

## POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 MARCH 2013

Present: County Councillor Clark (Chairperson)  
County Councillors Bale, Hunt, Keith Jones, Knight, Lloyd,  
Mitchell, Robson and Walker

### 49 : MINUTES

The Minutes of the Joint Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson:-

### 50 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part III of the Members' Code of Conduct to declare any interest in general terms and to complete personal interest forms at the start of the meeting and then, prior to the commencement of the discussion of the item in question, specify whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest. If the interest is prejudicial Members would be asked to leave the meeting and if the interest is personal, Members would be invited to stay, speak and vote.

Councillor Robson declared a personal interest in the following item as he was a Member of the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee.

### 51: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRIEFING

The Committee at its meeting in January 2013 considered the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which sets out the key strategic risks faced by the Council. The Register identified Information Governance as one of those risks citing the risk of 'a lack of clarity around information governance' which could lead the Council exposed to the Information Commissioner's intervention and financial penalties.

The Committee received a briefing report to give Members the opportunity to consider the Council's framework, resources and policies for the management of information. This briefing had been requested by

Members of the Committee following consideration of the Corporate Risk Register.

The report detailed the current controls in place within the Corporate Risk Register to mitigate risks. Additional proposed improvement actions agreed by the Cabinet when it considered the Risk Register in December 2012 together with the issues by service area that had been highlighted by Cabinet at that meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Heather Joyce (Leader) to the meeting together with Mike Davies, Head of Scrutiny, Performance and Improvement and Vivienne Pearson, Operational Manager, Improvement and Information.

Councillor Joyce (Leader) gave a brief statement in which she advised the Committee that she agreed with Members that a longer briefing was needed on this in-depth programme and thanked the Chairperson for giving her the opportunity to attend the meeting.

Councillor Joyce advised that Information Management tended to be a 'catch all' discussion of the management and control of information generated and held by the Council. Information Management was the term also used to describe Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Act, however in reality this was only the tip of the iceberg. Councillor Joyce advised the Committee that Mike Davies and Vivienne Pearson would give further details as part of their presentation to highlight some of the good issues together with areas that they believed needed more focus. Compliance with the Legislative requirements placed on the Authority would also be included in the presentation.

In conclusion Councillor Joyce (Leader) stated that as part of the Administration she was pleased to work with Scrutiny and looked forward to working with this Committee. Councillor Joyce reminded Members that the requirement under the Freedom of Information Act and Information Management was included in the Members' Handbook and training sessions had been carried out to assist Members in these matters.

Mike Davies, Head of Scrutiny Performance and Improvement gave the following presentation in which he advised Members that Information Management was the collection and management of information from one or more sources and the distribution of that information to one or more audiences. He added that he was pleased to have Scrutiny's involvement in this complex area and compliance area and due to the

nature of Information Management if Members were minded to look at these areas they would have his full support.

#### Key Areas and Issues

- Information Requests;
- Information Security;
- Information as an Asset;
- Information Sharing;
- Legislative Framework;
- Budget;
- Staff Capacity.

#### Information Requests include:

- Freedom of Information Requests;
- Subject Access Requests;
- Environmental Information Requests.

Key Risks include enforcement action by Information Commissioner; financial penalties of up to £500k issued by Information Commissioner (Data Protection Act) and damage to the Council's reputation.

#### Information Security

- Management of Information in line with Data Protection requirements;
- Covers both paper and electronic information;
- Records Management and classification.

Key Risks include the culture of the organisation and ability to change; and staff Capacity to deliver this significant agenda.

#### Information Sharing

- The Council has signed up to the Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI);
- Ensure that where the Council share or need others to process information it does so legally and appropriately.

#### Legislative Background

- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- Human Rights Act 2010;

- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

#### Budget (Central Cost)

- £200k staffing costs within the Improvement and Information Management Team (including Records Centre and Glamorgan Archives);
- No formal identification of all staff costs across the Council.

#### Information Management Capacity

- 8 existing staff based in the Improvement and Information Management Team (including 5 in the Record Centre);
- Inconsistent approach to deployment of staff across the Council (this was currently being addressed);
- Investigating the potential use of enabling technologies (to be able to use one system).

