

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 JUNE 2015

Present: County Councillor (Chairperson)
County Councillors Cowan, Hunt, McGarry, Murphy and
McKerlich

6 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

The Committee noted that the Council at its meeting on 21 May 2015 appointed Councillor Nigel Howells as Chairperson of this Committee.

7 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted the following Terms of Reference.

To scrutinise, monitor and review the overall operation of the Cardiff Programme for Improvement and the effectiveness of the general implementation of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, including:

- To scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Council's systems of financial control and administration and use of human resources.
- To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the Welsh Government, joint local government services, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non government bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.
- To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance Council performance and service delivery in this area.

8 : MEMBERSHIP

The Committee noted the following Membership:

Councillor Howells (Chairperson)
Councillors: Cowan, Goodway, Hunt, Love, McGarry, McKerlich and Murphy

9 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor Goodway

10 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson advised Members that they had a responsibility under Article 16 of the Members 'Code of Conduct to declare any interest and complete Personal Interest Forms at the commencement of the agenda item in question.

The Chairperson also invited Members that if they had completed Annual Forms there was still a need to disclose any interests. Members were asked when declaring an interest to clearly inform the meeting of the interest in question to complete a personal interest form and to indicate if they were withdrawing from the meeting.

11 : MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2015.

12 : ATTENDANCE & WELLBEING POLICY REVIEW

The Chairperson welcomed the following Councillor and Officers to the meeting:

- Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
- Christine Salter, Corporate Director, Resources
- Philip Lenz, Chief HR Officer
- Lynne David, Operational Manager, Centre of Expertise
- Jane Forshaw, Director of Environment
- John Minihane, Waste Collections & Cleansing Manager
- Malcolm Stammers, Operational Manager, Leisure & Play

The Chairperson advised Members that they had the opportunity to consider the 12 month, post implementation review of the Attendance and Wellbeing Policy, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 11 June 2015. To facilitate scrutiny in greater depth, there would also be an opportunity to consider the impact on sickness absence levels of targeted management intervention in two individual Council Directorates: Sport, Leisure & Culture and Environment.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement:

Councillor Hinchey welcomed the fact that Scrutiny were considering the Attendance & Wellbeing Policy Review.

Records of Sickness Absence showed an overall improvement. This was one of the main priorities of the Council to improve the current sickness levels and was very high on the agenda of service area managers. The Council was working in partnership with trade unions and all stakeholders to achieve this improvement with on-going discussions and monitoring taking place. At end of year position for 2014/15 the figure was 10.18FTE, with the target set at 9 FTE, this was seen as an overall improvement and the Council was moving towards the right direction. It was essential for the Sickness Absence Policy to be both strengthened and tightened including holding line managers to account. Cardiff Middle Managers Management Programme had been established to direct and train managers to comply with the Sickness Absence Policy. ABSE and WAO had been involved in the process, along with sharing of data to analyse best practice results. Core City data had been received from both Manchester and Plymouth and cross referenced with Cardiff's figures. Cardiff had also introduced the Employee Assistance Programme, which supported both short and long term sickness, including occupational health policies. In summary the overall sickness absence figures were improving and the trigger points in place were supporting this.

The Chairperson invited Philip Lenz to present the review proposals and introduce the service area case studies.

The Committee received a presentation on the Review of Attendance & Wellbeing Policy on the following information:

- Cardiff Outturn 2011/13 to 2014/15
- Cardiff trend against target
- Directorate compliance data
- Short/Long term absence
- Occupational Health referrals
- Review of central sickness team
- Reasons for sickness.

The Committee received a Case Study from the Environment Directorate

The previous number of days lost in the Directorate was 23 days, now reduced to 15. This was a large mobile workforce swamped by operational issues which had an impact on sickness absence. Procedures were put in place to deal with the issues including:

- Recording sickness on DigiGov
- Sickness data tabled at management team meetings
- Long term sickness
- Training Videos provided to managers
- Support from dedicated HR staff to monitor trends and trigger points
- Quality of return to work interviews, with possible Director involvement

John Minihane, Waste Collection & Cleansing Manager provided the following information.

- Team input changes to attitude
- Redeployment procedures in place
- Occupational Health Support

It was essential that return to work interviews met their deadlines. Consistency was vital with all employees recognising their responsibilities towards sickness absence.

The Chairperson invited the Committee to ask questions:

Members of the Committee were advised that a phased return to work process was in place to support employees. The phased return would last 8 weeks and if the employee was deemed not fully fit by that stage action may be taken.

Changes to this policy included staff being able to return to work without a GP sick note if they felt well enough to carry out their duties. It was recognised that some employees considered it essential to return to work as the majority of their friends and support groups were work colleagues.

The Committee received a further Case Study from Sport, Leisure & Cultural Directorate.

- 2014/15 Directorate Target had been 12.1 FTE days lost per person
 - Actual Leisure & Play April 2015 – 18.94
 - Actual Sport, Leisure & Culture April 2015 – 15.27
- Involvement of HR Sickness Caseworker – improvements recognised
- Regular meetings with all managers including reviews.
- Additional training sessions with HR for facility managers now extended
- Absence Management Action Plan

The Chairperson invited Members to ask questions.

The Committee was advised that there were no apparent patterns in sickness absence that related to Health & Safety issues.

The Committee was advised that a number of sickness absences related to front line staff issues. Managers in these areas would assess the staffing needs of the service before requesting temporary support.

The Committee was assured that all staff working in Leisure Centres were aware of the hygiene requirements.

PL drew attention to the Core Cities Summary. The Committee noted in terms of new initiatives to reduce sickness absence levels, early intervention initiatives as part of wider Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) appeared to be key, for example 24/7 confidential counselling sessions, closer support from HR and skills training for managers.

The Committee noted the information provided to compare Cardiff's sickness with Welsh Authorities.

The Committee were provided with the general proposed changes to the policy and the next steps being implemented.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to ask questions.

Members of the Committee were advised that reasons for short term sickness were picked up and monitored by the respective line managers.

The Committee was advised that reasons for not hitting the sickness targets were being dealt with at Management level. The Council was moving in the right direction to decrease sickness absence and the Challenge Session had given a direction about the time taken for change to be recognised. Developments across the organisation were taking place with following being implemented:

- Cardiff Academy
- Core Cities Data
- ILM Course undertaken by Middle Managers – 4 modules
- PPDR compliance

The PPDR review would analyse sickness absence and provide reasons for absence to managers. This data was proving useful and contributed towards significant improvement in this area.

Members of the Committee were concerned about the number of employees not attending occupational health appointments and asked if action had been taken. It was explained to the Committee that the number of employees who missed occupational health appointments was very little, if the second appointment was missed pay would be stopped.

The actual cost applied to employees missing occupational health appointments could not be provided.

The Committee was provided with the sickness absence procedures being applied in Education. It was noted that absences were higher in non teaching staff. Communication was on-going with schools regarding sickness absence and Head Teachers were being provided with information in relation to compliance.

Work related stress was addressed with a quarter of stress related illnesses being recorded. These figures were being examined to see how this could be alleviated, however the onus was placed on the manager to communicate work related stress issues to HR.

The Committee discussed possible solutions to improve the sickness absence figures and suggested that possibly staff not be paid for the first 3 days of sickness, common practice in the private sector.

Members of the Committee were assured that the process was being monitored and some aspects continue to be under review, including special leave and disciplinary matters. This was part of the Council's change agenda and was under constant scrutiny. The Council was working in partnership with the trade unions and it was imperative that sensitivity be applied in all instances of serious illness.

Work related accidents were discussed and the potential for a private health scheme to support employees in getting back to work more quickly was raised.

PL agreed to provide the Committee with further information on the breakdown of short term and long term sickness absences in Environment.

The Committee asked what auditing methods were in place to ensure accurate inputting of sickness data. This was being addressed through the DigiGov system but would be further investigated.

RESOLVED: The Committee **AGREED** to write to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance to outline the issues listed in the attached letter.

13 : ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODEL EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Item was deferred until 7 July 2015 following evacuation due to a fire alarm.

14 : ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE 2014/15

The Committee considered the Annual Report.

RESOLVED: The Committee considered and approved the Annual Report for 2014/2015.

15 : WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

The Committee was advised that a Work Programme Forum would be set up to establish what themes the Committee would like to scrutinise.

The Forum would have Director involvement to outline possible forthcoming agenda items.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Officer circulate dates to Committee members to arrange an informal meeting.

16 : CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee noted the information provided on the Correspondence Information Report.

17 : WAY FORWARD

18 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified