

The City of Cardiff Council: Follow-on from the Corporate Assessment

Project Brief

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Project Brief

Background

1. In September 2014, the Auditor General published his report on the full Corporate Assessment¹ at the City of Cardiff Council. This report concluded at that time **'Fragmented leadership and management have meant that weak performance in key service areas has not improved'**.
2. We came to this conclusion because:
 - political and managerial instability over a number of years meant that the Council had been unable to develop the culture and framework necessary for continuous improvement;
 - the Council had identified what it wanted to achieve for its citizens but had lacked an effective means of delivery;
 - some processes intended to ensure good governance had not been implemented and decision-making processes were inefficient and lacked transparency;
 - whilst there had been some recent changes, performance management had failed to consistently secure improvement in the past;
 - although the Council ensured a balanced budget, prospects for achieving proposed savings in 2014-15 were uncertain and the anticipated level of future funding meant current methods of service delivery were unsustainable;
 - corporate human resource arrangements were founded on positive practice but were not being implemented consistently;
 - the Council was improving its use of information technology and its information management arrangements;
 - the Council was not managing its land and property assets well; and
 - the Council engaged well in collaboration with others and was able to demonstrate improved outcomes for citizens.
3. The Corporate Assessment report made one Proposal for Improvement:

P1 The Council ensures that the implementation of its Organisational Development Plan resolves the range of issues identified in this assessment.

¹ www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/Cardiff_Corp_Assess_English_2014.pdf

The purpose of the corporate assessment follow-on

4. The full corporate assessment, sought to answer the following question: *'Is the Council capable of delivering its priorities and improved outcomes for citizens?'*
5. The Corporate Assessment Follow-On will seek to answer the question: **'Is the Council effectively addressing the issues raised in the corporate assessment?'**

Methodology

6. We will undertake work to inform the Corporate Assessment Follow-On over the course of the year. Our main fieldwork is likely to commence in the week of 5 October 2015. We will work closely with other regulatory bodies and inspectorates and will coordinate our work where possible and appropriate.
7. The delivery of this work will be shaped by:
 - document review and analysis;
 - structured interviews;
 - observations of meetings;
 - focus groups; and
 - two short surveys of senior officers and Members of the Council.
8. A list of suggested interviewees, focus groups and observations is set out in [Appendix 1](#). The list is not exhaustive and will be informed by discussions with the Council and will be confirmed following our document review.
9. A document request list is included in [Appendix 2](#). Again this is not exhaustive and will be informed by our ongoing work. We will agree with the Council how these documents are provided to us.
10. An electronic list of the email addresses of all senior officers and Members will be required from the Council to undertake the two surveys.
11. We will also be undertaking a series of smaller pieces of tracer work between July and September 2015 to inform the Corporate Assessment Follow-On.
12. The tracer work will be undertaken in the following areas:
 - Waste and Recycling;
 - Leisure; and
 - Delayed Transfer of Care (this is currently provisional, and we are liaising with the Wales Audit Office Health Audit Team to co-ordinate the work).
13. The exact nature of the tracer work will be set out in separate project briefs in due course.

Output

14. The output for this work will be a published report, planned for issue in early 2016.

Timing

15. A timetable for undertaking the work and producing the report is set out below:

Activity	Timescale
Scoping corporate assessment follow-on	June – July 2015
Fieldwork for the tracers	July– September 2015
Surveys of senior officers and Elected Members	August – September 2015
Fieldwork – on site at Council; qualitative research; focus groups and interviews	October 2015 (likely to be 5 – 9 October, and week commencing 12 October should this be required)
Drafting and issue of Draft Report for comment	November – December 2015
Issue Report	(Estimated)* January 2016

* *Subject to timely clearance of draft findings with the Council.*

Team

16. The contacts for the Wales Audit Office are as follows.

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17. Other colleagues may also be involved where relevant to the work.

Appendix 1

Interviews, focus groups and observations

The following is a list of suggested interviews and focus groups that will be scheduled for 60 minutes. The list is not exhaustive and will be informed by discussions with the Council and will be confirmed following our document review.

Individual interviews

- Chief Executive
- Section 151 officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Corporate and Service Directors – selection to be agreed
- HR Manager
- Learning & Development Officer
- Occupational Health Manager
- Democratic Services Manager
- Head of ICT
- Head of Finance
- Head of Asset Management
- Head of Risk Management (if applicable or equivalent)
- Head of Performance (or equivalent)
- Head of Procurement
- Head of Internal Audit
- Other lead Officers – to be confirmed following document reviews
- Leader of the Council
- Leader of the Opposition and leaders of other political groups
- Chair of Audit Committee
- Current Executive/Cabinet members – selection to be agreed
- Previous Executive/Cabinet members – selection to be agreed
- Chair of Standards Committee
- Cabinet support officers
- Scrutiny support officers

Focus groups to be determined following document review

- Overview and Scrutiny Chairs
- A selection of Non-Executive Members

Observations

- Council
- Cabinet
- Scrutiny committees and some Task and Finish Group meetings
- Audit Committee
- Challenge forum
- Any others to be confirmed following document review

Appendix 2

Document request list

The following is a list of documents we want to review as part of the follow-on. The list is not exhaustive and requests for additional documents may be made during the course of the review. Where documents in the list below are publically available on the Council's website, please direct us to where we can find them.

Document request list – for the main on-site work

- Organisation chart
- Details of member affiliations, portfolio etc
- Constitution
- Standing orders and scheme of delegation
- Delegated decision register
- Annual Governance Statement 2014/15
- Officer/member protocol
- Organisational Development Plan
- Single Integrated Plan
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16
- Budget monitoring reports 2014/15
- Budget Savings Proposals 2015/16
- Budget Strategy Work Programme 2015-16
- Improvement Plan
- Organisational Development Plan reports/updates
- Departmental/Service Business Plans 2015/16
- Corporate engagement/consultation strategy and guidance
- Asset Management Plan
- ICT strategy
- Workforce plan
- Information Storage Strategy
- Staff Appraisal process
- Statistics relating to appraisals completed for staff per service area/Directorate
- Random sample of anonymous appraisals
- Succession & Talent management plans re service area and/or Directorate
- Sickness Absence policy & procedure
- Sickness absence guidance for managers & staff
- Staff survey results
- Training and Development strategy – staff and members

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- Assessment of/feedback in relation to Cardiff Academy
 - Evaluations undertaken of training initiatives delivered
 - Risk Register
 - Executive and Scrutiny work programmes 2014/15 and 2015/16
 - Scrutiny Guidance and/or Annual Report 2014/15
 - Any guidance documentation for council staff on business/service improvement plans and performance management more generally
 - Performance Management Reports – latest quarter and 2014/15 end of year
 - Information and Guidance on ‘Star Chamber’ sessions
 - Project Management Guidance
 - Staff survey results
 - Reports on the Cardiff Partnership Board
 - Challenge Forum Papers
 - Any relevant documents that the Council uses to monitor its progress on implementing any of the Recommendations or Proposals for Improvement, together with any supporting evidence.

Please send us electronic copies of the documents by **17 July 2015**. If documents are available sooner, please provide them as soon as possible.

If these documents are also available on your website, please provide the appropriate links to these documents too.

For the two surveys, a list of the email address of every Elected Member of the Council; and the email address of every senior officer of the Council is required by **24 July 2015**. The list is required in an Excel spread sheet rather than any other format. Please liaise directly with Chris Pugh on the surveys.

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