

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Walker(Chairperson)
Councillors Berman, Henshaw and Mackie

40 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lister and McKerlich.

41 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

42 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2019 and 16 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

43 : WAO ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018-19

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation & Performance, Paul Orders, Chief Executive, Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources, and Gareth Newell, Head of Performance and Partnerships to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that in line with Committees Terms of Reference to scrutinise the Council's Programme for Improvement, Committee will consider the WAO Annual Improvement Report 2018/19, and internally challenge how effectively the Council is preparing for improvement.

The report summarises the audit work undertaken by WAO within Cardiff Council over the last year.

Delivering Capital Ambition - As part of the item Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Executive on future plans for the Capital Ambition Programme.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Performance, Councillor Chris Weaver, to make a statement in which he welcomed scrutiny and evaluation of this report, as there was a constant theme of improvement and challenges.

The Chairperson invited the Chief Executive to give a brief presentation of the Council's improvement journey to date, after which he invited questions and comments from Members.

With reference to the Local Government Reform Bill, Members noted the publication date of 18th November 2019 and asked what the process is following this. Officers

advised that it would take a few months, there would be consultation then Cabinet will discuss and decide who will respond (either Council or Cabinet).

Members asked if it would change the way the Council operates. The Chief Executive advised that the Improvement Framework will change, there would be a mandatory Peer Review in a Welsh context, the Council would be required to respond to external peer findings; there would be the introduction of Regional Structures and Corporate Joint Committees for Economic Development, Strategic Planning, Transport and Educational Improvement; all meaning a significant modification of how services are delivered going forward.

Members asked if this would have an impact on what Committee scrutinises in the future. Officers advised that it would, it would repeal the 2009 measure, Future Generations would be more prominent and there would be increased emphasis on Self-Assessment in each public organisation.

With reference to comparable Cities, Members considered that Bristol or Coventry may be better comparators as there were no comparable cities in Wales, and asked if this was likely to happen. The Chief Executive said there may be scope to frame a panel of peers, he anticipated these would be external peers outside of Wales, especially for a robust peer review method.

Members referred to sustainability, the Future Generations Act, transport and lean air, noting that there had been issues raised by Welsh Government with the Council's Clean Air Strategy. Members asked for an update on the current position. The Chief Executive noted that there had been some specific requirements with regards to data, an individual panel had sought clarification from the Council, which was duly submitted. There had been a panel meeting this week and it was anticipated that a response to the Council's proposals would come from Welsh Government shortly.

Members noted WAO comments about 5 ways of working and asked what this entails and how it is measured. Officers considered that WAO had not evidenced the statement very well and that it needed some clarification. It was in reference to the Transport Green Paper and referred to Corporate Planning, Consultation and Public Health, which was the remit. Officers have taken on board all comments and are looking at staff resources to support 5 ways of working. WAO had also commented on collaborative working and recognise it is a journey. WAO criticism was not overt but it was there, however does have partnership working and long term planning etc. in place.

Members considered it was disappointing that WAO had not attended the meeting as it would have helped a full scrutiny. Officers stated that going forward there was scope for dialogue, WAO had offered to have workshop settings with WAO, Estyn and Children Inspectorate Wales looking at the application of the Future Generations Act.

Members noted the proposal for improved Environmental Health and increased Member oversight and asked how this would work as part of a Shared Regulatory Service (SRS). The Cabinet Member stated that the action plan was still under development and would be looked at by the Environmental Scrutiny Committee in the coming month. The Chief Executive said they would look at the reporting

arrangements of the SRS but he was comfortable with how SRS reports back to Council.

Members noted that currently it was budget planning time and asked about the impact of these changes and how they could be prepared for. Officers advised that any change of resource will need to be reflected in the budget strategy, financial resilience would be undertaken of all the 22 Local Authorities; this will go to Audit Committee but PRAP may be interested in receiving this information too.

Members discussed the Capital Ambition aspect, and specifically the review of management arrangements and asked for an updated position on this. Members were advised that the Capital Ambition team are being reviewed in detail, which will result in changes, there will be a need to spread resources more effectively to ensure there is the right staff support for specific projects. Officers added that the strengthening of management support would be concluded in a month.

