

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Com Papers/July 2012
Date: 11 July 2012

Councillor Heather Joyce
Leader
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Joyce

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee – Performance Quarter 4

I would like to thank you and the Cabinet for agreeing to the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the 2011/12 Performance Quarter 4 report at its meeting on Wednesday 4 July 2012. Our thanks also go to Mike Davies, Christine Salter and Philip Lenz for attending. During their discussions following the scrutiny, the Members wished to pass on the following concerns and observations.

Reporting Approach

The Committee is aware that the Performance Quarter 4 report would normally be presented to Cabinet in the first instance, and Members are particularly grateful to have had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the corporate performance reporting and performance management arrangements at their first formal meeting. The Committee welcomed the offer of a report tailored to their own Terms of Reference should they decide it would be useful in the future, for example more detailed sickness absence monitoring information.

Presentation/Format

Members on several occasions requested that abbreviations are published in full. If necessary the report should contain a glossary.

Management or Monitoring

Members had some concerns that whilst there is clear evidence of a performance monitoring mechanism in place, there is less evidence of its link to performance management arrangements. They observed that within the current Personal Performance and Development Review (PPDR) mechanism it seems that no sanctions are applied where Chief Officers under or overspend budgets, or under perform on their targets. The Committee appreciates that at any one time Chief Officers will have many targets to pursue and that there may be greater merit in considering a balanced scorecard approach to performance management.

Trend Analysis

The Committee wishes to offer a view that performance reporting within the current report card approach would have more value if there was clearer trend

analysis. Arriving at the whole picture requires questions to be asked as illustrated on a number of occasions during the scrutiny. For example, page 30 reports good news for Committee and Member Services by providing figures of the number of Member meetings supported during 2011/12. However an absence of data for previous years means it is unclear whether this is good or bad news. The Committee therefore welcomed the offer of trend information as to how the picture has changed compared with previous years, particularly for example around Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Members sought clarification on whether the responses to FOI requests are made public and how many requests were outstanding after 20 working days.

Targets

The Committee has previously observed there are few numerical targets listed in the performance quarterly reports, and has questioned whether there is potential to refine the information provided to include targets (*Oct 2011*). The new Committee similarly felt there was an absence of targets, little explanation of how targets were arrived at, and the process by which targets had been validated as appropriately challenging.

Quality of Content/data

During the scrutiny Members made reference to several specific service area reports, which officers offered to pass on as appropriate and the Committee will refer to the appropriate Scrutiny Committees. Firstly more explanation is sought supporting the data around Houses in Multiple Occupation. Secondly target setting for Cardiff East Park & Ride, and thirdly increasing numbers of Delayed Transfers of Care.

Sickness Absence Monitoring

The Committee noted that Sickness Absence has become a more prominent feature of the quarterly report and that the target of 10.88FTE days for 2011/12 had not been achieved. Whilst this remains a matter of concern for the Committee, Members wish to stress the importance of evidence based analysis. The Committee sought further clarification and analysis of the reasons for the 2011/12 outturn sickness absence figures so that if further analysis found the reason given in the report to be incorrect the explanation should be amended. (*ref page 4, paragraph 3*)

Single Status – Appeals Process

Members were interested in the progress of the appeals process following Single Status. They noted that the appeals process for considering 1,500 appeals is underway and it will be necessary to increase the number of panels held each week in the autumn to ensure that all appeals relating to staff in detriment are processed by March 2013.

Future Work Programming

During the scrutiny several items were offered to the Committee for future consideration. Items that have been noted are: information governance; data

protection; grant funding – equality impact assessment; and training in the Council's risk methodology approach.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee. The concerns raised in this letter are for your consideration and a response where indicated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH CLARK
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Jon House, Chief Executive
Mike Davies, Head of Scrutiny, Performance & Improvement
Christine Salter, Corporate Chief Officer (Corporate)
Philip Lenz, Corporate Chief Officer (Shared)
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager