

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Gerry Clark (Chairman), John Story (Vice-Chairman), Karen Davies, Greg Jones, Lynne Jones, Helen Price, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim and Leo Walters

Also in attendance: Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor David Hilton, Councillor Mandy Brar, Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra, Councillor John Bowden and Councillor Maureen Hunt

Officers: Mark Beeley, Adele Taylor, Andrew Vallance, Nikki Craig, Rachel Kinniburgh, Louise Freeth, Steph James, Lynne Lidster, Kevin McDaniel, Alysse Strachan, James Thorpe, Emma Duncan, Lin Ferguson, Michael Shepherd and Karen Shepherd

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Werner. Councillor Bond was unable to attend in person, he would be attending the meeting virtually as a non-Panel Member.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Story declared that his wife was an employee of RBWM and requested that this was noted in the minutes. This was in relation to items 4 and 5 on the agenda.

The Chairman said that he was a Cabinet Member when the RBWM Property Company action plan was considered by Cabinet and originally referred to overview and scrutiny.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The Chairman said that there had been discussion around scrutiny of the waste contract and which elements should be considered and by which Panel.

Councillor Price said that she had raised the idea at the last meeting of the Panel having the opportunity to review how a meeting had gone. The Chairman had suggested that this could be done outside of the meeting, Councillor Price asked if this would be taking place.

Councillor Sharpe suggested that it could be something to consider as part of the ongoing review of how the scrutiny function was performing, rather than after every meeting.

Councillor L Jones said that a review should happen quarterly, so that the Panel could change how it operated if required.

The Chairman said that a quarterly private meeting could be held to review progress and actions from previous meetings. The Panel could then see if there were any benefits to holding the review meetings.

ACTION – The Chairman to work in collaboration with Democratic Services to organise an offline meeting to review Panel progress.

Councillor Price noted that at the last meeting, Mr Andrew Hill had asked a question which required a written answer after the meeting. Councillor Price requested that the answer was made publicly available in the interests of transparency.

The Chairman confirmed that Mr Andrew Hill had received the written answer, he agreed that the answer should also be made available publicly on the website.

ACTION – Written answer to Mr Andrew Hill’s question to published as a supplement to the minutes.

CORPORATE PLAN 2021-26 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Rachel Kinniburgh, Service Lead – Strategic Policy, Performance & Insights, said that this was the first performance report against the RBWM Corporate Plan. The report considered performance up until May 2022. Following the adoption of the Plan, officers across the council had identified measures and milestones which reflected progress against the 50 goals.

The criteria developed by the Strategy, Policy and Performance Team to govern the compilation of the Panel’s reports was set out in the report, considering areas of progress and concern along with the direction of travel. The first report had been compiled based on direction of travel alone. Each of the three corporate plan objectives were set out in the report with their respective areas of concern and progress. On the whole, the position was broadly healthy, with 15 goals making significant progress and four goals where there were some areas of concern.

With the ‘council trusted to deliver’ objective principally focused on satisfaction, trust and feeling that the council delivered value for money, it was noted that operational service delivery was likely to influence these areas and so more data around service delivery would be published on the Citizens Portal. Rachel Kinniburgh encouraged Panel Members to engage with the team throughout the summer to share their thoughts on what could be included.

The Chairman thanked all officers that had been involved in the work that had been undertaken to improve reporting and identify criteria. He felt this would be a good way of monitoring performance and targets.

Councillor Walters commented on the A308 study which was ‘successfully completed’. He felt that it had not been completed successfully and was three years late, there had been significant impacts as a result on the village of Bray.

The Chairman said that it was completed successfully, although the timetable of the study was something that came under the Panel’s remit with monitoring and performance.

Councillor Walters felt that the result of the study was disappointing.

Councillor Sharpe said that the report was an important piece of work. He asked where issues may appear looking to the future, over the next few months.

Rachel Kinniburgh said that there was nothing significant which was causing concern at the moment. The areas of concern outlined in the report had insightful narrative which had been provided by officers. This was the first report, there were a number of measures where data was still being sourced or where there was limited data available.

Councillor L Jones noted that some of the goals had a target in the narrative while others had the target in the commentary. She asked if it was possible for a target box to be included to show Panel Members clearly what the target was and when it was due to be reached by. Councillor L Jones agreed with the comments made about the A308, the study had only got to the first stage and the council were now considering options. The Biodiversity Action Plan was not yet complete as it was being considered by Cabinet in November 2022, while the Windsor

public realm project included appointing a contractor. The tender had been put out but no decision had yet been made. Councillor L Jones commented on targets which were outside of the council, she was unsure of how value could be added on these targets. More narrative on these targets could be useful.

Rachel Kinniburgh said that the structure and format could be evolved based on feedback. More detail would be made available through the portal. The team would take the comments away from the meeting and have a look at what could be improved.

Councillor Price said that there were three priorities which were considered to be making sufficient progress currently. However, she felt that these should still be monitored, she asked if the priorities could be brought out further in the report. Councillor Price said that while she was considering the report, she found that she referred to the corporate plan, the citizens portal and the report. She felt it would be easier if the corporate plan was taken as the base template, and everything else fell into the same order as the plan.

When looking at the citizens portal, there was very little data to currently look at, more data on past performance would be very useful. She agreed with comments from other Panel Members on targets being completed when they had only been partially completed. Councillor Price said that there was a target to meet national guidelines on air pollution, however the council had only met one of the ten targets on air pollution. There was no mention of the climate partnership.

Emma Duncan, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Law & Governance, said that if targets were not being met, Panel Members had the opportunity to raise queries around these during the meeting.

The Chairman said it was important that Members satisfied themselves with the answers given by officers. After the meeting, Members could contact officers to request amendments be made.

Councillor Price said there were a number of air quality pollutants, but the council was only measuring itself against one of them. She asked why the council was not measuring itself against all of the national targets.

James Thorpe, Sustainability & Climate Change Lead, said that air pollution sat with the Environmental Protection team. The solar purchasing scheme launch was complete, with emails of offers recently going out.

Councillor Price said that she was disappointed that there were no officers available to answer queries on air pollution. When building took place, this caused emissions and there was a lot of building planned to take place in the borough. This was shown as a straight line in the data which Councillor Price suggested was not realistic.

James Thorpe mentioned the environment and climate strategy which had a target of net zero by 2050, this was not a straight line trajectory. There was an aim for a 50% reduction by 2025, 75% by 2030 and 88% by 2035. On the citizens portal, the trajectory was a straight line until 2025 but this did not reflect the long term aim. On planning policy, the majority of new buildings would be net zero, especially in the South West Maidenhead area. A climate and sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would be brought forward in due course, to stop a big increase in admissions from building work.

Councillor Price commented on the SPD, this had been delayed and it was not obvious to the Panel. She asked when the SPD would be completed.

James Thorpe said that it was being worked on with planning colleagues, it was acknowledged that it was behind schedule. Some external support would be brought in to accelerate the document, no timescale on completion could be given.

Councillor Price said that the Biodiversity Action Plan was 12 months overdue, climate was meant to be a priority but everything seemed to be delayed.

James Thorpe said that a draft of the Biodiversity Action Plan had been completed but more consultation was needed. A short term delay meant that the plan could be a success, it was important that residents engaged with the consultation.

Councillor Price suggested that taking time to do things properly often led to better results. She had suggested initially that the Biodiversity Action Plan should have gone out for more consultation, this was now what was happening.

The Chairman said that biodiversity came under completed on the table, it would be useful to have an accurate or best estimate timetable.

Rachel Kinniburgh said that to get the system set up, a blanket April 2022 start date for projects needed to be added. These would be updated as the system progressed.

Councillor Davies commented on the nitrogen dioxide concentration across the Maidenhead AQMA. There was no empirical explanation for this, there had been an increase in other AQMAs since lockdown therefore there was no room for complacency. Full Council had agreed to review the air quality action plan in light of the new World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance on air pollution levels, which were lower than national guidelines. This topic was due to be considered by Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel prior to the reorganisation of scrutiny, she asked where this could be considered.

The Chairman suggested that officers could refer the item to overview and scrutiny as appropriate to look at the implementation of the air quality monitoring.

Emma Duncan said that air quality could be explored by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel, Panel Members could refer it to the Panel if they chose to.

Councillor G Jones said that the citizens portal had the potential to turn into a huge database which took a huge amount of time to update and maintain. He asked if other councils were using a similar tool to track progress.

Emma Duncan said that it was a standard approach for all councils, data was important to understand whether targets were being achieved. RBWM had a more proactive way of monitoring targets, officers could intervene if things were not performing as expected. This was a particular advantage of the data being real time, rather than past data. It was also a good way of showing the public what was happening and was therefore a transparent way of sharing performance.

Rachel Kinniburgh added that targets brought clarity to objectives and the council made promises to residents, reporting performance showed that the council was keeping them. The reporting gap between the data and scrutiny meetings could also be kept relatively small, making the data more relevant.

Councillor Story said that the performance reporting and the citizens portal were excellent pieces of work, he passed on his thanks to officers. He said it was difficult to comment without knowing the concerns of residents, he wanted to see what residents were saying about the performance of the council. Councillor Story asked what the concerns of residents were and how long was it taking to resolve any concerns that had been raised. A large number of services were outsourced, Councillor Story requested that the performance of contractors was also included.

Councillor Story asked if the citizens portal was interactive, could residents add comments to the platform, for example. Councillor Story said that some of the data supplied was a couple of

years out of date, the data needed to be up to date for the platform to fully work. Councillor Story concluded by commenting that on two of the main goals, there were no areas of concern and Councillor Story asked what conclusions could be drawn from this.

Emma Duncan said that the council needed to ask residents what they thought of council services, this could be used to determine whether the council was 'trusted to deliver its promises'. This was being worked on and the data was currently light in this area. RBWM Together was an engagement platform which could be used to gain feedback from residents. Some datasets only received data on a yearly basis, so this was old data but it was the best and most up to date data available.

Rachel Kinniburgh confirmed that residents were unable to engage through the citizens portal, but RBWM Together was used as a collaboration space across a number of different services. There were a broad range of measures on the citizens portal, with a wide variety of reporting frequencies. Some data was only available nationally on a yearly basis, all other local authorities were in a similar position.

Emma Duncan added that it was important that adequate data was provided to Members so that they could challenge the performance. Performance indicators would need to be developed to fit around the data that was available, officers trusted the data which was being put in front of the Panel.

Councillor Walters referred back to the discussion on the SPD and the 50% reduction in emissions by 2025. He asked what the 50% reduction was referring to.

James Thorpe clarified it was 50% of the borough's carbon emissions, as published by the government. This was based on the 2018/19 baseline figure.

Councillor Bond commented on issues like vegetation growing over highways, this could fall under cycling and walking targets or customer services targets in the performance monitoring. If there was no budget, it was a financial issue, which again could appear in three areas of the citizens portal. He was happy to discuss the issue after the meeting with officers.

The Chairman said that this should initially be discussed with the Cabinet Member to understand why specific issues were not being dealt with in the first instance. This would then help to determine if it was a budget matter or not, and if required could then be considered at a scrutiny meeting.

Councillor Bond said that he had followed some issues through and discovered that areas were missing from the contract, so that the work did not get done.

Emma Duncan said that the 'council trusted to deliver its promises' objective would allow Members to see where residents felt that services were not at the level they felt they should be. A new caseworker system would be introduced in the autumn which would allow Members to raise queries directly.

Adele Taylor, Executive Director of Resources, said that the customer service strategy piece of work had a number of strands which identified a number of gaps and looked to identify data which could be collected.

Councillor G Jones said that he had been looking at the number of active adults in the borough through the citizens portal, when the 'more information' button was clicked, there was no further information or data. He asked where the 70.8% figure had therefore come from.

Rachel Kinniburgh said that target trajectories were available in the majority of cases, but some metrics were subject to baselining. The long term intention was to refine measures, in the short term the user would have to work harder to find the target trajectories in the portal, where they existed. This was due to current platform limitations, there was a limit to the

number of future dates which could be displayed on the first page. The team had to decide to include either past data and part of the trajectory, or the whole trajectory and no past data. The whole trajectory had been decided upon to show where the council was going. To see all of the data, Councillor G Jones would need to click on the calendar and increase the date range.