Members asked if all projects were subject to timeframes, targets, quality standards etc. Officers advised that they were, all was in place and there was scope for improvement in the allocation of resources to specific projects.

Members sought an update on the savings targets. Officers advised that they have placed a greater performance management emphasis on the work, building into the proposals an emphasis on service data, targeting areas that will deliver financial savings and use the refresh for this.

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED that the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Members on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments and observations.

44 : CUSTOMER LEADERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Governance, Isabelle Bignall, Chief Digital Officer and Rachel Bishop, Head of Customer Services for this item

The Chairperson advised Committee that this item would consider a progress update on the Customer Services project and the programme of work developed in response to recommendations made by the PRAP inquiry report on Customer Leadership, published last year. The Committee were advised that the last update was in December 2018 when it was presented with the Programme of Work to be undertaken by the Customer & Leadership Delivery Team to address the recommendations.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Weaver, as Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, to make a statement, in which he said that this was a long term project as it involves changing culture, a continuing process to improve, turnover of workforce etc, so was always ongoing. He recognised the good scrutiny input, which was a real credit to officers who had worked incredibly hard on this.

The Chairperson invited Rachel Bishop to give a short presentation, after which he invited questions and comments from Members:

Members asked if there had been any advice provided by ICS about what outcomes could be measured once this had all been embedded to ensure that it is successful. Officers stated that they have regular meetings with ICS, they have conversations around engaging staff more, staff surveys, amount of training and uptake, increases in complaints and compliments etc.

Members asked how this works with internal customers and were advised that they look at how we treat each other and work with each other. There had been meetings with the Head of ICT, to look at bespoke training for desktop support staff. Officers had reported to SMT and been invited to lots of team meetings, so a 12 month strategy to engage with all staff would be needed. Officers added that people were reaching out for the training and that the internal customer message was definitely getting through.

Members asked if there would be internal customer surveys in the longer term and officers advised that internal customers could nominate for the Customer Hero Awards.

Members noted that with 1 person delivering customer service training this would be a very long term process that may need some acceleration.

Members asked about the evaluation of training and were advised that feedback forms are provided and that these would be reviewed and fed back to managers.

Members asked whether ICS could undertake any 'Mystery Shopper' type survey of the Council and were advised that they could and this was on the forward plan. They had advised that they would speak to customers in the first instance.

Members noted that at the Task and Finish group there had been a number of invitations from external witnesses, for the Council to visit and vice-versa. Members asked for an update on this. Officers explained that they haven't progressed this as yet, and now have a larger network to choose from via the ICS. This would be valuable long term but the initial focus is to get all the managers through the training.

Members were interested to learn about the response from Senior Managers. Officers stated that they had received fantastic support from SMT; officers attend the Customer and Digital Board, Senior Management Forum and Operational Manager Meetings.

Members asked if there were any sticking points currently. Officers explained that it could be difficult releasing staff for training, but as this was year 1 of a 5 year plan, hopefully this would become easier.

With reference to Waste Management and culture change, Members asked what impact was being made there. Officers explained that they now attend management meetings there every week; managers are on board and the Corporate Director has a focus on this issue. All staff will have done the level 1 training over 12 months, there has also been a staff event. Members asked if there were the resources to do all of this and officers stated that there was only 1 trainer at the moment and that there needed to be a plan going forward.

Members noted that in previous years there were presentations held for Customer Service Hero awards (Proud Our People Awards). Officers explained that currently all those nominated receive a certificate from the Chief Executive and there is an award for the winner. Officers added that next year they may have both Internal and External awards.

With reference to the Charter, Members noted that the language used on the Young People Charter was fantastic, however the language used on the Charter may be difficult for some people to read, with such a diverse population. Officers agreed and stated that consultation on this was very important. Staff provide feedback and officers pick up issues as they go. Officers agreed to bring back updated versions.

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED that the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Members on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments and observations.

45 : CORRESPONDENCE

Noted.

46 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

47 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 16 DECEMBER 2019 4.30PM

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm

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