

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

Date: 02 April 2015

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

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 MARCH 2015

Members wish to pass on their thanks to you and officers for attending the above meeting to discuss the Organisational Development Programme Progress Report and to participate in the discussion with Barry Quirk, Peer Advisor.

Members found the presentation and discussion with Barry Quirk both interesting and thought-provoking. Members were reassured to hear Barry describe the challenge forum process as characterised by rigour, honesty and candour and to hear that he believes the Organisational Development process in place in Cardiff has ensured that management has a grip on the challenges facing the Council. Members note that Barry emphasised the need to have a balanced approach, using hindsight to learn lessons and foresight to ensure the direction of travel is appropriate. Another clear message Members heard from Barry is the critical need for speed in reframing local authorities, redesigning services, reprioritising and reallocating resources and revitalising staff.

With regard to the Organisational Development Programme Progress Report, Members note your comments that you believe it is leading to improved outcomes and the Chief Executive's comments that he is confident it is leading to progress. Members also note your statement that there will be a balanced budget for 2014/15, with circa £217,000 being rolled into next year. Following debate at the meeting about how this has been achieved, Members are clear that a major cultural change is needed so that directorates no longer expect the corporate centre to resolve overspends; Members were heartened to hear the Chief Executive agree with this and to hear that work is underway to enable budget monitoring to be more timely. On this note, Members were pleased to hear your personal support for the proposal to establish a cross-party, scrutiny panel to undertake monthly budget monitoring scrutiny and your agreement to take this proposal to Cabinet for discussion. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future on this matter as it would be beneficial for this panel to begin work early in the new municipal year.

As raised at the Committee meeting, Members do not feel in a position to comment in detail on the progress report as it was not explored in depth at the meeting. In addition, Members feel the progress report provided was incomplete, in that it did not fully address the financial position and resilience of the Council. Members were



pleased to hear the Chief Executive give his commitment to ensure that a future progress report would provide clarity about the financial position and resilience of the Council, as well as providing an overview of the new approach planned for Organisational Development Programme.

Therefore, as agreed at Committee, Members wish to scrutinise a further progress report at our next meeting, 12 May 2015. I therefore ask that you instruct officers to ensure that this report is available in time to go out with the meeting papers and is provided to scrutiny officers by 5 May 2015 at the latest. At this meeting, Members intend to explore in more detail the achievements to date and the speed and pace of change that is required going forward.

Finally, Members explored three specific issues at the meeting and have the following comments:

- Hubs – Members note that Lewisham Council is moving away from one-stop shops (due to declining footfall, a desire to avoid ‘welfare warehouses’ and the need to reduce costs and manage expectations) and towards on-line services complemented by work with social enterprises to provide alternative delivery of face to face services. Members note that, from Barry’s perspective, the three critical questions to ask with regard to hubs are: are they meeting needs?; are they reducing costs?; and what can be done to ensure hubs do not become welfare warehouses?
- Benchmarking – Members explored the relevance of benchmarking with core cities and note that Barry Quirk felt it was important to compare with the best in the world, regardless of where they were, as long as one is comparing similar sizes and demographics. Members would like to receive a copy of this Council’s benchmarking strategy and ask that this be supplied with your response to this letter.
- Alternative Delivery Models – Members questioned whether the Council was limiting ADMs to the 6 models outlined in the paper and were pleased to hear that this is not the case and that other suitable models will be considered as required.

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

- Feedback from you on the view of Cabinet with regard to the proposal to establish a cross-party scrutiny panel to undertake monthly budget monitoring scrutiny
- A further progress report on the Organisational Development Programme that provides clarity about the financial position and resilience of the Council, as well as providing an overview of the new approach planned for Organisational Development Programme, to be provided by 5 May 2015
- A copy of the Council’s benchmarking strategy.

Finally, Members considered a correspondence report at this meeting, which showed that responses are still awaited for the letters that were sent to you, as listed below. I would be grateful if you could please arrange for the responses to these letters to be sent to me as soon as possible.

- Letter dated 21 January 2015 regarding the Organisational Development Programme/ WAO Corporate Assessment
- Letter dated 12 March 2015 regarding the Quarter Three Corporate Performance Report.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly,

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: Paul Orders Christine Salter Sarah McGill Martin Hamilton
Matthew Swindell Rhian Jones Rita Rohman Liz Patterson

