

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 APRIL 2014

Present: Councillor Howells (Chairperson);
Councillors Hunt, Knight, Lloyd, McGarry, Murphy,
Robson and Walker.

Apologies: Councillor Marshall

73: APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR MCGARRY

At the Full Council meeting on 27 March 2014 Councillor McGarry was appointed to the Committee to replace Councillor Bale. The Chairperson welcomed Councillor McGarry and thanked Councillor Bale for his work on the Committee during the last two years.

74: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part III of the Members' Code of Conduct, to notify any interests in general terms and complete personal interest forms at the start of the meeting and then prior to commencement of 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.

75: MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meetings of 13 February 2014 and 4 March 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

76: CARDIFF COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ralph Cook (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Citizen & Community Engagement and Democracy), Marie Rosenthal (County Clerk and Monitoring Officer), Isabelle Bignall (Assistant Director, Customer Services and Communities), Catherine Smith (Operational Manager, Communications) and Edward Townsend (Project Manager, Customer Programme).

The purpose of this report was to allow scrutiny of the ongoing ‘Web Refresh’ project to update Cardiff Council’s website, prior to a ‘soft-launch’ of the new website in early April and its full launch in May 2014. The Committee agreed to this scrutiny at its last meeting on 4 March 2014 and asked to consider the website’s future governance and performance management arrangements in particular.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Cook to make a statement.

Councillor Cook informed the Committee that one of the objectives of the Web Refresh project is to save money. The current system is resource intensive. The Council wants a seamless experience for customers when accessing Council services via its website. It is important to ensure that the site satisfies customer needs but also allows ‘a conversation’ between the Council and the public.

Catherine Smith gave a presentation.

The Committee was informed that the principles behind the Web Refresh project are as follows:

- Content is focused entirely on providing relevant information to the customer and ensuring the customer experience is as positive as possible.
- All content is jargon free, simple, concise and written in an appropriate tone for the audience.
- Every page signposts customers to key online services.
- Content is created in a consistent style and tone in line with our Web Style Guide.
- The site is as accessible as possible and is independently judged to meet the WCAG 2.0 AAA criteria. Inclusive design is a key theme of the new Cardiff.gov.uk developed in partnership with DAC (Disability Accessibility Centre).
- Increase our SOCITM rating (Society of Information Technology Management).

Content Governance will include:

- Content principles
- Writing for the web - training and skills development

- Web style guide
- Form principles
- Central content management pilot
- Service Area Liaison Officers (SALO) relationship management
- Continuous improvement from analytics, trends & performance indicators (PIs).

Soft Launch Performance Indicators will include:

- Delivering a 10% increase in the number of hand held device using customers accessing the site to hit a 50% target.
- Achieving year one ‘three star’ rating in the annual SOCITM testing cycle following the Better Connected principles: Useful, Usable & Used.
- Increasing effective traffic to the English & Welsh language sides of the site. Monthly stats show hits to English side of around 300,000 and 2,500 to Welsh side of the site.
- Creating monthly benchmark data around user behaviour/trends and drop-out to inform development of additional customer focused PIs.

The Committee was advised that the ‘soft launch’ puts the new site into a live environment and so further enables any problems with it to be identified. It is expected that testing of the system will be completed in May 2014, when the current site will close. The new site gives better access to online services. It will be ‘device neutral’ and accessible from smartphones, tablet computers and PCs. The new site is just the start of building a strong online presence for the Council and will develop in line with the delivery of services. The project team have worked closely with the various service areas and a web strategy is being developed that fully supports the provision of services to customers.

Regarding governance, the Committee was informed that previously the mandate for authorising service area content on the Council’s website remained with the service areas but this became difficult to manage. Governance is critical and a central content team will be responsible for site content. The success of the site will be down to customer led development and the Council will need to be responsive to changes. The aim has been to make sure that any customer using the site can access the content they want on the site within three clicks. The site has been accessibility-tested and customers will be encouraged to use online

services on every page. The site is more streamlined than the current site and adapts to the device that is being used to access it.

The Chairperson invited the Committee to ask questions.

The Committee asked whether customers will be able to access the site from social media websites. The Committee was advised that more work is needed to explore how social media can be used in relation to service delivery and it is very high on the agenda. The Council has about 25,000 followers on Twitter and regularly ranks in the top ten of local authorities with the most informative tweets, such as tweets warning that bad weather is expected. There will be links to social media sites throughout the website.

The Committee asked whether it has been made easier for people to contact Elected Members, and whether that ease of access is available via all devices. The Committee was advised that everything possible has been done to make sure that all information and facilities on the site can be accessed from all types of devices. One of the aims of the soft launch is to get as much feedback on this as possible.

The Committee suggested that social media should be a way in which people can report deficiencies in the service they have received. The Committee was advised that although this seems like a good idea it can make it difficult to keep track of contacts made.

The Committee asked whether the site will have links to other “third party” sites like Cardiff Bus, and was informed that it will have these links and that they will build in number as the site develops.

The Committee asked whether library staff are going to be trained how to use the new site so that they can help customers with it. The Committee was advised that library staff will be trained, although it is hoped that the new site will be so good that they will not require much training.

The Committee pointed out that it is important to keep customers informed of when the services they have requested are going to be provided. If people are going to be encouraged to use the online services available on the site, the system should have the capability to maintain this contact with the customer. The Committee was advised that when people have requested services, such as repairs to property, they will get a text message or email to confirm their appointment time and another one when the service has been provided and the ‘call’ is therefore closed. The

beauty of the system is that it requires no re-keying, no duplication of work. The Council will still need the Connect 2 Cardiff call centre as there will always be some people who will prefer to talk to someone rather than use online services.

The Committee asked whether the site will have links to various Friends groups and was advised that that content is not on the site at present but it is something that is being aimed for.

The Committee asked officers whether they have the resources necessary to deliver and maintain the project and was advised that there are sufficient resources. Eventually, it may be that the site becomes more service led than it will be at the beginning, but there will be only a gradual de-centralisation. Service area officers will be trained so that they understand the need for consistency on the site.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Cook and officers for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED - That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the following issues:

The Cabinet Member's strong vision for how the Administration will be seeking to harness the potential of the new website ahead of the September 2015 full SAP Customer Relationship Management (CRM) integration. Members were particularly pleased that the new website would enable community participation, with links to Council campaigns and consultations, and signposting to Friends' groups and third party providers.

In terms of the SAP CRM integration, Members were reassured to hear the Assistant Director (Customer Services and Communities) confirm that the September 2015 deadline is still anticipated to be met, and are excited at the potential that this will unleash for a fully transactional website. The Committee looks forward to further news in advance of the intended initial launch of the link to Mobile Scheduling technology.

A Member questioned whether the in-house development of the SAP CRM enterprise architecture was a better solution for the Council than a commercial "off the peg" system. Committee was content with the response that the in-house option would deliver an advanced

system that would be future proofed, and well-integrated with the Council's service delivery and management arrangements, offering it better value and quality in the medium to long term.

The Committee was pleased to hear the Assistant Director re-confirm that citizens who are not regular or confident users of technology would still be able to fully transact with the Council by phone or in person.

Members were advised by the County Clerk and Monitoring Officer that the Democratic Services Directorate was planning to procure during 2014/15 a bespoke Committee Administration package that – as well as making democratic administration more efficient and effective – had the potential capability to promote the work undertaken by the Council via blogs, Member annual reports and Member websites and more, and generally enhance democratic and Member engagement.

Members were pleased to hear the Cabinet Member's assurance that the Content Management Board will enjoy strong elected Member representation.

Members noted and concur with the Cabinet Member's expressed view that for the immediate future maintenance of the website should remain centrally controlled. Members would like the central team to be responsive to local needs and creative ideas feeding in from Service Area Liaison Officers, but can see the benefits of central control in ensuring consistency and adherence to delivery of Council priorities. Their recommendation would be to review the effectiveness of arrangements following an initial period of operation, before ceding too much control back to service areas.

Members did not note from the presentation a strong desire to integrate social media with the website. Members were also mindful of the recommendation made by the Committee's April 2013 task and finish inquiry into *Public Engagement With Scrutiny* (which the Committee notes has yet to receive a Cabinet response) that Scrutiny Services consider developing a Facebook page.

Members recognise that social media may be easier for the Council to manage as a communications tool rather than as a transactional tool, and that it has deficits in terms of the Council's ability to

monitor, quality assure and report on actions taken in terms of customer requests. The Committee feels, however, that in terms of customer focus our citizens should be able to report faults in the way that is most natural and most convenient to them. Members would urge the Cabinet Member not to consider social media like Facebook as an afterthought as a communications interface with the Council website, or to constrain too heavily the channels for our citizens' transactions with the Council.

77: DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14 QUARTER 3

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance), Paul Orders (Chief Executive) and Martin Hamilton (Assistant Director, Sport, Leisure and Culture).

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement.

Councillor Hinchey informed the Committee that the aims of each Directorate have been clearly set out; be on budget; look at sickness absence; and look at staff performance, including staff morale and how to deal with staff who are under-performing. Personal Performance Development Reviews (PPDRs) have to focus on whether or not people want to improve the services that are provided.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that there are two issues; there is to be a much greater emphasis on peer challenge and an honest discussion about how the Council's performance can be improved. The links between overall performance and PPDRs is clear.

The Assistant Director informed the Committee that the format for performance reports has been changed, moving from a statement on the current position to something that is much more focussed on the issues. It is important that Members are kept aware of the issues and challenges. There has been a move towards a Balanced Scorecard concept, which allows more visualisation of the information that is presented. The new reporting format provides more narrative on the Corporate Plan and performance indicators. Directorate plans for this year have much more detail in them and will detail plans to manage future challenges. Improvement actions will be tracked from one quarter to the next. The PPDR process will be streamlined and compliance will be more rigorously enforced. The fact that the PPDR process has merely been 'initiated' will no longer be counted as part of the data on compliance.

The setting of objectives is the first meaningful part of the process. It will be down to the service areas to set their own objectives but the quality of the objectives will be checked. Corporate objectives will be linked to Education, Vulnerable People and the Economy.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee suggested that targets in relation to Planning should be monitored given recent job savings in this area and the possibility of more planning appeals. The Committee was advised that there is a very strong focus from the new Director with responsibility for Planning, who is keen to significantly improve the planning appeals process.

Members asked when the Directorate plans will be brought to the Committee for scrutiny and were advised that they will be reported to the Committee in June or July, as has happened in previous years, and will contain detailed information.

The Committee asked whether the Directorates will work together where there is an overlap in the Directorate plans. The Committee was advised that it is important that ways are found to capture information across the Council, and an evolution of the Directorate plans should be expected.

A Member pointed out that it can sometimes be difficult for the Committee to get a sense of how challenging it is to meet the performance targets that have been set, a sense of how challenging objectives actually are, and asked if there is any way to improve this. The Committee was advised that it is important to develop a more creative approach to benchmarking, so that the Council reaches a position where it has developed relationships with other local authorities that allow a useful assessment of what the comparative data really means.

The Committee noted that one of the challenges for the next quarter is to bring forward a draft Property Strategy for the next quarter, which is something that the Committee has been requesting for some time. The Committee was advised that the Council has to make decisions about how it develops the estates that it has and about what it does with its buildings if, as is likely, it becomes a smaller council, employing fewer people.

The Committee asked for more information about proposals to create a Public Sector Hub in the city centre. The Committee was advised that officers are in discussion with the Welsh Government about the

possibilities of bringing public services and organisations together in the city centre for the benefit of the citizens.

The Committee pointed out that the number of students in the city is growing; student populations at Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University and the University of Glamorgan have all grown. More analysis is needed on how Cardiff functions as a university city. Many of the entertainment venues in the city centre are geared towards younger people. Many students live very near to the city centre and in the evenings older people are perhaps deterred from coming into the city centre because fewer buses and trains run at that time. The Committee was advised that it is a mark of the city's success that students come to it and like it, but the Council has to do what it can to make sure that people of all ages can enjoy the city centre, as a place to live as well as somewhere to enjoy their leisure.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED - That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the following issues:

As an overall piece of feedback, Members felt that the new style report is succinct, and relatively clear on priority issues.

The Committee would like to see a stronger link between quarterly reports so that it is made clear how successfully the issues previously flagged up as challenges for the forthcoming quarter had been managed.

Members noted that the Chief Executive sees the new refreshed quarterly reporting documents as a work in progress, and that they would continue to evolve in coming quarters. Members were interested to hear the Chief Executive describe emerging improvement approaches being considered at Senior Leadership Team as pathfinders towards new ways of improving performance, and will be very interested to hear more detail on these ideas at an appropriate point in the future.

Members were pleased to hear from the Chief Executive that – while the new look Directorate Delivery Plans for 2014/15 would better support the management of performance of cross-cutting agendas – this would continue to improve moving forward, and that Members

would see further improvement on this point as the organisation moves into its planning for 2015/16 delivery.

Members are pleased to have heard commitment expressed for enhanced benchmarking.

It was particularly interesting to hear the Chief Executive talk of the potential for future performance reports to have a “corporate wrap” with key messages about the Council’s overarching performance quality across its services and Directorates.

The Committee thanks the Chief Executive for suggesting that he would take a question about citizens and other interested stakeholders (including non-executive Members) could access and interrogate open and machine-readable data on the Council’s performance back to explore the timelines and resource needs involved in making this kind of data available.

Members expressed enthusiasm for considering the Council’s Property Strategy and was delighted to hear that following discussions with the Director for Economic Development the Cabinet Member felt it will be available to come to the Committee very soon.

The Committee understands that the concept of a Public Sector Hub referred to in the Quarter 3 performance report may still be in its early days, but would also be keen to further explore this concept (and the Council’s potential participation in a hub of this kind) if possible as part of the Property Strategy.

78: JOINT SCRUTINY OF COMMUNITY HUBS PROPOSALS – MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services, presented this item.

The purpose of this report was to enable the Committee to adopt a more flexible approach to the membership of the Community Hubs Subcommittee that was established in July 2013, so that changes in membership during 2014/15 can be managed without requiring further reports to Committee, allowing the Chairperson of this Committee to liaise with Members individually regarding membership of the Subcommittee.

The Committee was advised that so far there have been two meetings of the Community Hubs Sub-Committee. It is anticipated that during the coming year there will be revised proposals regarding a hub for the St Mellons area of Cardiff and consultation on a hub for Llandaff North. Other committees represented on the Sub-Committee are the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee and the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee and membership from these committees also needs to be refreshed in order to replace those Members who are no longer able to participate.

The Committee was informed that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Environmental Scrutiny Committee are both to consider creating sub-committees so that they are also represented on the Community Hubs Sub-Committee.

The Committee was advised that there should be five Members on the sub-committee from the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee that forms part of the Community Hubs Sub-Committee. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee's sub-committee currently consists of Councillors Howells, Knight, Murphy, Robson and Walker. Councillor Hunt expressed an interest in taking a place. The Committee was advised that as representation should proportionally emulate the composition of the Committee, having a Liberal Democrat Member of the Committee on the sub-committee would give better proportionality.

AGREED - That the Committee grants its permission for the Chairperson to liaise with individual Members regarding membership of its sub-committee that forms part of the Community Hubs Sub-Committee.

79: CORRESPONDENCE - INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee noted that replies have not been received for a number of letters sent to the Cabinet by the Committee.

AGREED –

- 1) That the report be noted.

- 2) That the Chairperson writes to the Leader to ask whether the new Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance will reply to those letters.

80: AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee received for information the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee that was held on 2 December 2013

AGREED - That the report be noted.

81: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next Committee meeting will be held on 6 May 2014 in Committee Room 4, County Hall.