

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

Date: 23 November 2016

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Dear Councillor Bale

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 15 November 2016.

On behalf of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee thank you for attending Committee for consideration of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Corporate Assessment Review Follow On report. Please also pass on the Committee's thanks to Christine Salter, Davina Fiore and Joseph Reay for supporting this item and answering Members' questions. I have been asked to pass on the following observations and concerns.

The Committee wishes to commend you on the generally strong progress the Council has made in delivering the Corporate Follow On Statement of Action. Members have some concern that the Leadership and Management heading has just one action, and were looking for evidence of how Leadership has improved. The Committee was reassured that continual improvement in staff engagement is in place, with the introduction of the Chief Executive staff roadshows, the launch of a staff app, openness to staff ideas, and development programmes in place for staff to support succession planning.

The Committee is interested in progress around IT, specifically the customer facing system, CRM. We are reassured to hear that the integration of our existing systems with SAP are considered by the company to be critical given the cutting edge nature of our work with them, are being addressed at the highest level, and that there are teams on site to develop solutions. We note the Council cannot deliver a customer portal until the digitalisation issues currently experienced by C2C operators are resolved. We were interested to hear the Council has a contractual relationship with two partners, SAP plus a gold standard implementation partner. Therefore, as CRM is considered the key customer facing system, Members are frustrated we are not further ahead and will keep a close eye on developments. We feel that the Council should have a resolution date in mind and have some concerns that there is no deadline in place or definite date as to when the problem will be resolved. We would consequently request an update on SAP/CRM when there is something significant to report back.

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Members wish to clarify how the WAO are monitoring progress on the Council's Statement of Action, and whether in fact they consider good progress has been made. We note the regular informal discussion between the Head of Performance and WAO, at which they are ensuring the Council understands the barriers and takes mitigating actions. We endorse the more formal governance of public reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny. In April 2016 you indicated you were unclear whether WAO would undertake a further formal review visit in 12 months time. Following this meeting we are still unclear as to whether the Council can expect a further inspection.

The Committee notes that Lead officers are named throughout the Statement of Action, making them accountable for performance. We welcome the officer view that performance management needs to be mainstreamed into the management of all services. We are less clear as to how performance focussed Directorates are, and whether they face any consequences for poor performance. We have noted that the Council will undertake a self assessment within this financial year of how well performance is embedding, and will factor this into our work programming.

.To Recap, actions arising from the Scrutiny are as follows:

- As CRM is considered the key customer facing system, we will keep a close eye on developments. We have some concerns that there is no deadline in place or definite date as to when the problem will be resolved. We would like an update on SAP/CRM as soon as there is something significant to report back;
- We are still unclear as to whether the Council can expect a further WAO inspection. As Council will undertake a self assessment within this financial year of how well performance is embedding, we will factor this into our work programming

Please could I ask that you relay our comments and observations to the Cabinet, and once again please pass on my thanks to all Cabinet Members and witnesses who attended for consideration of this important assessment of the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

Yours sincerely



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
Davina Fiore, Director Governance & Legal Services
Joseph Reay, Head of Performance & Partnerships
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Support Office
Naomi Evans, PA to Leader