

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 September 2014

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CORRESPONDENCE – INFORMATION REPORT

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**Background**

1. Following Committee meetings, the Chair writes a letter to the relevant Cabinet Member or senior officer, summing up the Committee's comments, concerns and recommendations regarding the issues considered during that meeting. The letter usually asks for a response from the Cabinet Member to any recommendations made and sometimes requests further information.

**Issues**

2. A copy of the Correspondence Monitoring Sheet detailing the Committee's correspondence and those responses received is attached at **Appendix A**. For ease of reference, the lines of those letters to which the Committee has received a full response and where no actions are left outstanding have now been removed from the document. Where new information has been added since the Committee last considered a correspondence report, this information is highlighted in **bold**. Attached to this report are copies of recent correspondence.

**3 June 2014 meeting**

3. The Committee considered the Quarter 4 2013/14 Report at this meeting. The Chair's letter is attached at **Appendix B**; the response is attached at **Appendix C**.

**2 September 2014 meeting**

4. The Committee considered the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment, The Reforming Local Government White Paper, Quarter 1 2014/15 Performance report and the Challenge Forum at this meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter is attached at **Appendix D**.

## **Draft Property Strategy**

5. A letter from the Chair to the Leader regarding the Draft Property Strategy is attached at **Appendix E**.

## **Legal Implications**

6. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is recommended to note the content of the letters attached to this report and decide whether it wishes to take any further actions, or request any further information.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer  
24 September 2014

Policy Review Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Correspondence

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
03/06/14	2013/14 Quarter 4 Performance	Leader (Cllr Bale), Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	Committee - thanked the Leader and Cabinet member for bringing the report to Scrutiny before it was presented to the Cabinet; - welcomed the improved corporate overview and overall structure; - recommended that officers should explore the use of Connect to Cardiff data to improve the customer point of view; - asked for the opportunity to consider the report aimed at members of the public once it was developed; - noted regrettably low rates of Personal Performance & Development Review completion, particularly in some smaller Directorates; - recommended that thought should be given to staggering PPDR completion dates, particularly for areas with end of year deadlines, such as Finance; - hoped that there would be ongoing and vigorous challenge of in-year Directorate overspends; - noted comments that a restructure may be imminent and asked to be involved in any decisions; - was concerned about the challenge process for Directorate Delivery Plans, around target-setting; - stated that they were minded to undertake detailed inquiry work into various aspects of performance in the coming year.	05/09/14	- The response welcomed the Committee's proposal to undertake performance deep dives; - stated that more use would be made of digital channels to engage with the public and that a summarised report which would be more customer-friendly was under development; - agreed with the Committee's point regarding Member enquiries and will include an explanatory note from Qtr 2 onwards; - agreed that c2C data would be used from Qtr 2 to give a better view of the customer point of view; - stated that the Chief Executive's work around PPDRs had already started to raise compliance rates; - welcomed further involvement in performance challenge.	None
01/07/14	Property Update	Leader (Cllr Bale), Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	Committee: - expressed its disappointment that the Property Paving report had not been made available despite considerable delays in progressing a Property Strategy and that a Paving report would go to Cabinet in July although it was not made available for scrutiny; - will schedule pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Property Strategy for its 30 Sept 2014 meeting; - will also schedule consideration of the Investment Property review and asked for the timing of this to be confirmed; - reiterated its recommendation that the Council's approach to its estate should not only take into account financial aspects, but also community, social and environmental needs of citizens and that this must be given prominence in the Paving report and Strategy; - asked that a way forward for future Hubs in Cardiff should be clearly set out as soon as possible, to alleviate the public's concerns; - recommended that asset management should take a medium to long-term view rather than a short-term annual point of view; - requested a list of the Council's non-operational/investment properties including details of lease and rental agreements; - requested details of what other Councils are doing in terms of managing their property, as previously recommended.		Not yet received	

Policy Review Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Correspondence

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
02/09/14	WAO Corporate Assessment	Leader (Cllr Bale)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- welcomed the early opportunity to consider the Assessment which enables issues to be built into the Committee's work programme;</li> <li>- noted the Leader's receptive stance to the report;</li> <li>- noted how many issues raised had previously been highlighted by the Committee - workforce planning, achievability of budget savings, asset management - but recognised that steps had been taken to address some of these already;</li> <li>- noted that the WAO will follow up on progress in summer 2015, so will carry out interim scrutiny of the Organisational Development programme at December and March Committee meetings;</li> <li>- anticipates scrutinising the Property Strategy at its 30 September 2014 meeting and the methodology for the Cardiff Debate at its 4 November 2014 meeting;</li> <li>- noted the issues for Scrutiny itself to address and will consider scrutiny improvement under the Organisational Development programme ;</li> <li>- noted the negative impact which WAO found managerial and Cabinet changes had brought and anticipated that this would be taken into account as the Council planned any further restructures</li> <li>- asked to be engage with before any such changes are made.</li> </ul>	Not yet received		
02/09/14	Reforming Local Government White Paper	Leader (Cllr Bale)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emphasised that Cardiff's position as Capital City should not be lost;</li> <li>- recommend that the Cabinet's proposed response is presented to Council for debate and approval prior to submission on 1 October;</li> <li>- requested that the additional Welsh Government guidance regarding voluntary mergers is forwarded.</li> </ul>	Not yet received		
02/09/14	Qtr 1 2014/15 Performance	Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- welcomed the additional risk information;</li> <li>- was pleased to see that Personal Performance and Development Review and Sickness performance had improved;</li> <li>- agreed to set up a Performance Panel to look at performance issues in more depth, and chose workforce planning as the first issue for consideration. As part of this the Committee would look at overtime/agency spend, as it didn't feel that the information contained the performance report was sufficient to judge how these were being used and how this linked to, for example, budget savings;</li> <li>- requested to attend Cabinet/director performance challenge sessions to assure themselves that challenge was sufficiently robust;</li> <li>- requested greater visibility of additional in-year savings where these are put in place outside the February budget-setting process, and of any use of budget contingencies;</li> <li>- noted with concern the decreasing performance in terms of fulfilling multi-service information requests.</li> </ul>	Not yet received		
02/09/14	Challenge Forum	Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- agreed that the Forum could be a powerful mechanism for encouraging real changes in performance and welcomed its initially focus on Education and Children Services;</li> <li>- requested Forum members to attend Committee to brief them on their work and aid their scrutiny of relevant issues (performance and Organisational Development);</li> <li>- requested written updates on the Forum's future work and recommendations, to be reported to other Committees as relevant;</li> <li>- requested more notice of future meetings to ensure the Chair's attendance</li> </ul>	Not yet received		

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 18 June 2014



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
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Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
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Councillor Phil Bale and Councillor Graham Hinchey,  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bale and Councillor Hinchey,

**POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 June 2014**  
**Draft 2013-14 Quarter 4 Performance Report**

On behalf of the Committee, thank you for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to discuss the draft Quarter 4 performance report. Please also pass Members' thanks to the officers who attended with you. Members very much appreciated the approach which you have taken in bringing the draft report to the Committee before it is presented to the Cabinet and hope that this will continue in 2014/15.

In terms of the report presented, the Committee was pleased to note that its structure and substance has been updated and that an improved corporate overview has been developed. There were some inconsistencies and minor errors, but we recognise that officers had been working under pressure in order to prepare it for the meeting.

Members have for some time urged the customer point of view to be taken into account and were glad to see complaints and Member enquiry data contained within the report. However, we feel that the latter does not necessarily capture the whole gamut of enquiries with which Members deal on a regular basis; we hope that the report can be amended to include a more rounded picture or an explanation setting out any gaps in the information. Later in the meeting the Committee also considered the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate Delivery Plan and discussed call data from Connect to Cardiff. We recommend that officers explore how this data (with a suitable narrative) can be usefully included in the report as it would seem to have the potential to highlight changes in the service delivery experienced by our customers.

The Committee was interested to hear that a version of the report is being developed which will be more suitable for engaging members of the public. We would like to have the opportunity to consider this once it comes to fruition. This may be a very useful tool in communicating with Cardiff citizens and managing expectations of service delivery in the future, something which the Committee believes is vital.

Members discussed Directorates' compliance with the Personal Performance and Development Review process, observing the regrettably low rates achieved by some of the smaller Directorates. Members felt that it may be understandable that larger Directorates with more frontline staff find it difficult to finish the process on time, but it is less so in small Directorates. Members explored with you and your officers how



compliance rates could be raised and were interested in Councillor Hinchey's comments that areas with significant fixed deadlines at the close of the year – for example Finance – may benefit from a staggered completion date compared to the rest of the Council. We recommend that this is explored further. We do however stress that the quality of objective-setting and performance reviews must not be forgotten. This is an issue to which the Committee may return as part of its 2014/15 work programme.

Members also discussed an issue which has been of concern to them for some time, in terms of the way in which Directorates manage their budgets in year. Given the seriousness of the financial challenge facing us, we hope that any predicted overspends will be vigorously challenged as part of the performance process. The Committee has previously commented that the Cabinet should return to publishing the position against individual savings targets with budget monitoring reports and hope that you will consider doing so in order to ensure that issues are highlighted appropriately.

The Committee noted your comments that the relationship between Cabinet and Directorate portfolios will be considered as part of the Organisational Development programme, and that the Council's structures 'from top to bottom' will also be addressed to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Having taken a keen interest in our senior management structure in the past, we would like to be involved as any proposals develop. A number of other issues were discussed during the meeting which the Committee may choose to explore as part of its 2014/15 work programme. These include the management development work mentioned by the Chief Executive.

At the same meeting, the Committee had the opportunity to consider a number of draft Directorate Delivery Plans, an exercise which was useful for setting the scene for the Committee's 2014/15 work programming. While we were largely positive about their contents, we were concerned that the challenge process around some of the targets contained in the Plans may have been insufficient. For example, many targets were static over several future years. While this may be appropriate in some cases, given decreasing budgets, we were not satisfied that it was appropriate to all. We hope that this is something which you will keep in mind during future planning and challenge processes.

Finally, Members of the Committee are keen to play an integral part in the new performance challenge arrangements which are now in place. Having largely concentrated on the overall performance management framework in the recent past, we would like to explore how we can play our part in raising the Council's performance levels in the coming year. Subject to formal agreement of our work programme, the Committee proposes to establish a standing panel which can scrutinise particular services' performance in depth throughout 2014/15. Given the Leader's comments at the end of the meeting, we hope this is something of which you will be supportive and that you will ask your officers to facilitate this process. We would welcome the opportunity to explore this with you both further.

