

Date: 30 June 2023

Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader  
Councillor Chris Weaver,  
Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Performance,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall,  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



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

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

Dear Huw & Chris,

**Scrutiny Performance Panel 26 June 2023: End of Year 2022/23**

Please find attached a record of the observations and comments made by all five Scrutiny Chairs at our recent informal meeting to consider the Annual Well-being Report 2022/23 and end-of year assessment.

Thank you for attending in person, this was a most useful discussion. We offer our feedback to inform your final draft report, and I look forward to pre-decision scrutiny of the final report at the July meeting of PRAP.

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Councillor Lee Bridgeman, Chair, CYP Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Owen Jones, Chair, Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Rhys Taylor, Chair, CASSC Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Peter Wong, Chair, Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities  
Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships  
Dylan Owen, Operational Manager Policy & Improvement  
Mike Tate, Assistant Director Education & Lifelong Learning  
Suzanne Scarlett, Partnerships & Performance Manager  
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee.  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

## Annual Well-being Report 2022/23

### Scrutiny comments and observations for further consideration

REF/PAGE	Comment / Observation
<b>GENERAL</b>	<i>Cross Cutting Issues</i>
	<p><b>Structure of the document</b></p> <p>The Panel consider there is scope to improve the public understanding of Council performance by improving the Annual Well-being Report's accessibility to citizens.</p> <p>Whilst we acknowledge the full report is produced for the reassurance of Cabinet, politicians and the Senior Management Team, we <b>recommend</b> an easy read Executive Summary that contains the key strategic issues/challenges as listed in the Cabinet report.</p>
	<p><b>Workforce Recruitment &amp; Retention</b></p> <p>Workforce recruitment and retention is clearly stated as a strategic risk in the report, which is supported by evidence across the 5 scrutiny committees over the year. The report also states that the Council needs to ensure it has processes in place to recruit and retain talented individuals in a competitive market and we note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporately the Workforce Strategy cites the opportunities presented by Hybrid Working to attract staff;</li> <li>• Recognition of the need to understand the skills gap;</li> <li>• Across Directorates there are different strategies to deal with recruitment and retention dependant on the issues faced;</li> <li>• Initiatives to 'grow our own,' provide staff with opportunities to become qualified social workers, and visits to universities across the UK to attract staff to Cardiff;</li> <li>• Public sector pay is an issue and there are also national pay differentials.</li> </ul> <p>Given the above Chairs consider it is vital to measure staff turnover and understand why staff leave the organisation through exit interviews. We note these are not uniform across all Directorates and look forward to receiving <b>more information</b>.</p> <p>Services of particular concern are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transport</b> – how will the Council ensure sufficient capacity to deliver big scale projects to support its ambitious Crossrail transport scheme?</li> <li>• <b>Social care</b> – the report is missing a forward look at new ways of working and the numbers of social workers required. How will the Council seek to influence universities, to keep pace with the number of vacancies in social care?</li> </ul>

	<p>Chairs are therefore seeking assurance that going forward there are clearly stated actions to deal with the recruitment and retention risks highlighted in the report.</p>
	<p><b>Race Equality Task Force</b></p> <p>The report references the Race Equality Task Force but gives no details of progress on implementing its recommendations to date. As the recommendations have been available since March 2022, Chairs are keen to ensure any progress made is reflected in the report.</p> <p>We therefore welcome the Leader’s acceptance that the good news stories of progress being made in addressing the recommendations of the Task Force should be reflected in this Annual Well-being Report.</p> <p>We also note the recommendations of the Race Equality Taskforce have been incorporated in this year’s Corporate Plan and look forward to the validation of mainstreamed progress, planned for review later this year.</p>
<b>WBO1</b>	<i>Cardiff is a great place to grow up</i>
	The Annual Well-being Report reflects the work undertaken by CYPSC during 2022/23
	<p><b>Unregistered Places for Children Looked After</b></p> <p>The Annual Well-being Report highlights a range of major challenges around lack of sufficiency of placements for Children Looked After and that “unregistered” places are being used, but there is not much detail in terms of “looking ahead” in addressing the resulting risk to the council; how demand will be met; how regulated places will be increased; and how targets will be met.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that the Corporate Plan sets out the Council’s commitment in relation to this in the current year, some narrative on linking the challenges set out in the Well-being report to how those will be addressed going forward would be welcomed, stating implicitly the roles that the Accommodation Strategy; Right Place Model; and initiatives such as the “My Things Matter” campaign are playing in this area.</p> <p>Issues around the role of (and potential risks posed by) CiW were also addressed, and responses were noted, particularly in relation to working with other local authorities and WLGA in working with CiW to change the narrative and approach in this area.</p>

	<p><b>School Attendance</b></p> <p>The Annual Wellbeing Report clearly sets out that school attendance has decreased year on year, and there is a commitment to monitor patterns, including persistent absence. Views on what the targets are; whether these would be met; the main reasons for absence; and what interventions and support are in place were sought.</p> <p>Responses relating to initiatives in place to increase attendance; issues relating to repeated and persistent absence; monitoring attendance; support around the school and individual pupils and their families; and increased clusters approach were welcomed and noted and will be explored further at the meeting of the Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Further comments, views and observations will be submitted to Cabinet following the meeting.</p>
<b>WBO2</b>	<i>Cardiff is a great place to grow older</i>
	<p><b>Access to mental health services</b></p> <p>At a recent work programming planning meeting, the CASSC committee were briefed on significant challenges and pressures around access and availability of mental health support. Chairs queried why there was no reference to this in the Annual Well-being Report.</p> <p>Although it is noted the report covers the 2022/23 financial year, and that this issue emerged recently, Members remain concerned that this issue has been developing during 2022/23. We request additional consideration as to whether this issue emerged during 2022/23 and if so, we <b>recommend</b> an assessment of the issue is incorporated in the report, particularly around the forthcoming work planned to understand the scale of the problem; our work with health colleagues; and any known potential next steps.</p>
<b>Appendix 1, page 17/18/19</b>	<p><b>Hospital discharge</b></p> <p>Chairs note the report provides insight and assessment on work undertaken during the year to facilitate hospital patient discharge, however, feel the narrative gives no indication of the pressures /challenges faced during 2022/23. We also note the report confirms this issue will be a strategic issue for 2023/24 and are aware the service area is working on a suite of KPI's to ensure effective, clear monitoring of this issue going forward.</p> <p>Although the development of these KPI's is welcomed and will assist the council's assessment of this topic, in their current absence, we <b>recommend</b> the narrative is reviewed to provide greater insight into the situation in 2022/23. For example, numbers of people waiting for discharge, average time taken, and reference to the forthcoming actions to monitor performance.</p>

<b>WBO3</b>	<i>Supporting people out of poverty</i>
<b>Appendix 1, page 24/25</b>	<p><b>Homelessness</b></p> <p>Chairs confirmed the detail included in the Annual Well-being Report on the pressure and work to address homelessness is captured in line with the severity of the situation and aligns with CASSC’s knowledge.</p> <p>However, we feel greater detail is required in the report on the opportunities for development, particularly around provision for single homeless people.</p> <p>In April 2023 it was confirmed to CASSC there are gaps in specific accommodation offered in the city, such as women- only provision, for those with learning disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community, and work is underway on addressing these gaps.</p> <p>We consider that this acknowledgement of the gaps in provision, and the service areas’ work to address it was in evidence in 2022/23 and so <b>recommend</b> it is referenced in the report.</p>
	<p><b>Employment Services</b></p> <p>Chairs welcomed the Leader’s acceptance that the progress being made in addressing the recommendations of the Race Equality Task Force should be reflected in this Annual Well Being Report (as noted above), and in addition that <b>specifically the progress on employment services should feature under WBO3.</b></p>
	<p><b>Health Inequalities</b></p> <p>Chairs requested that the report includes a reference to the Council’s actions to address inequalities in health across the City’s Southern Arc, particularly in relation to children. We note that Public Health Wales has a well-developed programme, but we would like to see a reference to Council activity in the report.</p>
<b>WBO4</b>	<i>Safe, confident and empowered communities</i>
	The report reflects the findings of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee, particularly around parks, allotments and leisure centres.
Appendix 1, page 32	<p><b>Working together to support a healthier and more active population</b></p> <p>Chairs queried whether this section should refer to Regional Sports Partnerships and their potential impact on grassroots sport provision in Cardiff. We welcome the Leader’s offer to explore further with the service area.</p>
<b>Appendix 1, page</b>	<p><b>Community Safety</b></p> <p>Chairs noted that the KPI around citizen satisfaction with how local bodies</p>

30 / 32	<p>deal with ASB &amp; Crime in their area has been disappointing for some time. Chairs consider the narrative in the Annual Well-being Report linked to this performance issue is of a high-level, strategic style. We feel it should be reviewed to ensure it is understood and provides assurance to the lay reader.</p> <p>Chairs would like the narrative to stress the work ongoing around ‘community led’ approaches to improving citizen satisfaction, and current/forthcoming work around this, such as the actions outlined in the P&amp;P DDP around progressing community-led approaches.</p>
WBO5	<i>A capital city that works for Wales</i>
	The main issues are really well articulated, particularly around the impact of cost inflation on major projects.
	<p><b>City Deal/ Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)</b></p> <p>Chairs highlighted that there is scant reference to the work of the City Deal/ CJC and the impact it has on Cardiff. We consider that this report would be an opportunity to raise the profile of the City Deal/ CJC and its work, increasing its transparency. We note the Leader’s agreement that the report be modified to include reference to the work of the City Deal/ CJC that has a specific impact on Cardiff.</p>
WBO6	<i>Cardiff grows in a resilient way</i>
	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>Overall, the chapter is honest and well balanced, however, many of the paragraphs have caveats suggesting issues going forward.</p>
	<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p>The report mentions that the Biodiversity &amp; Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (BRED) report will be written, however, as the Council declared a Nature Emergency in 2021 and we understand that the One Planet Cardiff strategy is purely about ‘carbon reduction’ and does not include any work/projects in relation to nature and biodiversity, this appears to be missing from the report.</p> <p>Concern was noted as the Council only has one Ecologist and previously the Environmental Committee has recommended the employment of an additional post as the one role was taken up significantly by ‘planning’ work rather than proactive work to protect and increase the city’s biodiversity.</p>
	<p><b>Recycling</b></p> <p>Concern was noted about the ability of the Council to meet the Welsh Government (WG) recycling target of 70% by 2025 with the current, 2022/23 unverified result being 61.57%. The Leader reassured the meeting that the actions in the Recycling Strategy for Cardiff were being implemented which he believed would enable the Council to meet WG requirements.</p>

<b>WBO7</b>	<i>Modernising and integrating our public services</i>
	<p><b>Capital Programme</b></p> <p>Chairs expressed concern about the increasing cost of borrowing, enquiring what assessments had been undertaken to reign in the cost of the Capital Programme. Specifically, will this mean capital funded projects are under threat?</p> <p>We are reassured that the total programme is affordable and operational limits still have headroom, however, note there is a sharper focus on reporting pressures, there will continue to be a re-examination of priorities and increasing challenge of invest to save business cases.</p>
KPI 7.19	<p><b>Customer Satisfaction</b></p> <p>There has been a marginal improvement in customer satisfaction levels since the last Annual Report, but at 48% it fell short of the 70% target. We note the view that there has been a narrative shift on social media that signals a new baseline in customer expectation and the Council is not alone is experiencing lower levels of customer satisfaction with public sector organisations.</p> <p>We acknowledge that the Council's performance is measured on both frontline services and projects that can benefit Cardiff on a global stage, such as the Principality Stadium.</p> <p>Given that the majority of customers are happy with schools in Cardiff, we <b>recommend</b> a media campaign that enhances/re-enforces public understanding that the provision of schools is a Council responsibility.</p>
	<p><b>Priority 1 works</b></p> <p>The delivery of capital receipts is a critical objective of the Council's Property Strategy and the 2022/23 Annual Property Plan set a target of £5.5 million that was not achieved.</p> <p>Chairs noted you expect the next Annual Property Plan (2023/24) to address what the Council is doing to mitigate the shortfall and we will monitor as part of our 2023/24 work programme.</p>