

Date: 19 February 2024

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 15 February 2024: Corporate Plan 2024/27

Please find attached a record of the observations and comments made by all five Scrutiny Chairs at our recent informal meeting to consider the draft Corporate Plan 2024/27. My sincere thanks to yourselves and all officers in support for attending in person. We offer our feedback to inform your final draft report.

All five scrutiny committees will consider the final draft Corporate Plan commitments alongside budget 2024/25 proposals at their February 2024 meetings.

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
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities
Andrew Gregory, Director Planning, Transport & Environment
Richard Portas, Director School Organisation Programme
Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships
Dylan Owen, Operational Manager Policy & Improvement
Suzanne Scarlett, Partnerships & Performance Manager
Carly Davies, Cardiff Commitment Programme Manager
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee.
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

Corporate Plan 2024-27 Target setting Observations

REF	Recommendation/Action for Cabinet's further reflection
General	
	<p>Corporate Plan Audience</p> <p>The Panel questioned the intended audience and readership of the Corporate Plan once again. The Leader advised it is a tool for Cabinet, to hold the Cabinet to account, to set out actions for Directors, for Scrutiny to monitor performance, and also for staff. However, it is not intended to encourage public participation, there is a separate strategy to support participation.</p> <p>Action – Chairs again recommend that consideration is given to the development of an easy read summary of the Corporate Plan to encourage public understanding and participation in democracy.</p>
	<p>Audit Wales Report: Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes.</p> <p>In line with recommendations made by Audit Wales, Chairs explored how the KPI targets set in the Corporate Plan are informed by citizen satisfaction. We noted in particular the need to ensure citizen satisfaction targets are adequate, achievable and realistic in terms of citizen expectations.</p> <p>We note from the discussion that this is a draft Corporate Plan and further work on consistency of citizen satisfaction targets is ongoing.</p> <p>Recommendation -The Panel recommends that Cabinet reflect on how citizen perspective can be strengthened in the Corporate Plan.</p>
	<p>Inconsistent KPIs.</p> <p>Chairs welcomed the opportunity to consider performance through these sessions, however noted the difficulty in tracking progress through consecutive Corporate Plans when indicators are removed, amended or new ones introduced.</p> <p>Action - The Chairs recognise that the Corporate Plan is an evolving document however to enable effective scrutiny and to track performance we recommend Cabinet consider the development of a core set of indicators that remains unchanged during an administration to be identified in future Corporate Plans.</p>
	<p>Inclusion of Steps reliant on partners for delivery.</p> <p>A number of steps in the draft Corporate Plan include delivery dates that rely on partners. We have seen in previous years that the delivery dates for a number of key projects have slipped significantly. Chairs expressed concern as to how non delivery of these steps is addressed. You clarified that mechanisms are in place, there will be discussion with relevant partners, and that there is a role for scrutiny to play.</p>

	<p>An expanding Corporate Plan against reducing resources and capacity.</p> <p>Chairs made a general observation expressing concern that the Council is facing a contraction in available resources alongside a Corporate Plan that is growing year on year. They suggested it may be time to refine the Plan. The Leader considered this a good question to pose in drafting future Corporate Plans, that it would be important to strike the right balance of delivering a reform agenda whilst being realistic and responding creatively.</p> <p>Action – we recommend that Cabinet reflect on this point in developing the 2025/28 Corporate Plan to reflect the budget challenges faced.</p>
WBO1	
	<p>Sustainability and Resilience in relation to delivering services.</p> <p>The Chairs asked what assurances could be given in relation to financial resilience and sustainability for the delivery and capacity of services under this WBO. The Leader stated that this was a difficult issue to respond to with confidence given the Welsh Government settlement and the need to make assumptions in relation to this. The autumn statement had been “bleak” in terms of budget gap but reported that young people and education remain a priority for the administration, and this is clearly set out in increased funding settlements to schools and delegated funding to schools; protect and grow youth service spend; and repeated realignments to Children’s Services budgets to protect this area.</p> <p>The Chief Executive outlined pressures in the management team in Education & Lifelong Learning. A vacant Assistant Director post had been successfully appointed to and this would be announced shortly, pending final checks. This post will be significant in providing support to schools; work around well-being of staff and pupils; review of middle tier staff; and ensuring that the Director is undertaking ongoing reviews to allocate resources to areas with any major deficiencies. He outlined positive work currently being undertaken between schools, Education and Children’s Services around managing capacity. The operational manager added that issues such as demands around the new curriculum; additional learning needs; expectations around progression for learners; community focussed schools and partnerships; and the Council’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a continuation of work ongoing to address challenges and set out in the Corporate Plan accordingly and Cardiff 2030. In addition, the Director of SOP reiterated that Education is used to change, and resources are often put into particularly important areas to respond to this. For example, the SOP programme is a significant change programme.</p> <p>The Leader also stated that a review of the work of the Central South Education Consortium was being undertaken.</p>
S1.07 & 1.08	<p>School Workforce Development</p> <p>Chairs explored the Corporate Plan’s commitment to developing school leaders and how this will evolve given the pressures schools are facing.</p>

	<p>The Operational Manager explained this referred to the middle tier review and feedback from Phase 1 had reminded the Service about the importance of leadership at school level and developing capacity in the school system to drive change and enable improvement. A key driver was to ensure that schools are equipped to deal with the changes ahead; and having trusted individuals in place to enforce change and improvement. Therefore, it was essential that this is highlighted in the Corporate Plan. The Leader added that this would also be reflected in DDPs, including learning pathways for Teaching Assistants. A Strategy document around this will be considered by Cabinet in February.</p> <p>Note: This Strategy will also be considered by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 26 February.</p>
<p>K1.21 – 1.24</p>	<p>Placements (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Chairs sought assurances on these KPIs - 4 of which are currently Red and Amber rated. The Leader stated that targets are perhaps not the right measure but ensuring that each young person has the right care. re K1.21, the target was Red rated as the Council has taken a different approach. The Corporate Director responded that they were confident that targets would be met, and significant improvements had been made via the Accommodation Strategy. The Corporate Director stated that there may be further consideration of KPIs relating to the number of placements available, and the kind of provision available to reflect this. A number of CIW registrations will be taking place in March. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Modernisation concluded that for Q4 and into 2024/25, there would be significant signs of improvement in this area.</p> <p>Recommendation – Chairs support the Leader’s recommendation to include an additional KPI on the number of accommodation units brought online following inspection.</p>
<p>K1.16 & K1.17</p>	<p>Successful transition from Year 11 to Education, Employment or Training.</p> <p>Chairs asked what would be done during 2024/25 to maintain and achieve these targets. The Leader responded that they would maintain these targets going forward. The Operational Manager concurred that this target is what the Council needs to aim for. She reported that these are small numbers of learners for both EOTAS (17) and CLA (9), so figure can be easily distorted. The Operational Manager gave assurances that each learner is thoroughly tracked and that officers meet regularly to track progression and opportunities for these individuals. This reflects commitments elsewhere in the Corporate Plan, particularly around those children looked after.</p>
<p>WBO2</p>	
<p>K2.12 / Page 16</p>	<p>Satisfaction with Adult Social Care Services.</p>

	<p>Chairs noted that the previous Corporate Plan had introduced a new KPI on ‘<i>the number of people satisfied with services provided by Adult Social Care</i>’ with a target of 70%.</p> <p>Chairs explored why, in this Corporate Plan, the 70% target had been replaced with a ‘target based on outturn’; particularly considering Audit Wales recommendation on the importance of citizen insight informing performance management and the need to strengthen in Cardiff.</p> <p>Chairs note, and concur, with the rationale provided for setting an out turn target (e.g. the need to ensure data is captured accurately, is verified, and the importance of piloting the data gathering).</p> <p>However, considering the importance of this KPI, and the underpinning principle of ensuring vulnerable individuals in Cardiff in receipt of care are satisfied with services...</p> <p>Action - we recommend you consider setting a target in future Corporate Plans.</p>
	<p>Responding to the needs of Communities.</p> <p>Chairs noted the absence of the Adult Housing & Communities forthcoming work on developing an Equality Action Plan and your response that this information is contained in the service area’s Directorate Delivery Plan,</p> <p>Recommendation - given the service area’s recognition and commitment to ensuring services are easily accessible to all communities, and our general comments on the importance of the Corporate Plan’s public accessibility, we recommend reference to forthcoming work on developing an Equality Action Plan be included in the final draft Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Action - We also recommend that, when this Action Plan is complete, the Cabinet Member and relevant officers consider the possibility of setting a KPI to measure performance of the Equality Action Plans work; with this measure captured within the Corporate Plan, or in service area’s Directorate Delivery Plan.</p>
WBO3	
K3.01	<p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>The number of new apprenticeships provided in the Council stands at 48 at Q3 against a target of 100 for 2023/24. Chairs asked what are the issues?</p> <p>We note results against this KPI are expected to increase over the next quarter, though are unlikely to meet the target.</p> <p>Action – consider amending the wording of KPI so that all Directorate opportunities, as well as corporate opportunities, are included.</p>
K3.05	<p>Into Work – support for BAME clients</p> <p>Chairs explored whether the Council measures the number of BAME clients who have received tailored support through the Employment Gateway and who secured work as a result. They feel it would be valuable to measure</p>

	<p>what percentage have a meaningful intervention and how we can track progress. They further enquired whether the Council monitors the progression of BAME clients.</p> <p>Action – Work by the Race Equality Taskforce has identified possible KPI’s that may address this, including those that progress to grade 8-10. Officers will check this is an action the RET are following up and would expect it to be reported in the RET Annual Report to be published in May.</p>
K3.06	<p>Ceased Engagement with intervention service with no positive destination.</p> <p>Chairs sought an explanation as to why this KPI is notably higher this year. Officers pointed to a data cleansing exercise in Q3 but are now confident we will meet the target at year end. There has been a progressive stretching of targets.</p>
K3.09 & K3.10	<p>Advice Services.</p> <p>Chairs acknowledged the revision of the targets for KPI 3.09 & 3.10; referencing that revising these targets is something the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee have been requesting for some time.</p>
K3.13	<p>Homelessness Prevention.</p> <p>Chairs noted the stable performance results around homeless prevention and concur with the Leader and senior officers on the importance of this work and its crucial interdependency with other areas of work/ performance measures.</p> <p>Chairs want to thank officers for their insight on how the 80% target for this measure is set, and that Cardiff’s performance on homelessness prevention compares well against other areas in Wales (noting the difficulties in comparing homelessness prevention performance with England).</p>
K 3.17	<p>Homelessness.</p> <p>Chairs were pleased to note that despite the continued pressures on homelessness services, the target for the number of street homeless in the city has not been raised.</p> <p>We note with interest discussion around disaggregating street homeless KPI’s to reflect support for individuals with or without recourse to public funds.</p> <p>Chairs also stressed the need to take heed in terms of language used when referencing homelessness, and the caution needed when commenting whether someone is facing / experiencing homelessness.</p>
WBO4	
Page 27-29 ‘NEW’ KPI’s	Council House Repairs.

	<p>Chairs wish to acknowledge that the recommendation made at the previous Performance Panel, to include specific steps and relevant KPI's on Council House repairs has been actioned.</p> <p>Chairs explored how the 70% target for completing urgent repairs had been set, to what extent this is a performance driven target or a citizen satisfaction-based target; if tenant expectations had been considered, and, given the initiatives and additional resources deployed in this area whether a 70% target was adequate.</p> <p>Chairs note the reasoning behind a 70% target however, given the upward trajectory of performance in <i>responsive repairs</i>, it is hoped this target, and the results will continue to grow.</p> <p>Action - Chairs look forward to monitoring performance results of this KPI.</p>
K4.05 & 'NEW'	<p>Empty Homes in the Private Sector</p> <p>Chairs questioned why the target of 100 for KPI 4.05 had been revised to 'based on outturn', and the 'NEW' KPI regarding the number of empty properties brought back into use, which had previously had a target of 33.</p> <p>Although Chairs note the insight offered at the meeting as to why these targets have changed, given the context of ever-growing demand and need for housing in the city, Chairs believe it is vital there is accountability and transparency on performance on this matter and are of the view that stretching targets should be set.</p>
K4.28	<p>Green flag Parks</p> <p>Chairs noted that the 3 parks that have recently been identified to apply for a green flag are within the Splott and Cathays wards.</p>
WBO5	
K5.01	<p>Grade A Office Space</p> <p>This Panel has previously recommended that you explore the feasibility of an additional KPI to measure changing patterns of work and post pandemic working practices. You agreed to explore, and one year on Chairs therefore sought progress as there is not a new KPI in this draft Corporate Plan.</p> <p>We note that Cabinet is not in a clear position on this, however, is of the view that the target remains relevant. We note that Savills have concluded the demand for grade A office space remains and there is a shortage in the city, that Cabinet believe the demand must be tapped into, recognising that the city needs good employers bringing well paid jobs.</p> <p>Recommendation - We therefore recommend that you create an additional target to reflect the increase in requirement for flexible working space.</p>
WBO6	
S6.15	Segregated Cycle Network.

	<p>The Chairs commented on the inclusion of steps, that are of interest to residents, in consecutive plans when they continue not to be delivered and timescales have slipped considerably. Officers noted that the Council still aspire to deliver these projects, but they are only a partner to the project. Chairs asked how do we hold partners to account when there are issues and delays?</p> <p>Recommendation - Officers confirmed that Cardiff University has no funding to support the delivery of the Blackweir Bridge, therefore we recommend the bullet point should be amended to reflect the conversations that have been had with them better.</p>
K6.21, 6.22, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26, 6.27, 6.28	<p>Waste, Recycling & Street Cleanliness.</p> <p>It was noted by Chairs that the majority of the indicators and steps in relation to these issues are green and therefore if the public were asked if this accurately reflected their understanding of the matters, would they agree?</p> <p>Officers commented that K6.27 is red and that a significant change in behaviour by the public is needed.</p>
KPIs	<p>Annual KPIs.</p> <p>Over 50% (15/28) of the KPI's that fall within WBO 6 are Annual and therefore it is difficult to easily track progress throughout the year.</p>
S6.14	<p>Llanrumney Bridge.</p> <p>Last year a written update in relation to progress regarding Llanrumney Bridge was requested. Chairs noted that planning has been secured so therefore does the wording need to be amended for the step?</p> <p>Action – A written update to be provided as planning has now been secured and we also recommend that step to be reworded to reflect this.</p>
K6.08 -6.11	<p>Modal Shift.</p> <p>Chairs noted that there has been a target set for these KPIs in the absence of any results since 2019/20, how has this target been derived?</p> <p>Officers clarified that the target has been set in a 'linear' way, i.e. from the baseline in 2020 to the target of 76% in 2030. Officers also noted that discussions were ongoing to secure funding to back many projects that will support the modal shift.</p>
NEW STEP	<p>Section 106 agreements.</p> <p>The inclusion of a new step to '<i>Maximise developer contributions from new developments to deliver community infrastructure, affordable housing and wider improvement within local areas</i>' was welcomed by Chairs, although they felt that 'sustainable and active travel' should also be included.</p>

	<p>The Chairs also asked should an indicator be developed to support the step as whole?</p> <p>Action – Officers to develop an appropriate indicator to support the new step, for inclusion in future Corporate Plans, if the indicator is a successful gauge of the step.</p>
WBO7	
S7.01 -7.04 K7.01-7.04	<p>Capital receipts.</p> <p>Chairs highlighted that for General Fund capital receipts (K7.04) the latest information available is for the end of 2022/23, and at that point the Council had secured just £3.3m of a £25m target.</p> <p>We note the need to take account of the market, but this appears way off target and requires corporate focus given that receipts will underpin the long-term capital programme.</p> <p>Action - Officers agreed to update this KPI as part of month 9 budget monitoring and the Capital Strategy/ programme report.</p>
S7.09-7.10	<p>Hybrid working</p> <p>At Q3 the narrative states final technical input is being made to the hybrid working policy to allow for final consultations to take place. Chairs asked whether this will be planned consultation with unions and further consultation with staff.</p> <p>Action – Officers confirmed there will be a final contractual phase to implementing hybrid working that requires further staff and union engagement. This is likely to take place in Autumn 2024.</p>
Not in CP	<p>Staff well-being</p> <p>Chairs considered that the Corporate Plan should assess whether the Council’s staff well-being policies are working and how they impact on staff turnover.</p> <p>Action - Whilst discussion with unions and employee networks is routine and ongoing, the Chief Executive explained there will be a broader staff survey in Summer/Autumn 2024 to assess the effectiveness/monitor the impact of staff well-being policies.</p> <p>Action -Chief Executive agreed to reflect on whether staff well-being should be included in the CP as a further step.</p>