

Policy Review Performance Scrutiny Committee
Correspondence

| Committee date | Committee item | Recipient | Date letter presented to Committee | Officers | Comments/Information requested | Response Required? | Response date | Response | Date response presented to Committee | Further Actions |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 02/09/2014 | Qtr 1 2014/15 Performance | Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey) | 30/09/2014 | Paul Orders Martin Hamilton | Committee: - welcomed the additional risk information; - was pleased to see that Personal Performance and Development Review and Sickness performance had improved; - agreed to set up a Performance Panel to look at performance issues in more depth, and chose workforce planning as the first issue for consideration. As part of this the Committee would look at overtime/agency spend, as it didn't feel that the information contained in the performance report was sufficient to judge how these were being used and how this linked to, for example, budget savings; - requested to attend Cabinet/director performance challenge sessions to assure themselves that challenge was sufficiently robust; - requested greater visibility of additional in-year savings where these are put in place outside the February budget-setting process, and of any use of budget contingencies; - noted with concern the decreasing performance in terms of fulfilling multi-service information requests. | Y | 18/11/2014 | Cllr Hinchey responded welcoming the Committee's comments. Officers are reviewing how overtime and agency spend is presented and the Cabinet Member would be happy to discuss this further. | 02/12/2014 | No comment regarding attendance at challenge sessions. Committee reiterated this point in its Quarter 2 letter. The presentation of overtime and agency data was amended/reduced in the Quarter 2 report, and Committee has asked for it to be reinstated in its Quarter 2 letter. Improved performance regarding Information Requests is being pursued. There was no comment regarding additional in-year budget savings. |
| 02/09/2014 | Challenge Forum | Leader (Cllr Bale) Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance (Cllr Hinchey) | 30/09/2014 | Paul Orders Martin Hamilton | Committee: - agreed that the Forum could be a powerful mechanism for encouraging real changes in performance and welcomed its initial focus on Education and Children Services; - requested Forum members to attend Committee to brief them on their work and aid their scrutiny of relevant issues (performance and Organisational Development); - requested written updates on the Forum's future work and recommendations, to be reported to other Committees as relevant; - requested more notice of future meetings to ensure the Chair's attendance | Y | 18/11/2014 | Cllr Hinchey responded that Martin Hamilton would arrange if possible for Barry Quirk to attend the Committee's look at Organisational Development. Rod Alcott observed the Quarter 2 performance scrutiny as part of his review. | 02/12/2014 | Although Rod Alcott observed the Committee's 4 November 2014 meeting, the Committee requested that he attend to explain his review of performance and his findings. This is proposed to take place before the Committee's 3 March 2015 meeting. UPDATE 4 February 2015 Rod Alcott will be meeting all Committees in the March cycle to discuss his perspective of performance scrutiny |

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| | | | | | <p>On Capital Times, the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressed congratulations to the team for the levels of income achieved by the paper; - Was reassured that the Cabinet Member ruled out a wholly online publication in future; - Could see positive aspects to returning to 12 printed editions in terms of accessibility and its good reputation; - Asked for further information to inform further budget scrutiny: numbers of unique hits on the web editions; the full costs of published version including journalists' time; the costs of publishing statutory notices elsewhere; - Recommended that the Capital Times should be developed into a more effective engagement tool for more serious issues such as the WAO Corporate Assessment and the Budget; - Recommended that the Capital Times should be monitored to avoid suggestions of political bias. | Y | 19/11/2014 | The Leader responded that costs of producing the Capital Times and of publishing statutory notices were provided. The County Clerk and Monitoring Officer will scrutinise each edition to ensure that it complies with the Code of Conduct on Local Authority Publicity, and the Leader will ask the Interim Head of Communications to address the content of Capital Times articles. | 02/12/2014 | The unique number of hits for online editions of the Capital Times was not provided. This is been followed up with officers. **** Jeremy Rhys should be providing**** Chase up |
| 04/11/2014 | Draft Property Strategy | Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Clr Hinchey) | 02/12/2014 | Neil Hanratty Charles Coats | <p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reiterated Members' disappointment at the delay in presenting the Strategy and the effect that this had on the agenda for the meeting. Members hoped that the Cabinet forward planning would improve to prevent a recurrence; - expressed their disappointment about the contents of the draft Strategy given the 18 month delay. Members had expected to see more detail of direction of travel, and noted that several pieces of work were yet to be completed; - requested to consider the Investment Review in pre-decision, so asked for confirmation of its availability; - noted that a detailed business case for an alternative to County Hall is under development and asked for pre-decision scrutiny; - will consider the annual Corporate Asset Management Plan for inclusion in future work programmes; - had referred the Schools Review to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; - noted positive steps in terms of partnership working; - did not feel the Council's vision had been addressed and reiterated the need to use property for community and social benefit as well as financial gain. Members recommended the amendment of the draft Strategy to reflect this; - recommended further detail should be included in the Strategy regarding benchmarking and Member engagement with disposals; - noted that some 'confidential' papers were referred to in the draft Cabinet report; asked that these be circulated to the Committee and recommended that the Cabinet report should be revised to set out the reason for exemption from publication. | Y | 05/12/2014 | Councillor Hinchey responded that the direction of travel is encapsulated in the strategy's title: 'fewer but better buildings', with three main components: modernisation, rationalisation, collaboration. The Strategy aims to provide a framework and vision rather than a detailed action plan, which will be provided through the Corporate Asset Management Plan. The Strategy does not suggest that there will be a fire-sale of assets, and alternative uses will be explored, and Members engaged with. Confidential papers will be forwarded to Members, but it was requested that they continue to be treated as confidential. The County Hall Business Case will be made available for pre-decision scrutiny | 10/02/2015 | Schedule consideration of the County Hall business case. Confirm receipt of confidential background papers |
| 04/11/2014 | Organisational Development - Strategic Commissioning & Service Reviews | Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Clr Hinchey) | 02/12/2014 | Christine Salter Steve Robinson Martin Hamilton | <p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomed the outward looking stance which has been taken in trying to learn from experiences elsewhere; - recommended that more concrete examples of what is done elsewhere are investigated and the knowledge shared; - noted the strain on the Commissioning and Procurement team and repeated its recommendation that a team should be created to support communities in developing alternative service models. Members were concerned that communities would not be able to take over service delivery and that this would lead to gaps in service provision; - recommended that the programme of service reviews should more properly sit within the Change & Improvement function; - noted the issue of internal capacity and capability to review services; - recommended that the management programme should be extended below Grade 8 to cover all managers/supervisors; - asked for confirmation of the timescale for putting in place a revised Community Asset Transfer Toolkit; - noted with interest the work of John Hallett and would seek to hear from him during its consideration of Social Inclusion in Cardiff later in the year. | Y | 05/12/2014 | Councillor Hinchey noted the positive response to the strategic commissioning approach and agreed practical examples would be useful. This will be explored and shared with Scrutiny. A new post has been funded in the Communities Directorate to work with communities to build capacity to take on service provision | 10/02/2015 | Response did not confirm timescale for the Community Asset Transfer Toolkit or which service would push forward service reviews. |
| 04/11/2014 | Performance Q2 2014/15 & Challenge Forum | Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Clr Hinchey) | 02/12/2014 | CEX Martin Hamilton Christine Salter | <p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted the Cabinet Member's comment that positive progress had been made, albeit that the budget position remains of concern; - noted the areas highlighted by the Chief Executive: the financial position; management of demand in Health & Social Care; sickness absence and pressures in Children Services. The former was already on the Committee's work programme for detailed consideration; - The Committee referred the 'Key issues' report produced by the Chief Officer for Change & Improvement to the other Scrutiny Committees as many issues fell outside PRAP's terms of reference; - noted the gap in risk information; - recommended that Overtime and Agency spend data be reinstated; - recommended that the customer point of view, which Members had recommended on several occasions be built into the report, be addressed by Quarter 3; - noted that the Member Enquiry line commentary, which the Cabinet Member had said would be addressed by Q2, had not been and that it should be by Quarter 3; - had previously questioned the credibility of target-setting and noted that it is being addressed through the corporate/service planning approach. The Performance Panel may address this area in future; - requesting confirmation of the quality checks of PPDRs which had been flagged up on several occasions with no evidence of the outcome provided; - repeated the as yet unanswered request to attend the 'star chamber' sessions; - requested an update on progress in producing a 'public facing' version of the report, which was flagged up during consideration of the 2013/14 outturn. | Y | 05/12/2015 | Councillor Hinchey has asked for the information requested to be brought to Committee once available. | 10/02/2015 | Full response is being followed up with officers; Committee may like to satisfy itself as to the response when it receives Quarter 3 Performance report. |

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| 02/12/2014 | Corporate Plan 2015-17 | Leader (Councillor Bale) | 06/01/2015 | CEX Martin Hamilton | <p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Plan at an earlier stage and the consideration given to best practice in Corporate Planning in the Core Cities and the wider planning & policy agenda; - Directorate Plans should be in place for the start of the new financial year. <p>The Committee didn't require a formal response, apart from conformation of the availability of the Corporate Plan, What Matters refresh and Directorate Delivery Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommended that more thought should be given to ensure the final Plan is suitable for all its audiences; - recommended that appropriate training should be developed for officers regarding outcomes/objectives, measures and target-setting; - asked for a number of points to receive more prominence in the Plan (NEETS, capital city status, cross-boundary working); - recommended that the influence of engagement on the Plan should be clearly set out; - suitable comparative data should be included in the Plan; - the Plan should be made available in time for all Scrutiny Committees' budget meetings; - the timings of the availability of What matters, Corporate Plan, Directorate Delivery Plans. | N | 13/01/2015 | A response wasn't required, apart from confirmation of the availability of Corporate Plan, Directorate Plans and the What Matters refresh. Councillor Bale confirmed that the Corporate Plan would be available for the five Committees in February; Directorate Delivery Plans would be 'operational for the start of the new financial year' and work will start on the What Matters Refresh in the first quarter of 2015/16. | 10/02/2015 | Schedule consideration of the Directorate Delivery Plans and What Matters refresh as appropriate. |
| 06/01/2015 | Employee Costs, Voluntary Severance Review | Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey) | 10/02/2015 | Christine Salter Philip Lenz Lynne David | <p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreed that greater restrictions should be placed on employees returning to the Council after having received voluntary severance, and recommended that a term of twelve months before re-engagement should be set; - agreed that there was justification for ending the routine use of settlement agreements, if HR officers' advice was that the Council would be adequately protected in future. <p>- Commended the Committee's research into employee cost savings to the Cabinet, noting that the Council has put in place many of the recommended approaches already and looked forward to considering the matter further at the February budget meeting.</p> | N | N/A | <p>The Review of the Council's Voluntary Severance Review was presented to Cabinet on 26 January 2015 and Cabinet was asked to approve a minimum of period of 12 months before staff released on VS could be re-engaged by the Council; ceasing the routine use of settlement agreements; and revising the VS calculator to a maximum of 45 weeks, maintaining the current statutory maximum weekly pay, subject to the annual increase agreed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills).</p> <p>A report was also presented to 26 January 2015 Cabinet setting out a new Partnership for Change, which provided an update on discussions with Trade Unions on 2015/16 budget proposals and putting in place a negotiation framework to assist with future reform.</p> <p>A further report set out proposals to start a consultation process to put in place a revised senior management structure.</p> | 10/02/2015 | None |
| 06/01/2015 | Organisational Development / Corporate Assessment | Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance (Cllr Hinchey) | 10/02/2015 | Chief Executive, Martin Hamilton | <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - looks forward to receiving a more detailed update on progress prior to a refreshed Organisational Development Programme being presented for Cabinet approval and will look for clear evidence of delivery against outcomes. Members would like to hear directly from Challenge Forum representatives at this meeting; - Requested a detailed report regarding the work and recommendations of the Challenge Forum with Quarter 3 Performance Report; - Anticipate receiving more detailed evidence of how Directorate overspends are being challenged and managed; - Recommend that staff morale and the positive management of change remain high up the Cabinet's and Chief Executive's agendas. | Y | | Not yet received | | |
| 06/01/2015 | Investment Property Review | Leader (Cllr Bale) | 10/02/2015 | Neil Hanratty, Charles Coats | <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommends that community and social benefit should be taken into account when Cabinet decides a way forward for the Investment Portfolio; - believes that Cabinet should not accept the Review's recommendation to sell rack rent shops without giving thought to their community benefit; - recommends that where community assets are considered for transfer, business cases should be in place; - recommends that full consultation with Ward Members should be carried out where disposals are considered; - recommends that strategic sites in the city centre should be retained. | Y | | Not yet received | | |