



County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2024, 4.00 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

b Correspondence following committee meeting(*Pages 3 - 18*)

This page is intentionally left blank

Date: 17 January 2024

Councillor Chris Weaver,  
Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Performance,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall,  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Chris,

### **PRAP Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2024: Budget Consultation 2024/25**

A sincere thank you for attending Committee on 10 January 2024 to update us on Budget Modelling and Consultation for 2024/25, we welcome such productive engagement with Scrutiny at this stage of the budget process. Please also pass on the committee's appreciation to Chris Lee, Gareth Newell, Dylan Owen and Claire Owens for the clear presentation on the financial position and the live budget consultation. Members are aware that you face difficult choices and have asked me to pass on their comments and observations to enrich the context of your decision-making on savings to frontline services.

We note the better than expected 4.1% provisional settlement for Cardiff, which after modelling presents us with a £30.491m budget gap to close from savings. Members were pleased to hear that £10m of savings have already been found without impacting on frontline services, and that the budget consultation, whilst recognising it relates to just a third of council finances, will assist in determining the remainder. We are reassured that the 4-week live budget consultation, informed by Ask Cardiff headline findings, will be analysed, and the report made available to inform final budget savings proposals, within 2 weeks of the consultation closing.

### **Provisional Settlement**

Members considered that the additional 1% settlement figure compared with the 3% on which the budget was previously modelled should result in some originally proposed savings being protected. We note the lack of detail on how changes to specific grants might affect Cardiff's final settlement, and that you were unaware of the changes to social services and homelessness grants prior to the announcement. Despite some uncertainty in respect of specific grants, we are pleased that you will

now be able to protect some services, such as Youth Services. You kindly offered to confirm the Council's understanding of the grants position prior to the announcement.

### **Quality of consultation**

*Presentation* - The Committee congratulates you on an excellent and accessible budget consultation document. Members considered the thematic layout, and the genuinely open questions were good. In addition, Members highlighted that Cardiff Civic Society had pointed out a discrepancy between the online and hard copy versions of the consultation in relation to Parks, and you reassured us that the substance of the questions remain the same.

*Content* – some Members felt the consultation contained controversial proposals that could scare residents. You reassured us that the survey recognises the need to be honest with residents, that *all* possible frontline service changes had been included in the survey, and all savings, if taken, would amount to £4m. We note, however, that the section on Council Tax is relatively small, and there is no option to reduce arena funding.

*Reach* - Members agreed that over time there has been a successful broadening of the consultation approach. We would also like to promote more ward consultations on matters such as Schools Organisation Planning and Highways investment in active travel, particularly as they are long term capital budget investments. We note your view that such issues sit more comfortably within the Ask Cardiff consultation, and you will consider a review of whether such questions could be included. However, we consider the 4-week timescale for this consultation is tight in which to access all hard-to-reach groups. We note you are targeting a high response rate online and will be reviewing responses weekly; you will use social media to target underrepresented groups and use a bespoke approach in the final week where gaps are identified.

*Listening* – whilst you make the point that public feedback is valued but the consultation is not a referendum, Members wish to re-iterate their view that public feedback should be listened to by the administration.

### **City centre cleansing**

The Committee sought clarification in respect of reports in the press that savings may include a reduction in the number of city centre litter bins. We note your focus would be on retaining cleanliness in those areas with high footfall, rather than quieter residential areas. We also note that resources to street cleansing have increased over previous years, these are challenging times, however there is a strong drive to increase recycling targets.

### **Schools' budgets**

Members are mindful of the budget challenges currently faced by schools in their communities and were seeking reassurance that the 4.1% settlement will be wholly passported on to schools' budgets. We encourage the Council to be mindful of the implications of short-term revenue savings on long-term capital costs, particularly on building maintenance matters. We note that you consider education a priority and the Council will do all it can to support schools however we are seeking your assurance that schools will not be expected to offer efficiencies within existing budgets.

