



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Tuesday, 5 September 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P M Black
D Jenkins
M H Jones
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
J W Jones
S Jones
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

L James
M Jones
M W Locke

Cabinet Member(s)

Cllr David Hopkins

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance

Cllr Robert Francis-Davies

Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events and Tourism

Officer(s)

Martin Nicholls
Ben Smith
Richard Rowlands
Lee Richards
Scott Dummett
Rachel Percival

Chief Executive
Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Corporate Performance Manager
City Centre Team Leader
Lead Lawyer
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C M J Evans, P R Hood-Williams, M S Tribe, T M White

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were no disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None.

3 Minutes

Minutes of the previous Service Improvement and Finance and Development and Regeneration Panels were agreed.

4 Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

5 Revenue Financial Outturn 2022/23

Ben Smith the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the report followed by questions and discussion.

- Overall, the Outturn demonstrates that all Directorates have an underspend against their service budgets, with requests for nearly £14m of the £18m service underspend to be carried over to 2023/24.
- There is an underspend on revenue costs of servicing capital financing of £8.6m due to slippage, borrowing at low sub 2% rates and temporary loaning out of surplus cash at variable rates of above 5%.
- £2m has been drawn from earmarked reserves plus £8m drawn from schools' reserves which is lower than originally assumed but is not a sustainable financial position going forward.
- Council tax showed a small surplus of £32,000.
- The Oracle Project has carried over £3.8m to this financial year.
- Council have approved borrowing of a further £50m for future developments and £25m for the Mumbles Coastal Risk Management Programme Scheme, however there are no plans to borrow this in the short term until interest rates have materially lowered.
- There are substantial persistent inflation pressures, unresolved pay awards and an increase in energy costs in 2023/24.

6 Revenue Outturn 2022/23 (Housing Revenue Account)

Ben Smith presented the report followed by questions and discussion.

- Slippage on the capital programme has resulted in an underspend on revenue financing of capital of around £6m, this will roll forward into next year.
- Rental income has increased by £1.2m compared to the budget.
- Housing Revenue is always ringfenced for spending only on Council Housing.

7 Annual Performance Monitoring Report for 2022/2023

Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance and Richard Rowlands Corporate Performance Manager presented the report followed by questions and discussion.

- The report demonstrates an overall improvement with affects of the pandemic still evident.
- In relation to performance against targets out of 49 indicators, 25 met or bettered their targets, 3 missed their target but were within 5% and 8 missed their targets. The remaining 13 had no targets.
- In relation to performance compared to same period of the previous year out of 49 indicators, 22 show improving or maintaining performance, 2 show declining performance but within 5% and 15 show declining performance trends. The remaining 10 indicators are new therefore there is no historical data.
- The performance areas with no targets or historical data are mainly the result of a new national social services performance framework introduced by Welsh Government.

- An update on policy commitments has been completed and performance indicators have been reviewed following the development of the new corporate plan. The revised suite will be reported from the first quarter of the new year.

8 Annual Review of Performance 2022/2023

Cllr David Hopkins and Richard Rowlands presented the report followed by questions and discussion.

- This report differs to item 7 by giving a broader perspective looking at wellbeing objectives and the corporate plan. The report also meets duties as required by the Local Government and Elections Act 2021 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Overall progress and the prospects of improvement are assessed using criteria outcomes for each of the six wellbeing objectives using self-reflection tools by each lead Director/Head of Service which are then challenged by a strategic governance group.
- Areas for improvement that were identified last year by Audit Wales, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committee have been addressed in this year's review.

9 Draft Work Plan 2023/24

The Panel agreed the draft plan for 2023/24. The Chair noted that instead of a regular quarterly progress / monitoring report there would be a focus on specific regeneration projects chosen by the Panel.

10 Letters

11 Exclusion of the Public

The public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in Paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

12 Copr Bay Development

Martin Nicholls, Chief Executive provided a statement including the following information, this was followed by a closed session.

- On the 18 August, Buckingham Group issued a notice of its intention to appoint an administrator. Much of the business formally entered administration on 4 September. At the time of this meeting no contact has yet been made with the administrator.
- There have been ongoing challenges with the delivery of the car park however the other elements have been completed and handed over. Legal advice is being taken with a view to getting the project completed as swiftly as possible.
- Officers and Members will work to identify a suitable contractor and timescale to deliver the remaining works, utilising the remaining available budget.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am.

Chair