

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

Date: 12 March 2015

Cllr Graham Hinchey  
Cabinet Member – Corporate Services & Performance  
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Dear Cllr Hinchey,

### **POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 MARCH 2015**

Members wish to pass on their thanks to you and officers for attending the above meeting to discuss the Quarter Three Corporate Performance Report. Members wish to pass on their thanks to officers for preparing the cover report and welcome the extra information contained in this regarding the actions arising from the Star Chamber and Challenge Forum.

Members welcome the Chief Executive's commitment to invite Group Leaders to the next meeting of the Challenge Forum and to share the Challenge Forum papers with Members, including confidential papers where Members would be bound by our Code of Conduct and Council's constitution. We look forward to this happening.

Members were interested to see the key actions listed at point 8 of the cover report regarding the Star Chamber and would like to receive the action plan for one of these, preferably bullet pointed, so that Members can see how these actions are being addressed. Please supply this information in your response to this letter.

Members are interested in carrying out pre-decision scrutiny of the revised Attendance and Wellbeing Absence Policy, scheduled for Cabinet in June, and ask that officers liaise with Scrutiny Services to ensure this comes to this Committee in time for meaningful pre-decision scrutiny.

With regard to Agency spend, as discussed at the meeting Members would like to look in more detail at this and, to assist this, would like to receive a briefing paper from the Environment Director to explain the rationale for the use of agency staff in their Directorate.

With regard to PPDRs, Members were interested in the discussion at Committee that 95% compliance was a sensible target to aim for, given that leave and sickness etc. mean reaching a higher target is not an effective use of resource. Members note that the emphasis instead is on ensuring the quality of the PPDRs and the need for these to be part of a continuous process. Members have previously asked for further details on the 'dip-testing' being undertaken to test the quality of PPDRs and we re-iterate our request for this information to be shared with us, either in response to this letter or as part of the committee papers for the Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Report item.



Members discussed the relevance of benchmarking the Council's performance with those of the Core Cities. Members understand the need to compare like with like in terms of urban scale, the role and functions that remain with Councils etc. but are also aware of the need to stretch performance by learning lessons from high-performing councils. We will therefore keep a watching brief on the usefulness or otherwise of benchmarking with the Core Cities.

Members note officers assurance that the Outcome Agreement measure for Solar Panels will be met this year and that the overall direction of travel for Education performance is an improving trend. Members were pleased to hear that a public facing version of the performance report will be published for Quarter One, with a scorecard approach being used.

Members asked several questions regarding detailed performance issues in Directorates and agreed to seek briefing papers from the relevant Directors, as follows:

- Director of Children's Services, Tony Young – Safeguarding – a 1 page report that details what the new unit is, what it is expected to deliver, how it fits with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and whether any savings are anticipated.
- Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services, Sarah McGill - Rent Arrears – a 1 page report that profiles HLS/001a over the last 10 years and details how Cardiff Council's performance compares to other local authorities.
- Director of Education and Lifelong Learning - Nick Batchelar - Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant – Members are aware from their ward work that this grant has made a significant difference to the achievement levels of individual pupils they know and wish to pay tribute to the achievements that Fitzhalan High School in particular has facilitated. With this in mind, Members wish to receive a one page report on the Council's work with the Central South Education Consortium regarding liaising with the Welsh Government to achieve flexibility in 2015/16 in the use of the single funding stream that replaces 11 existing funding streams for Education.

Finally, as part of this item, Members asked whether the reduction in budget in the Economic Development Directorate will affect the level of staff resources available to the Business Council. Members note the Chief Executive's response that this was still to be resolved, with on-going discussions with the Business Council to determine the best way forward to ensure that staff resource capacity is available. Members request an update on this once discussions have concluded and there is an agreed way forward.

To recap, this letter requests several actions and pieces of information, as follows, and requires a response:

- o Members look forward to Group Leaders be invited to the next meeting of the Challenge Forum.
- o Members look forward to shortly receiving the Challenge Forum papers, including confidential papers where Members would be bound by our Code of Conduct and Council's constitution.
- o With the response to this letter, Members would like to receive the action plan for one of the Star Chamber actions detailed at point 8 in the cover report for

this item, preferably bullet pointed, so that Members can see how this action is being addressed.

- Members ask that officers liaise with Scrutiny Services to ensure the revised Attendance and Wellbeing Policy comes to this Committee in time for meaningful pre-decision scrutiny, currently scheduled for Cabinet in June 2015.
- Members request a briefing paper from the Environment Director to explain the rationale for the use of agency staff in their Directorate.
- Members re-iterate our previous request for information on the results of PPDR dip-testing to be shared with us, either in response to this letter or as part of the committee papers for the Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Report item.
- Members agreed to seek briefing papers from the following Directors, as detailed above: Director of Children's Services, Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services and Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.
- Members request an update on the level of staff resources available to Cardiff Business Council once discussions have concluded and there is an agreed way forward.

Yours sincerely,



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

Cc: Paul Orders      Christine Salter      Martin Hamilton  
Matthew Swindell      Rhian Jones      Rita Rohman

