

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 10 October 2018

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Dear Chris,

### **Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 3 October 2018**

Thank you for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee last week, to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny of Cardiff's Annual Statutory Well-being Report 2017/18. We discussed the report at the Way Forward, following which the scrutiny Members agreed that I capture their views in a letter.

I pass on these observations within the context of the Annual Statutory Well-being Report 2017/18 reporting the Council's performance during 2017-18 against the Well-Being Objectives in its 2017-19 Corporate Plan. The Committee recognises you have used a wide range of evidence to self-assess each Well-being Objective as Good, Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory progress. We note the clear definitions of these three outcomes on page 12 of the Report, and that you have self-assessed your performance as Good in seven of the objectives, and Satisfactory in six objectives. However, we do have a few concerns we would ask that you factor into your conversation with the Cabinet.

This Committee has frequently aired concerns about the robustness of target setting, previously highlighting that the targets set appear, in some cases, to be lower than the previous outturn. We were therefore pleased the Committee's Performance Panel had an opportunity to feed into the target setting exercise for the 2017-19 Corporate Plan, at the suggestion of the Chief Executive. However, we note some targets for 2017-18 remain lower than the 2016-17 attainment. We therefore wish to re-iterate that to ensure credibility we feel tougher targets are required for some Performance

Indicators, and we would welcome an opportunity to engage with you as you set targets for the 2018-20 Corporate Plan.

Several Members consider that where self-assessment is recorded as Satisfactory<sup>1</sup> but the Performance Indicator (PI) suggests results have fallen, more contextual information may be required. We accept the Chief Executive's view that it is important to acknowledge achievements that are not always illustrated by PI's. Some Members considered greater narrative and consistency of self-assessment would provide a more robust assessment.

The Committee is of the view that when evaluating improvement it is important to measure success rates rather than statistics. For example, the Performance Indicator "*% of looked after children returned home from care during the year*" is assessed in the report as not having improved. Whilst the Council has set an increased target of 12% for 2017-18, not achieving this target may not reflect poor performance but an improvement in the service to looked after children, providing care where it is needed.

Some Members expressed a concern about the improvement trajectory of the Council. The Committee welcomed the Chief Executive's acknowledgement that, despite an overarching general improvement in the Council's macro performance that has improved its stability, he recognises there are areas of the organisation that would benefit from a stronger scrutiny focus and greater challenge going forward. Those services that have been risk assessed for review and ongoing internal scrutiny challenge are tackling sickness absence levels, delivery of the Corporate Landlord model, managing demand in Children's Services, and the Waste Management service. I will be signposting my scrutiny chair colleagues to these issues where appropriate.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended PRAP Scrutiny Committee for consideration of the Well-being Report 2017/18. I look forward to the Cabinet and Performance Team continuing co-

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<sup>1</sup> Satisfactory progress: The evidence suggests good progress has been made in achieving the Well-Being Objective, with improvement observed across most of the key performance areas. However, there may be areas where performance is not as strong as it should be, and this helps to identify where more focus is needed.

operation with the Committee's Performance Panel in pursuit of appropriate internal improvement challenge.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Christine Salter, Corporate Director, Resources  
Joseph Reay, Head of Performance and Partnerships  
Andrew Simms, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager in Resources,  
Heather Warren, Cabinet Support Officer  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager