

---

**CORRESPONDENCE – INFORMATION REPORT**

---

**Background**

1. Following most 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 attached correspondence is for information only.

**Issues**

2. At the Committee meeting on 6 March 2013, Members considered the Council's approach to Information Management. A copy of the Chair's letter to the Leader, Councillor Joyce, following the meeting is attached at **Appendix A**. The response is attached at **Appendix B**.
3. At the same meeting, the Committee considered the Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Review. A copy of the Chair's letter to the Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Communities, Housing & Social Justice, following the meeting is attached at **Appendix C**. The response is attached at **Appendix D**.

**Legal Implications**

4. 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 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 of 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**

5. 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.

MIKE DAVIES  
Head of Scrutiny, Performance & Improvement  
11 April 2013

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

Date: 12 March 2013

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



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Councillor Joyce,

## **POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRIEFING**

Thank you very much for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013 to brief the Committee on the Council's management of information; Members found it a very instructive session. Members were informed about the potential financial and reputational risks to the Council if information requests are not handled correctly. They 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 is being built into the quarterly Cabinet Delivery and Performance reports. We will aim to build similar information into the Committee's own monitoring reports.

The Committee is also interested in information as an asset – in other words how it is presented to and used by managers, in terms of both budget and performance information. We will also consider whether to include this subject in our work programme for the coming year.

We noted comments from you 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, we will consider undertaking an inquiry at the earliest opportunity in the next municipal year, subject to full Committee agreement of the 2013/14 work programme.

There were a number of points about which Members asked for 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, we would also be interested to have that information;

Thank you again for having attending the meeting. I would be grateful if you would ensure that officers work with Scrutiny Services to help ensure that Members receive the information requested above in good time.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH CLARK**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Mike Davies, Head of Service - Scrutiny Performance and Improvement  
Vivienne Pearson, Operational Manager, Improvement and Information  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager  
Members of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee

**LEADER'S OFFICE  
SWYDDFA'R ARWEINYDD**



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

My Ref / Fy Nghyf: CM24103

Your Ref / Eich Cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: 14th March 2013

Councillor Elizabeth Clarke  
Chair Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Butetown  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear / Annwyl Elizabeth

**Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Information Management Briefing**

Thank you for your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013, and for your helpful and constructive comments set out therein.

I am pleased to hear that the Committee is considering undertaking an inquiry into the important area of "Information Management" as, as was made clear at the meeting, I believe that this is an area that could benefit from Scrutiny consideration and involvement.

With regards to the requests for further information set out in your letter, I have asked Mike Davies (Head of Scrutiny, Performance & Improvement) to provide you with this information as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,  
Yn gywir,

**COUNCILLOR / CYNGHORYDD HEATHER JOYCE  
LEADER OF CARDIFF COUNCIL  
ARWEINYDD CYNGOR CAERDYDD**

**PLEASE REPLY TO / ATEBWCH I:**

Leader's Office, Room 525, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW  
Tel (029) 2087 2500 Fax (029) 2087 2599

Swyddfa'r Arweinydd, Ystafell 525, Neuadd y Sir, Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Caerdydd CF10 4UW  
Ffôn (029) 2087 2500 Ffacs (029) 2087 2599

100% recycled paper  
100% o bapur a ailgylchwyd



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

Date: 12 March 2013

Councillor Lynda Thorne  
Cabinet Member – Communities, Housing & Social Justice  
Cardiff Council  
c/o Cabinet Support Office  
Room 529  
County Hall  
Cardiff CF10 4UW



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Councillor Thorne,

**POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013  
STRATEGIC EQUALITIES PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW 2011/12 – 2012/13**

On behalf of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee, thank you for attending the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013 to discuss the first annual monitoring review of the Strategic Equalities Plan, 'Everyone Matters'. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the review prior to its presentation to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Members felt that, while there is evidently much work to do, the Council is making a laudable effort to meet its duties in what is a challenging arena.

Following consideration of the issues raised during the meeting, Committee members agreed that I should write to you to outline our key observations, which are set out below:

- The Committee noted your hope to address barriers to all groups in accessing services, both those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and those without. We also noted your comments that not everyone in these protected groups is necessarily 'vulnerable', and welcomed comments that the Council hopes to go beyond the legal requirements to eliminate discrimination for those in disadvantage in other ways, such as those facing socio-economic inequality. We would 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 will be working closely with service areas to ensure that actions to meet these duties are embedded in service area business plans in the coming year. We will bear this in mind when the Committee considers those business plans which fall under its remit in the coming months;
- Members also noted that the Citizen Focus team has 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 went through an Equality Screening process. We also note that the team will be working to embed the Equality Impact Assessment process further in the

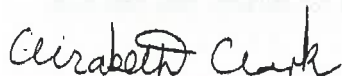


coming year and will particularly help service areas to improve the quality of Impact Assessments. The Committee hopes to establish a working group to consider the development of the 2014/15 budget in more depth in the coming year, and will look to build more detailed consideration of the Equality Impact Assessment process as it relates to the budget proposals into its work;

- Members noted that it is intended to improve service area equalities monitoring data in the coming year, so that there is more consistent information available regarding service users. The Committee will bear this 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. We 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 is anticipated that this situation will improve in the next twelve months.

Thank you again for attending the meeting. I look forward to your response to the issues and queries outlined above.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH CLARK**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Sarah McGill, Corporate Chief Officer, Communities  
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager, Partnerships & Citizen Focus  
Luke Burton, Principal Citizen Focus Officer  
Members of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**

My Ref: CM24161

Date: 3rd April 2013

Councillor Elizabeth Clark  
Chair Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny  
Cardiff County Council  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff Bay  
CF10 4UW

Dear Elizabeth,

**Scrutiny - 6 March 2013 - Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Review**

Thank you for your letter dated 12 of March and the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee's feedback. As this is the first year we have reported against our strategic plan we appreciate that there is still work to do in a challenging arena and under challenging circumstances. I am pleased the committee can see the hard work and good practice that is going on across the Council to tackle some of the key inequalities we face.

Thank you for your noted comments, especially around the mainstreaming of equalities and the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. I would really welcome the committee's and others support to ensure EIA's are embedded with all of our decisions but more so the budget setting process. Your support with this issue is appreciated.

The committee noted that not all of the staff data was available. This is due to several reasons including:

- the IT system that monitors the data has recently changed which has meant that we do not have the continuity of consistent information. However, we will expect that the 2013/14 year to show a marked improvement in the availability of data
- as a Council we need to work with staff to ensure they feel confident to disclose their information
- time scales for reporting were shorter this year, which has resulted in us not being able to provide the information in time for the cabinet meeting to approve the document. This is partly due to staff not being in post but also late guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on the reporting of the development year

**PLEASE REPLY TO:** Cabinet Support Office, Room 529, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf,  
Cardiff CF10 4UW  
Tel (029) 2087 2598 Fax (029) 20872691



Specifically the committee mentioned there are no pay grades against the protected characteristics. This is due to the recent grade changes because of single status as previously there were too many grades to monitor this information. Now that there are ten distinct grades at officer level, this information will be readily available during the next reporting period in 2013/14.

Once again I would like to thank the committee for their comments and if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Lynda Thorne**  
**Cabinet Member (Communities, Housing & Social Justice)**