

## ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2015

Present: County Councillor Craig Williams(Chairperson)  
County Councillors Dilwar Ali, Howells, Javed, Weaver and  
Darren Williams

Apologies: Councillors Stubbs

### 64 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Stubbs.

### 65 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part III of the Members' Code of Conduct to declare any interest in general terms and to complete personal interest forms at the start of the meeting and then, prior to the commencement of the discussion of the item in question, specify whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest. If the interest is prejudicial Members would be asked to leave the meeting and if the interest is personal, Members would be invited to stay, speak and vote

### 66 : QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bale, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Partnerships and Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development.

The Quarter 3 Performance reports provided the Committee with information about the context that services are operating in, performance information and the management actions that are being taken to address performance issues.

The Committee was given a presentation, following which the Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee enquired about the delay in the creation of the Business Improvement District (BID), a partnership between the local business community and a local authority to develop projects and services that will benefit the trading environment within the boundary of a commercial area. The Committee was informed that the delays were due to two failed bids to secure funding. The Welsh Government chose to direct funding elsewhere. Internal funding has now been secured. The local authority is raising awareness of the BID and putting in place a structure to take the BID process forward.

The Committee asked about the situation regarding funding for the Cardiff Business Council (CBC) and was advised that the local authority is on track to fund the CBC through the private sector. At the moment the CBC receives £500,000 a year from the local authority but next year that will be reduced to about £360,000. There will be some changes to the staff team that supports the CBC. In order to deliver savings in the coming year, the Director chose to take one operational manager post out of the

staff structure and if the CBC wants dedicated support it will have to fund it. The Committee felt that further clarification was needed on the support that will be available for the CBC.

The Committee enquired about the income that the local authority receives from bus shelters and was advised that the local authority receives about £250,000 a year from advertising at bus shelters. The Council has renegotiated a new, lucrative contract for bus shelter advertising.

The Committee asked about the progress being made on the new ice arena and was informed that there have been some delays due to housing issues but construction has started and the arena is on course for completion in January 2016. The Committee felt that communication about the delays should be well managed as there are expectations of an earlier completion.

The Committee suggested that some of the targets in the key performance indicators (KPIs) are not stretching enough. The Committee was advised that targets are based on the long-term and may have been set several years ago. This year there have been significantly less resources available to deliver year-on-year growth as the Directorate has had to achieve savings of about 50%. It may be worth looking at the KPIs on economic development that are used by the other Core Cities. There will be changes on economic development across the region. Some of the benefits of economic development in Cardiff extend beyond its boundaries. By the time the funding reductions hit hardest some significant income streams will have been generated and these will help to sustain economic development. The local authority used to have funds for grants but what it has to do now is facilitate, to help companies gain access to other sources of funding that are available. But it is important to review KPIs to make sure that they remain relevant.

The Committee enquired about progress that is being made to ensure the future of the Coal Exchange and was advised that the local authority has been working with a number of developers on this, one of which has significant experience in the field. It is important that the local authority understands what is unique about the building and ensures that it is preserved. Funding from external sources, including the Welsh Government, has been secured for the conservation of the building.

The Chairperson thanked the Leader and the Director for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Leader highlighting the issues raised during the Way Forward discussion.

## 67 : QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE - SPORT LEISURE & CULTURE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury Bale, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise, Councillor Bob Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Environment and Chris Hespe, Director of Sport, Leisure and Culture.

The Quarter 3 Performance reports provided the Committee with information about the context that services are operating in, performance information and the management actions that are being taken to address performance issues.

The Director gave a presentation, following which the Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee enquired about performance in relation to sickness absence, asking for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 figures and whether stress amongst staff is having an impact on the figures. The Committee was advised that it is expected that the year end figure for sickness absence will be 13.95 full-time equivalent (FTE) days, compared with 14.47 FTE for last year. Stress is an issue and staff are to be sent a questionnaire to see what support is needed. Discussions have been held with the trade unions to see how the sickness absence figures can be brought down.

The Committee enquired about the Directorate's high levels of use of agency staff and overtime. The Committee was advised that the majority of overtime is plain time, which does not show in the figures. And as leisure centres are open much of the time it is important that cover is provided when staff are away due to sickness. Also, a lot of the use of agency staff occurs because some of the Directorate's work, such as Parks Services or major events, is seasonal. What the Directorate spends on agency staff is made up for by income generation.

The Committee asked about performance in relation to compliance on Personal Performance and Development Reviews (PPDRs), which stands at 81% completion at the half year review. The Committee was informed that the 81% represents only that portion of the Directorate's staff that have access to DigiGov, the local authority's electronic system which is used for, amongst other things, the setting of PPDR objectives with staff and recording the achievement of those objectives. The actual figure on PPDR compliance is higher than 81%, but the difficulty is that those PPDRs which are completed for staff who are not on DigiGov do not appear in the figures. Also, things like maternity leave mean that PPDR compliance is never likely to reach 100%.

In relation to the budget setting process, the Committee questioned the situation in which some targets are set when it is acknowledged that those targets will never be met. One example of this is the income target set for the Mansion House, which has a shortfall in income of £117,000. The income target has been recognised as being unachievable and is therefore likely to be marked as an overspend year after year. The Committee was advised that Directorates are given targets as a percentage figure for savings to be made and then the Director and officers discuss how this can best be achieved. The target for the Mansion House is two or three years old and the Director advised the Committee that it is not one he would have chosen himself.

The Committee enquired about the progress being made on options for a new operating model for Flat Holm Island and was advised that officers will be bringing a report on this to the Committee. The proposal is for a four-way partnership, with the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Flat Holm Society, and this will provide a way to share costs. Councillor Derbyshire advised the Committee that it is hoped that the recommendations that the Committee made for Flat Holm in 2012 will be realised through the proposal and that this will result in income generation.

The Committee was concerned that delays on Community Asset Transfers (CATs) are costing the Council money and asked why these delays are occurring when in

some cases, such as that of the Maes-y-Coed Community Centre, a suitable organisation is ready to take over the running of the facility. The Committee was advised that delays are caused by due process, making sure that everything that was presented in the business case that had been put forward would be there in reality. And organisations that are taking on the assets have to take the time they need to make sure that they get their own assurances in relation to what they are undertaking. Although the public need to be confident that CATs will be made as quickly as possible, a balance has to be struck between transferring the assets quickly and making sure that the right management for them is in place. A degree of caution is required, to ensure that the assets remain operational for the community. The Council is being flexible in its approach to community organisations wherever possible, including offering short term leases or licences.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Members and the Director for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Members highlighting the issues raised during the Way Forward discussion.

#### 68 : QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE - COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES (LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING)

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury Bale, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise, Isabelle Bignall, Assistant Director for Customer Services and Nick Blake, Senior Business Officer, Customer Services.

The Quarter 3 Performance reports provided the Committee with information about the context that services are operating in, performance information and the management actions that are being taken to address performance issues.

The Assistant Director gave a presentation, following which the Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee enquired whether the Directorate's budget allows for the recruitment of more Neighbourhood Librarians. The Committee was advised that two Neighbourhood Librarians are already in post, in the east and west of Cardiff, but the funding for those posts was already in place. The local authority is looking to employ more Neighbourhood Librarians in the Llandaff North/Faiwater area but once those have been recruited there will have to be a good business case made for any further appointments.

The Committee asked when the report on Roath Library will be ready and was advised that it will be completed in May. The library building had significant maintenance issues; the roof fell in and the boiler stopped working. The local authority is absolutely committed to ensuring that there is good library provision for the people of Adamsdown.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, the Assistant Director and officer for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the issues raised during the Way Forward discussion.

69 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is due to be held on Thursday 2 April 2015 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm