

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

Date: 14 September 2015



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Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
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Councillor Graham Hinchey,  
Cabinet Member, Corporate Service & Performance,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Hinchey,

**Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 8 September 2015  
Statutory Annual Improvement Report 2014-15**

On behalf of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for facilitating consideration of the Council's Statutory Improvement Plan 2014-15 on 8 September 2015. The Members have reflected on the scrutiny and wish to pass on the comments and observations set out below. The Committee found the Chief Executive's clear overview of Corporate Performance useful context in relation to scrutiny of both the Statutory Improvement Report and Quarter 1 Performance 2015/16, on which I have written to you separately.

Overall the Committee agrees with the Chief Executive that the Council's comparative position is not good. The Members consider that, notwithstanding Cardiff's city issues, the performance picture of Cardiff compared with urban authorities such as Newport and RCT is unattractive for City Councillors. The Committee acknowledges good progress on many indicators and they accept that when social services indicators are removed then 70% of the Councils performance indicators have improved. They also note that, when focussing in on Performance Indicators, such as '*my local authority is good at letting people know how it is performing*' several authorities score similarly to Cardiff. However, in light of the WAO comments the Committee considers it worrying that 66% of missed targets relate to Children's Services, and are particularly concerned to hear that in just 4 key indicators for this service the Council has improved its standing.

Members were therefore pleased that the Chief Executive is confident in expecting better headlines next year, and that, as Cabinet Member for performance, you feel

the Council has come a long way in the last 2-3, years illustrated by the improved staff survey response. They accept that the annual media assessment of Local Authority performance is a crude mechanism and note there is some evidence of a possible move away from Performance Indicators by Welsh Government. The Committee notes your commitment to policy priorities however wishes to endorse the Chief Executive's view of the importance that Members understand the nuances of policy decisions and the impact those decisions might have on performance indicators.

The Members feel the Improvement Plan could better address the quality of Council services delivered as it is important to assess improvements in quality, and not simply tick a box against an action. More generally they question the validity of tick box questionnaires in terms of the quality of data that materialises, and in this respect they question the usefulness of the Cardiff Debate approach. They agree with the Chief Executive that further work is required as to what is important to our customers and have therefore programmed a customer themed scrutiny for their December meeting.

Finally, the Committee wishes to support the Chief Executive's aspiration for a review of the Key Performance Indicators and, whilst they do not consider the complexity of the City, the relevancy of performance information, or the conflicting nature of KPI's reasons for missing targets, Members consider the indicators could be improved with a greater emphasis on qualitative rather than quantitative measurement. The Committee wishes to contribute to the review by undertaking a piece of work that examines the KPI's in detail, and as such will programme further consideration on its work programme.

*To re-cap, the Committee will:*

- be looking for a notable improvement in Cardiff's comparative position in September 2016;
- programme a customer themed scrutiny for their December meeting;
- undertake a piece of work that examines the KPI's in detail, and as such will programme further consideration on its work programme;

Once again thank you for attending Committee. Please would you pass on our thanks to the Chief Executive and the senior team of officers who facilitated scrutiny of the Statutory Improvement Plan 2014-15.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Howells', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS  
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;  
Vivienne Pearson, Improvement & Information Manager;  
Gareth Newell, Operational Manager, Business & Investment;  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager;  
Matt Swindell, Principal Administrative Officer.

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET  
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

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Dyddiad / Date: 22 September 2015

Councillor Nigel Howells  
Chair, Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 263  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Councillor Howells

**Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 8 September 2015  
Statutory Annual Improvement Report 2014-15**

Thank you for your comments regarding the Statutory Annual Improvement Report and I am pleased that you found the Chief Executive's presentation helpful in setting out the context for the performance being reported in the Report.

In terms of the comparative performance within Childrens Services it is worth restating that during 2014/15 the Directorate focussed on improving performance in relation to indicators that have the greatest significance for safe and effective practice concerning children. Those selected for this focus are based on guidance agreed between the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), the Care & Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and sit outside of the NSI and PAM data sets.

I am able to advise that recent feedback provided by CSSIW's Regional Director has acknowledged that although there is a mixed picture in terms of overall improvement, performance indicators evidence a good direction of travel. The Inspectorate recognises that the realignment of operational responsibilities has brought about change and improvement in the delivery of services, balancing the

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pace of change against risk in the social care environment, particularly in relation to children.

I agree that performance against the PIs designated as NSIs and PAMs was less encouraging in 2014-15 and the Directorate's intention is to focus on these PIs when further improvement in relation to those agreed by the ADSS, CSSIW and WLGA is more secure. The stronger strategic focus that has characterised the Directorate's work in 2014/15 will provide a basis for improving performance against NSIs and PAMs.

I welcome your comments and your plans for a customer themed scrutiny for your December meeting and look forward to working with you to deliver an improved approach to understanding what is important to our customers.

I also look forward to your planned contributions to a review of the KPI's and would suggest that this work compliments the development of the next Corporate Plan. I will ask Vivienne Pearson, Operational Manager for Improvement and Information, and Gareth Newell, Operational Manager Cabinet Office, to liaise with Nicola Newton, Scrutiny Officer, to discuss how this can be best achieved.

Once again, thank you for your contributions in scrutinising and helping the Council to continue to improve performance management arrangements. I look forward to the outputs of the planned work around customers and KPI's.

Yn gywir,  
Yours sincerely,



**Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hinchey**  
**Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee;  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive;  
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources;  
Vivienne Pearson, Improvement & Information Manager;  
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