An outline was given of the current actions including:-

- Reviewing policies, procedures and processes across the Council;
- Standardising processes;
- Improving capacity and accountability;
- Delivering training;
- Raising the profile of the importance of information as an 'Asset'.

#### External Views

- Recognition that there has been a significant improvement around key aspects of the Information Management Agenda;
- Review the approach to electronic document and records management (EDRMS) to ensure that it supports the Council's Information Management Strategy;
- Improve Freedom of Information request compliance and identify opportunities to reduce the volume of requests;
- Expand the terms of reference and membership of the Information Security Forum;
- Increase the range of pre-published information.

#### Next Steps

- WAO Feedback Report on Information Management (March);
- Phased capacity building (April – December 2013);
- Preparation and approval of the Council's Information Governance Strategy (September);

- Future deployment of an electronic Records Managements solution e.g Sharepoint.

The Chairperson thanked the Officer for his informative presentation following which she invited the Committee's comments and observations.

- In response to a query about the location of the 8 staff, Members were advised that most were based in the Records Centre (5 were based in the Records Centre and 3 were based in the Central Team dealing with Data Requests and Data Information). Members were advised that the Council were looking to increase capacity for the Central Team due to increased volumes of work over the past two years.
- With regard to requests it was confirmed that in 2008 there were approximately 3-4 hundred requests a year this figure was currently 1500 requests. Members were advised that with regard to the nature of requests a breakdown would be provided for Members' information.
- With regard to costs Members were advised that the cost varied depending on the complexity of the information requested. Some requests were straightforward due to information being readily accessible. Other requests were more complex and took longer to access the required information, making it more costly to comply.
- A Member highlighted the fact that a lot of open information and data could be made available on the website, avoiding requests for information.
- The Committee was advised that due to the nature of this area there tended to be a number of acronyms and technical terms. It was suggested that a list of these terms would be useful to Members.
- In terms of capacity, Members were advised that there had been a lot of 'fire fighting', particularly with regard to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, which needed a large amount of forward planning. Staff were looking at ways of improving Data Protection. Members were advised that the service area was open to ideas on how to improve the service. There was a need to establish where models of best practice could be found to enable the Team to follow those Models and make recommendations to Cabinet.

- Information was sought as to whether there had been any re-arrangement in the staffing in terms of skillset. Members were advised that there would shortly be an enhancement to the existing staffing levels and the service area would be advertising in the next few weeks. This would result in there being 5 staff in Performance Management and 5 staff in Information Management which would be a huge improvement. In addition, Members were advised that there also needed to be a cultural shift in the Organisation and an innovative solution to come up with resources to move the Agenda forward. Members were urged to play a role in bringing Scrutiny to this.
- The issue of sharing data in terms of IT infrastructure was discussed. Officers were asked their view about the sharing of data. Members were advised that this had not yet been addressed by the Authority. If Scrutiny were minded to look at this in depth it would be useful to learn more about systems in other parts of the Organisation. Systems that interact with each other and have the relevant safeguards in place for the sharing of information would be preferable.
- In response to a query about protocols for redaction of information Members were advised that there was legislation with regard to redaction. There were limited areas that redaction could be applied such as personal information or commercially sensitive information. Currently in the case of FOI requests they were allocated a work number and allocated to an Officer who would then compile a response. An exemption would be added and the Team would test the merits of the exemption. Should significant issues be found the matter would be referred to the Monitoring Officer for legal advice.
- A Member referred to performance data in terms of FOI requests and was interested to know how many requests were out of time. Officers agreed to provide this information.
- Officers were surprised to hear from a Member that he had experienced delays in receiving responses to requests for information prior to becoming a Councillor but following his election he had not experienced such difficulties. Members were advised that this would be looked into.
- Members were advised that the processes had been improved, there had been a period of time where there had been a backlog of appeals,

this had now been added into the process and the level of appeals had now reduced. Requests for information were now dealt with centrally.

- Information was sought about the sources for the requests in terms of public, press, commercial etc. Officers confirmed that a breakdown of this information could be provided to the Committee.
- In response to a query about off-site storage of records, the Committee was advised that arrangements for storage were managed by service areas. It was confirmed that not all records had to be kept forever. It was confirmed that records were also kept at Glamorgan Archives. There was a need to review the information and locations of records being stored to avoid duplication however there were currently insufficient resources to undertake this major piece of work. With more digitised records being available a decision would need to be taken in the longer term as to what should be retained and a review would be undertaken at a future date.
- Reference was made to the fact that as a public sector organisation there should be few secrets and the majority of the information should be open data which should be more accessible. In terms of performance it was suggested better management information should be available to decision makers in order to measure performance in terms of performance and management accounting.

In response Members were advised that some data lends itself to be open however some things in the Council such as information in areas such as Social Services would not be appropriate to be open. There were two issues with regard to culture (i) getting appropriate systems in place and (ii) getting people comfortable in releasing data. Members noted this was still a long way off.

- A Member picked up on the comment about external storage and the cost and sought information as to what action was being taken in respect of this. It was the view of the Member that the Council should be driving this down particularly as there was space in County Hall. It was suggested that digitisation of data should be the way forward in order to reduce the costs of storage.

Members were advised that in terms of storage in County Hall this was part of the Our Space project. With regard to digitisation Members were advised that there would be significant cost

implications to the back scanning of documents, it would also be impractical.

The Chairperson thanked the Officers for their presentation and for their responses to Members questions.

Following discussion on the way forward it was

AGREED – That a letter be sent by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to Councillor Heather Joyce (Leader) thanking her and Officers for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 6 March 2013 and to convey the following observations of the Committee:-

- Members found this to be a very instructive session. Members were informed about the potential financial and reputational risks to the Council if information requests were not handled correctly.
- Members also heard about the current capacity issues in the Improvement and Information team, as well as the need to review the Council's physical records storage in terms of both central and service-area based stores.
- The Committee noted that information regarding information requests was being built into the quarterly Cabinet Delivery and Performance reports. The Committee would aim to build similar information into the Committee's own monitoring reports.
- The Committee was also interested to hear about information as an asset –in terms of how it was presented to and used by managers, in terms of both budget and performance information. The Committee intend to consider whether to include this subject in its work programme for the coming year.
- Members noted the comments from the Cabinet Member and Officers that further input from the Committee in terms of a more in-depth inquiry would be welcomed. Given some of the issues highlighted above, the Committee would consider undertaking an inquiry at the earliest opportunity in the next municipal year, subject to full Committee agreement of the 2013/14 work programme.



During the discussions Members sought the following further information:

- A breakdown of the source of information requests received by the Council (for example whether they come from a private individual, Member, or media organisation);
- The types of requests received (e.g. Subject Access Requests/Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Requests; to which service area they are directed, and which subject matter they cover);
- Number of information requests which are within or outside the required timescales for response;
- The average cost of fulfilling an information request, once this has been determined. Given officers' comments that the highest and lowest costs can be quite divergent, Members would also be interested to have that information.

## 52 : STRATEGIC EQUALITIES PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2011/12 AND 2012/13

The Committee's terms of reference include responsibility for scrutiny of the Council's Corporate Equalities policies, schemes and action plans.

The 2010 Equality Act created a new public sector equality duty, tasking all public bodies with preparing and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan every four years that covers all 'protected characteristics' in respect of the following areas:-

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or Belief;
- Sex and Sexual Orientation.

Cardiff Council's Strategic Equality Plan was published on 2 April 2012. Committee received a progress report to provide Members with an opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the first Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Review, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 14 March 2013.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member, Communities Housing and Social Justice to the meeting together with Sarah McGill, Corporate Chief Officer (Communities), Rachel Jones, Operational Manager (Partnerships and Citizen Focus) and Luke Burton, Principal Citizen Focus Officer.

Councillor Thorne gave a statement in which she advised Members that Cardiff Council had a legal duty with all other Welsh public bodies to produce a Strategic Equalities Plan every four years. The Council's Plan 'Everyone Matters' was launched in April 2012 and sets out how Cardiff Council would strive to make Cardiff a more inclusive city for its citizens, visitors and staff.

Councillor Thorne advised that many people fell within the different protected characteristic groups, but it was important to highlight that not everyone that falls into those groups were vulnerable. Councillor Thorne stated that it was also important to mention that there were similar barriers to everyone who wanted to access the Council's services but couldn't whether they were part of a protected group or not. This was represented in the objectives that had been set and highlighted in the needs assessment.

The Cabinet Member advised that further information would be presented on the objectives in the What Matters document together with how these had been developed.

Every public body in Wales was required to review its strategic equalities plan annually. Guidance released from the Equality and Human Rights Commission in November also stated that public bodies in Wales needed to review the development year of the strategic equalities plan. To that end Cabinet had decided to review the development year 2011/12 and the first year 2012/13 together. Any additional work in quarter 4 would be published in April 2013.

Cabinet had worked hard to ensure that equalities was mainstreamed throughout the organisation as this was the only way it could achieve access to opportunities for everyone and ensure a level playing field. Ensuring that equalities was mainstreamed and part of everyone's 'day job' had been one of the main priorities of the strategic equalities plan and had been carried out in several ways:-

- Political support from Councillor Thorne and other Cabinet colleagues together with high level officer support;
- Embedding strategic equality objectives into the new corporate plan as well as previous service area business plans;
- All Managers in the Organisation now have equality objectives as part of their Personal and Professional Development Review process.

Councillor Thorne advised that next year Officers in the Citizen Focus Team would be working even closer with service area Lead Officers and performance teams to ensure objectives were embedded further into the service areas. This would mean that service areas would own the objectives as well as being responsible for monitoring them alongside the Citizen Focus Team.

The Strategic Equalities Plan was facilitated by the Citizen Focus Team but was the responsibility of the whole Organisation. There have been many achievements over the past two years but there was still a long way to go.

In conclusion Councillor Thorne advised that next year Cabinet would be concentrating on embedding the objectives further into service areas, ensuring equality impact assessments influence projects, policies and programmes and equality monitoring across the organisation would be improved to ensure Cabinet knows who uses and needs the Council's services the most.

Rachel Jones, Operational Manager (Partnerships and Citizen Focus) and Luke Burton, Principal Citizen Focus Officer gave the following presentation:-

Rachel Jones gave an overview including a recap of the 2010 Act; Development of the Strategic Equality Plan; Annual Review 2011-12/12-13 and way forward.

2010 Single Equality Act – One Act to replace previous legislation which includes the following 'Protected Characteristics' :-

- Race;
- Disability;
- Gender;

- Sexual Orientation;
- Religion, belief and non belief;
- Age;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage or Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- (Welsh Language).

The Cabinet had produced a document entitled 'Everyone Matters', this document would be embedded into the Corporate Plan.

### Everyone Matters

- Builds on previous Equality Schemes;
- Based on the What Matters Partnership Strategy;
- Informed by needs assessment and ongoing consultation and engagement;
- Focuses on outcomes;
- Mainstreaming activity into the Council's Corporate Plan and Service area Business Plans;
- Detailed actions developed in collaboration with Services and Stakeholders.

A single Needs Assessment had been undertaken to gather information in relation to Health, Employment, Crime and Education.

### Business Intelligence

- Spatial variation not changed in 15 years;
- More than ever Cardiff was a city of two halves;
- The very poorest had rapidly increased in number over recent years and continued to do so;
- Almost one in five (18%) of Cardiff residents lived in the most income deprived communities in Wales;
- Income Deprivation was the main determinant in most outcomes across the city.

An outline was given of the 7 key objectives, each objective was contained in the Delivery Plan of the Corporate Plan together with the linkages.

Luke Burton, Principal Citizen Focus Officer provided the following information as part of the presentation:

### Annual Review

- The first reporting period runs from 6 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 (Listed Bodies must publish a report by 31 March in the year following a reporting period);
- The Wales specific equality duties set out the requirement to report annually under the heading “Reports by Authorities on Compliance with the General Duty”;
- Two year review to align with the business planning process.

An Annual Review must set out the following:

- The steps the Authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- How the Authority has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty and in meeting the Wales specific equality duties;
- Any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the Authority’s arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- Progress towards fulfilling each of the Authority’s equality objectives;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the Authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
- Specified employment information, including information on training and pay (unless already published elsewhere).

### Annual Review 11/12 – 12/13

#### Engagement

- Engagement events December 2011 for Strategic Equality Plan;
- Older persons engagement with 300 older people;
- Business intelligence sharing with partners;
- Partnership work streams;
- Staff Networks;
- ‘Ask Cardiff’ Residents Survey;
- Super School Survey;
- Community Group Networks.

Members were advised there had been a large number of Engagement Partners involved in the Annual Plan.

The Annual Plan included details of Good Practice in relation to

- (i) Equality Impact Assessing the Budget Proposals 2012/13 – 13/14;
- (ii) Welfare Reform Task Group;
- (iii) Generic Good Practice.

### Way Forward

- Improved monitoring of the Council's own staff – 2.3% of staff had declared they had a disability – the national average was around 20%;
- Improved monitoring of service users;
- Develop co-production with key partners through the partnership work stream and target areas of need;
- Further development of the Welfare Reform Task Group;
- Further embed the Equality Impact Assessment process in service areas;
- Increase engagement with protected characteristic groups;
- Roll out of Families First packages;
- Realign the strategic equality objectives to the Corporate Plan;
- Further engagement with third sector partners.

The Chairperson thanked the Officers for their presentations, Members made the following observations:

- It was acknowledged that this was an important agenda especially for people in deprived communities. Concern was expressed that supporting people in deprived communities had not been included in the 'protected characteristics' list. Clarification was sought as to whether this was still a requirement.

Members were advised that there was a difference between the legal requirement and what the Plan was trying to reflect, it gave an indication of where people might have barriers in terms of accessing services but did not give the full picture. With regard to addressing inequality in Cardiff it was found that people with disabilities were less likely to have employment opportunities; action to address the issues listed in the protected characteristics would be included in the objectives.

- Reference was made to the fact that Welsh Language was specifically mentioned in the list of 'Protected Characteristics'. Information was sought as to whether other minority languages would come under the umbrella of race as these other minority languages were equally important.

The Cabinet Member responded saying that the issue of languages was massive but there were so many different languages. There was also the issue of people in some of the communities in Cardiff that

had difficulty speaking English and difficulty with reading and writing, it was a case of drilling down to identify the real issues and barriers. Barriers were not just about racial background they were also about opportunities to learn properly in people's own languages. Members were advised that the Council was legally required to put the Welsh Language alongside the protected characteristics.

In terms of disability, Members were advised there were schemes in place to help people with disability, the Council has a reasonable adjustment policy where service areas must put in place measures and appropriate facilities to assist more disabled people in the workplace, with regard to the statistics Members heard there was still more the Council could do to improve;

- In response to a query about people being reluctant to move from welfare benefits into the workplace because they feared difficulties if they needed to re-apply because of their disabilities, Members were advised that the Welfare Rights Team would be able to assist and give advice to help someone who might want to return to work from being on benefit, as often they would be better off working.
- With regard to inequality in society, it was the view of a Member that the greatest inequality was between those who were economically advantaged and those who were economically disadvantaged or in poverty and that this should be the starting point for providing support and targeting resources.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council had improved its position and the data collected helped to target resources. With regard to the protected characteristics Members were advised that just because a person fell within a category did not mean they were disadvantaged, the Council needs to consider people that are disadvantaged and need assistance, not just people that fall within the terms of the protected characteristics. Members were advised that there was a legal requirement to focus on the headings in the protected characteristics when putting the Plan together, Members were assured that socioeconomic issues/poverty was at the heart of the Everyone Matters document.

- Concern was expressed that some of the phrases in the document appeared to be woolly and contained in-house jargon.

- A Member expressed his support for the work of the Welfare Task Group and was pleased to see Cardiff leading the way with good practice on this issue.
- Reference was made to the policies and procedures section, Members were pleased to see details of good practice during 2011/12 to 2012/13 in Adult Social Care, including the fact that Housing Benefit Advice was now available on the website in British Sign Language and in paragraph 5.23 (page 24) The Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy and Procedure had been reviewed and amended to reflect the changes to the Equality Act 2010. It was suggested that there were other Council procedures that needed to be reviewed and focused on in the future, these included Bullying and Harassment, Grievance and Whistleblowing procedures and information was sought about the timescales for these to be reviewed.
- With regard to other areas such as Procurement where the Council were dealing with other Organisations with similar policies and processes information was sought as to whether these policies would be reviewed as part of the 'What Matters' document. Members were assured that the service area had tried to reflect the work ongoing in the Council and Partner Organisations to ensure it meets the equalities agenda.
- Members were pleased to hear about the increased footfall to the new community hubs which offer accessibility and a wide range of services and advice.
- Reference was made to page 78 of the Document under the heading Gender Pay and Contract; the data was shown for numerous categories including 'Gender by Salary' but there was no data with regard to salary for ethnic minority, sexual orientation, or disability groups, clarification was sought as to whether this had been missed. Officers agreed to follow up the request to provide this information if possible.
- It was acknowledged that the document contained a large amount of data and narrative in terms of equalities, clarification was needed about the budget that would be required to address some of these issues.
- Members were advised that monitoring was the key focus of the work and to ensure it was embedded into all the services to be able to



identify gaps and share data, the sharing of data was critical to gain the whole picture.

- In response to a query about data collection and the methodology for collating data on employees particularly those with disabilities. Members were advised that this was an action for next year it had been piloted in three service areas, however staff cannot be compelled to put forward the information, the key thing was to be open about collecting data, there were still some technical difficulties that needed to be addressed.
- Information was sought about the progress of the BME Employee Networks in terms of progressing outcomes and awareness raising. Members were advised that it was intended to have a re-launch of this network.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their responses to Members questions.

Following discussion on the way forward it was

AGREED – That a letter be sent by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member Communities, Housing and Social Justice thanking her and her Officers for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 6 March 2013 and to convey the following observations of the Committee:-

- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the review prior to its presentation to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Members were of the view that whilst there was evidently much work to do, the Council was making a laudable effort to meet its duties in what was a challenging arena;
- The Committee noted the aim to address barriers to all groups in accessing services, both those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and those without. The Committee also noted the comments that not everyone in the protected groups was necessarily 'vulnerable', and welcomed comments that the Council hoped to go beyond the legal requirements to eliminate discrimination for those in disadvantage in other ways, such as those facing socio-economic inequality. Members wished to stress the importance of addressing

issues at a young age, for example in terms of anti-bullying work in areas such as sexual orientation;

- The Committee noted the Council's aim to mainstream equalities duties, and that the Citizen Focus team would be working closely with service areas to ensure that actions to meet these duties were embedded in service area business plans in the coming year, this would be borne in mind when the Committee considers those business plans which fall under its remit in the coming months;
- Members noted that the Citizen Focus team had undertaken considerable work in the past year to develop the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process. For example, ensuring that all 2013/14 budget proposals had gone through an Equality Screening process. Members noted that the team would be working to embed the Equality Impact Assessment process further in the coming year and would particularly help service areas to improve the quality of Impact Assessments. The Committee hope to establish a working group to consider the development of the 2014/15 budget in more depth in the coming year, and will look to build more detailed consideration of the Equality Impact Assessment process as it relates to the budget proposals into its work;
- Members noted that it was intended to improve service area equalities monitoring data in the coming year, to ensure there was more consistent information available regarding service users. The Committee will bear this is in mind during future scrutiny of the subject;
- The Committee noted that some of the required equalities monitoring data for Council staff was missing in the progress report. For example the number of employees split by pay and grade, against all protected characteristics and would urge officers to rectify this error and to ensure that there are no further data omissions;
- Finally, the Committee noted officers' comments that there had been some difficulties in the administration of specific Employee Equality Groups, and that it was anticipated that this situation would improve in the next twelve months.

### 53: CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee received a report and appendices of correspondence sent by the Chair on behalf of the Committee summing up the Committee's comments, concerns and recommendations regarding the issues previously considered. Responses received to date were also attached to the report.

AGREED – That the report and attached correspondence be noted.

### 54: AUDIT PANEL & AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee were presented with the Audit Committee minutes of its meeting on 3 December 2013 for information.

AGREED – That the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 3 December 2013 be noted.