

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM31091
Eich Cyf / Your Ref : RDB/PM/BD/19.05.15
Dyddiad / Date: 15th September 2015



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

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

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee
c/o Scrutiny Services
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Chairperson

Environmental Scrutiny Committee 19 May 2015

Thank you for your contact of 29 May 2015 following the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 19 May 2015. I will address each point in turn:-

C2C can handle over 4000 contacts per day and to handle these high call volumes and ensure excellent service standards we provide a dedicated environment service. During the month of July C2C handled 14,235 calls on its dedicated environment line and I can confirm that the average time for calls to be answered was 23 seconds which is within our industry standard target of 30 seconds. I can also reassure you that C2C have not received any complaints regarding prolonged wait times for this service and when we do have busy periods we actively promote the use of emails and online forms to help alleviate even the shortest of wait times for our customers. We encourage Customer Feedback, and carry out monthly Customer Satisfaction Surveys. One of the questions asked is 'How satisfied were you with the time you waited before we answered your call', 89 customers were surveyed in the month of July and the satisfaction rate was 97%.

Local authority performance is measured using two sets of indicators – the National Strategic Indicators (set by Welsh Government) and the Public Accountability Measures (set by local government).

Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) are a small set of "outcome focused" indicators. They reflect those aspects of local authority work which local authorities agree are considered to be important in terms of public accountability.

PPN/009 - The percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards is a national PAM.

This provides the percentage of businesses that have been deemed to comply with food law following an assessment based on the risk rating system set out in Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales 2008). The assessment of

PLEASE REPLY TO / ATEBWCH I : Cabinet Support Office / Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet,
Room / Ystafell 518, County Hall / Neuadd y Sir,
Atlantic Wharf / Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Cardiff / Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW



any individual premises may or may not have been completed during that reporting year. The descriptions in relation to this indicator cannot therefore be formally changed but further explanation can be given in the reporting arrangements locally.

Indicators reference PPN/001 were removed from the national dataset a few years ago, but remain important as a local performance indicator to monitor in-year progress against the planned inspection programme set out by requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). This information is also collected and published annually by the FSA. The expectation is always that the performance of each local authority is 100%. There is more scope to clarify the descriptions for these indicators locally and further explanation can also be given in the local reporting arrangements.

Please see response below on two issues for HRPeople Services. It is however worth giving some context in relation to sickness absence, notably the views of Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee (PRAP) who scrutinised the review of the Attendance and Wellbeing Policy at their meeting on 2 June 2015 -extract below:

"Overall the Committee considers that the direction of travel of sickness absence is clearly in the right direction, however we feel that there is still some way to go on the journey. We suggest that, to have a more dramatic impact on the figures, greater urgency is required. Members were encouraged to hear that you will continue reviewing the policy, and when sickness absence reaches a plateau you will consider further measures. However it is Members' view that at some point the Council should consider setting harder targets and timescales, and if these are not achieved then the Council should consider revising the policy. Members feel this view is justified given the significant cost of high sickness levels in services where agency staff are brought in to cover. The Committee would urge it is important that the Trade Unions continue to be a part of this journey"

In response to the two specific points you have asked HR to clarify, please see below:

1. Calculation of Sickness

The report in question was an adhoc report requested from HRPS relating to the Collections area within the Environment Directorate. The report calculates the % days lost (e.g. Collections = 9.45%) and to get the full time equivalent (FTE) days lost the system times this by 224 * and divides by 100 = 21.18. This is an approximate figure. (* 224 equates to 365 days minus 104 weekends/8 bank holidays/29 days leave.)

We are exploring options for all data reports to be in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines which is basically FTE days lost divided by average FTE staff numbers..

However, when data is provided in regular reports eg quarterly and annual figures, figures submitted to PRAP, Cabinet etc the Welsh Government guidelines are used. In future, if we are asked to provide these adhoc reports, we will ensure that it is made clear that figures are approximate.

2. Employment Tribunal (ET) Issues

Why it was lost? - Whilst the Council won part of the case, it lost on two process issues. The case was mainly related to the redeployment process and particularly changes agreed by Cabinet which were to take effect from 1 January 2014. The key change made was that that time available for employees seeking redeployment should be reduced from 6 months to 12 weeks on the register. The timing of the change caused confusion with this particular case and there were delays in putting the individual on the register. There was also no formal dismissal hearing for the employee, although a dismissal letter was generated.

What has been learnt? - Whilst the Redeployment Policy has worked successfully since its introduction, it is currently under review in the light of operational experience following the last change which took effect from 1 January 2014. Additionally, learning from this ET case will be used to strengthen the scheme and tighten up some of the procedural issues. Discussions have already been held with the sickness team within HRPS to ensure that a dismissal hearing is held with the relevant Directorate before the person is placed on the redeployment register. We will also be producing a guidance note on statutory dismissals for managers.

Any changes implemented to the sickness absence process? - the Attendance and Wellbeing Policy has been reviewed and tightened up with proposed changes agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 June 2015. The redeployment policy will be kept under review.

Cost of dealing with the industrial tribunal? the Tribunal awarded the sum of £20,000 which includes both compensation and legal costs.

Please note a confidentiality clause was signed as part of the ET case, therefore, we must ensure that the individual cannot be identified from the information provided.

The Council has 2 Additional Licensing Schemes for Houses in Multiple Occupation in Cardiff.

The Cathays Additional Licensing Scheme 2010 expired on 30 June 2015. The Housing Act 2004 stipulates that schemes shall not last for more than 5 years. We are in the process of re-designating the scheme for a further 5 years. Officers carried out an extensive consultation process throughout April this year with tenants, residents, local businesses, landlords and managing agents. A report will go to Cabinet on 17 September 2015 giving the results of the consultation and making the case for re-declaration for a further 5 years. There must, in law, be a 3 month period between designation and commencement of the scheme, so if Cabinet decides to re-declare the scheme it will go live on 1 January 2016.

The only performance indicator in relation to the scheme has been the number of HMOs licenced compared to the original estimate of 1400 HMOs requiring to be licenced. The final result was 1664 HMOs licensed which, when combined with the 510 HMOs licensed in Cathays under the mandatory HMO licensing provisions (applying to 3 storey HMOs having 5 or more occupiers throughout all England and Wales), gives a total number of HMOs licenced in Cathays of 2,174.

However, the progress of the Cathays scheme has been the subject of intense scrutiny, with much interest from the Cardiff Landlord Forum, and an additional licensing working group chaired by the relevant cabinet member and attended by ward members and operational managers from relevant service areas, particularly Planning and Waste Management. I attach a copy of the evaluation document for the Cathays scheme, which can also be found at <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Business/Licences-and-permits/Houses-in-multiple-occupancy/Documents/Evaluati.pdf>

This document gives a lot of detail on the impact of the scheme particularly in relation to the improvement of properties, complimentary initiatives, partnership working and key service delivery improvements made during the course of the scheme.

The Plasnewydd Additional HMO Licensing Scheme commenced on 3 November 2014 so has now been in operation for 9 months. The team is currently dealing with 485 cases. The rate of applications has been slower than experienced than when Cathays was declared.

The team has licensed 130 HMOs and is processing a further 95 applications. The remaining 260 cases represent incomplete applications or cases identified during door to door surveys in the northern part of the Plasnewydd Ward.

It would appear that promotional work and publicity has been of limited success in Plasnewydd Ward. Cathays is predominantly a student area so it is possible the Council's requirements have spread more readily within the student housing market, but Plasnewydd presents a more diverse market that is harder to engage.

The Council has carried out the statutory publicity in 2 local newspapers and advertises the scheme on the Council website. We have written to every Managing and Letting Agent in Cardiff and have engaged fully with the Cardiff Landlord forum. We have issued a recent press release and used the Council's communications team and social media to publicise.

The Student Liaison Officer has issued two issues of Unity News majoring on the Additional Licensing Scheme in Plasnewydd. Unity news is our magazine highlighting the joint work done by the Council, the Universities, the Student Unions and our partners to improve communities and neighbourhoods having large student populations. The magazine is issued in hard copy at PACT meetings and electronically to over 2000 people, including over 1,500 landlords and agents. The newsletters are attached.

The Housing Enforcement team has also attended the Cardiff Met housing fayre to raise awareness of the scheme. Plasnewydd has a high proportion of Cardiff Met students. We have also agreed with Cardiff Met that they will only advertise HMOs on their Housing lists where the landlord has applied for a licence.

These steps have yielded disappointing results, so more formal, concerted effort is required. The Council has recently employed a Licensing Support Officer with the sole brief of chasing incomplete licence applications and identifying unlicensed HMOs. During July 2015, using intelligence gleaned from the Housing Enforcement database and Council Tax records, HMO licensing officers conducted door to door enquires in the streets north of Albany Road spanning from Mackintosh Place to Angus Street. They identified over 150 unlicensed

HMOs, with application packs being sent to each landlord. These will be vigorously pursued by the Licensing Support Officer and subject to prosecution if not received within a reasonable period of time.

The response from Enforcement regarding the fly capture report is attached. This data is broken down by ward and month for the number of queries sent to enforcement which also includes waste presentation matters and also the fly tipping incidents recorded by the teams by load type.

We anticipate the new Customer Relationship Management System to be operational by Christmas. The new system will provide the customer with an end to end self-service experience. They will be able to log issues, such as missed collections or delivery orders, track their query and see when it has been actioned. Providing direct feedback to and from the operatives on the ground will be a later phase of the project. A timeline for this work has yet to be set corporately, although waste management are keen to be front runners in any new system.

Thank you once again for providing your constructive challenges.

Yn gwyir
Yours sincerely



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Bob Derbyshire
Cabinet Member for Environment
Aelod Cabinet Dros Yr Amgylchedd

Enc: Evaluation Document for Cathays
Unity Newsletters
Fly Capture Report

