Minutes

Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Date: 25 April 2018

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors M Rahman (Chair), D Davies, Y Forsey, S Marshall, R Mogford and T Suller

In Attendance: Tracy McKim (Partnership Policy & Involvement Manager), Mark Bleazard (Information Development Manager), Jo Evans (Digital Information Project Officer), Elizabeth Blayney (Scrutiny and Governance Manager) and Meryl Lawrence (Overview and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors R Hayat, M Linton and K Whitehead

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1   **Declarations of Interest**

    None

2   **Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 February and 12 March 2018**

    The Minutes of the meetings held on 28 February and 12 March 2018 were **approved** as an accurate record of the meetings.

3   **Shared Resource Service Update**

    Attendees:
    - Tracy McKim (Partnership Policy and Involvement Manager)
    - Mark Bleazard (Digital Services Manager)
    - Jo Evans (Digital Information Project Officer)
    - Matt Lewis (Chief Officer - Shared Resource Service)
    - Mike Doverman (User Support Manager – Shared Resource Service)

    The Partnership Policy and Involvement Manager introduced the report and advised the Committee that the Head of Service was unable to attend. The Digital Services Manager presented a brief overview of the report.

    Discussions included the following:
    - Members raised some concern about the performance data and that comparative performance information with other partners should be included in the report, together with clear actions for measures that had underperformed. Members were advised that the Shared Resource Service (SRS) assured the Committee that SRS collate the information requested and could include it in future reports.

    - *Measure PBC/062 - Percentage of Helpdesk calls resolved at first point of contact*, had a target of 85% however the Actual was only 57.5%. It was asked whether this was due to staffing issues as no explanation was given. Members were advised that there had been issues with the current Service Desk tool which measured performance against all

calls, but not calls resolved at first point of contact. A new tool had been contracted which would be able to measure this and was expected to be implemented within 12 weeks.   It was further explained that the 85% target was set for all partners from the outset, it was difficult and unrealistic for the Council to reach targets in the first year as staff had to learn then Newport City Council systems, but the Head of Service had decided to keep this measure in for transparency.

- **Measure PBC/061 ICT Customer Satisfaction %** - customer satisfaction responses were discussed and it was confirmed that out of 2514 surveys sent out in 2017, 2077 had not been completed. Members were advised that a new simplified feedback method had been introduced using smiley faces and assured that all unhappy faces would be followed up. Members requested that a breakdown of responses be included in the future reports.

- Members asked whether there was an online helpdesk option rather than calls only and how issues were followed up. Officers advised that there are self-service times when issues could be logged via an online helpdesk portal, completely dissatisfied responses are followed up and that dialogue is ongoing and regular. It was also advised that there would be wider options included in the new tool, such as web chat and the ability to download an app to log a call, which was expected in the next ten days.

- SRS was leading the way on technology and an example was given of the platforms that would become the norm for their partners and they were also engaging with Socitm and the Welsh Government Minister.

- Members enquired about where the performance measures were reported and whether the target setters see them. It was advised that performance is reported 4 weekly to the Delivery group and seen by the target setters. Descriptions of the categories of priority were discussed. More detailed information would be provided upon performance in future reports, to enable better scrutiny.

- With regard to the comment page 25 of the report which stated: "*In addition, some of the existing NCC infrastructure is ageing",* Members asked how much ageing infrastructure there was and where do NCC stand comparatively with other partners. Members were advised that in the first instance, the SRS was trying to move all partners onto the same systems, so that there is much less risk, but that it was a long process and a Year 2 issue. Details of risk could be included in future reports to the Committee. An example was given of NCC's Customer Records Management (CRM) system which was a risk as it is sitting on old technology, but SRS were in the process of moving NCC to the same CRM system as other partners. In relation to where NCC stands comparatively with other partners, it was advised that each local authority had different issues, for example another partner was the only one not using the same payroll system.

- It was clarified that Information Governance is retained by the Council and doesn't sit within the SRS as it can't be transferred to a shared service. While the SRS carries out actions to ensure information is managed accordingly, the responsibility remains with Newport. The new General Data Protection Regulations strengthen the pre-existing Data Protection requirements and the Information Commissioner's Office also provides guidance. The Council reports its Information Governance Risk Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee annually and data protection is always taken very seriously.