Councillor G Jones said that on other metrics, it said 'awaiting data'. He felt this was more honest than not showing the full data set.

Michael Shepherd, Sport & Leisure Service Manager, said that the figure came from Sport England Active Lives data. This was the 2018/19 figure for RBWM, with a lag over Covid.

The Chairman said that air quality was on the Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel work programme, he suggested that this was the appropriate place to discuss the item in further detail.

Councillor Price said that it was important that there was a tight remit when things were referred to other Panels.

The Chairman said that the Chairman of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel would be referred to the minutes of this meeting, where this had been discussed. The Panel could then discuss the item once it was timetabled and ready to be considered at a meeting.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel noted the report and:

- i) Noted the progress made in relation to implementation of the new performance reporting arrangements.**
- ii) Noted the criteria to guide the preparation of performance reports for consideration by the Panel and the interim criteria used to support the Panel's first Performance Report set out at Appendix A.**
- iii) Accepted the invitation to Panel Members to engage with the Strategy, Policy and Performance Team to support the identification of additional indicators under the Corporate Plan objective "A council trusted to deliver its promises".**
- iv) Considered the Performance Report at Appendix A and agreed any areas of performance the Panel considered appropriate to refer for further, more detailed scrutiny.**

WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT

Nikki Craig, Head of HR, Corporate Projects & IT, said the report was produced on an annual basis and was also published on the website. The report covered a number of areas including: head count, grade bands, part time employees, length of service, voluntary turnover and starters and leavers, up until 31st March 2022. The second section of the report covered the nine protected characteristics. Under the Equality Act 2010, the council was required to report and publish this information. It was hoped that there could be a comparison with the 2021 Census data, however only data on gender and age had been released so this comparison was not yet possible. Comparisons had been made between previous years where possible.

Councillor Walters noted that there were more starters than leavers over the course of the year, he asked what jobs the additional starters were in.

Nikki Craig said that the overall head count had only increased by five, from 548 to 553. The starters and leavers were across all areas, some areas had higher turnover than others. Nikki Craig said that she would be able to share a list of which service areas the starters and leavers had come from, this could be shared with the Panel after the meeting.

ACTION – Nikki Craig to share starters and leavers list with the Panel.

Councillor Walters commented on sexual orientation, with a percentage saying that they 'would prefer not to say'. Councillor Walters felt that it was important that the employee was the best person for the job.

Nikki Craig said that it was not useful if the protected characteristics data was not completed, the data was collected at the start of the recruitment process. HR were considering what positive action could be taken to reduce the number of people who 'preferred not to say'. The reason for collecting data on protected characteristics was to ensure equality and to make sure that nobody was being discriminated against. The recruitment process was about someone's capacity and ability to fulfil a role. Part time working was less at a more senior level, work had been done to understand what the barriers were to working part time for senior staff.

Councillor Story asked what conclusions could be drawn from the number of staff that were 65+. He asked if there was an obligation for the council to have a workforce which was proportionate, under the Equality Act.

Nikki Craig said it would be good for the council to have an age profile which was reflective of the local area. The number of elderly residents was due to the number of care homes and that a number of residents had chosen to retire. Around 50% of the current workforce nationally were millennials, this was not reflected in the employee make up of RBWM.

Councillor Story asked if volunteers made up this age group.

Nikki Craig clarified that the report did not include volunteers, but a number of volunteers in the borough were in that age group. Nationally, there were more vacancies than people that were unemployed.

Councillor L Jones said that there seemed to be fluidity around female staff at RBWM. It would be helpful to understand where starters and leavers came from, as had been raised by Councillor Walters.

Nikki Craig confirmed that she was happy to provide the breakdown. Over the past year, there had been a 55%/45% split on male and female starters. It was difficult to say why people left the organisation, sometimes it was career development but there were a number of other factors, for example personal circumstances.

Councillor Price commented on the mandatory consultation, where only one senior officer had seen the report.

Nikki Craig said that was correct for the covering report, the actual workforce profile had been through a significant amount of consultation amongst senior officers.

Councillor Price said it was worrying that a number of employees did not want to give answers, it was good that officers were doing work to improve this.

Nikki Craig added that there had been an increased response rate to the annual employee survey.

Councillor Price understood that casual staff and contractors were not included as part of the report. She asked what percentage of the total workforce was covered by the data.

Nikki Craig said that before Achieving for Children and Optalis the count was around 1,200 and the other big service area not included was highways due to outsourcing, with around 50 more staff.

Councillor Price asked if there would be any value in having the workforce information from these areas, if it was possible.

Nikki Craig confirmed that the organisations were not required to share their workforce profile data.

Councillor Price commented on part time staff, she often found it difficult to get hold of officers on a Friday. She asked if service delivery was factored into which days staff worked.

Nikki Craig said that there was a flexible working policy, pros and cons needed to be considered. In HR, there were a number of colleagues that worked a four day week. However, the day not worked was spread evenly across the week.

Councillor Price asked if career development was a genuine reason from some leavers, or whether it was an easy option to tick. She said that there was a reference to an 'ambassador group' in the report, she asked for the context behind this group.

Nikki Craig said that the exit interview questions were asked anonymously. The ambassador group was a voluntary group of employees across the organisation, they were an employee voice group. The group was an important resource for gauging the opinion of the workforce and feeding in ideas.

Adele Taylor said that the question was asked before employees joined the organisation, it could be updated at a later date. It would be useful for officers to have more information on the workforce. Trust had been measured in the staff survey, improvements had been made in this area.

Councillor Walters asked what the equality, diversity and inclusion network was.

Nikki Craig said it was an employee led voice group, which came together to consider all things related to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Executive Director of Resources and the Chief Executive were also part of the network. An outcome of the survey produced by the network was to have diverse interview panels, which incorporated people with protected characteristics, if possible. Colleagues could be borrowed from other services if required.

Councillor Walters noted that there was reference to the strategy team in the report.

Nikki Craig said that Rachel Kinniburgh led the strategy team, they had corporate and borough wide responsibility on equalities.

Adele Taylor said that sometimes members of the equality, diversity and inclusion network were offered the opportunity to be part of interview panels. It allowed employees to broaden their development.

Councillor Shelim commented on starters and leavers in March 2021, it was hard to understand why people were leaving the organisation when there were few jobs available due to the pandemic.

Nikki Craig said that turnover for that year went down to 10%, so the number of roles available had reduced. Now the turnover figure had returned to a figure similar to before the pandemic.

Adele Taylor said that a lot of work was done to market the organisation, it was important to have employees that also met the values of RBWM.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny noted the report and:

- i) Received future reports which would take into account the Census 2021 detail when published.**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2027/28

Andrew Vallance, Head of Finance, explained that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been considered by the Panel at their last meeting in June. Comments from Panel Members had been incorporated into the report, which had since been considered by Cabinet before coming back to the Panel. Cabinet had recommended the MTFS to Full Council, which would be considered in September. The numbers element of the plan was included in the report, this showed an anticipated savings gap of £7 million. There was estimated to be an additional £3 million of costs from the adult social care reforms. Assumptions had been made around inflation and interest rates, these were subject to change. Appendix B considered a sensitivity analysis which showed the effect of changing some of the assumptions, for example a 1% increase in the council tax cap could increase the amount of council tax by £800,000. The draft budget would be considered by Cabinet in November, before two months of consultation which would include scrutiny in December.

The Chairman asked, for the benefit of any residents watching the meeting, why the council needed to provide a balanced budget.

Andrew Vallance said that there was a legal requirement for the council to have a balanced budget. Savings would be made across the five years of the MTFS. Officers were currently asking service areas for income generation or savings, which would be considered by Cabinet Members in the autumn. The budget consultation would then feed into Cabinet at the beginning of February 2023, before going to Full Council for approval at the end of February 2023.

Adele Taylor said that RBWM was in a similar position to many local authorities across the country. This was the start of the budget setting process, a set of assumptions needed to be laid out. The uncertainty at a national level meant that there was a lot of unknown and the financial situation was very volatile. Officers spoke to treasury bodies, other Berkshire colleagues and CIPFA to be as accurate as possible in assumptions that had been made.

Councillor Walters said that he had a lot of confidence in officers to make accurate assumptions and set a balanced budget. RBWM had traditionally had a low council tax level, which was what residents wanted. However, due to the financial position, this might have to change.

Councillor L Jones agreed that officers were doing a good job, there was stable reporting. There were a few challenges which were unique to RBWM. The council had the lowest council tax level outside London, coupled with low reserves and with increased levels of borrowing had made the financial position more challenging. Councillor L Jones noted that £7 million of savings needed to be made, with the potential for a further £3 million needed, she asked how confident officers were that there was sufficient financial resource available to achieve the objectives set out in the corporate plan, including climate change. Councillor L Jones asked if the voluntary sector had the capacity to deliver the council's objectives. In the report, it was estimated that there would be an increase of £500,000 in council tax and business rates each year, with the development in the borough. Councillor L Jones asked if these estimates could be made more accurate.

Adele Taylor said that the budget needed to be balanced and the objectives in the corporate plan needed to be met. The plan gave officers some prioritisation and framework within which

resources should be focused. Work around early intervention was key in helping to deliver the budget as it would help to manage demand. If Adele Taylor did not think that the council could deliver its statutory services, a S114 notice could be issued. RBWM was not in this position now and had not been either in the past few years. Money needed to be prioritised and spent in the right areas, as had been outlined in the corporate plan. On the voluntary sector, there had been a significant amount of work done on trying to build bridges and working differently.

Andrew Vallance answered the question on council tax, a report would be going to Cabinet in November which set out the level of council tax for the following financial year. The government had kept changing its mind on business rates, it was expected that there would be at least one reset over the five years.

Councillor Price said that there had been a few but significant changes to the report which had been considered by the Panel at their last meeting, she asked if any changes could be highlighted in future so that it was clear to Panel Members where changes had been made. Councillor Price asked why the savings for next year had increased by £4.8 million.

Andrew Vallance said that the savings had increased as officers had reconsidered the assumptions which had been made. The interest rate and inflation were the areas where there was an increase since the last budget in February 2022.

Councillor Story asked where the three biggest cost vulnerabilities were. Inflation and care costs seemed to be important factors, he asked if there were any others. On inflation, Councillor Story asked if RBWM inflation was the same as national inflation.

Adele Taylor said that national inflation included things like the cost of food, it was difficult to determine the exact level of inflation which would affect RBWM. Some of the contracts would have wage inflation included, officers had to go for best estimates at the current point in time. The adult social care reform would be coming in October 2023, there was a difference between what the government thought it would cost and what officers believed it would cost the council. The three areas of cost vulnerability for Adele Taylor were inflation, normal demographics and the adult social care reform.

On normal demographics, Councillor Story asked if it was care costs in relation to demography.

Adele Taylor said that demographics had to be dealt with, there was an increasing and ageing population in the borough.

Councillor Walters commented on the new homes bonus, which was assumed not to continue.

Andrew Vallance said that it was assumed not to continue, although the bonus was extended last year and the settlement was likely to be a roll forward. No consultation had been done on what would replace it.

Councillor Walters asked about the provision for paying back debt.

Andrew Vallance said that it was paid back over 50 years, usually 2% to 4% of the capital sum and it was done on the lifetime of assets.

Councillor Bond said that the size of the savings required was particularly significant. It was useful to have the sensitivity analysis. RBWM used Arlingclose, Councillor Bond asked if they agreed with the assumptions made on inflation and interest rates. He asked what would happen if the assumption for interest rates were incorrect.

Adele Taylor confirmed that officers did consult with Arlingclose, their assumptions were very similar to those from the Bank of England. RBWM was continuing to lobby the government about the impact of inflation, it was hoped that this would be considered when any settlement

figure was agreed. More detailed work would need to be done around the collection fund, the draft budget would show what had changed.

The Chairman asked when officers would be able to update the material parts of the report.

Adele Taylor said that there was less certainty than usual due to what was happening nationally. Settlements were expected to be similar to previous years, notification would be received in December.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Panel noted and commented on:

- i) The proposed key themes of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy set out in the report.**
- ii) The Medium-Term Financial Plan set out in Appendix A.**

As per C25 in Part 2 of the Constitution, the Panel was required to hold a vote on whether to continue the meeting, as the meeting had continued past 9.30pm.

A named vote was taken.

| To continue the meeting (Motion) | |
|---|-----|
| Councillor Gerry Clark | For |
| Councillor John Story | For |
| Councillor Karen Davies | For |
| Councillor Greg Jones | For |
| Councillor Lynne Jones | For |
| Councillor Helen Price | For |
| Councillor Julian Sharpe | For |
| Councillor Shamsul Shelim | For |
| Councillor Leo Walters | For |
| Carried | |

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the meeting would continue and the remaining items on the agenda would be considered by the Panel.

PROPERTY COMPANY GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Adele Taylor explained that the report set out an update on the action plan, the action plan itself had been considered at a previous meeting of the Panel. As of 1st April 2022, the client officer had changed from the Chief Executive to the Executive Director of Resources. The majority of the actions had now been completed, with some actions ongoing. Some of the items still outstanding were around shareholder protocol, CIPFA had recently produced a best practise document on management of public companies, officers were ensuring that the Property Company complied with this best practise before the shareholder protocols were agreed. The Property Company was a wholly owned company, property services in the council were undertaken by the Property Company. All other actions were expected to be resolved in the next couple of months.

Councillor Price mentioned that when the business plan had been considered by Cabinet, it was done so in Part II. She asked if the shareholder protocols would also be in Part II.

Adele Taylor said that as much content as possible was being discussed in Part I, she would confirm with Councillor Price after the meeting exactly how much could be discussed in public.

ACTION – Adele Taylor to confirm how much of the Property Company action plan could be discussed in Part I and which parts could only be discussed in Part II.

Councillor Walters asked if the Property Company had their own retained firm of lawyers.

Adele Taylor confirmed that they did, she would confirm the name of the firm after the meeting.

ACTION – Adele Taylor to inform Panel Members of the law firm for the Property Company.

The Chairman welcomed the transparency around the Property Company.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the report and:

- i) **Offered any comments on the latest updated action plan.**

WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor L Jones said that she had been trying to get the customer journey on to the Panel's agenda for over a year. She had been told that there was a working group, once work had been done it would be shared with the Panel. However, Councillor L Jones was concerned that the Panel would not be involved and would just receive a final report. The peer review team were visiting the council again in October, it would be good for the Panel to see the report. Councillor L Jones said that she wanted the Tivoli contract to be considered, Corporate should consider the contractual obligations. Annual complaints and compliments would link in well with the performance monitoring reports.

The Chairman said that there was a significant amount of work ongoing around the 'report it' system. This should be a useful tool to understand if issues were being resolved. He said that he would contact the relevant officer with regard to the customer journey.

Adele Taylor said that she was happy to take the item away and bring an item as an update on the customer service and journey, she would speak to the relevant officers.

ACTION – Adele Taylor to confirm the customer journey item on the work programme and speak to relevant officers.

Nikki Craig said that RBWM was legally required to report the compliments and complaints for adult and children's services, the council reported all complaints and compliments which had been received. The report did not include the 'report it' function. Nikki Craig said that she would discuss with the strategy team to see if current detail could be matched with the performance monitoring report.

ACTION – Nikki Craig to discuss with the strategy team to see if feedback from residents in the form of complaints and compliments could be incorporated into the performance monitoring report which would be considered by the Panel.

Emma Duncan said that an update on the action plan from the peer review was due at Cabinet in August. This could be brought to the next Panel meeting.

Councillor Price said that she would be meeting with officers this week to finalise the scrutiny scoping document on her suggested topic around equalities. She would circulate it to Panel Members shortly and it was hoped that it would be ready to come to the next meeting. On the transformation programme, she suggested that it would be good to look at this sooner rather than later as there had been some changes in the transformation team. On the Cabinet

Forward Plan, there was an item on the Covid Relief Fund, Councillor Price asked if this was relevant for the Panel to consider.

Adele Taylor said that there were some potential changes to the transformation team, this would be brought forward at the appropriate time. On the Covid Relief Fund, the council had been given money for business rate relief, this was for businesses that had not had any other support. There was a strict criteria around the fund, therefore there was not much opportunity for scrutiny. Adele Taylor said that she was happy to discuss with Councillor Price outside of the meeting, if appropriate.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 10.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....