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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** WEDNESDAY, 22 MARCH 2023, 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](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

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

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Date: 23 March 2023

Councillor Julie Sangani,  
Cabinet Member Public Health & Equality,  
Cardiff Council,  
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Dear Julie,

### **PRAP Scrutiny Committee 22 March 2023: Participation Strategy**

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 22 March 2023 to present your early work on the Council's Participation Strategy. Please also pass on my appreciation to the Director of Governance & Legal Services, Davina Fiore, Head of Performance and Partnerships, Gareth Newell, Head of Democratic Services Gary Jones, Operational Manager Policy & Performance Dylan Owen and Principal Researcher, Claire Owens for supporting the scrutiny. I have been asked to pass on Members' comments and observations following discussion at the Way Forward.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity for policy development scrutiny of the Participation Strategy. Members wish to thank you for a comprehensive presentation of development work to date, particularly in respect of seldom heard groups in our city. We agree that representation matters, the strategy is all about listening and must reach all communities to ensure Cardiff Council is open and ensures local voices can influence local decision-making. We acknowledge that the strategy is at an early stage, that the statutory guidance officers are following is draft and may change, and that, despite the Council's grand vision for placing communities at the heart of decision-making and its aspiration for inclusivity, this strategy must be delivered without the benefit of additional resources.

Overall, the Committee considers your work to date on developing the Participation Strategy has been very comprehensive, however there are a few areas we feel would benefit from further examination. We therefore make the following observations and recommendations to inform your ongoing development of the strategy:

### **Mitigating low response rates from minority groups.**

The Committee was pleased to hear there has been an improvement in general consultation response rates, particularly given members conversations with the research team to gather community intelligence, and stakeholder mapping to improve reach. However, more specifically, we note that the response of minority language groups to the recent Budget Consultation was low. We are pleased to hear you will continue working on this and will take the opportunity to integrate council wide resources and intelligence as you develop the Participation Strategy. We therefore **recommend** that you take steps to mitigate a lack of responses from minority groups and we are seeking your assurance that the strategy will include more information on how you plan to achieve this.

The Committee's view is that talking face to face with communities improves the quality of information gathered. We were particularly interested that speaking a minority language is not a guarantee of written skills in that language, and this assumption can often present a barrier to communication. We therefore **recommend** that you ensure the strategy addresses this.

### **Closing the feedback loop**

The Committee reflected on the importance of closing the feedback loop in all consultation exercises. Members feel glossy publications are rarely the answer to feeding back consultation results. We note you agree the Council needs to improve on this matter and we therefore **recommend** that the strategy contains clear proposals as to how we will communicate back to communities.

### **Strengthening the link to performance**

Members were pleased to hear of the intention to strengthen corporate practice on engagement by linking citizen perception data collected by all service areas into the performance framework, and by developing a citizen perception element to the Directorate Delivery Plans. This was a recommendation of the Scrutiny Performance Panel and as such we will test its implementation over the course of our performance monitoring work.

### **Partner opportunities**

The Committee concurs with officer's views that there is scope for significant collaboration with the Council's partners on inclusive consultation, particularly given the financial implications of reaching out to all minority languages. We note that digital translation has already been explored. We also note that partners have undertaken citizen perception analysis and have an insight into communities that we might share. We urge that the strategy includes a vision as to how this can be achieved. We therefore **recommend** that the strategy seeks to build a broad coalition of stakeholder networks through collaboration with its partners.

### **Socio-economic barriers**

Members are particularly interested in how to overcome the barriers to consulting with low-income socio-economic groups. We note that you have focussed on geographic indications in development work to date, and there is recognition that face-to-face engagement with these groups is very important, but that there is an opportunity to examine any barriers that may be alienating these groups further and we **recommend** you do so.

### **Policy development consultation**

The Committee highlighted that consultation with residents on policy development would stretch the council's engagement from one focussed pre-dominantly on service development and design to one of greater influence. You agreed to reflect on this and suggested a report back at the all-member session. We are therefore listing this as a **recommendation**.

### **Supporting diversity in standing for election**

In respect of the Democratic Services requirements of the Participation Strategy, the Committee concurs that Members hold the key to community intelligence and welcomes the plan to hold an all-Member engagement event in May 2023 as part of the ongoing development of the Strategy. We also note the importance of communications and welcome the development of a democracy communication plan.

### **Political party collaboration**

Members from all parties on the Committee were of the view that there is an opportunity for collaboration/closer pre-election links across political parties, in

preparing prospective new candidates who are considering whether or not to stand in an elected role, and in supporting candidates as they prepare for election. This collaboration should be founded on the role of a Councillor in serving their community. We note your intention to include extra support for independent members and ensure better communications between the council and political groups. We **recommend** you examine the possibility of improved collaboration and communication across parties as a part of developing the strategy.

### **Protected characteristics**

Members welcomed your proposed initiatives to ensure that the representativeness of Council membership more closely mirrors the communities it serves. However, we consider there may be more work required to examine the support provided to Members in respect of all protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010. We therefore **recommend** you address these as part of developing the strategy.

### **Assistance fund**

Officers referred to an assistance fund available to support prospective candidates from minority groups in standing for election. We therefore **request** that you share with the Committee more information on its purpose and how individuals can access the fund.

### **Recommendations following the scrutiny:**

To summarise, the Committee makes 8 formal recommendations following this policy development scrutiny, as set out below. As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could, for each recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet's response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
That you provide assurance the Participation Strategy will include the steps you will take to mitigate a lack of responses from minority groups.				
That you ensure the Participation Strategy addresses the fact that speaking a minority language is not a guarantee of written skills in that language, and this assumption can often present a barrier to communication.				
That the Participation Strategy contains clear proposals as to how the Council will communicate the results of consultations back to communities.				
That the Participation Strategy seeks to build a broad coalition of stakeholder networks through collaboration with its partners.				
Face-to-face engagement with low-income socio-economic groups is very important and we recommend you examine any barriers that may be alienating these groups from contributing to consultations.				
That you reflect on, and report back to the all-member session, consultation with residents on policy development to stretch the council's engagement from one focussed pre-dominantly on service development and design to one of greater influence.				

<p>That you examine the possibility of improved collaboration and communication across political parties on supporting potential and new candidates as a part of developing the Participation Strategy.</p>				
<p>That you examine the support provided to Members in respect of all protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 as part of developing the Participation Strategy.</p>				

**Requests following the scrutiny:**

- That you share with the Committee more information on the purpose of the assistance fund, and how individuals can access the fund.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you once again for the opportunity of policy development scrutiny of the Participation Strategy. With your support, I look forward to continuing the Committee’s involvement in this strategy. In the interests of clarity on the matters the committee would like addressed as a consequence of this policy development scrutiny, I have captured our suggestions as recommendations. There is also one request for information. I therefore look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Leaders of Opposition Parties – Adrian Robson, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson  
Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services  
Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships  
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services  
Dylan Owen, OM Policy & Performance  
Claire Owens, Principal Research & Consultation Officer  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit  
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations  
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager  
Heather Warren, Cabinet Support Officer  
Andrea Redmond, Committees Support Officer.

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