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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2019, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

10 **Correspondence following Committee Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

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

Date: 18 January 2019

Councillor Huw Thomas,
Leader
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
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CF10 4UW



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Dear Councillor Thomas,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 17 January 2019

On behalf of all Members of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, thank you for facilitating policy development scrutiny of the draft Corporate Plan once again. We appreciate the opportunity to feed in our suggestions for improvement at this stage and look forward to seeing the final draft alongside budget papers.

Captured below are some key issues raised during our discussion at the Way Forward, that we ask you to consider when finalising the draft for Cabinet and Full Council consideration.

The Committee welcomes the inclusion of Steps within this Plan that are a result of your previous engagement with the Committee. We note that you consider there are many examples of Scrutiny influencing and shaping the Corporate Plan. We have some concerns and proposals we would ask you to address as you continue to develop the Plan.

Selecting Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Members acknowledge that not all measures for which data is available can be illustrated in the Plan, to prevent it becoming unwieldy, and that it is important to choose those that are representative of overall performance. However, for some Steps Members would like you to re-consider whether the KPI's used are the best ones to illustrate performance. A good example is Youth Justice. The Step within Objective 1.4 to **Modernise the Youth Offending Service**, currently measured by *the number of children entering the criminal justice system*, whilst useful we feel should be supplemented by an additional measure of *the number of children re-offending*. Our view is that an increase in the number of children entering the system

may not be a negative outcome, it is the avoidance of re-offending that is the positive outcome, and as such should be measured. Additionally, we urge you to use consistent terminology in both the Step and the KPI.

Agency Costs

The Committee notes that over the years efforts have been made to reduce agency costs, and we consider that scrutiny concerns have helped to give that process greater visibility and attention. We consider however there is further work to be undertaken, to identify those areas where the Council can make a case for short term use of agency staff; and the actions necessary to reduce or eliminate agency work in other cases. This could well lead to a tightening up of the processes leading to the authorisation of agency use. Justification for agency use could potentially be defined as a last resort requiring authorisation, rather than a first easy option. The £10m annual cost remains at an unacceptably high level. We recommend further corporate oversight of escalation to full employment rights, opportunities and job security for agency workers. We also note that you recognise the potential for improving organisational culture by reducing the use of agency workers, particularly within Waste Management.

We ask that further work be carried out to produce a strategy for reducing agency use and we plan to invite you to return to Committee on this issue. This is an area of work for consideration in the Committee's future work programme.

Directorates with too few KPI's

We welcome your commitment to re-consider the number of performance measures (KPI's) within the Plan for the Economic Development Directorate. We wish to re-iterate our concern, raised this time last year, that performance measures for Objective 2.1 are noticeably light compared with KPI's identified to measure other Objectives and those of other directorates. For example, we would welcome reference to work underway with large developers to generate employment.

Additional issues the Committee would like referenced in the Plan

- **Schools** – you took on board our concerns in respect of Objective 1.1. We would like to strengthen the measures in place to evaluate progress in educational attainment. We would like a clear target for the number of schools in Cardiff that

should achieve good or better ESTYN assessments in any specific year, rather than simply stating 'all schools'. We would also ask that you include a KPI that sets a target for improvement in levels of attainment at KS4 and A level.

- Whilst we are reassured that Cardiff's PSB consider the Well-being Plan strong on the issue of **Health inequalities**, some Members would like to see a commitment to this issue in the Corporate Plan.
- In respect of **Waste Management**, two issues appear to be absent from the Plan. We would expect to see reference to the replacement for Wedal Road HWRC, and also an indication of a plan to raise collection productivity to meet benchmark attainment with accompanying targets. We note that there is a forthcoming Cabinet report on the proposed new HWRC, and a new Street scene strategy under development, and we look forward to scrutinising these in the future. We note also that discussions are ongoing with Trades Unions that you anticipate will enable measurement and improvement of productivity in core data sets in future Corporate Plans.
- Whilst the Plan references improving the health and wellbeing of our employees, measured by the number of working days lost due to **Sickness Absence**, we would like to see an indication of the work underway to understand the causes of stress on employees and proposals to address these causes.

I would be grateful if you would pass my thanks to all who attended PRAP in support of this item. We look forward to considering the final draft alongside the budget on 20 February 2019. I will not require a response to this letter. I assume the matters raised will be taken into account in preparing the final version of the Plan and can be referenced in our informal discussions on 11th February 2019.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the PRAP Scrutiny Committee
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Christine Salter, Corporate Director, Resources
Gareth Newell, Policy Manager
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office
Debi Said, Cabinet Support Officer
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Kate Rees, Senior Committee Administrator

Date: 18 January 2019



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Mr Ian Arundale
Chairperson, Audit Committee,
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Ian,

Purchase of Streetscene vehicles

Thank you for your recent correspondence. The Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the Council's emergency purchase of streetscene vehicles on 16th January 2019.

The Committee received a presentation, and an opportunity to question the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment, the Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, and the Transport Manager. This briefing was a result of my agreement, as Chair, that the decision qualified as an emergency, and therefore would not be subject to the call-in procedure under the Council's Constitution. Following the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward, Members agreed that I make the following observations which I am happy to share with you and the Audit Committee.

The Members unanimously consider that the Cabinet has taken the appropriate decision in purchasing essential vehicles to deliver frontline services. The purchase of Refuse Collection Vehicles and Gritters from the administrators of Gulliver Transport Hire (GTH) at a cost of approximately £1.3million was justified given the emergency circumstances and satisfies the Council's essential vehicle requirements in the short to medium term. However, the Committee has some concern that the model, now adopted by the Council as an opportunistic way forward, may not necessarily become the best approach in the longer term. It represents a significant change of direction to delivering the service, from leasing to ownership of vehicles, with the associated responsibility for all maintenance work, along with large potential future capital costs of purchasing new replacement vehicles.

We considered the risk assessment and contingency planning processes were in place when the decision was taken alongside the Council's arrangements for securing value for money. I offer the following to inform your need for assurance, and to avoid duplication of Committee effort.

On a positive note, we:

- Agree that the Council saw both a threat and an opportunity, and acted quickly to avoid what could have been a high risk position had the Council lost the use of key frontline vehicles which were being offered for sale following the demise of GTH.
- Are assured that a factor in securing a positive outcome was the recognition early in 2018 that GTH were in difficulty, and arrangements already put in place that lease charges would be paid monthly rather than annually.
- Note that the purchase has increased confidence in the Council's Central Transport Services (CTS) ability to manage ownership and maintenance of these vehicles. The £470,000 budget for the external maintenance of the vehicles has been brought in-house. It is also viewed as an opportunity to kick-start further commercialisation of the CTS service and make it of a size which can become sustainable.

Whilst we recognise the Cabinet's achievements in reacting speedily, we are unclear as to whether the Council has the financial and operational capacity to make the in-house model it has adopted in the short term, sustainable in the longer term.

We have agreed to invite the Cabinet Member to return to Committee one year on from this significant outlay of capital, to update us on the financial and operational realities of the decision and his vision for the future.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER

CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Michael, Cabinet Member Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment
Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Chris Pyke, Audit Manager
Steven Melhuish, Transport Manager
Kate Rees, Senior Committee Administrator
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Melanie Jackson, Cabinet Support

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