- Members inquired when the issue with firewalls in schools would be addressed. Officers advised that there is a business case with Blaenau Gwent Council and NCC for a timeline to migrate all schools from the corporate network to the education network, which would

be an open network and more flexible. Members requested that the next report includes the outcome and information regarding the schools' customer satisfaction responses.

- Members asked as voting on the board is unanimous, how does the SRS overcome if one partner say no. An example was given to the Members where one partner voted against the rest, so another solution had to be found. If a partner decides not to proceed, then there could be increased costs in the future.

- What is the SRS road map referred to on page 28 of the report, item 7, and why is not longer term? It was advised that the road map contained everything to be done over the next 6-12 months and programmed for each quarter. The roadmap contain things that the SRS can control, but other things have to done in the partners' organisations. The positivity and drive from the recent CEO days was stressed as having an important impact.

- How effectively does the SRS work, does one authority take control or is it shared equally? Initially the SRS was set up with three partners, but it is irrelevant to how the organisation now runs, as people see themselves as the SRS and have stepped into subsequent roles. Each Council pays for a number of service desk staff split on contribution made by the organisation at the start of each year.

- How effectively is the Council able to monitor the progress of the partnership arrangements? There are standard delivery group reports to each partner authority and each partner gets the right to challenge the work done. It was felt that SRS are having an appropriate challenge. Newport's structure had been changed to enable this challenge and at the senior level we have Board Representation, but there is still some way to go on how NCC monitors its partnerships.

- The Terms of Reference for the SRS Business and Collaboration Board in Appendix A was discussed and Members questioned whether board members Job titles should be listed rather than their names, to provide for members of staff leaving. Members were advised that the reason was that the titles varied but each is the person within their organisation with responsibility for Digital Board ownership reason.

- Whether there were other ways of measuring customer satisfaction, not just by surveying the people who have contacted the service desk? It was advised that intelligence is gathered wherever it can be. Some project workers and partners may never log a service desk call so these people could be asked to respond to separate project work surveys and raise the numbers. Members were also advised that there is a section within Digital Champions section of the staff intranet which gives a good indicator on what is happening, and also a section to log feedback.

- It was clarified that there had been progress in most, if not all objectives which had been outstanding. The majority of work around Windows platforms was completed, as well as disaster recovery which was important. All work had been planned into the delivery groups, specifically investment objective work which will be a focus. Some objectives had missed dates but were for valid reasons such the introduction of the WICCS system for Social Services.

- The Committee then asked if there are any barriers to delivery that should be known. The latest Green paper was an example given to the Committee of a barrier to investment from new service users. Two months ago unanimous voting by the Board had been a risk, however since March 2018 a way forward had been found in which partners can progress. Consequently there would be a meeting in May with the Legal officers from all organisations to discuss rewriting the Terms of Reference.

- Does the SRS have a risk assessment document to log risk, and would it be worthwhile to have a register to log the consequences? It was advised that there not for governance risk. The Committee then asked if there are any mitigations in place for SRS to tackle the investment objectives. The Committee were advised that there is no mitigation currently, currently in the process of working through and monitoring in earnest. The risk to the Council is that objectives aren't achieved in the timescales. This would be logged by the Council as a risk and a risk register was also completed when the Council joined the SRS partnership.

- There was discussion regarding cyber security. Officers advised that while cyber attacks were carried out, due the technology SRS has in place it hasn't resulted in any risk for the partners. It was advised that cyber security is also on the Council's Corporate Risk Register and it is continuously being monitored, and the Information Governance Team were vigilant.

- It was enquired whether Linux system had ever been considered. It was advised that Linux had been considered to be less secure, even though it is open source, the response time to problems is not quick enough, partners could be left vulnerable for an amount of time if a repair patch arrival was delayed.

- Members queried whether the SRS tries to hack its systems to ensure safety and to mitigate against service attacks? It was confirmed that this is done as well as external testing annually and a phishing exercise to staff is also conducted. All public networks had been placed on one system, PSPA, which increased security.

- Members discussed the transfer of staff from the Council and inquired about: staffing at the SRS; staff transferred from the Council, and; whether external staff are recruited. Officers advised that: SRS had job progression grades so staff could progress via set objectives; SRS always tried to promote from within which was a preference as its staff were multi-skilled, and; external staff were sought if a specific skill set was required. Members were also advised that the SRS are passionate to give opportunities to those who have started out without qualifications and are committed to developing apprenticeships. All SRS vacancies are advertised on partners' websites.