### **Lobbying government**

Finally, the Committee encourages Cabinet to continue lobbying Governments' where there is the opportunity. We note you are having productive conversations with Welsh Government with the aim of securing an earlier indication of the provisional settlement in future years and urging that more specific grants are increasingly made available through the General fund; and we note that you continue to lobby the UK government on the matter of teachers' pensions. We are assured that there will be ongoing trade union and staff engagement on employment savings matters.

### **Requests following this scrutiny:**

There are three issues we request that your response addresses.

- Confirmation of the Council's understanding of the grants position prior to announcement of the Provisional Settlement.
- Consider reviewing the inclusion of Schools Organisation Planning and Highways investment in active travel within the Ask Cardiff consultation.
- Assurance that schools will not be expected to offer efficiencies within existing budgets.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, I thank you and the officers for facilitating the internal challenge of important issues such as Budget Consultation that can improve the quality of Council services. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Leaders of Opposition Parties – John Lancaster, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources  
Gareth Newell, Head of Partnerships and Performance  
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office  
Claire Owens, Principal Research & Consultation Officer;  
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit;  
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications  
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs  
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager  
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer  
Andrea Redmond, Committee Support Officer

Date: 17 January 2024

Councillor Julie Sangani,  
Cabinet Member Public Health & Equality,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall,  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Julie,

### **PRAP Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2024: Participation Strategy**

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 10 January 2024 to present the Council's final draft Participation Strategy. Please also pass on my appreciation to the Head of Performance and Partnerships, Gareth Newell, Head of Democratic Services Gary Jones, Operational Manager Policy & Performance, Dylan Owen and Principal Researcher, Claire Owens, for supporting the scrutiny. I have been asked to pass on Members' comments, observations and recommendations following discussion at the Way Forward.

#### **Overview**

The Committee's overwhelming view was that this final draft Participation Strategy represents good quality policy work that will continue evolving over time. We note your conviction that every citizen voice matters. There is a clear driving force within the policy to ensure that where the Council cannot access a representative sample in a live consultation exercise it will invest in face-to-face engagement with diverse and hard to reach communities. There is also an awareness of opportunities for improvement. We were particularly pleased to hear you have accessed the Shared Prosperity Fund to appoint 4 additional staff to enhance face-to-face engagement in the next 18 months.

#### **Part 1**

**Closing the feedback loop** – Members continue to seek assurance that closing the feedback loop post consultation is a priority for directorates. We note you consider feedback is currently passive and subject to team capacity. However, in future you will take practical steps, such as using social media platforms, developing quarterly

newsletters with links to Cabinet and Scrutiny reports, and targeting communities of interest more directly.

**Breaking down barriers** - Members were keen to establish why some citizens are difficult to contact. We note your view that, in the case of ethnic minorities, it is primarily because they are unaware of the availability of information, however improvements are actively sought with the Council asking other employers/partners to share their networks. We also note your aspiration to break down barriers by developing a dynamic relationship with advocacy groups.

**EIA's** - Members consider that Equality Impact Assessments (EIA'S) are a key element of consultation, and, in this respect, it would be useful if the Council had a KPI, with a target, to enable the monitoring of engagement with underrepresented groups over time. We are pleased officers agree that monitoring progress on this matter needs to be in place and we are therefore recommending that you consider setting a target as part of your forthcoming Corporate Plan discussions.

The Committee recognises that co-production in policy development and service planning is especially important, and communities engage when a topic is particularly relevant to them. We were therefore pleased that officers consider the Participation Strategy will assist in building a gateway to working with the Council by increasing its database, and plans are in place to ensure that, going forward, EIA's play an important role in the co-production of service delivery policy.

**Corporate control** - The Committee expressed the importance of corporate-wide control of consultation, to ensure all engagement is valuable and good practice. We were therefore pleased to hear that the Senior Management Team take a view that all directorate consultation must seek assurance from Cardiff Research Centre, to ensure it meets good practice.

**Comparative reporting** - Whilst Members agree that qualitative data is extremely useful, and they welcome the favourable quantitative response figures comparative to other authorities, we consider you should be reporting proportions rather than population, to ensure parity of comparison.



**Hard copy distribution** - Officers were clear that, as part of the Participation Strategy, the Council will attempt to engage with a broader variety of community organisations. Members felt strongly that the circulation of hard copy versions of council consultations should extend to all wards. Specifically, where there are no Council premises (hubs/libraries) in wards, then in non-council community venues. Members are delighted with the recognition that grass roots community groups will unlock an improvement in response numbers and consider they could assist with identifying and connecting suitable venues.

## **Part 2**

The Committee welcomed the positive developments to address the democratic engagement requirements of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2022, such as the Democracy Ambassador Programme for schools, the Democracy Portal and self-assessment of Democratic Services. However, Members also raised some concerns you may wish to reflect on further.

**Political party contact** -The Committee notes your view that in seeking to correctly implement the Participation Strategy the Council must be mindful of engaging with all political groups and independent candidates equally. Members feel it is important to be honest and ensure full understanding that potential election candidates must either be a member of a political party or stand as an independent member. Importantly the strategy should stress candidates must be prepared to work hard for the community.

**Democracy Portal** - Members expressed caution in respect of the Democracy Portal. They feel it is important that the Portal does not simply duplicate information that is available elsewhere (*e.g. the Council website*). Members cautioned that supporting the Portal could become resource intensive, at a time of financial and resource pressure. However, we applaud the aim to make information more accessible by removing jargon, simplifying and shortening reports. Therefore, we urge you to continue researching best practice, your work with partners and associations, and to access advice from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

**Information review** - Members acknowledged that standard report templates, procedures, and some bureaucracy is necessary for informed decision making.

However, we consider it would be useful to review the scale and helpfulness of Scrutiny Committee and Full Council papers. The aim would be to establish whether councillors feel the scale of papers leads to informed debate. Members also suggested that papers should be accessible not only to committee members but to all communities and cut back on jargon to improve public engagement.

**Age range** - Members felt that the age range targeted with information on access to public office could be expanded to include over 65's, given the upward trajectory of the working age.

To summarise, the Committee makes 2 formal recommendations as set out below. As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could, for each recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet's response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
<b>Part 1</b> - As part of forthcoming Corporate Plan discussions, you consider creating a KPI, and setting a target, to monitor progress on engaging with underrepresented groups.				
<b>Part 2</b> - Review with Members the scale and helpfulness of Scrutiny Committee and Full Council papers to establish whether councillors feel the scale of papers leads to informed debate.				

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you once again for the opportunity of pre-decision scrutiny of the Participation Strategy. With your support, I look forward to continuing the Committee's monitoring of this strategy and its aspirations. I have captured our suggestions as recommendations, and I therefore look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS**

**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee;  
Leaders of Opposition Parties – John Lancaster, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson;  
Gareth Newell, Head of Partnerships and Performance;  
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services  
Dylan Owen, OM Policy & Performance  
Claire Owens, Principal Research & Consultation Officer;  
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit;  
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications  
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager  
Heather Warren, Cabinet Support Officer  
Andrea Redmond, Committee Support Officer

This page is intentionally left blank

Date: 17 January 2024

Councillor Caro Wild,  
Cabinet Member for Climate Change,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall,  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Councillor Wild,

### **PRAP Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2024: Central Transport Services**

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 10 January 2024 to update Members on the Central Transport Services function. Please also pass on my appreciation to Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources, and Dean Thomas, Operational Manager CTS, for their presentation and for facilitating the scrutiny.

The Committee heard that CTS is an important element in the delivery of council services and has been undergoing transformative change in 2023 following a series of unsatisfactory reviews. We are pleased that large numbers of improvement actions set out in the programme for improvement are already in place, and opportunities exist to develop this service further, with a CTS service portal and a business continuity plan currently under development. I have, however, been asked to pass on Members' observations, requests and recommendations following discussion.

