, work and services provided by external organisations. It was noted that the statement in the foreword of the Strategy was misleading and that it should be made clear that this amount included funding that came into the Council, as well as the funding of the Council itself.
- The Council's good performance against the local expenditure target of 45% and it was suggested that this figure should be used in the report next time.
- The need to put pressure on the Assembly to ensure a fair field to all councils in terms of measuring performance and providing statistics.
- Methods of addressing examples where a company headquarters is outside the area but the work itself would be contracted locally.
- The suggestion that it would put pressures on the company rather than the Procurement Unit, to state how many local workers were employed on contracts etc. was a very useful addition.
- Responding to complaints and how category management would create more expertise within specific fields and assist learning across all fields.
- The role of procurement in the new approach by means of category management as an enabler for services to reach their efficiency target.
- Request for certainty that the Council has provided enough opportunities for local companies.

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- Influence of the Council on the private sector.
- Avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Importance of changing culture and the need for departmental training on a joint basis.
- Importance of ensuring that some e-procurement processes do not hinder good procurement.
- Importance of engagement with local stakeholders and increasing local skills.
- The need to push the boundary as far as is reasonably possible in terms of the Welsh language.
- Importance of providing guidance in the procurement field for town and community councils as they could take over some Council services.

The Cabinet Member and officers were thanked for the discussion and it was noted that they would possibly be invited to return before this committee in due course to report on the progress of the new Procurement Strategy.

8. FFORDD GWYNEDD STRATEGY

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources inviting the committee's observations on the latest version of the draft Strategy prior to submitting the final draft to the Cabinet for formal adoption.

The Cabinet Member set the context and a presentation was given by the Chief Executive which addressed several questions which had been raised at the Preparatory Meeting on 23 April in relation to:-

- The meaning of Ffordd Gwynedd
- The general ambition of the Council for Ffordd Gwynedd, and was it achievable and realistic.
- The adequacy of the resources in place and the capacity to realise the Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy vision and to implement it.
- The likelihood that Ffordd Gwynedd would succeed.
- Evidence that Ffordd Gwynedd had succeeded to improve services for residents and secure financial savings in the two pilot schemes in the fields of homelessness and property.
- Methods of securing commitment and understanding across the Council to realise Ffordd Gwynedd.
- The performance measures which could be put in place in order to ensure the change of culture within the Council.
- Formal / informal engagement with stakeholders.

Members were given an opportunity to ask further questions and offer their observations. During the discussion, the Cabinet Member and the Chief Executive responded to questions / observations regarding:-

- How the Strategy was intertwined with the concept of Managing Demand and the Savings Strategy?
- The method of disseminating Ffordd Gwynedd down and across the establishment.
- How Ffordd Gwynedd responded to legislation and the requirements of Welsh Government and various external bodies and was this Council

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brave enough to be reprimanded in order to keep the residents of Gwynedd happy?

- The challenge of getting people to behave differently.
- The feeling that the statement '*Putting the People of Gwynedd at the Heart of Everything*' was a significant challenge because every area had strong voices which had their own agendas.
- Lessons learnt from the pilot schemes.

The committee's desire to see the Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy succeeding was expressed, and it was noted that one of the most important points arising from the discussion was the question of risk and the need to equip all staff, from the top down, to practise common sense and to have confidence to take small risks which might bring large rewards.

Concern was expressed that only half the committee members were present to take part in this discussion. The staff had committed to these changes and it was extremely important that they and the Leadership Team were given appropriate support by the members also.

The Cabinet Member and the Chief Executive were thanked for the discussion.

9. INVESTIGATIONS

Submitted – a draft scope of two potential investigations, namely:-

- (a) Holiday Homes and Taxes Scrutiny Investigation
- (b) Engagement Scrutiny Investigation

The committee was asked to select one investigation from the two and it was agreed that the Holiday Homes and Taxes Investigation was of higher priority.

RESOLVED

- (a) **To establish a Scrutiny Investigation into the field of Holiday Homes and Taxes.**
- (b) **To appoint the Chairman, Councillor Dyfrig Jones, along with Councillors Trevor Edwards, Aled Evans, Eirwyn Williams and Wyn Williams, as members of the Investigation, and ask Vera Jones (Members' Manager – Democracy Services) to contact all committee members to invite more people.**

The meeting commenced at Time Not Specified and concluded at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN