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Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group Tuesday, 28 February 2017

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS STEERING GROUP HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT

County Councillors D R Jones (Chair) K W Curry, L V Corfield, S C Davies, D R Jones, JG Morris and Mr J Brautigam

Officers, Jeremy Patterson, Chief Executive, David Powell, Strategic Director, Resources, Clive Pinney, Solicitor to the Council, Peter Jones, Professional Lead, Business Intelligence, Wyn Richards, Scrutiny Manager, Liz Patterson and Lisa Richards, Scrutiny Officers

1.	APOLOGIES	JCSG14 - 2017
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Members: County Councillor M J Dorrance
Officers: Paul Griffiths, Strategic Director, Place

2.	DRAFT NOTES - FOR CONSIDERATION	JCSG15 - 2017
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Documents Considered:

- Notes of meeting held on 17 January 2017

Outcomes:

- **Noted**

3.	DISCUSSION WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, STRATEGIC DIRECTORS REGARDING POTENTIAL SCRUTINY ITEMS	JCSG16 - 2017
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Documents Considered:

- None

Issues Discussed:

- Scrutiny of Adult Social Care, Education and the Highways LATC was ongoing
- There were significant gaps in the third year of the MTFs and some Portfolio Holders and Service Managers need to be clearer in terms of what is required for that third year – this would be included on the next FSP agenda
- The Chair of Audit had been disappointed in the response to a report relating to the overspend in Adult Social Care. The report had been evidenced based yet the Portfolio Holder's response had been selective and defensive. Whilst the conclusions may not have been palatable, they were correct. A clearer understand of scrutiny's role was required as a successful Council would be hindered if scrutiny was inhibited.
- The Chief Executive commented on feedback received from the WAO following recent reviews which highlighted the level of maturity of the organisation. Work has already commenced with the Cabinet but a wider,

cultural issue must be addressed. An organisation should be mature enough to learn from experiences and move on. A development programme is being prepared for consideration by Council. Members suggested that both Cabinet and Scrutiny should benefit from the same training. Specific Portfolio Holder training is to be developed to ensure the Portfolio Holders can hold senior officers to account. Further training for scrutiny and senior officers will also be provided.

- The Scrutiny Manager advised that the WLGA had been commissioned to provide scrutiny training for all Members and Chairs of Committees with additional training for Scrutiny Chairs being considered at a later time
- A template for the process of a pre-decision scrutiny will be put in place to provide clarity for both Cabinet and Scrutiny Members and ensure a consistency of approach - a draft will be provided for consideration by the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group
- Objective scrutiny and challenge is good for the organisation – those who do not agree, tend to hide behind political issues. Ongoing behavioural issues see a reluctance to discuss issues in an open way. It is essential that there is transparency and that constructive challenge can take place. Cabinet must be more open, but scrutiny must not be parochial.
- There were concerns regarding the denial of financial responsibility by the service and Portfolio Holder during the investigation into the ASC overspend. This seems to have been an issue for a number of years and there has been no willingness to change.
- A three year strategy is to be put in place for the service which will address finance, leadership and behaviours within the service. It will take time for ingrained attitudes to change. The three year strategy will be available to Management Team by mid-March and to scrutiny thereafter.
- The principles of scrutiny will be addressed in the induction programme for the new County Council
- More timely information is required to assist scrutiny – data availability for scrutiny will be discussed by Management Team
- Work Programming is fundamental and there will be more emphasis on pre-decision scrutiny

Outcomes:

Action	Completion Date	Action By
MTFS – 3rd year proposals – include on FSP agenda	Ongoing	LR
A Protocol for Pre- Decision Scrutiny to be drafted for consideration	July 2017	WR
Data availability for scrutiny to be discussed at Management Team	May 2017	CP

4.	WELLBEING ASSESSMENT	JCSG17 - 2017
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Documents:

- Powys Wellbeing Assessment
 - Social Key Findings
 - Culture and Community Key Findings
 - Economic Key Findings

- Environment Key Findings
- Links and Potential Responses
- Producing our Wellbeing Assessment
- Engagement
- Assessment Findings and Impact on Wellbeing Goals
- Data considered not to have an impact
- Gaps in our evidence
- Key sources of information
- National findings

Discussion:

- The Wellbeing Assessment is a requirement for the PSB under the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act
- Business Intelligence have developed the Wellbeing Assessment under a collaborative approach
- The Welsh Government are seeking a change in how qualitative information is considered
- There is no formal need for Cabinet to agree the document
- The Assessment is fundamental to corporate planning and provides the evidence base for future priorities
- The Welsh Government have reviewed the document and it is fully compliant. Some areas have been highlighted for improvement.
- Funding is being sought to develop digital technology to ensure data is more accessible.
- Members considered that some of the conclusions were not as robust as they could be where they existed. The Assessment was the first and future iterations would improve.
- A workshop had been held to discuss the document but it was noted that suggested amendments had not been incorporated. It was clear from the 32 pieces of analysis that had been undertaken that work had been variable with some being better informed than others.
- The Assessment must be published 12 months prior to the Corporate Plan
- The Group debated the area covered by 'Growing Mid Wales' and whether or not the area would be best served with the Swansea Bay incorporated within the region. The Swansea Bay area have similar concerns.
- Tourism is only a small part of the economy of the region but seems to be given precedence over agriculture or manufacturing
- Page 170 refers to Crickhowell as an affluent area – this should be reworded as, whilst there were affluent areas, a different set of issues were raised for local residents. There are references to both low unemployment but low employment in the 25-39 age bracket.
- The PSB has responsibility for agreeing the draft but comments will be fed to the PSB
- The strategy which flows from the Assessment is of more importance than the Assessment itself

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Comments to be forwarded to the PSB for inclusion	March 2017	PJ

5.	WELSH GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER - "REFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: RESILIENT AND RENEWED"	JCSG18 - 2017
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Documents:

- Report of the Scrutiny Manager
- White Paper; Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed

Discussion:

- A scrutiny model for PSB has been developed and this will be rolled out
- More joint committees are likely
- The White Paper encourages regional working with a minimum of economic development, transport, planning and public protection being on a regional basis
- The Leaders of the constituent authorities or relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders will be delegated to make decisions.
- Scrutiny arrangements will have to be determined
- Further regional working will be considered
- Profound changes are likely
- Other regional committees will comprise the portfolio holders for particular services
- The WLGA are developing scrutiny arrangements for joint working
- Regional working will have to be strategic
- The anomaly of the national park remains to be addressed

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Comments made will be incorporated for consideration by Council into a corporate response.	March 2017	WR

6.	REGULATORY TRACKER	JCSG19 - 2017
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Documents:

- Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance
- Regulatory Tracker

Discussion:

- The report and tracker had already been considered by Audit Committee and the governance arrangements agreed

Outcome:

- **Noted**

7.	PROTOCOL FOR SCRUTINY PRESS RELEASES	JCSG20 - 2017
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Documents:

- None

Discussion:

- The issue of scrutiny press releases had previously been discussed and a protocol introduced
- It was now suggested that scrutiny should be able to issue press releases without comment by the Portfolio Holder
- Portfolio Holders have the ability to issue press releases without scrutiny comment, and recently some policies have been announced through the media

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Scrutiny Press releases will be agreed between the Chair and Scrutiny Manager and provided to Cabinet for information only	Ongoing	WR

8.	LATENESS OF REPORTS	JCSG21 - 2017
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The issue of late arrival of reports had been discussed and the Solicitor to the Council had agreed revised measures to ensure reports were received in a timely manner to enable scrutiny to be undertaken.

9.	MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JOINT CHAIRS STEERING GROUP AND CABINET	JCSG22 - 2017
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Documents:

- Report of meeting held between representatives of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs

Discussion:

- The proposals discussed with the group had been considered by Democratic Services Committee and proposals will be considered by County Council on 7 March

10.	WORK PROGRAMME	JCSG23 - 2017
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Documents Considered:

- Work Programme

Discussion:

- The issue of repairs and maintenance in new build schools will be added to the programme for consideration
- It was suggested that all capital projects should be reviewed after 12 months as a matter of good practice

Action	Completion Date	Action By
Repairs and maintenance at new build schools to be included in the work	June 2017	WR

programme for consideration		
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11.	PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD	JCSG24 - 2017
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24.1. Draft Notes of Previous Meeting(s)

Documents:

- Draft notes of meeting held on 2 February 2017

Outcomes:

- **Noted**

24.2. PSB Dates - For Information

- 27 April 2017
- 8 June 2017
- 20 July 2017
- 21 September 2017
- 26 October 2017
- 21 December 2017

12.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - FOR INFORMATION	JCSG25 - 2017
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- 20 June 2017
- 11 July 2017
- 19 September 2017
- 10 October 2017
- 7 November 2017
- 5 December 2017

County Councillor D R Jones