
**REPORT OF THE CARDIFF PARTNERSHIP BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL –
PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Reason for the Report

1. To present the report of the Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel entitled “Public Sector Asset Management: The role of Cardiff Partnership Board in improving management of the public estate”, which is attached at **Appendix A**. This report was agreed by the Scrutiny Panel on 12 December 2013, and is being presented to the Committee for information, as the Council’s asset management falls within this Committee’s remit.

Background

2. The Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel was set up in March 2012 to scrutinise the Cardiff Partnership Board (CPB), Cardiff’s Local Service Board. The Panel takes a holistic approach to scrutiny, focusing on the partnership approach, the actions of the CPB and other cross cutting themes. The main aims of the Panel are to:
 - reflect the voice and concerns of the public and of the communities of Cardiff;
 - provide an effective “critical friend” challenge to the Cardiff Partnership Board;
 - scrutinise, evaluate and actively promote improvement in the work of the CPB, in developing and implementing projects to address the priorities set by the CPB.
3. The Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel comprises 12 representatives:
 - The chairs of Cardiff Council’s five scrutiny committees;

- Non executive nominees from the South Wales Police Commissioner's Office, South Wales Fire Authority, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Wales Probation Trust (all bodies which are members of the CPB);
- Representatives of the Cardiff and Vale Community Health Council, the Cardiff 'third sector' and the Cardiff and Vale Equality and Human Rights Network.

Issues

4. The CPB Scrutiny Panel is currently designated as a task and finish group of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, to ensure a strong link between the Panel and the wider scrutiny work carried out by the Council's five scrutiny committees. However as this report (the first substantial report from the Panel) deals with asset management, which falls under the remit of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, it is being presented to this Committee as well as to the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. The Committee may wish to use the report's findings to inform its own future scrutiny of the Council's asset management, or may wish to commend the report to the Cabinet for formal consideration.
5. Members' attention is particularly drawn to the report's key findings and recommendations, set out from page 6 of the report attached at **Appendix A**.

Way Forward

6. Emyr Williams, Principal Partnerships Scrutiny Officer, has been invited to attend the meeting to present the report.

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 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

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of the report at **Appendix A**;
- ii. Consider whether it wishes to commend the report to the Cabinet for formal consideration.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

30 December 2013

s c r u t i n y



Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel

Public Sector Asset Management: The role of Cardiff Partnership Board in improving management of the public estate

**A report for the
Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel**

November 2013



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Chairs Forward

I am very pleased to present the Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel's first formal report.

I would like to thank my fellow Panel Members who worked diligently to secure the evidence and recommendations presented in the report. Similarly, I appreciate the support of the Partnership Board members who supported the scrutiny, as well as the internal and external witnesses who contributed their expertise. Finally, I am grateful to our Scrutiny Officer Emyr Williams and members of the Cardiff Council Scrutiny Team for their part in the Inquiry.

Effective leadership of partnership asset management is critical to Cardiff's future success. Not only will it shape the impact of future collaborative service delivery, but it also has the potential to realise huge efficiencies for all of Cardiff's service providers, increasing the resilience of our services in the face of huge current financial pressures.

I hope that the recommendations presented will be of assistance to the Members of Cardiff Partnership Board. I recognise that their work is complex (and often taking them through uncharted waters), but they have a vital role to play and we need them to show the leadership required for Cardiff to succeed.

The Scrutiny Panel has a twin track approach to ensuring that the Cardiff Partnership Board delivers benefit to the people of Cardiff. On the one hand, we scrutinise the Board's specific Programmes, to hold the Board to account for its agreed partnership outcomes. On the other, we have decided this year to focus in depth on two "wicked"¹ issues – Public Sector Asset Management and 'NEETs'² – which could either propel us to partnership success, or hold us back and spoil our competitive advantage as a city.

¹ A Wicked Issue is a social problem in which is inherently complex and often requires multiple partners to begin to address the issues.

² People who are not in employment, education or training

Through both of these approaches, our over-riding aim is to both support and to hold to account the individual members of the Cardiff Partnership Board (and the Board as an 'institution') for what they are doing to lead, remove blockages to progress, and ensure our collective wellbeing.

I hope that you find the report of interest, and will welcome your future involvement in our work.

Key findings

As a result of the findings from their meeting with the Cardiff Partnership Board (CPB) and the evidence received from papers and witnesses from their previous meeting the CPB Scrutiny Panel (The Panel) drew together the following Key Findings:

- KF 1** Successful long term Public Sector Asset Management (PSAM) can produce substantial savings for all involved and help improve service delivery while reducing costs.
- KF 2** Successful PSAM can help improve front line services through co location, better planned service provision, increased communication and partnership working between all organisations.
- KF 3** There does not appear to be a strong appetite or any time frame within the Cardiff Partnership Board to produce a PSAM strategy for Cardiff.
- KF 4** PSAM is a significant priority for governments at all levels and is being pushed by the UK government, Welsh Government and is already underway in Scotland via the Scottish Futures Trust.
- KF 5** There are a number of barriers to successful PSAM and the development of a PSAM strategy.
- KF 6** Two counties in England have managed to overcome these barriers and created PSAM strategies. Others are in the process of creating similar strategies and developing public assets databases.
- KF 7** Successful PSAM requires effective leadership and a real drive from senior leaders.

- KF 8** The CPB seems to be the most appropriate body to oversee the progression of PSAM and push the PSAM agenda forward in Cardiff.
- KF 9** Additional / dedicated resources are required to move the PSAM agenda forward in Cardiff and resources need to be shared across all partners.
- KF 10** Cardiff has undertaken some very successful and effective projects in this area which are already proving the value of partnership working with assets e.g. Community Hubs, Police working with the Probation Service and the Alcohol Treatment Unit.
- KF 11** Cardiff appears to be adopting a neighbourhood based PSAM model but this is not being effectively communicated.
- KF 12** Definitive targets and an end 'prize' is required to ensure all partners know what they are aiming for through successful PSAM.
- KF 13** Partners may be at different levels of understanding and development in relation to PSAM but it is important that all are involved and resources are shared for the benefit of all.
- KF 14** A phased approach to PSAM may be required to ensure that partners do not have to wait for the least developed partner before progressing the agenda.
- KF 15** Effective mapping of partners' assets is a vital first step to allowing all partners to be involved in potential collaborative asset projects.
- KF 16** The Scrutiny Panel have a different understanding from the CPB about what constitutes meaningful progress on public sector asset management, and would not accept that what has occurred to date is sufficiently ambitious to count as sufficient progress for a priority issue.

Recommendations

As a result of these findings the Panel therefore recommend that:

- R 1** CPB partner organisations work towards a shared and explicit understanding across all partners about how much of a priority PSAM is to the CPB.
- R 2** The CPB commit to produce a Public Sector Asset Management Strategy.
- R 3** Clear timescales and milestones are established by the CPB for the completion of a Public Sector Asset Management Strategy.
- R 4** That any PSAM strategy should complement (and not await results of) the alignment of service delivery plans.
- R 5** The PSAM strategy should help to guide the process of service delivery and provide clear guidelines for the community approach that is being undertaken, as in the case of Worcester.
- R 6** The current database of partners' assets be made available to all partners in an accessible format, which can be easily interrogated by any partner organisation wishing to explore potential collaborative projects in their area.
- R 7** The CPB commit to providing resources to create and implement a PSAM strategy.
- R 8** All partners commit to their involvement in the process of creating a PSAM strategy, even if this has to be in phased, developmental way.
- R 9** CPB public sector partners commit their expertise to assist the third sector throughout the PSAM process.

- R 10** Current barriers to the creation of a PSAM strategy be identified and an action plan put in place on what will be done to address them.
- R 11** Clear roles and responsibility are identified for the Asset Management Board, the CPB and all the individual partners involved.
- R 12** Clear lines of communication for all partners relating to the PSAM strategy be identified.
- R 13** A specific target for the savings that can be achieved be identified and promoted to help partner organisations plan their way through current financial and economic pressures.
- R 14** PSAM and the development of a PSAM strategy be a priority workstream of the most suitable CPB partnership programme to ensure lines of responsibility and clarity of reporting mechanisms.

Introduction - Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel

- 1 The Cardiff Partnership Board (CPB) Scrutiny Panel was set up in March 2012 to scrutinise the CPB as its work develops. The Panel takes a holistic approach to scrutiny focusing on the partnership approach, the actions of the CPB and other cross cutting themes. The main aim of the Panel is to:
 - reflect the voice and concerns of the public and of the communities of Cardiff;
 - provide an effective “critical friend” challenge to the Cardiff Partnership Board (CPB);
 - scrutinise, evaluate and actively promote improvement in the work of the CPB, in developing and implementing projects to address the priorities set by the CPB.
- 2 The Scrutiny Panel is unique in having representation from elected Members as well as non executives from a number of partner organisations. Cardiff Councillors are represented by the chairs of each of the Council’s five Scrutiny Committees, while the partners’ representatives are non-executive members of the bodies on the CPB. The Panel also includes representation from Cardiff and Vale Equality and Human Rights Network and Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Community Health Council.
- 3 The Panel meets four times a year in venues around Cardiff to scrutinise the work of the CPB. As a result of these meetings, letters, reports and recommendations are produced to be sent to the CPB, the relevant Scrutiny Committee and any relevant partners within the CPB. This is the first substantial report from the Panel who have previously relied on shorter letters to the CPB with particular recommendations. However as the Panel have looked at PSAM in some detail, they wanted to ensure all of the evidence they received had been captured and demonstrate the rationale behind their key findings and recommendations.

The current CPB Scrutiny Panel Membership (November 2013):

- Paul Warren - Equalities Representative – Diverse Cymru - Chair of the Panel
- Mark Brace – South Wales Police – Vice Chair of the Panel
- Nick Corrigan - Third Sector Representative - Media Academy Cardiff
- Marcus Longley – Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- Lesley Jones – Cardiff and Vale Community Health Council
- Angela Gascoigne – Wales Probation Service
- Cllr Mohammad Javed – South Wales Fire Authority
- Cllr Paul Mitchell – Chair of Cardiff Council Environmental Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Nigel Howells - Chair of Cardiff Council Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Sue Lent - Chair of Cardiff Council Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Dan De’Ath - Chair of Cardiff Council Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Craig Williams - Chair of Cardiff Council Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee

CPB Scrutiny Panel and PSAM

- 4 The CPB Scrutiny Panel held a meeting in March 2013 to review their previous years work and plan the work programme for the following year. The Panel agreed that the scrutiny work over the past year had been too broad and they wanted to focus on topics in greater detail to get a deeper understanding of the issues to be able to scrutinise it effectively.

- 5 However the panel also felt that they need to ensure they scrutinised the work of the Cardiff Partnership Board and not simply look at a particular workstream or activity. The Panel therefore agreed to focus their scrutiny on issues around collaboration such as sharing resources, information and knowledge, communication across different partners, joint commissioning, leadership, allocation of responsibility, problem solving etc.

- 6 The Panel did however feel that to look at these issues in isolation, without focussing on a particular topic, would be too abstract and cause difficulties for effective scrutiny and meaningful recommendations. The Panel therefore decided that they wanted to explore partnership issues through focussing on issue of public sector asset management as this was highlighted as a priority area by the Council's Chief Executive and the South Wales Police Divisional Commander for Cardiff at the Panel's March 2013 meeting.

- 7 This topic was also considered by Panel Members to have a significant impact upon all partners, as well as the citizens of Cardiff. The Panel therefore decided to focus its scrutiny on public sector asset management for its May and September 2013 meetings. This topic would be used as the vehicle to scrutinise the CPB and partnership issues such as information sharing, communication, pooling resources, collaboration etc.

What is Public Sector Asset management (PSAM)

- 8 Asset management is the process of optimising the use and management of property assets (land and buildings) with the aim of releasing financial and service benefits. Simplistically, asset management can be defined as: "optimising the utilisation of assets in terms of service delivery and financial return" (RICS 2012). The way in which public sector organisations manage their assets, both strategically and operationally, directly affects their ability to deliver value for money and so deliver better outcomes for their citizens. The recent National Assembly for Wales (NAFW) inquiry into Asset Management recognises this and argues that

“At its simplest, efficient management of assets saves money. The less you have to spend on accommodation, the more there is to go in to front-line services. “ NAFW 2013

- 9 The focus on asset management in the public sector has not only been explored by the Welsh Government. The PSAM agenda has been emerging over the last decade in recognition that saving money on running buildings allows the redeployment of resources to frontline services.
- 10 There has also been growing exploration and policy advice relating to the wider public sector estate. This began when Michael Lyons (2004) report attempted to identify £30 billion worth of savings by 2010 in relation to public sector assets. The report also emphasised the need for further collaboration across public services assets to achieve the massive savings efficiencies required.
- 11 This was reinforced in the Scottish Futures Trust report (2011) which concluded that significantly greater benefit can be realised if there is a

greater amount of cooperative working across organisational boundaries.

The areas for collaboration which the report identified were:

- **Joint planning and shared accommodation** - to identify shared facilities including depots and workshops, offices, customer contact centres and training centres. This includes locality asset rationalisation and co-location planning and involves peer reviews of partner asset management plans.
 - **Sharing people, management and contracts** – Including pooling expertise, sharing contract management and joint procurement of facility management contracts, reducing duplication of consultants and internal resources and exploiting economies of scale.
 - **Sharing data** - to allow each organisation's property assets to be viewed by others.
 - **Surplus property coordination** - to help manage the release of property to the market to ensure competitive pricing, and to help identify opportunities to leverage value.
 - **Pooling assets** - with consideration of alternative models for collectively managing assets.
- 12 Most recently the Cabinet Office have also published its Government Estate Strategy (2013) which aims to 'create an efficient, fit for purpose and sustainable estate that delivers value for money and facilitates flexible working'. In so doing, the strategy aims to set out ways of accelerating savings and driving better performance from the central civil estate, and examines plans for better co-ordination across the whole of the public estate.
- 13 The Government Property Unit is practically advancing this agenda by teaming up with 12 local authority pilot areas to explore where the surplus

of central government and the wider public sector can be brought together into a programme to deliver better value and economic growth.

Public Sector Asset Management – the Current Situation

- 14 The property asset management scene has already changed substantially for most organisations. Until recently, the focus of property asset managers was on their organisation's portfolio alone. Today, all public bodies are expected to work together to create a delivery system which maximises the collaborative use of public property assets. This may also involve third and private sector involvement in operations and delivery.

- 15 The public sector asset management approach provides a continuing emphasis on using less space, the sharing of facilities by a variety of local and national bodies and the centralised management of public portfolios. These are all prioritised in order to reduce management costs, improve procurement and force efficiency gains in the use of shared accommodation by co-location.

- 16 A considerable body of property asset management expertise now resides within the public sector and there are increasing moves to bring this expertise together to provide wider public asset management strategies. This has resulted in initiatives which advocate flexible work styles being adopted as departments and other bodies relocate and centralise their physical presence to 'hub' locations, in more efficient and sustainable buildings.

The Potential Benefits of Effective Public Sector Asset Management

17 The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS 2012) highlight that there are both financial and non-financial benefits to an organisation practicing effective property asset management. These include:

- the delivery of quality services to customers, to agreed priorities, while focusing investment on need
- empowering of communities and encouraging feedback
- improvement of the economic well-being of an area
- maintenance of all property assets to good standards
- the introduction of new working practices and organisational change
- a reduction of carbon emissions and the improvement of environmental sustainability
- the introduction of co-location, partnership working and sharing of knowledge between organisations
- the improvement of accessibility to services including DDA/Equality Act compliance
- the generation of efficiency gains, capital receipts and reliable revenue streams; and
- an overall improvement in the quality of the public realm.

- 18 Scottish Futures (2011) expands on these benefits by highlighting the positives that public sector asset management can bring to different stakeholders:
- **The public** will benefit from more convenient access to multiple public services under one roof and greater choice of alternative access channels, where appropriate, that do not rely on face to face contact.
 - **National government** will benefit from confidence that a structured approach is being taken to address budget reductions that will help to minimise the impact on front-line services, through using less property more efficiently, leveraging resources, enhancing value, and more service integration across public bodies.
 - **Local public bodies** will benefit from collectively releasing cash and carbon savings, both faster and with less resource than if they were doing it alone. They will benefit from a higher stream of recycled capital that potentially could fund change initiatives and upgraded social infrastructure. Local partnerships will have resources focused on planning and delivering the estate that will support back office and front-line service integration.
- 19 In light of these benefits the RICS (2012) emphasise the importance of partnerships working towards effective public sector asset management strategies as:
- improved public services provided from less capital intensive and lower recurring expenditure property will take considerable vision.
 - collaboration, new property vehicles, community involvement, property rationalisation all require a measured strategic response rather than a pragmatic response.

- the lead-in times for property change are longer than any other resource (human, information, finance). Maybe three years for small projects and eight to ten years for large projects.
- changes and improvement will need to be monitored and measured to ensure that progress is made as quickly and effectively as possible.
- without accurate and up-to-date data, real progress will be hindered and perhaps thwarted.
- this all points to the need for every organisation to be effectively practicing, the key elements of effective property asset management which are:
 - Planning
 - Delivery
 - Review
 - Organisation
 - Leadership
 - Communication.

20 The benefits of PSAM were also reiterated in the two PSAM strategies that the Panel explored in their evidence gathering. These strategies both emphasised the benefits that can be achieved through effective PSAM including:

- 20% reduction in running costs
- 220% increase in capital returns after five years
- Improved joined up service delivery
- Improved carbon management.

These points were reiterated by David Bentley – Head of Asset Management at the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) who

attended the CPB Panel on the 20th May 2013. Mr Bentley stated that effective PSAM can result in millions or even hundreds of millions of pounds in savings in both capital and revenue receipts. Indeed public sector office rationalisation alone was identified as having the potential to make 25% savings. These dramatic savings were identified through:

- The co location of staff within the same building.
- The sale of assets for buildings that are no longer required.
- Shared costs for purpose built co located buildings.
- Reducing the maintenance backlog by prioritising buildings and selling those which are surplus to requirements.
- Sharing IT and resources within the same building.
- Preventing the creation of new buildings when space may already be available in other public sector assets.

With all of these benefits, it would seem imperative that local partnerships all produce PSAM strategies. However whilst the reasoning behind a PSAM strategy may seem straight forward, creating them in practice is not as simple.

Potential Issues with Public Sector Asset Management:

21 As the policy agenda for effective public sector asset management has advanced so significantly, and the benefits to all partners potentially so numerous, the question must be asked as to why there are so few public sector asset management strategies currently in existence across the UK. The answer to this is that the process is by no means straight forward. Whether collating a wide ranging area public sector asset management strategy, or a one off partnership hub project, there are numerous issues and barriers which need to be overcome for it to be done effectively. The sections below highlight just some of the potential issues.

Additional Consultation

22 As there will be more stakeholders involved in most joined up public partnership projects, additional consultation will be required before projects can get underway. This presents additional responsibilities and complexities for the property asset manager, introducing further consultation streams into the preparation of collaborative property asset management plans and potential system issues for data collection, management and benchmarking. If these additional cross-organisational requirements are known when systems are being established, they can be incorporated. More difficult challenges emerge when requirements change in the middle of a systems project or midway through the property asset planning programme.

Information and Professional Skills

23 To realise any form of effective asset management strategy, organisations require as much information as possible about their assets. Indeed there are some common preconditions that are considered necessary for conducting public asset management activities efficiently.

These are:

- a public asset registry
- public asset classification

- public asset recognition and measurement
- public asset portfolio construction
- institutionalisation and professionalism in public asset management, and
- cost and outcomes measurement.

24 For a public sector asset management strategy to be developed, all of the agencies involved need to know what assets they have, what they are used for and what their future service plans are. This requires professional public asset management expertise within all organisations to ensure effective and accurate practice.

Budgets and Resource Allocation

25 One of the most significant issues mentioned in the literature relating to partnership asset management is around finance. With a number of different agencies being involved / benefiting from rationalisation of buildings, a shared facility or a brand new multi purpose building, then the issues around who pays (and how much) are always likely to cause problems. Partners can often value assets differently, resulting in complications regarding the sale / rental of space.

Sharing of Potential Savings

26 The other significant issue around finance is the problem of savings / profits allocations. The involvement of a number of stakeholders means that savings may need to be disbursed across all of those who have been involved in a project. Again the issue of how and when these savings are distributed can cause significant complications. Savings can often only be realised over a long term period and so it is often impossible to identify 'lump sums' in relation to immediate savings. Furthermore, if one partner is able to relocate to space within a partner organisation and able to sell

their own asset, there could be potential issues over whether one or both agencies are entitled to the profit.

Engagement

27 Whilst a number of partners may be particularly enthusiastic and advanced in relation to sharing assets it can only take one partner to be disengaged to hold up or prevent a project from being realised. This can be down to a number of factors, such as a skills shortage, suspicion of partnership, historical and cultural barriers within an organisation or simply an unwillingness to engage in the partnership agenda. This can be particularly problematic if the partner is one of the larger agencies involved.

Differing Legal / Process Issues

28 As the bodies involved in any public sector asset management strategy / project tend to be long established large organisations, there are often a multitude of differing legal frameworks and asset management processes already in place. This can result in problems of the same process / task taking different lengths of time in different organisations. Some processes which are relatively simple within one organisation can be far more complex in another. This can cause frustration amongst different partners if they do not understand the differing processes that organisations have to complete and result in a breakdown of relations between partners.

IT and Data Protection Issues

29 If different partners are planning to share particular buildings there are often IT and data protection issues that need to be overcome. Joint IT systems are more cost effective and can provide easier ways to share information. However shared drives and access can result in data protection issues if different agencies are using the same systems and data storage.

Leadership / Project Management

30 Any project (whether it be co-location to an individual asset or the complete strategy for public sector assets in an area) requires leadership, and a lead agency. Whilst it is important for all parties to be involved in the process, it is also necessary for an individual or team to take the lead and be responsible for the continual overall management of a project. Therefore, while agreement from partners on the direction of a project is necessary, the next step is for one agency or a team made up of partner agencies to take the lead on the project.

31 All of these issues mean that commitment and leadership are vital to ensuring the success of any public sector management project and makes the creation of a joint understanding or PSAM strategy even more important. This is a sentiment that was echoed in the NAFW report (2013) into PSAM which argues that

*“there needs to be a step-change when it comes to asset management. There is a small pool of expertise, which needs to be nurtured and developed and **there needs to be greater priority given to the area by senior leaders.***

Investing in back office efficiency seems fraught with peril for ambitious leaders in a world where frontline services are all. But unless the books are balanced, there will be no frontline services.”

NAFW 2013 (Bold added)

32 The Panel therefore feels that the CPB are best placed to play a pivotal role in the leadership of this agenda and should be helping to shape the parameters for the city’s PSAM and to monitor progress with regards to its development and implementation. However, whilst the CPB has had some involvement in this agenda, the Panel feel that the Board should be playing a much greater role.

How to address the issues

33 The Panel discovered that despite these issues, there have been two local authorities (Cambridge and Worcester) who have created PSAM strategies to which have helped address the problems outlined above. The Panel explored these strategies in depth and felt that the creation of a PSAM was vital to overcome the issues that had been identified through their evidence gathering. The Panel therefore feel that a PSAM strategy should be produced which contains the following elements which have been drawn from the PSAM strategies of Cambridge and Worcester.

A Strategic Vision

34 The Panel feel it is vital that any PSAM strategy should provide a strategic vision of partnership asset collaboration in order to rationalise the public estate. This vision should outline how to extrapolate the best value from the 'public estate' whilst improving provisions for service users. For example, the Cambridge strategy (2011) states that

'the combined property portfolio of the public sector is considered as a single strategic resource for service delivery. Property is but a tool to support the delivery of services to all citizens' Cambridge Partnership 2011

35 The Panel felt that this type of strategic vision statement is vital as it highlights a consensus view of property amongst partners: that property needs to be shared and is not an end in itself, but rather a tool for the delivery of services.

Clear Aims

36 Whilst having an overall strategic vision, it is also vital that any strategy outlines how it will achieve this vision. The Panel therefore felt that it is important to have specific and achievable aims similar to those outlined in the Worcester strategy (2013) below.

In order to achieve our vision this strategy will

- Align more closely the use of property to the corporate aims/objectives and priorities of each of the partner organisations, accepting that there will be the over arching requirement for conciliation so that service needs are met.
- Achieve best value for money from property management activities irrespective of funding source, i.e. capital, revenue or external resources.
- Ensure that short-term considerations do not compromise long-term sustainable and environmentally responsible property and asset management.
- Contribute to a built environment which is safe, accessible for all users and complies with all relevant statutory requirements.
- Develop partnership-working arrangements with other public bodies in the county in order to pursue common objectives.
- Ensure that asset management is responsive to diverse community / user needs and strikes a proper balance between aspiration and affordability.
- Contribute to growth and regeneration.

- Establish robust governance arrangements to manage the Property Company.

A Clear Approach to Asset Management Reviews

37 Whilst both the Cambridge and Worcester strategies have very similar visions and aims for PSAM there is a difference in the approach that they take to implementing PSAM. Worcester adopts a localised area approach, emphasising that local issues require local solutions. The Worcester Partnership feels that demand for public services varies significantly across the county and a “one size fits all” approach to service delivery would be both inappropriate and inefficient in terms of resource usage.

38 The Panel understand from their questioning of the CPB that this is also the model that Cardiff is adopting. Whilst the Panel can see the benefits of such an approach, they do feel that it is vital that there are clear guidelines as to how such an approach will be implemented to ensure transparency and consistency across the City. The Worcester Partnership has developed four basic tools which are used in forming ideas around asset and service rationalisation which are outlined below. These are combined with a number of fixed criteria which must be taken into account in any review of community assets. The Panel feel that Cardiff need to have similar guidelines if they are to continue with the community approach.

39 The four key tools to allow for effective community asset reviews:

- **Strategic Asset Management Objectives** – This is a set of broad objectives that the Worcestershire Partnership have developed and which can be applied to any review option in any geographical area with any mix of stakeholders (This can be seen in Appendix B).

- **Collaborative Asset Mapping** - The property assets of each partner have been mapped on a single web based GIS system which is available to all stakeholders.
- **Capital Mapping** – The usual sources of capital funding for each partner have also been mapped.
- **Customer Insight Data** – This is the information held on community characteristics as well as feedback from consultations over service options.

40 The fixed criteria that the outcome of any Community Model Review must meet include:

- Future provision must be a catalyst and gateway to other public and voluntary services that are integrated within the facility – no more stand alone provision.
- Future provision does not have to be in a specific building – they must explore the possibility for provisions to be located within another partner’s facilities, and run by them.
- That the cost of back office operations is reduced through joining up with other services.
- The use of technology is maximised to gain the maximum benefit from the available revenue funding.

