

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: NRS/RM/PBr/04.06.15

Dyddiad / Date: 30 June 2015



Councillor Peter Bradbury  
Cabinet Member: Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bradbury

### **ECONOMY AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2015**

Thank you for attending the June meeting of the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee, where we considered the elements of the Directorate Delivery plans for the City Operations and Communities, Housing & Customer Services directorates that are relevant to this Committee's terms of reference. I will be grateful if you could also pass on the thanks of the Committee to Sarah McGill, Isabelle Bignall and Chris Hespe for their presentations and for addressing the questions that arose during the meeting. The Committee had a few comments and observations following the meeting, which are set out below.

#### **City Operations Directorate Delivery Plan**

Members are mindful that the recent senior management restructure has resulted in the creation of the City Operations Directorate, with some elements of the former Sport, Leisure and Culture Directorate (namely Leisure Services, Parks and Green Spaces and Cardiff Harbour Authority) being moved to this new directorate. It has been clear to us that you have had a good working relationship with the Director of Sport, Leisure and Culture, and have been able to challenge him and work together to drive forward projects such as the Alternative Delivery Models for Leisure and Culture Facilities. We hope that a similar relationship will be established with the new Director for City Operations.

Throughout the year Members have closely monitored the progress in procuring an operator for Leisure Centres and Arts Venues in the city, and have been involved via a task and finish inquiry. We are pleased that these procurement exercises are moving forward as planned but note the Director's comments made during the meeting that the procurement timetable leaves little flexibility, making it challenging to secure the levels of savings indicated within the financial year. Members also note

the comments made that throughout the year the in-house provision has been driven to make efficiency savings and generate increased income, but that there is not much scope for further efficiencies or income to be found. This leaves the Committee questioning what additional money an external provider will be able to secure, and whether the levels of savings applied to this project in the budget are in fact attainable and realistic. We would welcome your comments on this matter.

The Community Asset Transfer of Maes-y-Coed and Plasnewydd Community Centres have been on the radar of this Committee for some time, and you will be well aware that we have written on many occasions to urge you to accelerate the process. With this in mind we are pleased to hear that the need to speed things up has been acknowledged, and that the Council is now looking at long term leases rather than traditional asset transfers as a means of quickening the transfer to community groups. We note that a strategy is being developed with respect to community transfer of Council facilities and request that officers liaise with the Principal Scrutiny Officer in order for this to be brought for our consideration later in the year.

A final note from this Delivery Plan is that the Committee notes the assurances given that a Strategic Framework for Sport and Leisure Facilities should be in place by September 2015 and we will keep this in mind as we look to set the Committee's work programme for the 2015/16 calendar of meetings.

### **Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate Delivery Plan**

Our comments on the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Delivery Plan relate to the directorate as a whole, and as such we will be writing to Cllr Merry to raise the same points.

During the meeting Members explored the sickness absence figures for the Directorate. We are aware that the areas of the directorate with high sickness are not those that fall under the Committee's terms of reference, nevertheless we would like to request a breakdown on the sickness in this directorate by age profile and by job categories / service provision for Members to review and make comments to the relevant scrutiny committee should it be deemed necessary.

In relation to these levels of sickness, we are mindful that this will have had a knock on effect on the levels of overtime and agency spend for the directorate. Please could you also provide us with figures on this area of spend, again split by job categories / service provision.

Members were pleased to hear that plans are in place to address an ageing workforce in many of the services within this directorate and in particular that apprenticeships are offered in a number of services, and with a range of durations. Please could you provide us with the relevant figures for apprenticeships provided, the services they apply to, and their duration? Members would also be interested in

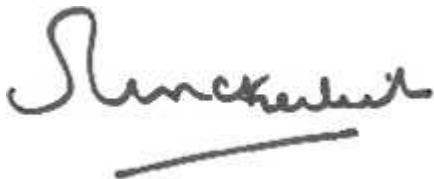
information on how many of these apprenticeships translate into more permanent roles within the Council, if this analysis is available.

To re-cap for ease, the Committee asks that the following points are addressed:

- We would welcome your comments on the savings to be delivered from the Leisure Management procurement exercise and their achievability.
- Request an item be arranged with the Principal Scrutiny Officer to consider the strategy for asset transfers and long term lease arrangements.
- Request an item be arranged with the Principal Scrutiny Officer to consider the Strategic Framework for Sport and Leisure Facilities.
- Request a breakdown on the sickness in this directorate by age profile and by job categories / service provision.
- Request figures for agency and overtime spend split by job categories / service provision.
- Request information on apprenticeships in the directorate, including total number, the services they are within, their duration, and how many translate into permanent employment.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments, observations and recommendations, and look forward to receiving your feedback.

Regards,



**Councillor Roderick McKerlich**  
**Chairperson, Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee**

cc Sarah McGill – Director, Communities, Housing and Customer Services  
Andrew Gregory – Director, City Operations  
Chris Hespe – Director, Sport Leisure and Culture  
Neil Hanratty – Director, Economic Development  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Support Office  
Members of the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee