
CORRESPONDENCE – INFORMATION REPORT

Background

1. Following Committee meetings, the Chair writes a letter to the relevant Cabinet Member or senior officer, summing up the Committee's comments, concerns and recommendations regarding the issues considered during that meeting. The letter usually asks for a response from the Cabinet Member to any recommendations made and sometimes requests further information.

Issues

2. A copy of the Correspondence Monitoring Sheet detailing the Committee's correspondence and those responses received is attached at **Appendix A**. For ease of reference, the lines of those letters to which the Committee has received a full response and where no actions are left outstanding have now been removed from the document. Where new information has been added since the Committee last considered a correspondence report, this information is highlighted in **bold**. Attached to this report are copies of recent correspondence.

30 September 2014 meeting

3. The Committee considered the Cabinet response to the Committee's Public Engagement with Scrutiny Inquiry at this meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter is attached at **Appendix B**. A copy of Councillor De'Ath's response is attached at **Appendix C**.

4 November 2014 meeting

4. The Committee considered the Cardiff Debate Engagement programme at this meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter is attached at **Appendix D**. A copy of the Leader's reply is attached at **Appendix E**.

2 December 2014 meeting

5. The Committee considered the Corporate Plan at this meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter is attached at **Appendix F**.

6. The Committee also considered the 2014/15 Month 6 Budget Monitoring position and the preparation of the 2015/16 Budget Proposals at this meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter summing up the Committee's comments on these subjects is attached at **Appendix G**.

Legal Implications

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the content of the letters attached to this report and decide whether it wishes to take any further actions, or request any further information.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

30 December 2014

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
02/09/14	Reforming Local Government White Paper	Leader (Cllr Bale)	Committee: - emphasised that Cardiff's position as Capital City should not be lost; - recommend that the Cabinet's proposed response is presented to Council for debate and approval prior to submission on 1 October; - requested that the additional Welsh Government guidance regarding voluntary mergers is forwarded.	18/11/14	Cllr Hinchey responded that Cabinet considered a report on the subject at its 9 October meeting and agreed that discussions would be progressed with the Vale of Glamorgan, as well as other stakeholders and the Welsh Government around the development of alternative proposals in exceptional circumstances. A report will go to Council on 27 November 2014.	None
02/09/14	Qtr 1 2014/15 Performance	Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	Committee: - welcomed the additional risk information; - was pleased to see that Personal Performance and Development Review and Sickness performance had improved; - agreed to set up a Performance Panel to look at performance issues in more depth, and chose workforce planning as the first issue for consideration. As part of this the Committee would look at overtime/agency spend, as it didn't feel that the information contained the performance report was sufficient to judge how these were being used and how this linked to, for example, budget savings; - requested to attend Cabinet/director performance challenge sessions to assure themselves that challenge was sufficiently robust; - requested greater visibility of additional in-year savings where these are put in place outside the February budget-setting process, and of any use of budget contingencies; - noted with concern the decreasing performance in terms of fulfilling multi-service information requests.	18/11/14	Cllr Hinchey responded welcoming the Committee's comments. Officers are reviewing how overtime and agency spend is presented and the Cabinet Member would be happy to discuss this further.	No comment regarding attendance at challenge sessions. Committee reiterated this point in its Quarter 2 letter. The presentation of overtime and agency data was amended/reduced in the Quarter 2 report, and Committee has asked for it to be reinstated in its Quarter 2 letter. Improved performance regarding Information Requests is being pursued. There was no comment regarding additional in-year budget savings.
02/09/14	Challenge Forum	Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	Committee: - agreed that the Forum could be a powerful mechanism for encouraging real changes in performance and welcomed its initially focus on Education and Children Services; - requested Forum members to attend Committee to brief them on their work and aid their scrutiny of relevant issues (performance and Organisational Development); - requested written updates on the Forum's future work and recommendations, to be reported to other Committees as relevant; - requested more notice of future meetings to ensure the Chair's attendance	18/11/14	Cllr Hinchey responded that Martin Hamilton would arranged if possible for Barry Quirk to attend the Committee's look at Organisational Development. Rod Alcott observed the Quarter 2 performance scrutiny as part of his review.	Although Rod Alcott observed the Committee's 4 November 2014 meeting, the Committee requested that he attend to explain his review of performance and his findings, so Committee may like to request this for Quarter 3.

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
			<p>On Capital Times, the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressed congratulations to the team for the levels of income achieved by the paper; - Was reassured that the Cabinet Member ruled out a wholly online publication in future; - Could see positive aspects to returning to 12 printed editions in terms of accessibility and its good reputation; - Asked for further information to inform further budget scrutiny; numbers of unique hits on the web editions; the full costs of published version including journalists' time; the costs of publishing statutory notices elsewhere; - Recommended that the Capital Times should be developed into a more effective engagement tool for more serious issues such as the WAO Corporate Assessment and the Budget; - Recommended that the Capital Times should be monitored to avoid suggestions of political bias. 	19/11/14	The Leader responded that costs of producing the Capital Times and of publishing statutory notices were provided. The County Clerk and Monitoring Officer will scrutinise each edition to ensure that it complies with the Code of Conduct on Local Authority Publicity, and the Leader will ask the Interim Head of Communications to address the content of Capital Times articles.	The unique number of hits for online editions of the Capital Times was not provided. This is been followed up with officers.
30/09/14	Public Engagement with Scrutiny Inquiry response	Cabinet Member for Safety Engagement and Democracy (Cllr De'Ath)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomed the positive response to the Inquiry; - noted that there is still some way to go in increasing public engagement with scrutiny and hoped that Scrutiny would be able to tap in to the Council's holistic approach; - noted that modern.gov should be operational in December, but emphasised that those who don't or prefer not to use ICT should not be forgotten; - recommended that more cost effective ways of increasing engagement should be experimented with; - recommended using Cardiff Debate and community events to engage with the public; - recommended that more should be done to communicate the outcome of scrutiny; - was supportive of the proposal to trial webcasting of the Budget Scrutiny meetings. 	04/12/14	Councillor De'Ath responded that the Improving Scrutiny project will be used to set plans in place for increasing public engagement, as will the Communications Strategy. Public questions will be piloted in Scrutiny Committees. He noted that the Scrutiny team has reduced in recent years so capacity to address this agenda has been affected. Committees are welcome to pilot webcasting meetings in the Council Chamber.	None
04/11/14	Cardiff Debate	Leader (Cllr Bale)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thanked the officers who have supported the Debate; - recognised the step forward which the Debate represented in terms of public engagement, and some of the successful methodologies used. Some Members highlighted how well the events had been received in their communities; - had discussed the merits and difficulties in consulting the public and believed that it is still something which the Council must attempt to inform communities regarding the budget and discover their priorities. Ensuring their views are taken into account and the feedback loop closed is vital; -welcomed the Leader's openness to accepting suggestions for improvements; Members felt some of the categories used were lacking and should be re-thought; - recommended repeating community results in order to obtain a more reliable result which is not so coloured by current events; - highlighted the subjectivity of some of the interpretation of results and the lack of reliability in terms of ward results, questioning how far they could be used to inform future decision-making. They were reassured that where specific service cuts were proposed, there would be full consultation 	03/12/04	The Leader had taken Committee's advice on board and rethought the categories on offer, providing a new voting opportunity for Local Development Plan / planning. Was pleased to see the commitment of partners in health and police in co-owning the consultation opportunity and responsibilities. Welcomed further views on how to engage and empower local Members in taking forward consultation and engagement opportunities with local residents as the three year programme of engagement develops.	None
04/11/14	Draft Property Strategy	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reiterated Members' disappointment at the delay in presenting the Strategy and the effect that this had on the agenda for the meeting. Members hoped that the Cabinet forward planning would improve to prevent a recurrence; - expressed their disappointment about the contents of the draft Strategy given the 18 month delay. Members had expected to see more detail of direction of travel, and noted that several pieces of work were yet to be completed; - requested to consider the Investment Review in pre-decision, so asked for confirmation of its availability; - noted that a detailed business case for an alternative to County Hall is under development and asked for pre-decision scrutiny; - will consider the annual Corporate Asset Management Plan for inclusion in future work programmes; - had referred the Schools Review to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; - noted positive steps in terms of partnership working; - did not feel the Council's vision had been addressed and reiterated the need to use property for community and social benefit as well as financial gain. Members recommended the amendment of the draft Strategy to reflect this; - recommended further detail should be included in the Strategy regarding benchmarking and Member engagement with disposals; - noted that some 'confidential' papers were referred to in the draft Cabinet report; asked that these be circulated to the Committee and recommended that the Cabinet report should be revised to set out the reason for exemption from publication. 		Not yet received	

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
04/11/14	Organisational Development - Strategic Commissioning & Service Reviews	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -welcomed the outward looking stance which has been taken in trying to learn from experiences elsewhere; - recommended that more concrete examples of what is done elsewhere are investigated and the knowledge shared; - noted the strain on the Commissioning and Procurement team and repeated its recommendation that a team should be created to support communities in developing alternative service models. Members were concerned that communities would not be able to take over service delivery and that this would lead to gaps in service provision; - recommended that the programme of service reviews should more properly sit within the Change & Improvement function; - noted the issue of internal capacity and capability to review services; - recommended that the management programme should be extended below Grade 8 to cover all managers/supervisors; - asked for confirmation of the timescale for putting in place a revised Community Asset Transfer Toolkit; - noted with interest the work of John Hallett and would seek to hear from him during its consideration of Social Inclusion in Cardiff later in the year. 		Not yet received	
04/11/14	Performance Q2 2014/15 & Challenge Forum	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted the Cabinet Member's comment that positive progress had been made, albeit that the budget position remains of concern; - noted the areas highlighted by the Chief Executive: the financial position; management of demand in Health & Social Care; sickness absence and pressures in Children Services. The former was already on the Committee's work programme for detailed consideration; - The Committee referred the 'Key issues' report produced by the Chief Officer for Change & Improvement to the other Scrutiny Committees as many issues fell outside PRAP's terms of reference; - noted the gap in risk information; - recommended that Overtime and Agency spend data be reinstated; - recommended that the customer point of view, which Members had recommended on several occasions be built into the report, be addressed by Quarter 3; - noted that the Member Enquiry line commentary, which the Cabinet Member had said would be addressed by Q2, had not been and that it should be by Quarter 3; - had previously questioned the credibility of target-setting and noted that it is being addressed through the corporate/service planning approach. The Performance Panel may address this area in future; - requesting confirmation of the quality checks of PPDRs which had been flagged up on several occasions with no evidence of the outcome provided; - repeated the as yet unanswered request to attend the 'star chamber' sessions; - requested an update on progress in producing a 'public facing' version of the report, which was flagged up during consideration of the 2013/14 outturn. 			
02/12/14	Corporate Plan 2015-17	Leader (Councillor Bale)	<p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Plan at an earlier stage and the consideration given to best practice in Corporate Planning in the Core Cities and the wider planning & policy agenda; - Directorate Plans should be in place for the start of the new financial year. <p>The Committee didn't require a formal response, apart from confirmation of the availability of the Corporate Plan, What Matters refresh and Directorate Delivery Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommended that more thought should be given to ensure the final Plan is suitable for all its audiences; - recommended that appropriate training should be developed for officers regarding outcomes/objectives, measures and target-setting; - asked for a number of points to receive more prominence in the Plan (NEETS, capital city status, cross-boundary working); - recommended that the influence of engagement on the Plan should be clearly set out; - suitable comparative data should be included in the Plan; - the Plan should be made available in time for all Scrutiny Committees' budget meetings; - the timings of the availability of What matters, Corporate Plan, Directorate Delivery Plans. 		Not required, apart from confirmation of availability of availability of What Matters, the final Corporate Plan, and Directorate Delivery Plans.	

Committee date	Committee item	Recipient	Comments/Information requested	Response date	Response	Further Actions
02/12/14	Budget Monitoring M6 2014/15 & 2015/16 Budget Consultation proposals	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey)	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remain concerned about the number of Directorate budgets that are overspent; - reiterated the point that where alternative savings proposals are found these should be visible and subject to scrutiny; - urged that the Council must push ahead where savings are dependent on the outcome of projects, such as finding alternative management for St David's Hall; - noted the slippage in the Capital Programme and referred the Education programme to Children & Young People Scrutiny; - welcomed the early release of consultation proposals; - recommended that more should be done to advertise the Cardiff Debate, although recognising that this was difficult to achieve; - asked for Cardiff Debate results to be ready for the Committee's February budget meeting; - recommended that a contingency should be included in the proposals; - thanked Cabinet Members and Directors for their briefings on their budget positions. 		Not required apart from confirmation of the availability of the Cardiff Debate results.	

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

Date: 8 October 2014



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Councillor Daniel De'Ath
Cabinet Member for Safety, Engagement and Democracy
City of Cardiff Council
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Item 9 Appendix B

Dear Councillor De'Ath,

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
30 September 2014 - Public Engagement with Scrutiny Inquiry response

On behalf of the Committee, many thanks to you and your officers for attending Committee to present the combined response to the Committee's Inquiry regarding public engagement with Scrutiny. We welcome the positive response to the Inquiry's recommendations.

Having considered the progress which has been made to date in increasing public awareness of and engagement with Scrutiny, it is obvious that there is still some way to go. The Committee recommends that a holistic approach is taken, to consider the Council's whole mechanism for engagement. Scrutiny should be able to tap into that overall approach, rather than running along separate, parallel lines, particularly given resource restraints.

We welcome the acquisition of modern.gov and hope that it will indeed make information about Scrutiny more accessible to the general public once it is operational in December. However, this Committee has always emphasised that we should not forget those citizens who do not have access to, or prefer not to use, ICT as their primary method of contact with the Council. We agree that Ward Councillors are vital in bringing their expertise and knowledge of local matters to decision-making. The Committee also recommends that the Council is proactive in employing more inventive and cost-effective ways of involving the public in what Scrutiny does. Members suggested trialling calls for evidence via social media or the Capital Times several months in advance of Committee items. We could also benefit from community events and Cardiff Debate sessions to promote Scrutiny and gain citizens' views within communities, rather than expecting communities to come to us. We would hope that some relatively economical methods could be found for engaging the public and generating enthusiasm about the democratic process, if we are happy to experiment, review and adjust our practices. Members further recommend that more is done to report the outcome of Scrutiny, closing the feedback loop, perhaps via the Capital Times or the Scrutiny webpages.



The Committee noted your proposal that it may be useful to trial webcasting of Scrutiny Committee meetings by holding the next Budget Scrutiny meetings by using the existing equipment in the Council Chamber. The Committee was supportive of this idea, assuming that the pilot is fully assessed in terms of its effectiveness before any longer-term or more costly arrangements are put in place.

We would be grateful for response to the comments and recommendations above and thank you again for attending the meeting.

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 Marie Rosenthal, County Clerk & Monitoring Officer
Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services
Cabinet Office
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
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My Ref / Fy Cyf: CM29343
Your Ref / Eich Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad: 4th December 2014

Councillor Nigel Howells
Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee
c/o Kate Ward
Room 263h
Cardiff County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
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Item 9 Appendix C

Dear / Annwyl Nigel

Policy Review And Performance Scrutiny Committee 30 September 2014

Thank you for your letter dated 8 October 2014, and for the welcome extended to myself, Marie Rosenthal and Paul Keeping at the meeting. It was pleasing to receive Committee's observations and suggestions on improving our citizens' connection with local democracy, and it goes without saying that your Committee's investment of time in producing the excellent report "*Public Engagement With Scrutiny*" has set out a helpful policy agenda for us to progress.

You will be aware that the Council is developing an *Improving Scrutiny* Project as part of its Programme of Organisational Change for the remainder of the financial year, and I am determined to achieve all that can be achieved through this project in setting out ambitions, expectations and plans around public engagement. I agree that engagement with scrutiny should be part of a holistic framework of inclusive governance, touching all parts of the democratic process. The Cabinet is developing a Communications Strategy and about to appoint a new Head of Communications, which will both provide capacity and direction to future engagement work.

Pending these developments, recent successes have included an engagement summit between Cabinet and the Cardiff Youth Council during Local Democracy Week in October, and in January 2015 Constitution Committee will receive a report seeking their approval to introduce public questions at Scrutiny Committee meetings, subject to the support of Scrutiny Chairs. My plan is for this to be piloted in scrutiny, but if it is seen to work there, we could consider extending as appropriate to other Committees of the Council.

At a more general level, I would cite the Cardiff Debate framework introduced by Councillor Phil Bale immediately on taking on the role of Council Leader as a

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holistic and innovative approach to informing and involving the public in the democratic process.

I am pleased that you are in support of my suggestion about piloting innovative engagement. As you say, social media offers new ways of communicating and involving people who might not have understood how councils work. I also concede that there is potential to inform communities more effectively about the improvements that former Scrutiny inquiries have made to Council services. I would like to restate, however, the note of caution I expressed in my response about capacity and expectations. Cabinet reluctantly proposed the loss of four of the 15 posts in Scrutiny Services as part of its 2014/15 budget proposals.

In a perfect world, none of us would have wanted to lose officer capacity in Scrutiny, but this was at the time seen as necessary as part of the Council's overall need to reduce expenditure. One of these posts was the Public Engagement Officer, which had been specifically designed to increase involvement with scrutiny. Another was the loss of the Principal Scrutiny Officer for the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee, which the Operational Manager has had to cover this year, reducing his capacity to secure scrutiny improvement and engagement. Expectation of scrutiny is increasing at both a local and national level, and I would like to suggest that it will be important to remain realistic about what can be prioritised and achieved moving forward.

On a more positive note, I will be happy to support the extension of webcasting to scrutiny committees within the spare capacity currently available in the Council's contract with Public-i. I understand that you considered my suggestion of webcasting the February 2015 Budget Scrutiny meetings at your Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum recently, but felt that the Council Chamber was not an ideal environment for conducting scrutiny. We do not currently have financial capacity to invest in the installation of webcasting hardware in Committee Room 4, but the offer of using the Chamber remains on the table, and I hope that you will keep it under review.

In closing, thank you again for your Committee's commitment to – and championship of – the public engagement agenda, and I look forward to discussing this with you again in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
Yn gywir,



Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Daniel De'Ath
Cabinet Member for Safety, Engagement & Democracy
Diogelwch, Ymgysylltu a Democratiaeth

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

Date: 13 November 2014

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Item 9 Appendix D

Dear Councillor Bale,

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 4 November 2014 Cardiff Debate

On behalf of the Committee thank you for attending this month's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the methodology used for the Cardiff Debate programme. You will recall from your time on the Committee the importance which we have placed on meaningful consultation with Cardiff citizens, particularly over budget matters. Firstly the Committee has asked me to repeat their thanks to the officers involved in delivering the Debate; it is obvious how much work they have put in over a relatively short space of time. I will set out some of the Committee's other comments and recommendations below.

When considering recent budget consultations, the Committee had emphasised that there was a need for much more effective engagement than can be offered by short-term web-based surveys. There has been a distinct need to make the Council's engagement more meaningful and accessible. Members recognise that the Cardiff Debate represents a significant step forward from previous consultation, particularly that around budget proposals. The Committee's own work on public engagement highlighted that it is typically most effective to involve communities by going out to them and by 'piggy backing' on existing community events, rather than by expecting communities to come to the Council with their views. Some Committee Members commended the Debate in terms of how approachable and useful people in their own wards had found the events they attended.

The Committee discussed the inherent difficulties and merits of consulting effectively with the public. We recognise that public engagement is something which few bodies have truly mastered, but Members were largely in agreement that it is nevertheless something which the Council must attempt to do, both to inform the public about the hard budget choices we have to make and to gauge how citizens would prioritise expenditure in more restricted circumstances. Closing the feedback loop is also essential to ensure that the public does not become cynical, believing that their views are given to little or no effect. We recognise that this may have resource implications, but believe that it is important that citizens can trust that their views are taken into account. We recommend that further thought is given to how this can be achieved.



We welcomed your openness to accepting suggestions for improvements to the future of the programme. There were a number of areas which Members believe must be addressed in the next two years of the programme. Several Members feel that the categories which people were asked to prioritise did not give a rounded picture of Council services. Members also feel that if, as officers informed us, the categories were intended to be useful for prioritisation in a partnership context, then they were also not appropriate for this purpose. 'Health Services' as a grouping would not seem to provide Health partners with much valuable data in terms of prioritising their resources, for example. We recommend that these categories are re-thought in any future rounds of engagement.

It was clear from officers' evidence, and from Members own reading of the Cardiff Debate feedback report, that the results of the engagement are very much snapshots of current opinion. Some were clearly coloured by the events upon which they piggy-backed and quite different results may have been obtained in other contexts. We recommend that activity is repeated in order to provide a more reliable result.

In terms of the ward-specific analyses of public priorities, Members feel that the results cannot give an accurate picture of any ward's concerns given that the addresses of those who voted were not recorded and it cannot be guaranteed that views can be attributed to the residents of any particular ward. Members were also concerned that some of the analysis of the results was more subjective than scientific. This was particularly evident in the narrative evaluation of the rates of satisfaction with services provided by the Council, as Members raised during the meeting. Issues such as these made Members question how far the results can be relied upon in future decision making. The Committee was therefore reassured to hear from the Director for Communities that should specific proposals to cut services come forward, these will be fully consulted upon.

Many thanks again for attending the meeting, and I look forward to your response regarding the comments and recommendations the Committee has raised.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Sarah McGill, Director Communities, Housing and Customer Services
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager Partnerships and Citizen Focus
Cabinet Office
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee



Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM29145

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 3rd December 2014

Item 9 Appendix E

Councillor Nigel Howells
Cardiff County Council
Atlantic Wharf
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Annwyl / Dear Nigel

Prap 4 November 2014 - Cardiff Debate

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the comments and recommendations of the Committee in relation to the Cardiff Debate.

I welcome the recognition of the Committee of the efforts made to establish a more accessible engagement programme with our citizens and the success of 'piggy backing' on existing community events. As Officers and I highlighted when we attended the Committee, it is important that we continue to engage and raise awareness and interest in the challenges that all public services are facing. It has also been pleasing to hear feedback from members of the Committee who attended events in their wards that their communities had found the events to be both approachable and useful.

Regarding the next phase of the Cardiff Debate, the Cabinet and I agree that we have a vital role in informing the public about the difficult budget choices we have to make and to gauge how citizens would prioritise expenditure in more restricted circumstances. We have set out our budget proposals for consultation earlier than before to encourage a wider debate on possible solutions and encourage ideas to come forward that could enable us to do things differently. I also believe that by setting out our city-wide proposals on an area basis we have a more transparent basis for discussion signalling our firm intention to move away from a traditional silo-based Directorate approach. Certainly, there are currently a number of ongoing discussions around services and buildings and, whilst our £48.3m budget shortfall is extremely challenging for next year, I very much hope that some new solutions will be found by working together with our communities

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Feedback to citizens on decisions made following consultation and engagement is crucial if people are going to take the time to get involved and to continue to give us their views. Social media offers us some real opportunities to communicate the changes we make and this is an area where there is certainly potential to make our information more accessible to the general public in addition to the website which was launched this year. As part of the Cardiff Debate we will continue to explore the most effective ways of doing this.

In relation to the point raised regarding the categories used at the engagement sessions, we have already taken on board the feedback and incorporated a new voting option for Local Development Plan / Planning. However, regarding Health Services we need to be mindful that a large proportion of our residents do not focus so much on who delivers which service but are very interested in the outcomes that organisations deliver together, whether it be the lead responsibility of the Council, NHS or the Police. As we increasingly work more closely with our partners it is vital that the conversation about public services in Cardiff is owned jointly by our collective organisations and I was really pleased to see the commitment of our partners in supporting the engagement events and providing staff to assist.

At the Committee, Officers and I confirmed that this exercise was never a scientific exercise but one which engaged people in discussing priorities in an informal, non-intimidating and relaxed way at events where they felt comfortable. As some of the Committee members themselves confirmed, often people engaging were people that would never normally get involved in Council consultation and engagement sessions. We therefore need to use this tool to get people involved – alongside the more formal quantitative surveys.

The need to engage Cardiff's citizens in contributing to the future prioritisation, design and delivery of our public services is something that I believe all Members take seriously and, as community leaders, we are well placed to understand the most effective routes to make that happen. Therefore I would welcome any ideas and suggestions from Members about how best to engage people in their own wards over the next three years of the Organisational Development Programme and I look forward to hearing your feedback at future meetings.

Yn gywir,
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Bale', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**CYNGHORYDD / COUNCILLOR PHIL BALE
ARWEINYDD, CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD
LEADER OF THE CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL**

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

Date: 12 December 2014

Councillor Phil Bale
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Item 9 Appendix F

Dear Councillor Bale,

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 December 2014 Corporate Plan 2015-17

Thank you for attending this month's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting to present the approach to developing the 2015-17 Corporate Plan. The Committee warmly welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Plan at an earlier stage than in previous years, having recommended on several occasions that both the corporate planning and budget-setting processes should be brought forward. This was obviously the first step in making the development of the Plan more timely and we hope that next year we may have a full draft of the Plan to consider in the late autumn.

The Committee welcomed the outward focus which you and officers have taken to developing the Plan; we were glad to see that you have considered Core Cities' corporate planning to learn from good practice elsewhere. We note that a thematic approach will be taken, setting out objectives and measures under the Administration's four priorities, rather than taking a Portfolio-based view, in an approach similar to many of the Core Cities.

We appreciated the consideration given to the wider policy context for the Plan, in terms of aligning to national policy and the partnership agenda in Cardiff. The Committee has agreed to consider the refresh of the What Matters strategy when available, so would be grateful for confirmation of that timescale. Members of the Committee have previously recommended that the Plan should be developed in order to suit the needs of all its various audiences – partners, the public, regulatory bodies, officers – and although this was briefly discussed at the meeting, Members wish to underscore that point as the Plan is developed.

Members also welcomed the intention to include definitions of terms such as 'outcome' and 'objective' in the Plan in order to ensure clarity. As you recognised at the meeting, this is a point which both the Committee and the Wales Audit Office have raised in relation to previous years' Plans. Members queried whether training is being put in place to ensure that officers are fully cognisant of these definitions as the Corporate Plan and Directorate Delivery Plans are developed. We noted the Chief Officer's comment that this is being addressed through the Chief Executive's ongoing



engagement activity, but recommend that further thought is given to developing appropriate training instead, perhaps through the managers training programme.

The Chief Officer for Change & Improvement stated that the full draft of the Corporate Plan will be available to consider with the Budget Proposals at our February meeting. There have been many delays in making the report available for all five Committees in the past to support their consideration of the alignment of budget proposals to corporate priorities; we would like to re-emphasise how important it is that it is made available in a timely manner (in order to meet translation deadlines, for example, the Community & Adult Services Committee would need the final draft in the week commencing 19 January 2015, for example).

On a similar note, we were informed that much of the detail of the Council's improvement activity will now fall down to the next layer of Directorate Delivery Plans. Given the extra weight which is being placed on them, we anticipate that the Delivery Plans will be in place in time to support delivery of the Corporate Plan and the Budget, i.e. by 1 April 2015. We would be grateful if you would confirm the timescale for their production.

Members thank you for your openness to accepting the Committee's recommendations in terms of the content of the Plan. There were some points which the Committee felt should be accentuated in the final draft of the Corporate Plan, which did not necessarily stand out in the presentation given to the Committee: the NEETs agenda; the environment (particularly given the importance which the public place on this issue); education targets for older children; the impact of Cardiff's status as a Capital City and the work which is ongoing with neighbouring authorities, particularly given the local government reorganisation agenda.

An issue which has previously been raised is the need to clearly set out the influence which citizen – and officer – engagement activity has had on the development of the Plan. As this did not clearly come through in the officer's presentation, we recommend that the final draft Plan makes the linkages between the results of the Cardiff Debate and the objectives set out in the Plan unambiguous.

The Committee has flagged up the value of comparative performance data on many occasions, particularly with regards to non-Welsh authorities. We noted the Chief Officer's comment that this will be made available where possible, while acknowledging that it is not always feasible. We would still emphasise this point however, and recommend that more effort is put in to finding suitable comparators for inclusion in the final draft Plan for as many measures as possible.

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

- further thought should be given to how the Plan can be developed to suit all of its audiences;
- appropriate training for officers should be developed addressing knowledge around outcomes and objectives and the identification of appropriate measures and target-setting;
- a number of specific points should be emphasised in the Plan: the environment, NEETs, the city's Capital status and cross-boundary working;
- the influence of citizen and staff consultation on the Plan should be clearly set out;
- suitable comparative data should be included in the final draft Plan;

- the final draft Plan should be made available in time for all Scrutiny Committees' budget meetings (allowing time for translation for the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee's papers);
- Directorate Delivery Plans should be in place for the start of the new financial year and we would like the timescales confirmed.

