

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

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Dear Huw,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 10 July 2019

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee with the Annual Well-Being Report 2018-19. Please also pass on our thanks to Councillor Chris Weaver, Paul Orders, Dylan Owen and Gareth Newell for the comprehensive presentation. We offer the following comments and observations for your consideration and response.

Variety of terminology

The report contained a variety of terminology which appeared inconsistent and potentially confusing to members of the public. It was indicated that the report information would be reviewed with the intention to make improvements to enhance the clarity of the information for the benefit of the committees and the public considering the report. Support for the proposal for Gareth Newell to meet with myself and the other committee members separately to assist in the continual improvement of the Annual Wellbeing Report would be appreciated.

The self-assessment

The Committee was keen to understand the rationale in respect of the self-assessment which identified objectives as satisfactory when there was significant variance in the level of achievement of the Key performance indicators (KPIs). The Committee was advised that the KPIs were not the sole source of information and that reports from the Auditors Inspectors and Regulators had also been taken into account to provide a balanced assessment which was then challenged and moderated by the Cabinet to provide a rounder view of council performance which you considered as good and can do better. However, the variety of information

sources and the factors used to determine the self-assessment rating was not clear in the report and this should be included as one of the potential areas for improvement in the future.

Key Performance Indicators with no data

It was identified that approximately 25% of KPI's contained within the report had no associated data. It was acknowledged that the majority of these KPIs related to the Social Services Wellbeing Act. These were new indicators and no targets had been set. The committee considered that this should have been explained in the report and that appropriate measures should be identified at the earliest opportunity rather than having KPIs with no data.

Corporate Landlord

The Committee considered that the implementation of the Corporate Landlord model had provided some benefits and the report included some significant and worthy objectives. Information regarding the backlog of essential maintenance for corporate building was estimated to be approximately £100m but this could be as high as £250M. Some clarity was needed regarding the financial implications on the capital programme of this maintenance backlog. The committee was advised that property condition surveys had been undertaken as part of a comprehensive review of council stock. These surveys had provided a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the corporate estate which had updated the previously illustrative figures that had previously been provided. It was identified that the key strategies to progress the Corporate estate would be brought to Cabinet in the near future and the Committee would welcome being involved in the decision making on these strategies.

Setting Appropriate Targets

From the report it was identified that a number of targets were considered as not being challenging enough and that the target should provide an opportunity for an element of stretch. It was clarified that the committee assisted in setting the new targets last year and there was some year on year fluctuation which would be reviewed. The report also identified some great performance but performance which was out of context for this year should be identified and an explanation of the reasons for being out of context.

The committee also wished to commend the work undertaken with the implementation of Universal credit and with the management of 5000 queries when an initial target of 1500 was set. This target would also be reviewed this year as the spike in queries was the result of the initial implementation of Universal Credit and now that it was in place the number of queries were expected to reduce.

Fostering and adoption

The Committee expressed its concerns with the rising number of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) and the need to increase the levels of adoption. The members were informed that this matter was not being neglected and that increasing adoption was a key part of the Council's policy and that action was being taken in respect of IFAs. The committee welcomed the long awaited parity in the target set for looked after children compared with other children.

New Indicators

Members of the committee proposed that additional performance indicators be developed to include:

- The impact and levels of poverty
- The number of new jobs created following a Council Apprenticeship
- Contractors of the Council paying its employees a living wage

Overall Performance

The committee welcomed the report which on the whole described a positive position of the council performance for the 2018-19 year.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended PRAP Scrutiny Committee to assist us in consideration of the Annual Well-Being Report 2018-19

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation &
Performance,
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Gareth Newell, Head of Partnerships and Performance
Dylan Owen – Head of Cabinet Office
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Claire Deguara
Cabinet Support Officers.