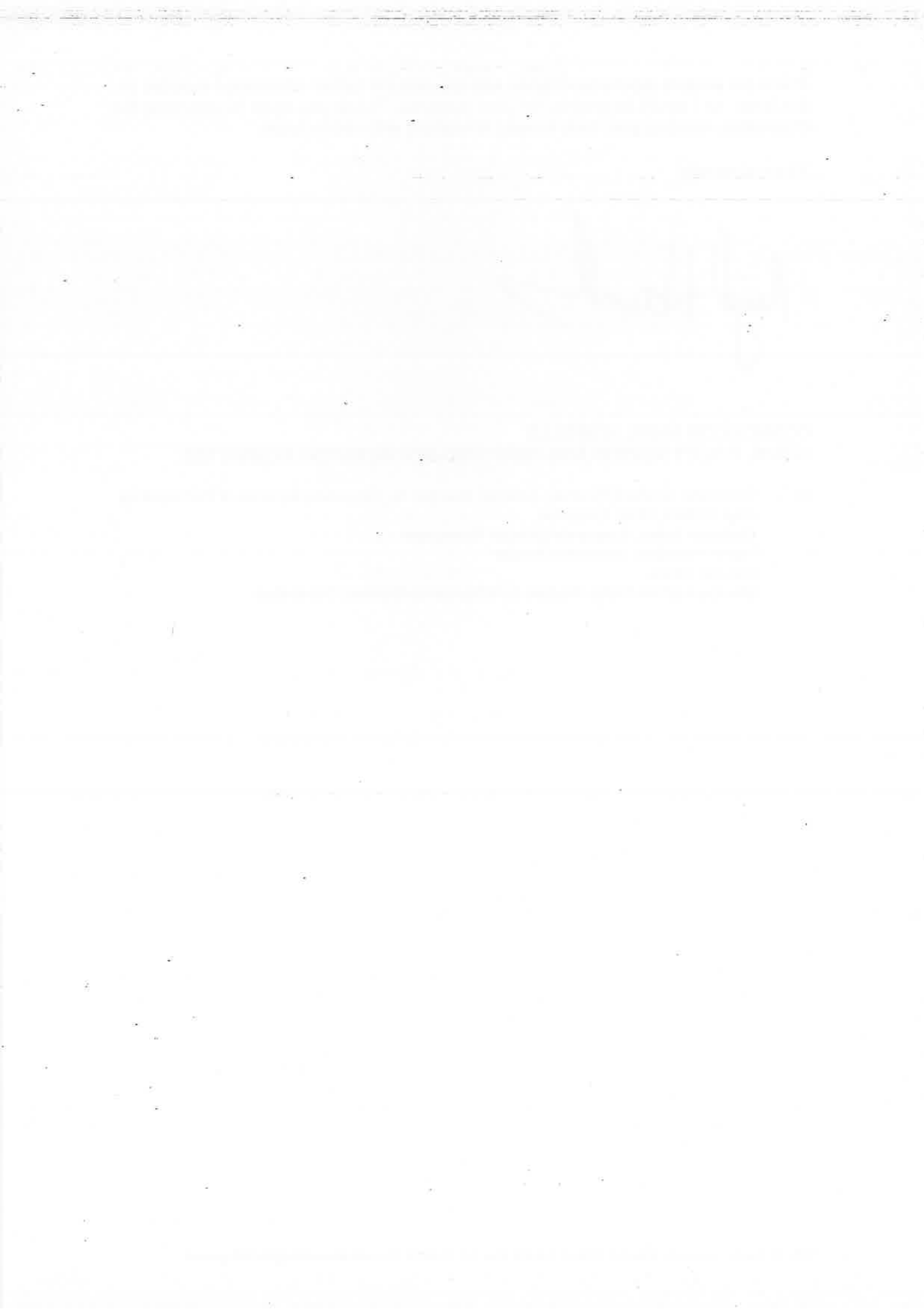
There are several recommendations and requests for further information included in this letter, so I would be grateful for your response. Thank you again for attending the Committee meeting and I look forward to working with you in future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Howells', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources  
Martin Hamilton, Assistant Director  
Cabinet Office  
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee



**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**



My Ref / Fy Ref: CM27850  
Your Ref / Eich Ref: T:Scrutiny/PRAP/  
Comm Papers/  
Correspondence

Date / Dyddiad: 05 September 2014

Councillor Nigel Howells  
Chair, Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 243  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Howells

**Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee 03 June 2014  
Draft 2013-14 Quarter 4 Performance Report**

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June 2014 and the comments of the Committee. Please can I take the opportunity to thank the Committee for their positive response to consider a 'deep dive' into the performance of specific service areas as part of its performance review remit.

We would respond to points raised as follows.

**'Capturing the Customer View'**

We share your thoughts and agree that capturing the customer view should become part of the quarterly reporting process. We are hoping to include a section in the report that will include data from C2C to illustrate the reason and direction of calls. We will also be producing data to review our presence on social media reviewing our contribution and customer comments across all platforms. We hope that the digital channel will offer us a far more in-depth understanding of the citizen's views and expectations.

**Citizen Engagement**

We feel that more interaction through the digital channel will help us engage more with the customer while we are also reviewing a summarised report that may be a Balanced Scorecard or use infographics to produce a more customer friendly report. Delivery methods are also being considered; again the digital channel is expected to be part of the solution.

**Member Enquiries**

We would agree that the current Member enquiry data does not fully capture all of the enquiries. We will include a commentary in future reports (Q2 onwards) to explain any differences and are currently undergoing a program of work to improve the quality of this data.

**PLEASE REPLY TO / ATEBWCH I:** Cabinet Support Office / Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet,  
Room / Ystafell 519, County Hall / Neuadd y Sir,  
Atlantic Wharf / Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Cardiff / Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW Tel / Ffon (029) 2087 2479

**Personal Performance and Development Reviews (PPDR)**

We were also concerned about the level of conformity with the PPDRs and the Chief Executive has led a drive to improve the corporate performance. This has already been a successful campaign achieving high rates of compliance in setting objectives for 2014/15.

**Budget Monitoring**

You are aware that I have already made it clear that budget variances will be challenged vigorously. Indeed, that has already commenced with discussions in respect of emerging issues in some directorates in advance of the first formal monitoring position. This is based on Month 4 projections and will be reported to Cabinet in September.

Appended to this report will be the projected position against individual budgeted savings and this will be updated and reported on appropriately throughout the year.

**Performance Challenge Involvement**

We are certainly glad that you want to take a stronger role in challenging corporate performance and are more than happy to support you in this. We would welcome further review of performance levels stemming from the quarterly reports and would like to progress this concept with you. In addition as we look to reboot / refresh the Cardiff Improvement System (CIS) we will look to consult with you as we consider a more accessible system that will expand your opportunity for challenge.

I trust this information is of use to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Yn gwyir,



**Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hinchey**  
**Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad**

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 10 September 2014

Councillor Phil Bale  
Leader, City of Cardiff Council  
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Dear Councillor Bale,

## **POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 September 2014**

On behalf of the Committee, please accept our thanks for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee. The Committee had a number of comments and recommendations following the meeting, as set out below.

### **Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment**

The Committee welcomed the sharp focus which the WAO Corporate Assessment has brought to the Council's performance, and are grateful to Steve Barry, you and the Chief Executive for bringing it to the Committee at such an early point. This has given us a timely opportunity to support the Council as it seeks to strengthen its performance and enabled us to build relevant issues into our work programme for the coming year.

We were pleased that you have taken a receptive stance to the Assessment's findings and are willing to acknowledge the challenges we face as a Council. Sadly many of the issues it covers are already familiar to this Committee and have been mentioned in the past by the Wales Audit Office. Several areas highlighted by the Assessment are ones which the Committee has raised previously, such as the Council's management of its assets; its engagement with the public (particularly regarding to budget decisions) and its employees; its workforce planning and the achievability of required budget savings. We recognise that your Cabinet has already made steps to address some of the shortcomings highlighted and hope you will continue to do so with all the necessary urgency. When the Committee discussed the Organisational Development programme at its May 2014 meeting, Members were concerned that employee engagement was a key issue for ensuring the success of such a significant change programme. The WAO findings also highlight the need to secure better ways for the Council to communicate with its staff. We were therefore relieved to see that some progress has been made in recent months in terms of holding employee roadshows and an 'ambassador' network. We will look to see an impact from this work on future employee morale.

We noted the Wales Audit Office's intention to follow up on progress in summer 2015 to assess how successfully the Organisational Development programme is responding to its recommendations. We also noted Steve Barry's assertion that when



it returns WAO will be looking to see improved results from the Council's new performance framework. We would like to keep a watching brief on progress in the interim, so will schedule scrutiny of the overall programme for our 2 December 2014 and 3 March 2015 meetings. We need to be assured as a Committee that the promised actions are being taken on the ground.

We will also scrutinise the issues raised through other work programme items. We have scheduled an item for 30 September 2014 on the Council's draft Property Strategy, having waited some considerable time for progress in this area, so will undertake this in the new light shed by the Assessment. The Committee also noted that one of the areas upon which the WAO will focus its follow up work is the outcome of the Cardiff Debate. We have already scheduled a consideration of the Debate for our 4 November 2014 meeting and will aim to test the methodology which is being used at that point.

With regards to the Assessment's observations concerning Scrutiny, there are obvious lessons to be learned. We will be looking to make improvements swiftly and welcomed Steve Barry's offer to further brief the Committee Chairs regarding the detailed findings. We will also build a scrutiny of proposed Governance improvements under the Organisational Development programme into our work programme.

Finally, the Committee noted the emphasis laid by the WAO on the negative impact which the political and managerial instability in recent years has had on the Council's ability to improve its performance. When you and the Chief Executive attended Committee to discuss the Quarter 4 performance report in June 2014, you discussed your intention to address the Council's structures from top to bottom to ensure that they are fit for purpose. We anticipate both that you will take the Audit Office's comments into consideration before any further restructures and that you will engage with Scrutiny before any decisions are made, as we have previously requested.

I have copied this letter to the Chairs of the other Scrutiny Committees as I hope that they will take the findings into account in their own work.

### **Reforming Local Government White paper**

The Committee would like to thank you for the briefing on the development of the Cabinet's response to the Devolution, Democracy and Delivery Local Government White Paper. The Committee discussed a number of issues surrounding local government reorganisation, including ward representation, potential incentives and the need to work on a regional basis. We found the discussion regarding the options for the Council's response to be useful and were supportive of the need to ensure that Cardiff's unique status as capital city is not lost, particularly given the growth projections set out in the Deposit Local Development Plan. Equally, it is vital that we work constructively across the South East Wales region.

Given the importance of this issue, we recommend that the Cabinet's proposed response is presented to Council for debate and approval prior to its submission to Welsh Government for 1 October 2014. We also request that the additional Welsh Government guidance is distributed to Members as soon as it is available so that we

can understand the potential incentives to a voluntary merger with the Vale of Glamorgan.

### **Quarter 1 2014/15 Performance**

As you will recall from the Committee's consideration of the Quarter 4 Performance report, we welcome recent changes in the structure and content of the report; your willingness to bring it before the Committee in such a timely fashion; and the changes which have resulted from the Committee's previous recommendations. We feel that the additional risk information included for this period was also useful. We were pleased to see improvements in compliance with the Personal Performance and Development review process during the last quarter, although we agree that the quality of the reviews is now of greater importance than simple compliance with the process.

Following your request that the Committee considers particular performance issues in more depth, Members have agreed to set up a standing Performance Panel to do so. Given the issues raised by the Corporate Assessment, and the Chief Executive's recommendation, we have selected workforce planning as the first issue for close scrutiny. You will recall that we have previously raised concerns around the potential lack of experience and talent from the organisation if voluntary severance and redeployment are not managed properly and about our ageing workforce.

Linked to these issues, the Committee raised the issue of information regarding agency and overtime expenditure during the meeting. We do not feel that the data provided in the Performance report is sufficient to enable a judgement to be formed around the Council's use of either and how it may be linked to resource pressures created by budget savings. We will explore this issue further through the Panel.

The Committee discussed the process for appraising performance in terms of how the assessments in the performance report are arrived at. Members would like to understand and test the challenge process in more depth and would therefore ask whether it would be possible for Committee members to attend a sample of 'star chamber' performance sessions in order to achieve this.

The Committee noted that there is a £4.9m projected shortfall on 2014/15 savings as at Month 3. We recognise that this is a better position than the same point in the last financial year. However, we feel that greater clarity is needed regarding any likely non-achievement of savings so that it can be understood what level of savings is achieved from those proposals approved through the budget-setting process, as opposed to additional in-year savings which were not agreed in this way. The Committee has stated on several previous occasions how important it believes transparency around additional in-year savings to be. It should also be absolutely explicit where the budget contingency is used. We feel that this is especially important given the findings of the Corporate Assessment.

Finally, the Committee raised the issue of compliance with Information Requests and the declining performance against multi-service requests. This is a matter of some concern as it seems to indicate silo-working. We recommend that this is addressed and will look for an improvement in coming quarters.

## **Challenge Forum**

Many thanks to Martin Hamilton for his update on the Challenge Forum's first meeting. The Committee agrees that this could be a powerful mechanism for encouraging real changes in performance and welcome the Forum's initial focus on achieving improvement in Education and Children Services. We also agree that it would be useful if the Forum examines Health and Social Care in the near future, given that area's ongoing budget pressures.

We noted that Barry Quirk is testing the operation of the Organisational Development programme. We would welcome his participation in our planned scrutiny of the Programme on 2 December 2014 and hope that you will help to arrange this. Similarly the Committee would be grateful if Rod Alcott were available to discuss his rapid review of performance management arrangements to coincide with our scrutiny of the Quarter 2 performance report on 4 November 2014.

We would like to be kept up to date with the work of the Challenge Forum and ask to have a written report from each of its quarterly meetings detailing what work has been undertaken and what recommendations and actions have resulted. We would recommend that work is also reported to the other Scrutiny Committees where relevant.

Finally, I found it difficult to attend the first meeting of the Forum as the meeting was arranged at quite short notice. I would be grateful if you would let me know as soon as possible when the next meetings will take place so that I can ensure I am available.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance  
Steve Barry, Wales Audit Office  
Scrutiny Chairs  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources  
Martin Hamilton, Chief Officer Change and Improvement  
Cabinet Office  
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 24 September 2014

Councillor Phil Bale  
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Dear Councillor Bale,

**POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**30 September 2014 Draft Property Strategy**

I am writing to express my great disappointment as Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee that there has been a further delay in presenting the Draft Property Strategy to the Committee.

You will be aware from your time on the Committee that we have been waiting some considerable time for the opportunity to scrutinise the Draft Strategy. The importance which we have placed on the Council's management of its assets in the challenging budgetary situation faced by the Council, has only been echoed by the findings of the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment. The Auditor General concluded that 'the Council is not managing its land and property assets well', having commented in previous years that progress has stalled.

Last week's report to Cabinet presenting the Corporate Assessment set out a timetable for further Audit Office work with the Council, including a milestone to check progress on the strategic approach to property management in November 2014. The Cabinet and senior officers have on several occasions assured the Committee that this work is progressing with urgency. We have left flexibility in our agenda for 18 months in order to scrutinise the issue. You last attended on 1 July 2014 and confirmed that the Draft Strategy would be presented to Cabinet at the latest in October 2014 and would be available for pre-decision scrutiny. I am concerned that if this issue slips any further, the Council will not be able to present the Audit Office with sufficient evidence of progress in this area in November.

I was informed of this delay on the morning of the publication of the Committee's agenda and papers. This has led to considerable disruption to the Committee's meeting next week. You will recall that the Wales Audit Office advised strongly that Scrutiny agenda management in terms of the number of Committee items should be improved. The need to defer items in this way has a considerable impact on the Committee's workload. Pre-decision scrutiny of the Draft Property Strategy will now necessitate either a lengthy agenda of up to six significant items at the Committee's 4 November 2014 meeting, or the calling of a special meeting. I'm sure you will appreciate Members' commitment to scrutinising the many important issues which



the City is facing and anticipate that you and your Cabinet will help us in doing so in future.

I would be grateful for your swift response to the points raised above, to my letter dated 8 July on the same subject, and for your assurance that there will be no further delays in presenting the Draft Strategy to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Howells', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance  
Neil Hanratty, Director Economic Development  
Cabinet Office  
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee