

Date: 12 October 2016



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Councillor Graham Hinchey,  
Cabinet Member, Corporate Service & Performance,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Hinchey,

**Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 11 October 2016**  
**Statutory Improvement Report 2015/16**

Thank you for attending Committee to facilitate the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the Statutory Annual Improvement Report 2015/16. Following discussion at the Way Forward Members have asked that I pass on the following comments and observations for consideration by the Cabinet.

The Committee is pleased to hear that this year all steps have been taken to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 in respect of the Council's own assessment of its 2015/16 performance, and therefore comply with Wales Audit Office requirements. We note that in future the Measure's Improvement Objectives, used for performance improvement measurement, will be replaced by the Well-being Goals introduced by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The central focus of the Committee's concerns continues to be around the robustness of the Council's target setting. Members illustrated such concerns about performance measures using the following examples during the Committee and the Way Forward:

- **Page 43: The percentage of year 11 leavers not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).** We accept that – where there has been over performance – managers use an outcome to determine future resource allocation; but we are concerned as to what happens next. The Committee wishes to have a fuller explanation of how the effectiveness of target setting is reviewed, given its contribution to overall improvement.
- **Page 63: The number of additional affordable housing units provided during the year.** Here performance has far exceeded the target set for 2015/16. The target has been set considerably lower than both 2013/14 and

2014/15 results. Clearly we have met the target and are therefore assessed as improving, though against what could be considered an unchallenging target.

- **Page 71: 'Grade A' office space committed for Development in Cardiff.** The 2014/15 result was 100,000 square feet, the target set for 2015/16 was 100,000 square feet, which was duly achieved and self assessed as having made strong progress (a smiley face), though it could be considered there has been no improvement because the assessment is measured against a target that doesn't allow for improvement. The report indicates the Council actually approved 316,000 square feet of Grade A offices.
- **Page 75, Mode of Travel to Work by Cycling.** The 2013/14 and 2014/15 result was 9.2%, and the target set for 2015/16 was 9.2%, which was duly achieved and self assessed as a smiley face, though again it could be considered there has been no improvement because the assessment is measured against a target that doesn't allow for improvement.

The Committee considers that the smiley face assessments used are sometimes subjective, and wish to suggest the accuracy of the judgements is checked. We would be interested to understand the framework used to arrive at the final judgement.

Members take on board the Chief Executive's view that the self assessment process adopted this year is clearer and more precise, however they have some reservations that the tick approach (*page 9*) does not reflect the detail behind services such as 'access to good quality housing' and 'every Cardiff School is a good school'. These are services about which Members receive many enquiries in the course of their ward work. Members therefore feel there may be an opportunity to improve the robustness of the assessment of performance process.

Whilst we acknowledge that other published Council documents provide financial detail, the Committee feels that within 'The Cost of our Services' section (*Pages 11/12*) the report would benefit from greater detail of budget overspend.

Finally, the Committee notes your intention to conduct a comprehensive independent review of the Organisational Development Programme (ODP) by the end of the 2016/17 municipal year and is keen to have an opportunity to consider the findings. We also note for future work programming you consider it will be necessary to re-visit the ODP programme early in the 2017/18 new municipal year.

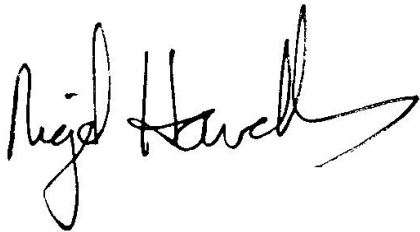
To recap, the Committee:

- Requests that Cabinet give consideration to the robustness of the Council's Performance Measure target setting;

- Would be grateful for a fuller explanation of how the effectiveness of target setting is reviewed;
- Would be interested to understand the framework used to arrive at the final judgement of performance;
- Wishes to consider the comprehensive independent review of the Organisational Development Programme (ODP) when it becomes available.

Once again thank you for attending Committee, we remain keen to support the Council in its performance review work and contribute to a culture of proactive performance management that provides a strong foundation for improvement in Council services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Howells', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee;  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive;  
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources;  
Joseph Reay, Head of Performance & Partnerships;  
Clare Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager;  
Matt Swindell, Principal Administrative Officer.