Many thanks again for attending the meeting, and I look forward to seeing the points above addressed in the draft Corporate Plan which the Committee considers in February. As such, most of the points in this letter do not require a formal response, although I would be grateful if you would confirm the planned timescale for producing the Directorate Delivery Plans, the What Matters refresh and the final draft Corporate Plan.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Martin Hamilton, Chief Officer Change and Improvement
Cabinet Office
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

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

Date: 12 December 2014

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Item 9 Appendix G

Dear Councillor Hinchey,

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 December 2014 Budget Monitoring 2014/15 and 2015/16 Budget Proposals for Consultation

Thank you for attending this month's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss the current year's budget and the process for developing the 2015/16 proposals.

Budget Monitoring 2014/15 Month 6

While recognising that the overall Council position has improved since the Month 4 projections were reported, the Committee remains concerned about the Council's monitoring position. In particular, Members are concerned that many Directorate positions continue to show considerable variances against 2014/15 savings targets. Members questioned whether this was the result of 'poor budgeting' or 'poor management', feeling that both are likely to be true. You stated that challenge sessions with Cabinet Members and Directors are starting to bear fruit in ensuring that the budget position 'goes in the right direction' and that you are planning as far as possible to avoid scenarios such as the unanticipated costs in continuing healthcare which the Health and Social Care directorate has experienced this year. Given the underachievement against many Directorate savings proposals, the Committee would like to reiterate the point it has made on several occasions about the need for visibility and scrutiny of methods for achieving alternative savings.

Members were concerned about the effect of the delays in implementing savings proposals agreed as part of the 2014/15 budget, for example in finding a new management operator for St David's Hall. As a number of the 2015/16 budget proposals which have been put forward for consultation include similar projects, the Committee emphasised the need to drive forward such projects.

Members noted the considerable variance in the Capital Programme and in particular the slippage and overspend where the Education programme is concerned. We would like to bring this to the attention of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and I have therefore copied this letter to the Chair of that Committee for information.



Budget 2015/16 – consultation proposals

Thank you for setting out the context of and process for developing the 2015/16 Budget Proposals. Having for some years pushed for budget proposals to be released earlier, the Committee very much appreciated that the public have been given a longer period during which to share their views. The Committee considered the Cardiff Debate methodology at its November meeting, and while there were divergent views among Committee members about the effectiveness of the programme, the principal of consulting on the budget at the earliest possible stage is one which we endorse. Although it is not an easy issue to solve, the Committee recommends that more is done to advertise the remaining engagement events and to ensure that those who prefer not to access online surveys are aware that they can obtain paper versions from some Council buildings. The Committee would also like to understand at what level of response (as a percentage of the population) the Cardiff Debate results will be judged to be statistically reliable, in comparison with similar budget engagement activities nationally. I would be grateful if this information could be provided. The Committee asks to have access to the results of the Cardiff Debate available at its February budget meeting, so I would be grateful if your officers would work with Scrutiny Services to ensure that they are available.

In terms of the proposals themselves, the Committee will be undertaking a more detailed scrutiny at its February meeting once the results of consultation are known and therefore did not get into detailed discussions at this meeting. However, given the Month 6 position, Members would like to reiterate the concerns which they expressed in previous years regarding the achievability of budget savings. Many savings seem to have been proposed in areas reporting shortfalls this year against similar savings targets. The Committee was concerned that this year no contingency seems to have been built into the budget proposals and recommend that this is addressed in the final proposals.

Directorate Budget briefings

Finally the Committee would like to express its thanks to the Cabinet Members and officers who attended the meeting to brief the Committee on their budget monitoring positions and to set out the process for developing the 2015/16 budget proposals. We appreciated their time and the contextual information which this item provided.

Thank you again for attending the Committee meeting. Although there are recommendations included in this letter, we will look to see how they are addressed in the final budget proposals in February, so there is no need to provide a formal response. However, I would be grateful for your assurance that the results of the Cardiff Debate will be available for our February meeting.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Councillor Phil Bale, Leader of the City of Cardiff Council
Councillor Richard Cook, Chair Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Safety, Engagement & Democracy
Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources
Sarah McGill, Director Communities, Housing and Customer Services
Neil Hanratty, Director Economic Development
Marie Rosenthal, County Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Cabinet Office
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

