
**STATEMENT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE
SERVICE & PERFORMANCE**

AGENDA ITEM: 15

Wales Audit Office

The Wales Audit Office (WAO) have issued a Certificate of Compliance from the Auditor General for Wales to provide assurance that we have discharged our obligations to plan the future priorities of the Council under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Performance Management

As part of the development of the performance management arrangements in the Council, and specifically in relation to improving the internal challenge regarding performance of services the quarterly 'Star Chamber' is now active, where the Chief Executive, Directors and Cabinet Members have an open and candid debate regarding performance levels, and challenges facing service delivery arising from the constructive challenge discussions, there will be key actions that the Director must take forward to mitigate the negative impact of underperformance issues and key risks. Updates on actions will feature in quarterly reports from Q1 onward.

The Council's Benchmarking strategy has been updated and approved by SMT 19th May. Delivery Plans for each directorate have been completed and considered by the relevant scrutiny committees.

Records Centre

As a result of developing 'leaner' ways of working and aiming to digitise records, the Improvement & Information Team has invested in a technological solution to digitalise records held in the Records Centre, and as an initial pilot are working towards digitalising all of the Council's Personnel files.

Employee Matters

Partnership for Change meetings are taking place on a fortnightly basis and good progress is being made. A Cabinet report will be coming forward in July.

Following widespread consultation with stakeholders, including Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee, the review of the Attendance & Wellbeing Policy was concluded and subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 11 June 2015.

The new arrangements will be commended to Schools and will apply from 1 July 2015.

Based on an independent review, major consultation exercise has commenced regarding proposed changes to the Discipline Policy - to be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn

Payroll Rationalisation from 3 payrolls to 2 was achieved from 1 June 2015.

A growing number of employees from across the Council have taken the opportunity to purchase additional annual leave under the new policy in place from 1 April 2015.

Appointments to Tier 1 of Senior Management Review have been concluded.

C2C

50,718 calls and 6249 emails & webchats were handled by the service centre in May.

C2C successfully went live SharePoint on June 15th – the first service area within the council to do so.

The C2C Expansion project will be completed by August 1st and result in an additional 31 seats being created within the centre. As a result, the team handling initial enquiries as part of the Rent Smart initiative will be based within C2C with a start date target of October 1st currently proposed.

The centre will once again be the telephone point of contact for the next wave of Individual Electoral Registration programme which will see £150k letters being delivered to Cardiff residents in early July

C2C currently average an 88% First Point of Contact resolve rate for customers calling with benefit queries and we will be working closely with our partners to maintain this post the launch of Universal Credits in November

8 additional customer service reps (temporary) have been recruited and trained to C2C to handle expected increased contact regarding the waste restrictions programme. C2C continue to work closely with the waste team to provide assistance and advice to customers to ensure delivery of his project is as seamless as possible for the residents of Cardiff.

Website

The Cardiff.gov.uk site continues to progress with 1.3 million visitors in the 12 months since launch, trends show that mobile use increased again (now at 45%) and the team are working on refining the home page based on customer feedback. The focus of the content at the moment is to ensure that the waste restriction changes are clearly communicated to residents. April showed a big step for our customers choosing to set up a direct debit for their new council tax bill online

Statement of Accounts

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2014/15 were presented to Audit Committee on the 22nd June in advance of being signed by the Section 151 Officer. The accounts will now be audited by the Welsh Audit Office over the summer. The audited accounts will be presented to Audit Committee and then Council in September.

The Statement of Accounts show that the Council's final position in relation to 2014/15 was an underspend of £1.741m. This increases the General Fund Reserve from £11.413m to £13.154m, of which £595,000 was already identified as required when the 2015/16 Budget was agreed in February.

The final revenue position of a surplus of £1.741 million after contributions to and from reserves as compared to the balanced position reported at month nine. The change includes a significant improvement to the directorate positions with over-spends against these budgets reducing by £1.147 million compared to previous projections. This reflects a number of factors including the impact of the measures implemented by the Chief Executive as set out in the Month 9 monitoring report. Further savings were also identified as a result of a higher surplus on Council Tax and an increase in non-domestic rate (NDR) refunds on Council properties.

During the year the Council's monitoring process identified financial pressures in a number of Directorates, notably Health & Social Care, Children's Services, Education & Lifelong Learning and Sport, Leisure & Culture. This reflected a range of factors including increased demographic pressures, shortfalls in income and the failure to fully achieve the savings targets set as part of the 2014/15 budget. This is reflected in the Outturn position forming part of an overall overspend of £7.650 million on directorate budgets. Apart from Children's Services all these areas reported a reduced over-spend compared to the projections at Month 9. Additional pressures were identified in Children's Services during the final quarter including additional placements and costs for looked after children, which resulted in a significant increase in over-spend in this area. The overspend on directorate budgets was offset by the £4 million contingency sum, together with savings in other areas including Council Tax collection, NDR refunds on Council properties, capital financing and additional income arising from successful performance against the 2013/14 Outcome Agreement Grant.

Work has already started on the 2016-17 budget preparation and the Budget Strategy Report will follow in July.

Councillor Graham Hinchey

Cabinet Member (Corporate Service & Performance)

24 June 2015