- Members asked about staff morale and were advised that staff were initially worried about potential job losses when a new partner joined, but reassurance was provided and out of the 32 staff transferred from Newport, 24 had progressed in different roles in the SRS, with 8 continuing in the same role.

Conclusions

The Committee **agreed** that:

- Overall clearly there was more work to be done, but that while the explanations and reasons provided by Officers verbally had not been included and evidenced in the report, the additional verbal information provided at the meeting in answer to Members' questions and supplementary to the report had reassured the Committee and provided confidence.

- The Performance data needed to include more detail, comparable data and clear actions on outstanding objectives in future reports.

- While it had concerns over the missed dates it accepted the reasons provided by Officers. The Investment Objective deadlines need to be reviewed and updated for inclusion in the next report to Committee, particularly for those investment objectives which had not been met within the original timescales and which had passed.

- The Committee to receive a more detailed updated monitoring report upon the SRS in 12months, to be included in the Committee's draft Annual Forward Work Programme.

- There should be wider evaluation of engagement through other mechanisms, due to concerns regarding the very low response rate to customer satisfaction.

- The Committee wanted it to be noted that there had been a lack of appetite for other Local Authorities to engage in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) since the Welsh Government Green Paper: *Strengthening Local Government* had been published and this was a risk to the SRS moving forward.

4   **Public Services Board Scrutiny - Recommendations Monitoring**

Attendees:
- Elizabeth Blayney (Scrutiny and Governance Manager)
- Tracy Mckim (Partnership Policy and Involvement Manager)

The Scrutiny and Governance Manager presented an overview of the report, including the recommendations that had been made by the Public Services Board Scrutiny Policy and Review Group and their implementation, together with Scrutiny best practice.

Discussions included the following:

- With regard to Recommendation 4, relationships had been built with the Chair attending meetings of the Public Services Board and Invitees attending meetings of this Scrutiny Committee.

- Members discussed whether a mechanism was needed to feed back a response from stakeholders to the Committee when it has made recommendations to them, so that it is a two way process. Members were advised that this action would be taken forward.

- It was advised that self-evaluation could be included in the Annual Forward Work Programme and could also identify if there are any training needs. Members were advised that the five Ways of Working from the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act could be used in the self- evaluation.

Conclusions

The Committee welcomed the report and **agreed**:
1. A mechanism was needed to feed back a response from stakeholders to the Committee when it has made Recommendations to them, so that it is a two way process;
2. An element of self-evaluation for the Committee should be included in the Committee's Annual Forward Work Programme;
3. To cease the monitoring of these Recommendations as the Committee was satisfied that they had been achieved.

5   **Forward Work Programme Update**

The Scrutiny Officer outlined the reports for the next three Committee meetings including particular reference to the statutory requirement for the Committee to formally receive the Wellbeing Plan, and advising that a report to this Scrutiny Committee upon arrangements for Joint Scrutiny of the City Deal is expected shortly, which would subsequently be reported to Council. The report would request the nomination of one Member from each of the 10 City Deal Partner Local Authorities to sit on a Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The attendance of the Chair of the Newport Association of School Governors; Mr Alan Speight for the EAS Governor Support Report would be confirmed for 20 June Committee.

The Committee requested that the Social Services and Wellbeing Act: Regional Area Plan - Information Report which had been circulated to the Committee, be included for monitoring in their draft Annual Forward Work Programme, as there was some concern about equitable service delivery in Newport as in other Local Authority areas in Gwent.

Agreed:

The Committee endorsed the proposed schedule for the next three Committee meetings and confirmed the topics to be considered.

The Committee noted the Social Services and Wellbeing Act: Regional Area Plan Information Report and requested that the monitoring of the Plan be included on the draft 2018-19 Annual Forward Work Programme, which will be considered by the Committee in its July meeting.

6   **Evaluation of Meeting**

The Committee discussed and evaluated the meeting and confirmed that they were happy with the content and structure of the cover reports, background papers and approach to the meeting and thanked the Scrutiny Officer.

The Meeting closed at 7.20pm.