Worcester (2013)

Asset Mapping

- 41 Whilst there is some difference between the asset management approaches of the Cambridge and Worcester strategies, both partnerships recognise the importance of effective asset mapping. Both see this process as vital to the success of PSAM and also embrace the use of technology to help share information and identify potential partnership asset possibilities. Worcester have already developed a single web based map of public sector property assets which is readily available to all partners. This provides details of “asset clustering”, which, together with risk assessment data, identifies priority areas for review.
- 42 The Worcester collaborative map also provides additional information related to usage which creates a comprehensive picture of asset utilisation across organisational boundaries within a particular area. These are used extensively at the area based stakeholder workshops as a means of collectively identifying potential opportunities for asset rationalisation. They were also used in relation to community model workshops which were felt to be invaluable in alerting partners to co-location opportunities, particularly where services are evaluating alternative service delivery options.
- 43 Customer insight data is also used to describe the characteristics and probable needs of an area, and to help prioritise and direct opportunities for service transformation. Customer insight reports for service areas based on defined geographical areas which provide a profile of the area’s population, socio-economics, health, and education as well as a breakdown of the population by ACORN³ are used to help inform project

³ Acorn is a consumer classification that segments the UK population. By analysing demographic data, social factors, population and consumer behaviour, it provides information and an understanding of different types of people. Acorn provides consumer insight helping to target, acquire and develop customer relationships and improve service delivery.

development and priorities. These reports are able to provide an analysis of the population or customers within these areas and compare them with the total population, or a wider customer base. This, together with direct feedback from customer engagement via consultations and surveys, is being used to inform the channel shift and targeting of services.

Leadership and Responsibility

- 44 Another area that both strategies agree on (and something also highlighted in NAFW report) is the importance of leadership and allocating responsibility. The Cambridge Partnership has the Making Assets Count⁴ (MAC) as the lead body in identifying and taking responsibility for joint asset management ventures. In Worcester lead roles in project development are shared across the partners, and there is flexibility across the public / voluntary sector in terms of how services are finally delivered.
- 45 The final decision on which projects are selected for implementation rests with the Worcestershire Partnership itself. This provides the strategic context to the locally generated proposals. However, responsibility for developing the final business case, final local consultations and the eventual delivery rest with the individual agency promoting the proposal.

Recognition of the Need to Compromise

- 46 One important theme that is reinforced through both strategies is the recognition of the difference between partners and the need for compromise when working with such large organisations. Cambridge for example recognises that whilst there is a PSAM strategy, partners will also need assurance that their own corporate plan objectives are being addressed. The Worcester Partnership also recognises that not all

⁴ Making Assets Count (MAC) is a partnership of all five Cambridgeshire District Councils, the County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Service and Primary Care Trust (PCT).

stakeholders are able to transform services at the pace of the quickest, and so proposals being developed will be implemented on a phased basis. This allows some changes to be made quickly if those partners are at the stage to implement them.

- 47 This more flexible approach presents the additional challenge of trying to avoid a situation where individual partners take short term decisions on asset usage which prevent greater collaboration across partnerships in the longer term. Therefore, despite these concessions to individual partners both strategies strongly reinforce the message that public sector assets are held for the delivery of services and the wider benefit of local communities. It is therefore vital that these objectives transcend the short term interests of individual organisations, to enable a more radical review of needs and resources to be undertaken.

Funding

- 48 Both strategies recognise that the sources of capital funding available to partners for investment in asset rationalisation projects are complex and diverse and that previously partners had often relied on central government grants and supported loan approval for investment programmes. It is recognised that this source is likely to be very limited in the near future. There was also found to be a significant use of Section 106 contributions to fund investment in infrastructure.
- 49 In the future the strategies anticipate that the most likely funding sources for investment proposals are expected to be the reuse of capital receipts and prudential borrowing. This reinforces the need to ensure that all rationalisation proposals are based on a clearly defined business case. The critical factors in resolving the funding challenges are 'a will to do something' and 'a willingness to be flexible'. Engagement with private

sector funders may also be required at some stage to ensure the sustainability of the strategy.

Targets and Monitoring

50 Finally, to ensure that the strategies are able to be held to account, long term targets are mentioned to help measure the success of the delivery.

Examples of such targets are:

- The public sector asset usage footprint will reduce by 25% across the non-schools estate.
- That voluntary and community sectors will occupy 10% of the public estate.
- Single use buildings will largely become a thing of the past as more of the estate (including schools) supports multiple service delivery.
- Services will be delivered by the most appropriate local agency.
- There will be local multi-agency solutions to local issues.
- Partners will operate through a Shared Asset Management group who will make strategic decisions on asset rationalisation.

Public Sector Asset Management and the Cardiff Partnership Board

51 In their concluding meeting regarding PSAM the CPB Scrutiny Panel met with Members of the CPB to explore the issue of PSAM in Cardiff and the role of the CPB in progressing the agenda. The CPB were represented by:

- **Sarah McGill** – Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services (Cardiff Council)
- **Sharon Hopkins** – Executive Director of Public Health (Cardiff and Vale University Health Board)
- **Sheila Hendrickson Brown** – Chief Executive (Cardiff Third Sector Council)
- **Superintendent Tony Smith** – South Wales Police
- **Eleanor Marks** – Head of Communities Division (Welsh Government)
- **Gail Reed** – Probation Trust (Deputy Head)

52 Through the discussions between the Panel and the CPB, Panel members discovered that the development of the assets based approach to a public sector asset management strategy is currently on hold. The Panel heard that the CPB feel that it is first necessary to align service delivery across the different partners before being able to make any strategic asset decisions.

53 The Panel recognise that the alignment of service delivery is important when exploring the use and future of partnership assets. However, the Panel were also wary that aligning service delivery plans can be a very lengthy process, particularly amongst a number of partners. The Panel

were therefore concerned with the impact that this could have on time taken for the development of any PSAM strategy. Furthermore the Panel also feel that a PSAM strategy could actually help rather than hinder the alignment of service delivery plans.

- 54 The Panel feel that a PSAM strategy does not have to be a description of what will happen to all public sector assets within an area. Rather it should provide a strategic direction, with agreed aims and principles around the direction of shared assets and some guidelines as to how the decisions over production and elimination of assets should be made. Therefore the Panel strongly felt that the CPB should re invigorate their efforts to produce a PSAM strategy to help guide and influence any strategic asset decisions, and highlight the potential savings that can be made through effective partnership working.
- 55 The Panel also heard that there had been progress with individual projects in relation to PSAM in Cardiff. This included the work on the Alcohol Treatment Centre, collaboration between the Police and Probation and the creation of several 'Community Hubs' across the city. More information about the development and future plans for these Hubs can be found in Appendix B.
- 56 The Panel agree that the Hubs and the partnership projects mentioned above were a positive step towards more effective partnership working with assets. The Panel strongly felt, however, that these projects and Hubs were only a small part of the solution and should form part of a PSAM strategy rather than being the main activity. The Panel were very concerned that an ad hoc approach to projects and hubs would not provide the strategic framework required to successfully manage the wider public estate and realise the significant potential savings that are possible.

- 57 The Panel also emphasised the importance of the CPB having access to a partnership asset database, which would identify all of the different partners assets across Cardiff, and their state of repair, occupancy etc. This was felt to be a vital first step in the progression of any PSAM. The Panel were very encouraged to hear that such a database had been created, and feel that this needs to be publicised across partners to help kick-start conversations around potential joint asset projects. Panel members would also like to have access to this database to share the wealth of information with their own organisations.
- 58 The Panel also explored the link between the CPB and the Asset Management Board and wondered how the relationship would progress with the current change in emphasis, and who would be take the lead role and responsibility for PSAM in the future. The Panel felt that there was still not a clear vision as to how the CPB and the Asset Management Board would interact, or who would take the lead in progressing the PSAM agenda in the future.
- 59 The Panel felt that this situation needed to be addressed very quickly, as throughout their evidence they had heard of the importance of leadership and clarity over lines of responsibility. The Panel would therefore like to see some clarity over the role of the CPB in progressing the PSAM agenda and exactly what role the Asset Management Board would play in the future.
- 60 The Panel also explored the different levels of progress amongst partner organisations in their own asset management agendas. The Panel heard how South Wales Police were quite advanced in their own strategic direction and saw the importance of working with partners to make savings and improve services. There was also a recognition that some of the other partners were not so far advanced and faced issues with regards professional asset management expertise (such as in the third

sector). The Panel have also learnt that the Cardiff Council's asset management arrangements has been identified as an area for improvement through the recent WLGA Peer Review, and through the Welsh Audit Office's (2013) improvement work.

- 61 The Panel asked the CPB members to expand on any further barriers that organisations felt could prevent progress of the PSAM agenda. Board members felt that consistency was vital to ensure progress across the partnership landscape, but also that financial barriers and varying organisational timelines were also stumbling blocks to effective partnership planning. The Panel were somewhat assured to hear that the Welsh Government were aware of these barriers and are hoping to push forward the PSAM agenda from the centre.

- 62 Despite this the Panel remained concerned over the differing levels of progress and expertise in relation to asset management across the different organisations. The Panel therefore feel there should be a commitment from the Board to share asset management expertise across all partners for the benefit of the whole of the partnership.

- 63 Throughout the discussions the Panel were left uncertain as to how high a priority PSAM was for the CPB. The Panel did question the Board over the will to create a PSAM strategy, and the time scales and resources that were available for it. The Panel felt that they were never able to establish any clarity over the Board's commitment to produce a PSAM strategy or dedicate any joint resources to the agenda. The Panel therefore feel that the Board need to clarify whether PSAM and the production of a PSAM strategy is a priority for the Board, particularly when it has such significant potential advantages to individual organisations, the partnership and serviced users.

64 If PSAM is a priority in Cardiff, the Panel feel that this should be reflected within the priority programmes and workstreams with the production of a PSAM strategy becoming a priority workstream under the appropriate programme.

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Appendix A

Worcester Partnership objectives for reviewing Public Assets

Opportunities for service transformation are addressed on a geographical area wide basis, where all public services, (both directly provided and commissioned), and the assets used by them will be reviewed at the same time. In doing so, the review will embrace, where possible:

- A single, unified set of standards for asset usage to maximise efficiency and future flexibility.
- The specific objective of using fewer assets, to minimise revenue commitments related to building usage and releasing the worst performing assets for disposal.
- The development of a common approach to the provision of facilities management and support services to buildings.
- Transformational opportunities will be evaluated and prioritised in terms of their efficiency, sustainability and flexibility.
- Asset rationalisation and service transformation proposals will respect the sovereignty and independence of each of the partner organisations.
- The objective of minimising the environmental impact of service delivery, in terms of assets used, energy consumed and customer access carbon footprint.

- That the implementation of transformation proposals is likely to be phased in recognition of the differing needs and cultures that exist in different stakeholders.

The preferred outcome from any review will achieve or facilitate in future an integrated service delivery. In doing so this will seek to maximise:

- Opportunities to develop a “self service” delivery model where possible
- Pursuit of the localisation agenda
- Flexibility and sustainability in terms of meeting customer demand

Reviews will be challenging, questioning the conventional approach to service delivery and the organisational structures used to support them. The challenge will also consider:

- Scale of activities
- Shape of the organisational structure
- Asset usage
- Attitude to risk
- Opportunities for entrepreneurship, both social and financial
- The outcome of reviews will aim to bring benefits to all partners

Individual proposals that emerge from workshops are judged against these criteria to establish their effectiveness



Appendix B

Summary Report of Hubs progress to date

1. Background

The Vision

The leading Cardiff – Building Communities document sets out the aim to “invest to save front line services” and to support people through the current difficult economic climate and the challenges of Welfare Reform.

The Customer Service Programme seeks to support these aims by improving and extending face to face customer services in Cardiff at a time when local services are under threat in many Councils.

The Hub project proposes to achieve this by joining up services within community Hubs - sharing resources and reducing costs.

- The future aim is to provide services through a series of Hubs situated within the neighbourhood areas plus one Hub in the City Centre.
- A core of generic council services would be available at each Hub with options for the delivery of specialist council and partner services as required by the neighbourhood.

Background

In the 2013-17 Corporate Plan and contributing to the Cabinet’s key commitment to “*work smarter and better*” the Council signed up to the objective, “[to] *Develop a new approach to customer management that improves Council services, makes them more accessible, convenient and easier to engage.*” To support this objective the Cabinet has commissioned a project to improve and extend face-to-face services in Cardiff, through the development of Community Hubs, at a time when local services are under threat in many councils.

The Hub project proposes to achieve this by joining up services within community Hubs - sharing resources and reducing costs. The future aim is to provide services through a series of Hubs situated within the neighbourhood areas plus one Hub in the City Centre. A core of generic Council services will be available in each Hub, with options for the delivery of specialist Council and partner services as required by the neighbourhood. The key to future Hub provision is to improve the local services offered by integrating and decentralising services that meet local needs, whilst reducing costs by disposing of buildings and sharing facilities.

The Community Hub concept has been successfully piloted in Llanrumney, St Mellons and Butetown.

The first two Hubs opened in Llanrumney and Trowbridge/St Mellons Libraries in the autumn of 2011. The existing library staffing was revised and the staff roles were updated to become more generic and customer focused. In addition, the roles are supported by full time specialist Housing and Benefits staff based at each Hub.

Core services offered by customer service staff within the Hubs include:

- General advice about council services
- Household waste and recycling information
- Arranging bulky waste collections
- Reporting street lighting problems
- Reporting anti social behaviour
- Internet access and online services
- Specialist housing, council tax and benefit advice
- Library service
- Self service PCs
- Phone – direct link to housing repairs & free-phone for DWP services.

A community room is available for use by the Council or other organisations to deliver customer services. Supplementary Hub surgeries are provided by a range of other services including CAB (Citizens' Advice Bureau), Want 2 Work, SNAP (Special Needs and Parents), Bereavement Services, Trading Standards, Victim Support and Speakeasy (provide legal advice).

The new Advice Hub in Marland House has also shown the advantages that can be achieved by the co-location of services. The Advice Hub in Marland House has recently opened bringing together a range of partner agencies. CAB, Somali Progressive and Credit Union have relocated their whole business into the Hub, including their back office staff, and many other organisations provide services on a surgery basis, providing really useful joined up service for customers.

There is a need for services in the Ely / Caerau area due to the above average level of deprivation across a range of indicators and the distance from the city centre services.

The Welfare Reform changes have also impacted significantly on the Ely / Caerau area due to the high proportion of tenants affected by the size restrictions on social housing and the Benefit Cap. The implementation of Universal Credit, with the expectation that claims will be made on-line; direct payment to the tenant and the payment of benefits monthly in arrears have increased the need for measures to improve digital inclusion and the need for budgeting and money advice in the area.

Many vulnerable citizens will be affected by the welfare reform changes. There is a need for joined up advice and support services that are easily accessible and fully co-ordinated.

Currently, a wide range of council and partner services are provided in the Ely and Caerau area. However, from a customer's perspective the current service provision in the area is disjointed, with each service operating from a separate building. These buildings have different opening times and the

usage of each venue varies considerably. The footfall into some of the locations is fairly low while in other venues, such as the Housing Office, there is high footfall and insufficient space to cater for the customer demand.

The Proposed New Community Hub in Ely / Caerau

It is proposed that a new Community Hub should be developed and based in the current Jasmine Training & Enterprise Centre, as this provides the best opportunity for co-location of services due to its size, location, condition and development potential. As part of the proposal the current library and housing service will transfer into the Hub and their current sites will be redeveloped for housing under the Cardiff Partnering Scheme. The capital receipts from these will partially offset the capital costs of conversion.

The proposed new Community Hub will bring together council and partner services together in one Community Hub with the services designed to meet the needs of local citizens. The development of a new Hub will also achieve efficiencies, reducing overhead costs.

By the co-locating and multi-skilling of staff the new Hub can also deliver extended opening hours. It is proposed that the new Hub will open throughout the day on 6 days a week and will open late at least one evening a week.

Summary of proposed facilities

In summary it is proposed that the new Hub will include:

- A full library service with children's activities and events
- Extensive IT and self-service facilities - including free internet access and telephone
- A quiet area for study and IT use
- Housing Advice
- Benefit Advice

- Services from other partner agencies such as CAB and Credit Union providing surgeries
- Advice about general council services such as waste management and street lighting
- Training facilities with a range of learning opportunities based on the results of the consultation and further needs analysis
- Into Work support and activities such as CV workshops and Job clubs
- DWP funded Want2Work service
- A Café with the availability of newspapers and magazines
- Fire Service (already located in the building)
- Communities First (ACE) office

Phase 2

A second phase to the project could include an extension to the current building or surrounding area to accommodate the Police and other partner agencies. Initial discussion with partners has shown an interest in this proposal. However, any future project will require technical investigation and feasibility studies and will require a further Cabinet report at a later date.

Information Points

The proposed Hub @ Jasmine would also be supported by a number of Information Points to extend the service across the area. Suggested venues are Michaelston Adult Education Centre and Trelai Community Education Centre.

Future plans for hubs:

Ely & Caerau Community Hub - Phase 2

As detailed above, a second phase to the project could include an extension to the current building or surrounding area to accommodate the Police and other partner agencies. Initial discussion with partners has shown an interest

in this proposal. However, any future project will require technical investigation and feasibility studies and will require a further Cabinet report at a later date.

Maelfa Hub

Currently working with preferred development partners on design proposals for wider redevelopment scheme, which includes a new Hub and Library, expected date of completion late 2015.

Grangetown Hub

We are in the planning process to provide a sustainable Community Hub provision in Grangetown that meets the needs of the local community.

List of partners involved in Hub activity:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Communities First | Citizens Advice Bureau |
| Somali Progressive Association | Credit Union |
| Job Centre Plus | Want to Work |
| Health | Trading Standards |
| Mind | Shelter Cymru |
| Family Mediation | SOVA |
| Remploy | Cardiff Voluntary Service |
| Womens Connect First | Police |

2. Hub Performance

The use of pilot Hubs by members of the public during their initial 12 months has been monitored and has shown an increase in usage.

Customer Footfall (2011 – 2012)

The figures below for St. Mellons Hub and Llanrumney Hub for 2011-12 have shown a consistent increase in demand.

St. Mellons Hub shows an increased customer footfall for comparable months from **76,203** (2011) to **108,739** (2012): **+43%**

Llanrumney Hub shows an increased customer footfall for comparable months from **60,815** (2011) to **72,266** (2012): **+19%**

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service

Evidence shows that there is a huge demand for specialist advice services due to the difficult economic climate and the challenges of Welfare Reform.

- Llanrumney Hub – 42% increase (an average of 320 customers per month)

The existing housing and benefit service delivered from Llanrumney Housing Office was transferred to Llanrumney Hub in October 2011.

- St. Mellons Hub – 117% increase (an average of 215 customers per month)

The housing and benefit service delivered from St Mellons Hub is a new service, hence the higher % increase of take-up.

Both Hubs have seen a steady increase in the number of Housing and Council Tax Benefit customers seen on a monthly basis.

Specialist Partner Activities

Evidence shows that the most popular partner service is Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB). At Llanrumney Hub an average of 7 customers are seen per session (348 customers over 52 sessions). At St. Mellons Hub an average of 6 customers are seen per session (439 customers over 70 sessions).

Positive Impact on Library Service

Evidence shows that customers who visit the Hubs for advice have taken advantage of the library services there. This has resulted in a 28% increase in new library users in 2011-12 compared with the previous year.

Neighbourhood Development Librarian

In order to ensure the continued delivery of library outreach services across the communities a full-time Neighbourhood Development Librarian post was created.

The aims of this post are:

- to develop links with local community groups, schools, partners and individuals to assess their reading, IT skills and information skills and needs.
- to design and deliver creative and imaginative sessions to meet these needs and achieve strategic service objectives.

This new post is an opportunity to build partnership working in developing front-line library services.

The Hub @ Loudoun

The third pilot Hub opened in May 2012 at Loudoun Square in Butetown. It is based in a building owned by Cardiff Community Housing Association and provided alongside a Health Centre.

The main focus of this Hub is to provide a specialist housing and benefit service. Hub staff also provide advice on core council services. The services provided include:

- Specialist housing, council tax and benefit advice
- Household waste and recycling information
- Arranging bulky waste collections
- Reporting street lighting problems
- Reporting anti-social behaviour
- Phone - a direct phone link to housing repairs & DWP services
- PC self-service

There is a small children’s ‘book corner’. The aim of this is to encourage reading by young children from families who would not normally use the library or who would have difficulty accessing the Central Library. As a result of consultation with service users the children’s ‘book corner’ service is provided in English, Somali and Arabic.

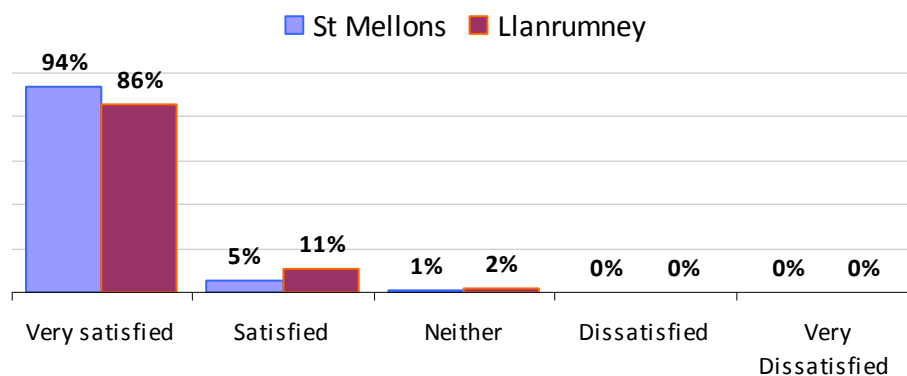
Evidence shows that there has been an average increase of 12 new children’s library users per month since June 2012.

Working closely with Health we have recently started health books as part of the Book Prescription Wales scheme.

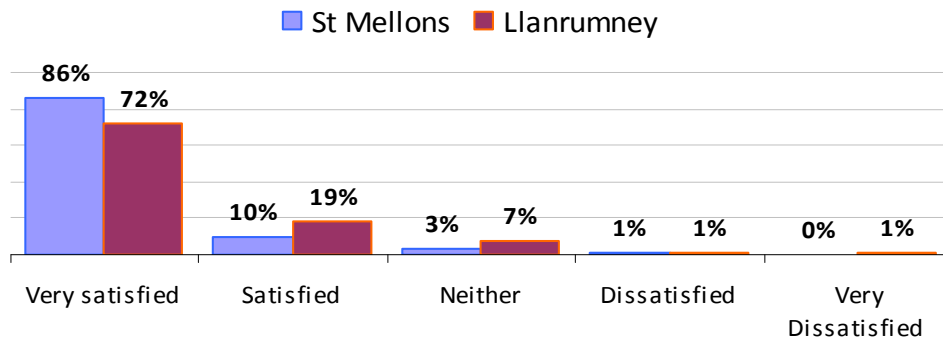
3. Customer Satisfaction & Feedback

The services provided from the original Hubs have proved very popular with customers and have resulted in high levels of customer satisfaction.

How satisfied were you with the hub staff?



How satisfied were you with the hub facilities ?



The following customer comments are taken from the Customer Exit Surveys:

“The essential face of Cardiff Council. Having moved to the area, very much appreciated for help and efficiency.”

“Very convenient and efficient.”

“This is a very convenient service and ideal for local people – it saves going into town and saves on bus fares.”

“Happy because it is easy to deal with the housing issues nearer home than going to town to Marland House.”

“It is a lot easier than travelling to town and easier to see the staff with our problems. A superb local facility meeting great local needs.”

4. Lessons Learnt

The aim of the pilots is to benefit from the lessons learnt and how to use best practice to ensure the smooth delivery of future Hubs. The following points have been identified as issues for consideration for future Hubs. Customer feedback has been invaluable for identifying areas for improvement as evidenced below:

Community Rooms:

There is a lack of sufficient private

interview space to accommodate the increasing demand for partnership working.

This is under review. And being taken into consideration when planning future Hubs.

Telephone Privacy Booths:

An issue was raised regarding confidentiality when contacting other agencies

These would be best situated in quiet areas of open space away from noise and where callers can speak and give confidential information without being overheard.

Having screens around all phones to create phone booths (space allowing) is under review.

Self-service Area:

The use of online self-service is low across all Hubs.

The self-service area has been re-designed to be more user-friendly in its layout and publicity of this service is ongoing.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys:

Customer feedback has been useful in assisting the identification of areas where service provision can be improved.

ICT Provision:

Customers have been requesting enhanced ICT training sessions from the Hubs.

This is currently under review due to the changes in welfare reform which are due to take place in April 2013.

5. Benefits Delivered

Three potential benefits were identified at the start of the Hub project:

- More accessible services
- More efficient use of resources
- A high level of customer satisfaction.

The pilot Hubs have delivered against all 3 criteria as shown below:

1. More Accessible Services

The pilot Hubs have increased the service provision in local communities, ensuring that services are fairly distributed and tailored to local needs. They provide sustainable and accessible services:

- Face-to-face customer access in neighbourhood locations
- Increased hours for face-to-face service provision
- Increased availability of services – based on community needs
- Consistent service standards

New Services include:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Housing & Benefit Service: | There was previously no service in St Mellons. Now, an average of 215 customers per month receive help without them needing to travel into the city centre. |
| Advice Service: | Local advice services are now being provided by agencies such as Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB). |
| Free Bus Pass Service: | <p>The bus pass application service (free bus passes for over 60's & Disabled Bus Passes, including replacements) has been implemented from Llanrumney Hub and St. Mellons.</p> <p>This service is increasing, due to 'word of mouth' and publicity of this. It will be rolled-out to the Hub at Loudoun from April 2013.</p> |
| Schools Online Admissions: | An online School admissions service is now available at all Hubs and working very closely with School services to promote this service. |
| Free School Meals and Student Awards: | There are plans in place to deliver free school meals and student financial awards services from Hubs in the near future. |

2. Efficient Use of Resources

The Hub staff have received customer service training to allow them to deliver effective advice on core Council services.

- Fully trained staff to develop a comprehensive service

- Joined up service delivery
- Improved use of existing buildings

Services from Council, partner and / or voluntary organisations are delivered efficiently and effectively alongside each other in the Hubs.

It has been possible to close the Llanrumney Housing Office as a result of the changes - releasing savings on operating costs that have been reinvested in the Hub services and ensuring sustainable delivery of joined up services in the community.

Services have been tailored to local need. Evidence has shown that the specialist Housing and Housing Benefits services have been the most popular council services amongst Hub service users. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has been the most popular partner agency in the Hubs, enabling sessions to be increased.

3. Customer Satisfaction

During the year 383 customer surveys were completed, which exceeded the projected target of 300 completed responses for this catchment area. The responses received from customers have been overwhelmingly positive about the Hub Staff and the facilities.

The one noticeable drop in customer satisfaction relates to the non-attendance of an external organisation for a pre-booked appointment with the customer.

6. Conclusion

Overall the Pilot Hubs have achieved the vision requirements and have provided a useful learning experience for the future development and sustainability of Hubs across the city.

Customer feedback received has been very useful for identifying further improvements to the existing service. These recommendations will help us to improve, extend and deliver face-to-face services in Cardiff and to further develop integrated partnership working.