

WAO Delivering with Less - Environmental Health Services – Follow Up Audit

Cardiff Action Plan

Ref	Proposals for Improvement	Action/Completion Date
P1	<p>The Council should subject any future changes to environmental health services to a more rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and impacts. We found some evidence of cost/benefit/impact analysis being performed to enable decision-making around savings and changes to services. Whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, members and officers acknowledged that the real impact of this will be largely unknown until £498k of savings begin to take effect.</p>	<p>This proposal for improvement comments upon the delivery of SRS savings across the three Councils only and not budget reductions from the other services within Cardiff.</p> <p>Future SRS changes/savings will undergo rigorous analysis across the three Councils. That process will begin again in May 2020, as the SRS sets out its next three year financial programme covering 2021 to 2024. Proposals will be considered by the SRS Management Board, Elected Members, through the review mechanisms at each Council, the Trade Unions and SRS officers.</p> <p>Changes to the other Environmental Health services delivered by the Council will also be assessed through the established Council mechanisms and that process will pay heed to the requirements of this proposal.</p> <p>Both processes will also take into account the recommendation presented in Proposal 8.</p>
P2	<p>The Council should investigate further possibilities for commercialisation and income generation for environmental health services in order to provide additional financial capacity if funding reduces in the future.</p>	<p>The SRS will as part of the budgeting process for 2021/24 undertake a full assessment of existing income streams and determine what additional income might be generated without impacting upon service delivery to local people.</p> <p>Income generation on Environmental Health functions is an important part of the SRS model. SRS has generated new, and increasing, income arising through training and the operation of the Primary Authority scheme. However, Income Generation has limitations, while it will provide some respite if funding for service</p>

		<p>delivery reduces in the future, it is not a complete panacea for the challenges facing service delivery in the future.</p>
P3	<p>When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.</p>	<p>Understanding the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services will provide elected members with some insight into which service are legally mandated. However, to date, the SRS business plans are geared toward outcomes; achieving those outcomes involves using all the tools available. This includes statutes that bestow powers upon the Council, but not duties. When the Joint Working Arrangement was created, it defined services in terms of ensuring public health, helping customers to access information and knowledge and securing a safe, healthy, fair, environment. From the outset, the Councils agreed that this required the use of both statutory and non-statutory legislation to achieve service and corporate goals.</p> <p>Going forward the SRS will incorporate into the Business Plans an indication of the “status” of the services being delivered and a rationale for the prioritisation of those activities.</p> <p>Additionally, when the actions identified in Proposal 1 above are undertaken, officers will ensure that decision makers are apprised of the nature of the service being delivered.</p>
P4	<p>The Council should introduce greater challenge of the level and quality of environmental health services provided by third parties, including the SRS under the Joint Working Agreement.</p>	<p>We will continue to build on our existing mechanisms to further strengthen scrutiny and accountability of environmental health services and those provided by third parties. We intend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the following Scrutiny Committees have oversight and input into the SRS Business Plan and Work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment ○ Economy & Culture and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community and Adult Social Services ● Develop the initial discussions held with our counterparts in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend to explore the establishment of a more collaborative approach to the scrutiny of the SRS. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploring options for the use of Performance Panel(s) which may enable us to scrutinise performance in greater detail and add greater value. ○ Establishing a mechanism for enabling the Scrutiny Committees to consider reports presented to the SRS Joint Committee including the Business Plan, and performance reporting to identify any key issues/challenges that could be reviewed/scrutinised in greater detail and form part of the scrutiny's work programme. ● Enhance the mechanisms whereby: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The recommendations of the 3 authorities be collated and fed back to the SRS Joint Committee. ○ The SRS Joint Committee can refer items to the relevant Scrutiny Committee of each authority for their consideration (as appropriate).
P5	<p>The Council should work with SRS to undertake a review of business continuity and succession planning arrangements in relation to the SRS to mitigate the risk of overreliance on key individuals, such as the Head of SRS and operational managers.</p>	<p>In 2020, the SRS will produce a four year review of the service to supplement the Annual reports. That review will examine trends in service delivery and service demand since inception in 2015. It will also look forward to the likely delivery mechanisms for the next three years, in line with the budget proposals. An examination of the robustness of the operating model and succession planning arrangements will form part of that review.</p>

P6	The Council should strengthen accountability and elected member oversight of its environmental health services, for example through more regular scrutiny of services provided by third parties, including the SRS.	Actions identified in improvement proposals P4 above and P7 below will support the achievement of this improvement proposal.
P7	The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training opportunities for relevant members, which may be beneficial in the event of changes in personnel and in areas experiencing changes in legislation, e.g. air pollution/food safety/infectious diseases.	The Head of Shared Regulatory Services will work closely with the Heads of Democratic Services to identify and deliver a programme of briefing sessions/e-learning opportunities that would benefit members across the footprint of the SRS in relation up and coming legislative and policy developments. These briefing sessions/workshops will be incorporated as part of the Member Development Programme.
P8	The Council should more clearly link any future decisions on changes to service levels to an assessment of impact on relevant stakeholders, including service users and residents. Whether consultation is necessary, and the most appropriate means of consulting should be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, where changes are likely to impact service users, businesses and local residents, they should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.	Currently, dialogue with stakeholders is delivered through the annual consultation on the SRS Business Plans where the programme of activities is articulated and developed through that engagement exercise. This process does not currently extend to residents and businesses. It is proposed to extend the customer satisfaction process to include the opportunity to comment upon any proposed changes in service delivery and to engage the corporate consultation mechanisms to collect more information to form part of the decision making process.
P9	The Council needs to build on initiatives such as the Noise app, to ensure that future funding reductions can be mitigated by innovation and transformation in service delivery and that environmental health services are able to benefit from new technologies.	The SRS is undertaking an ICT review in 2020 that will examine how technology can be deployed further to improve service delivery and where possible make financial savings.