### **Access to papers**

Importantly, Members highlighted that they had not had sight of the internal audit report or the programme for improvement that addresses the issues identified. Fundamentally the Committee cannot assess progress without access to both documents and Members considered this should have formed a part of scrutiny papers. At the meeting officers agreed to share the improvement plan. We therefore *request* that both the internal audit report and the programme for improvement are sent to the Committee's scrutiny officer for circulation.

### **Root and branch**

The Committee established that the internal audit of CTS published in May 2023 revealed a number of non-compliant areas. There had been a lack of management

stability, and paperwork in areas such as banking procedures, use of council vehicles, vehicle signing in and out, logging and approval of overtime was non-compliant. A full root and branch review was required on the operation of CTS. Following the scrutiny, we are assured that the action plan improvements to address all issues raised in the audit will be completed by the end of March 2024 and we will continue to monitor.

### **Utilisation of vehicles**

Members found this report very interesting and look forward to scrutinising CTS further. We wish to stress that we consider the full utilisation of council vehicles is an area of importance to improve efficiency, and perhaps is the most important for us to examine closer. We have therefore identified how we wish to continue monitoring CTS and *request* your co-operation as follows:

- April /May – Committee wish to visit the CTS depot followed later in the year by a more in-depth short scrutiny at committee that includes information addressing:
  - Directorate versus corporate ownership of vehicles
  - Data - numbers and types of vehicles & service area budget
  - IT software tracking system in vehicles
  - Utilisation of all vehicles, including minibuses
  - Clear examples of the effective use of vehicles.

### **Income generating opportunities**

Members recall that in previous years CTS has aspired to generate income through offering its services to external organisations. We understand that the Coleridge Road facility is state of the art and there will be opportunities once all improvements are in place to market our services to other authorities, public service bodies and partners.

### **Staff structure**

The Committee considers it will be important that the right staff structure is in place to deliver on future opportunities for the CTS service. We note this is currently under review with the aim of stabilising both the management team, the culture and prioritising an additional apprenticeship.

## Internal Audit reports

This item came to Committee at my request because CTS is an important part of the Committee's Terms of Reference. As referenced above, the Committee would like access to Internal Audit reports, particularly where services are found to be unsatisfactory. We are therefore *recommending* that when an unsatisfactory Internal Audit is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chair is notified by the Chair of Governance and Audit. This would ensure that monitoring the programme of improvement to address the matter is factored into future work programming. We are also *recommending* that where a committee is scrutinising a service that has been party to an unsatisfactory audit report, the internal audit report is automatically included in papers, accompanied by the action plan in place to address the opportunities for improvement identified. If necessary, the report can be marked confidential.

## Recommendations following the scrutiny

To summarise, the Committee makes 2 formal recommendations as set out below. As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could, for each recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet's response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
When an unsatisfactory Internal Audit is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chair is notified by the Chair of Governance and Audit.				
Where a committee is scrutinising a service that has been party to an unsatisfactory audit report, the internal audit report is				

<p>automatically included in papers, accompanied by the action plan in place to address the opportunities for improvement identified.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

**Requests following the scrutiny**

In addition, the Committee makes 2 requests following the scrutiny:

- that both the internal audit report and the programme for improvement are copied to the Committee’s scrutiny officer for circulation to Members;
- that you facilitate a committee visit to the CTS depot in April/May, and support a more in-depth short scrutiny at committee that includes information addressing:
  - Directorate versus corporate ownership of vehicles
  - Data - numbers and types of vehicles & service area budget
  - IT software tracking system in vehicles
  - Utilisation of all vehicles, including minibuses
  - Clear examples of the effective use of vehicles.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you once again for briefing us on the position at CTS. I look forward to continuing the Committee’s engagement with the service in 2024/25. I have captured our requests and recommendations, and I therefore look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee;  
Leaders of Opposition Parties – John Lancaster, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson;  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources  
Dean Thomas, Operational Manager CTS  
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit;  
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications  
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager  
Jenny Goss, Cabinet Support Officer  
Andrea Redmond, Committee Support Officer

This page is intentionally left blank