

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2016

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
County Councillors Murphy, Sanders, Thomas and Walker

19 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Goddard

20 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

21 : MINUTES

The Committee Agreed to approve the minutes of the 5 July 2016 as a correct record.

22 : WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2015/16

The Chairperson welcomed the following:

- Non Jenkins, Local Government Manager (South East) Representing the Wales Audit Office.
- Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
- Paul Orders, Chief Executive
- Christine Salter, Corporate Director, Resources
- Tony Young, Director of Social Services
- Joseph Reay, Head of Performance & Partnerships

The Chairperson advised Members that they had an opportunity to consider the Annual Improvement Report for 2015-16 issued to the Council by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) in August 2016. Members were reminded that this was an annual report having audited improvement planning and reporting arrangements to assess whether the Council would meet its statutory duties.

The Chairperson invited Non Jenkins, Wales Audit Office to make a statement.

Non Jenkins explained to the Committee that the Annual Improvement Report summarises the audit work undertaken at the Council since the last Annual Improvement Report was published in August 2015. The Annual Improvement Report includes a summary of the findings of reports produced both by the WAO and other regulatory bodies but does not contain new information.

Non Jenkins explained that on the basis of the work summarised in the Annual Improvement Report, the Auditor General has concluded that the Council is likely to comply with the Local Government Measure during 2016-17 providing that it fully

embeds arrangements to support improved outcomes and maintains the current pace of improvement.

The Committee noted the Conclusions in the report and were advised by Non Jenkins that the Council was now at a critical point and must ensure that it continued to embed its improved arrangements consistently to secure a step change in improved outcomes by the end of this year, as previously set out in the WAO's Corporate Assessment Follow On report of February 2016.

It was previously acknowledged that in 2014/15 the Council had not fulfilled its obligations under the local government measure. This issue was resolved in January 2016.

- The Financial Resilience Assessment reported that the Council had improved its arrangements for financial planning.
- ESTYN had reported in March 2016 that the Council had made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations arising from its monitoring visit in 2014;
- CSSIW inspection of Children's Services reported in March 2016 that the Council was committed to prioritising services that supported the most vulnerable.

Non Jenkins advised this was a good news report the Council was progressing forward and improvements were developing.

The Chairperson thanked Non Jenkins for the update and invited Councillor Graham Hinchey to make a statement.

Councillor Hinchey welcomed the update and acknowledged that the Council was moving in the right direction. It was essential to keep this steady improvement moving, with enhanced public engagement, financial resilience and staff engagement. The Committee were referred to Paragraph 45 of the report which references the Council's improved financial planning arrangements, and sound financial control and governance arrangements.

The CEX noted that significant progress had been made but recognised there was still work to be done. The Council would continue to embed its improved arrangements and this has been reflected in the Statement of Action that was produced in response to the WAO's Follow On Report.

The Chairperson invited Members' to ask questions.

Members reiterated concern that the Council had not been complying with the Measure and asked what the Auditor General's view of the Council was. Non Jenkins explained that non-compliance referred to the previous assessment and following the inspection in October 2015, this was resolved in January 2016. Non-compliance related to a technical requirement for the Council to assess progress against its improvement objectives.

The Committee requested examples of the Council's embedding of its improved arrangements. In response Non Jenkins explained that the WAO's Follow on Assessment of the Council had identified arrangements that had been put in place to address the issues outlined in the WAO's 2014 Corporate Assessment. Examples

had now been provided by the Council to ensure that steps had been taken to address the issues raised in 2014 in relation to Leadership, Partnership Working, HR and Finance, but the WAO remained interested in the extent to which these improvements were being embedded into everyday service delivery.

Members of the Committee were assured that the issues previously outlined by the WAO in 2014 were substantively addressed. Improved engagement was supporting and developing staff; the Cardiff Managers Programme was in place; high levels of PPDR compliance; and performance management arrangements that had been strengthened. More work however was needed to build on recent progress. This included steps to improve the quality of PPDRs.

Members of the Committee asked for clarity on the improvement in the Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils.

Tony Young explained that WAO Thematic Studies had taken place across Wales. Cardiff now had a wider cohort of staff to deal with these issues and performance measures were in place across the Social Services Directorate to support Safeguarding. A Safeguarding Board had been established, with additional training taking place for Members. The Council was now in a stronger position to deal with these issues and a robust Annual Report would be published next year to support this. Stronger Management was in place to deal with Adult Services and improvements were being realised in relation to Delayed Transfers of Care. It was essential to support Older People into independent living and this would reduce the demand on the service.

In relation to the delivery of savings, the CEX explained to the Committee year-on-year improvements had been made to the budget planning process. For 2016/17, due diligence of savings proposals had been strengthened; and savings that were deemed to be technically unachievable were written out of the budget. However, this only partially alleviated the challenges facing the Council in terms of the delivery of complex savings proposals which have inherently high levels of risk attached to them. Difficulties need to be set against the high level of savings that the Council has successfully delivered in recent years.

Members of the Committee asked if there were any issues following the amalgamation of Adult and Children's Services. Tony Young explained that Social Services had a solid Management Team with two Assistant Directors in place. Partnerships had developed with NHS and the Vale of Glamorgan Council to support Delayed Transfers of Care and assisted living.

The Committee was advised that one of the key drivers for improvement was the Annual Council Reporting Framework. All Operational Managers would undertake an assessment, which also included a shared session to address matters in the Directorate, including addressing areas of improvement and improvement planning.

Non Jenkins advised the Committee there would be no future round of Corporate Assessments. Next year the WAO would use the Council's own review mechanisms to understand whether processes have been embedded and whether the intended outcomes are being achieved.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members (letter attached)

23 : OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL PERFORMANCE 2015/16

The Chairperson welcomed the following:

- Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Performance
- Paul Orders, Chief Executive
- Christine Salter, Corporate Director, Resources
- Tony Young, Director of Social Services
- Joseph Reay, Head of Performance & Partnerships

The Chairperson advised Members the Committee now had an opportunity to consider the results of the National Performance Indicators for Wales 2015/16. Each year, local authorities were required to collect and report the results of a range of nationally set Performance Indicators. There are 41 National Indicators for 2015/16 made up of National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) set by Welsh Government; and Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) set by all local authorities and reported to Data Unit Wales. This data was published last week.

Joseph Reay delivered a presentation on Local Government Performance.

The Chairperson invited Members to ask questions.

The Committee drew attention to Leisure & Culture asking if these areas had declined. In response Joseph Reay explained that the performance indicators in this area were affected by changes to the Council's leisure services provision, including significant redevelopment activity.

The Committee noted there were issues in relation to Housing Indicators for Private Sector Dwellings. In response the CEX explained this decline reflected the transition to the new Shared Regulatory Service. The Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services, and the Head of the Shared Regulatory Service, were addressing the matter with a view to improving performance in the current financial year.

Members of the Committee were advised that benchmarking was in place to address improvement. An increase in collaborative working was a part of this development, along with working in partnership and benchmarking with Core Cities.

The Committee discussed the Council's performance when compared to other Welsh Local Authorities, especially with a view to understanding whether the Council was improving in the same areas as other authorities. The Committee was keen to explore whether there are specific areas that other authorities has improved in where Cardiff faces challenges, and whether it would therefore be possible for the Council to learn from the improvement of others, particularly in Social Services. In response Joseph Reay confirmed to report back with the information to the Committee.

Tony Young explained to the Committee that the numbers of Looked After Children in Cardiff changes in line with wider demographic changes and overall population growth. A new set of measures was being introduced and this would support and address improvement in this area.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members (letter attached)

24 : QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE 2016/17

The Chairperson advised the Committee that this item gave Members the chance to examine the Council's performance from April to June of this year, and to feed any comments or concerns into the monitoring process. Members were advised that the performance management reporting arrangements are currently undergoing a refresh and now open with a Council Overview Scorecard designed to give an 'at a glance' picture of the health and effectiveness of the organisation.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement.

Councillor Hinchey drew attention to the report, advising that improvement mechanisms were being embedded throughout the organisation. Data with Core Cities was being used for benchmarking purposes. Significant work was taking place to reduce sickness absence levels to meet targets with an increase of return to work interviews.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to ask questions.

Members of the Committee were concerned with the Sickness Absence Forecast and asked for clarification.

Councillor Hinchey noted that he and the CEX had met with senior officers across the organisation to address the issue and to explore what additional steps could be taken to support managers to deal with the issue. The CEX explained this was still early in the financial year and, following recent management interventions, it was hoped that improvements would be seen in Quarter 2.

Tony Young advised that performance in Social Services was improving with additional support in place for frontline staff dealing with home care and independent living support services.

The Committee noted that the Council's sickness absence policy did not cover schools. However, sickness absence figures were recorded at school governor meetings.

Members of the Committee asked why the Festival of Voice event had not been as financially successful as anticipated. The CEX explained the Festival of Voice was a Wales Millennium Centre-led initiative, which had been supported by the Welsh Government and the Council. It was widely viewed as a positive, home-grown event which had real potential for the future, despite the fact that attendance figures at St

David's Hall were not as positive as anticipated. Particular emphasis needed to be placed on planning and marketing the next event, which was scheduled for 2018. The Committee were of the view that a one-page summary per Service Area with bullet points would be helpful to analyse performance in the future.

Joseph Reay explained that an approach to performance reporting to wider audiences including the public is being developed. For both the Committee wider audiences the focus would be on presenting critical performance data in an accessible format.

The Committee was advised that detailed engagement with the Members of other scrutiny committees regarding their reporting requirements would be undertaken in due course.

There needed to be a coherent robust approach to target setting with cumulative targets being developed where appropriate. The Council's Corporate Performance Team is continuing to support effective target setting across the organisation.

RESOLVED: At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the evidence presented, following which they tasked the Chairperson of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to write to the witnesses to thank them for attending the meeting and set out the comments made by Members (letter attached)

25 : WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed its Work Programme for 2016/17

RESOLVED: The Committee Agreed its Work Programme.

26 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 11 OCTOBER 2016

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg