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Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Monday, 5 June 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 5 JUNE 2023

PRESENT

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

County Councillors B Davies, A Jones, E A Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, S L Williams,
P James, C Kenyon-Wade, G Preston and L Rijnenberg,

County Councillor J Charlton Cabinet member of a Greener Powys

County Councillor R Church Cabinet member of a Safer Powys

Emma Palmer (Head of Transformation and Communications)

Matt Perry (Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling)

Gemma Gabriel Professional Lead Human Resources Management and Development

Tom Yeo Programme Delivery Manager (Climate and Nature)

Paul Wozencraft Improvement and Programme Change Manager (HTR)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from
Cllr D Thomas Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: that County Councillor Karl Lewis be elected Vice-Chair for the
ensuing year.

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be
considered at the meeting.

4. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a
Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section
78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Outcome: The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the previous
meetings as a correct record 28.04.2023.

6. RECRUITMENT

Background:

- An update was provided around the challenges experienced by the Council to recruit, retain, and attract staff.
- Risks have been identified and a transformational and agile approach is being taken to review recruitment systems, processes, and activities to address the challenges and risks.
- A new recruitment brand has been launched with a number of follow on events and activities, which has generated some successful results.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.
<p>It was asked how the council were attracting personnel into Highways, Transport and Recycling (HTR) roles and if there was any flexibility in grading to retain staff.</p>	<p>Due to a highly competitive market the benefits of working for the Council are being sold and staff numbers were improving and reaching sufficient levels. In addition, initiatives such as providing opportunities for staff to undertake HGV testing, have been implemented. However external contractors were used last year to assist HGV drivers. It was hoped that a pool of staff can be gathered to draw on when needed. Market comparisons are planned across the authority as part of the wider HR plan, which should also help provide some useful data to support with recruitment initiatives in this area.</p>
<p>How was the Council encouraging apprenticeships and university spaces.</p>	<p>The draft Organisational Development Plan details this as an areas for development. The work on apprentices is working well and the next stage will be to provide graduate opportunities.</p>
	<p>Cabinet Member noted the problems within the Recycling Services and by working closely with HR hope to improve the process and make application forms easier. Reliable contractors were brought in at a reasonable cost to overcome short term gaps within the service. Seasonal working hours have been introduced in some areas and has proved successful. Gender aspects within HTR were also being looked into, to attract a greater gender balance mix.</p>
<p>How does the recruitment campaign go out to universities and colleges as many young people leave Powys to study, what is available to attract young people</p>	<p>Flexible remote working roles are promoted more nationally, as it is recognised that individuals could work some distance away from Powys in</p>

<p>back.</p> <p>Is there a way of tracking where young people attend education to target advertising.</p>	<p>some of these positions.</p> <p>Social Media is a big national platform used, and recruitment fairs outside the County were being explored and attended.</p> <p>The Council offers a wide range of alternatives career paths for young people, however, it is recognised that young people may not be aware enough of what the Council can fully offer. Career pathways is another important element of the draft People Strategy and Organisational Development Plan. Career Fairs offer another route of promotion of opportunities into the Council for young people. Some have been undertaken and been extremely successful.</p>
<p>It was commented that social care training settings/providers could be looked into and targeted for recruitment and the council should provide investment to resource promotion around working for the Council.</p> <p>Are local large events used (e.g., Hay Festival/ Royal Welsh Show) to promote recruitment.</p>	<p>Creative thinking was required to encourage all ages and all career stages to Powys, the Social Care workforce team have offered over 20 placements for those currently in training in social care. A four day week is also being considered within some social care teams.</p> <p>Internal discussions have been held on how shows and festivals could be utilised to promote recruitment for the Council.</p>
<p>The current website only provides a pool for apprentices and not individual places. Also are apprenticeship salary rates advertised on the site.</p>	<p>The Apprenticeship Talent pool is continually open for applicants and specific apprenticeship opportunities advertised as such. Agreed that Officers would check the website to ensure all positions are individually advertised, as it was noticed some were not showing, although, they may have closed. £21k is the annual salary for apprentices and this is promoted as part of the advert.</p>
<p>Would the Council consider direct engagement within schools.</p>	<p>Schools have been attended jointly with the Health Board, further work and promotion is needed to reach out to more schools to promote opportunities</p>

	working for the council to assist learners when considering their career opportunities.
Were there any statistics to show that staff leaving are moving out of the County.	This data is not easily accessible. The exit interview process was being reviewed as the current response rate for feedback is low. The traditional questionnaire approach for exiting staff was not always completed and proposals will therefore be made shortly to ensure we gather as much information from leavers as possible to inform our retention strategies.
Current staff have taken part in the Why Powys survey, were there any surprising comments made.	The summary of the survey will be circulated to the Committee Members.
What is the Council doing in the long term to retain apprentices once fully qualified.	The Council will look at the benefits package to ensure staff fully understand and value the benefits offered. Market analysis would provide information around what competitors offer and what people want.
It was asked if companies in the area consider the Councils training to be worthwhile for them to head hunt staff.	A challenge does exist with private companies and the Council is looking at how it can be more balanced. A cost benefit analysis was required alongside succession planning which ensures talent was available and retained in the future.
Are trainees required to stay with the Council for a certain amount of time once they have obtained qualifications.	This would be investigated by officers.
How many staff vacancies are there currently	It was noted that currently there are approximately 100 role vacancies being advertised. Analysis of vacancies is included in performance measures going forward.

Actions:

- The Committee asked for more information around the Grow your Own scheme for both the Council and The Teaching Health Board.
- It was felt that the report could be enhanced by showing how many vacancies are filled by agency works after the Social Worker recruitment drive.
- Officers to consider the following items as part of the ongoing project work:
 - Wider market comparisons
 - How to target and pinpoint promotions for graduates

- What benefits the Council can offer around qualifications and bursaries.
- How to encourage more women into the workforce for HTR.
- How the Council can reach out to young people and apprentices and show what exactly what it entails (not just a pool of people), but career pathways.
- To provide a strong presence in schools.
- Exit interview process to be reviewed.
- Knowledge management succession planning to tie in with apprenticeships.
- Provide more story telling aspects around how people feel about a job with the Council.
- Utilise festivals and shows to promote the Council as an employer.

7.	CLIMATE OVERVIEW
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Background:

- The presentation provided a complete overview of the Council's involvement and commitment to achieve set targets within the climate and nature emergency.
- The Powys Climate and Nature Programme has broad coverage involving internal and external groups including stakeholders.
- The Council also provide carbon accounts to the Welsh Government which provide details of the carbon footprint and emissions across council assets and operations.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.
What long terms plans/options have the Council considered for the fleet and has hydrogen been considered.	The Council would consider all options. Grid capacity remains an issue and may hinder the process. A transition plan is in place for the next seven years for fleet to covert or move to different vehicles.
Slide 19 – breakdown of scopes for carbon accounts 2021-22 – scope 3, 78.5% Scope 3 is critical (especially around procurement) and felt it should be higher on the agenda and a yearly reduction target should be set for the authority.	The Procurement Team are breaking down the contracts to show where money and carbon is spent and aims to support local suppliers. Cabinet Holder for a Greener Powys explained procurement was a challenging element, and a new strategy is in place. Action Plans were being compiled to provide assurance and that Investment would be needed as a matter of urgency to ensure targets are met.
Clarification required: Council Net Zero by 2030 Welsh Government Net Zero by 2050	The Welsh Government set the 2030 target for the Public Sector to show commitment to others and ensure the 2050 target for the whole of Wales is

	met.
<p>Since the Climate and Nature emergencies were declared in 2020, would it be possible to share success stories of what has happened so far or provide what best practise is being shared.</p>	<p>Cabinet Holder for a Greener Powys explained to achieve Net Zero by 2030 is a difficult challenge, several strategies were being used as a benchmark and engagement with Town and Community Councils could be used as an exemplar.</p> <p>A Steering Group has been set up with a Stakeholder Group to be launched shortly to share knowledge, provide support, and take action.</p> <p>The Climate Management Board have formed Action Plans to determine what needs to be achieved which will be circulated to Stakeholders and help to progress them forward.</p>
<p>Slide 19 – breakdown of scopes for carbon accounts 2021-22 – scope 3, 78.5%</p> <p>Further encouragement was given to adding yearly reduction targets around scope 3.</p>	<p>Experimental methods are being explored and the purchase of fuel could be a target to reduce.</p>
<p>Mobility and Transport Action Plan</p>	
<p>The Action Plan is lacking figures, concerns were raised around finance and how initial barriers would be removed.</p> <p>And how other ways could determine funding and investment.</p>	<p>Dates and costings were not currently available to the Committee.</p> <p>Work will be conducted with the Welsh Government to conduct actions and provide some investment.</p>
<p>Would the work be externally audited.</p>	<p>There were existing forums that provide challenge and support, including the Welsh Local Government Association Forum which brings officers together from across Wales for learning and knowledge.</p> <p>Carbon Accounts are submitted to Welsh Government which provides additional process to improve communication and identify challenges and opportunities for support.</p> <p>The Climate Stakeholder Group would provide a broad range of skills to shape action plans and support communities.</p>

	<p>Local Authorities discussions have begun to pool resources around the replacement of fleet to provide a stronger presence around the purchase of vehicles.</p> <p>Fleet transition plans were being supported by an external company which have provided support to other Countries on global issues.</p>
<p>It was asked if the old fleet will be sold off in order for the council to purchase replacements.</p>	<p>It was explained that the fleet fund is on a rolling scheme that the services pay into, however a standard refuse collection vehicle is currently approximately £250k and an electric version replacement is approximately £450k with the additional cost of infrastructure.</p> <p>Recent fleet additions are low carbon emitting but not zero carbon.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised that the older fleet if not sold would be used to support services.</p>	<p>Resilience issues need to be addressed and the Council are monitoring other Local Authorities with new electric vehicles to determine performance etc.</p> <p>The Council are taking a cautious approach and learning from the vehicles they have and from others.</p>
<p>It was felt that hydrogen could be an option to explore, as there have been many objections to pylons.</p>	<p>Hydrogen could be a way forward for the heavier vehicles, challenges are evident around production, transportation, and usage.</p>
<p>It was noted that changes were fast, and all avenues must be explored thoroughly and feared the Council may be left with outdated technology.</p>	
<p>It was noted that a bold vision is needed and has the Council considered investment into projects.</p>	
<p>Was LPG conversation considered for the fleet</p>	<p>By injecting LPG into diesel fuel used by the current fleet it would reduce carbon emissions by 23%.</p> <p>Capital investment of approximately £90k is required, and the heavier vehicles would be targeted.</p>

Would local solar circumvent the need for the grid.	<p>On site solar would be looked into along with all land assets to identify if renewal energy can be produced and secured.</p> <p>The Local Area Energy Plan under a regional level would be considered on how we can use energies differently.</p>
<p>The RAG rating on the Action Plan shows green are the action ambitious enough.</p> <p>As there has been no evidence that the flexi bus service will take off in Powys.</p>	<p>More specific details and dates will be added to the Action Plan which would determine a more accurate RAG rating.</p> <p>A demand response bus service has been operating in Powys for a number of years.</p> <p>A ring and ride basis runs in certain areas and further consideration is needed for sustainability.</p>
What considerations have been made around the behavioural change target.	<p>Covid demanded home working which was still encouraged but staffing needs have been taken into consideration.</p> <p>Cabinet Holder for a Greener Powys shared that the Action Plan has been developed with stakeholders and included both public and staffing needs.</p> <p>Car sharing Seasonal working Four day week</p>
How would the impacts of climate change be managed to those working from home as well as environmentally (localised flooding).	<p>Powys does not have the infrastructure to deal with what was extreme but is now yearly weather events.</p> <p>The Action Plan will help the Council working with organisations to be more proactive.</p> <p>Cabinet Holder for a safer Powys noted that aspects overlap into biodiversity and what can be done to elevate flood risks which falls under the Nature and Climate emergency.</p>
Concerns were raised around costs and how the schemes would be financed as services still need to be provided.	The concerns emphasise the challenge to be undertaken and service delivery will be looked into along with the targets.

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Actions:

- The Mobility and Transport Action Plan would be updated, and RAG ratings and financial information to be provided.

8.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted the dates for future meetings.

Monday 17-07-23	Committee – Public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and Land – climate action plan • Governance – climate action plan • procurement – climate action plan • Workforce Planning • Winter Maintenance - Confidential
Thursday 14-09-23	Pre-Meeting
Monday 18-09-23	Committee - Public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 Performance • Q1 Strategic Risk • Q1 Finance • Freedom Leisure – annual report • Phosphate Update • Revision of Transport policy • Customer Services Review outcome reports
Oct	Pre-Meeting
Monday 30-10-23	Committee - Public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powys Economy – Full round-up • Q2 Strategic Risk
Dec	Pre-Meeting
Monday 11-12-23	Committee – Public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing waiting list • Garage / Property maintenance • Clearsprings – accommodation for asylum seekers / update / entitlement

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

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