

Scrutiny comments and observations for further consideration

Mid-Year 2021-22 Performance Observations

PAGE	Observation/for further reflection
WBO1	<i>Cardiff is a great place to grow up</i>
	<p>Increased demand on services and the capacity to deal with them – The Panel sought assurance from Cabinet of their intention to tackle the challenge of increasing demand for services and capacity to deliver. Members heard that the Council would do everything in its power to meet increased demand, and its commitment was demonstrated by a good track record of providing additional funding year on year to Education, Children’s Services and the wider social services of, particularly schools, where there has been growth over and above council budgets.</p> <p>The Panel noted there are significant challenges in recruitment, but that a market supplement had been offered to social workers and was paying dividends. We note the Cabinet will continue to look at innovative ways to meet demand pressures, as reflected in the call to action.</p>
	<p>Measuring educational achievement and school improvement locally and nationally, and the role of the Central South Consortia – The Panel raised the issue of measuring educational achievement and school improvement, what the Council is doing to address this, and what role the Central South Consortium plays in addressing the need.</p> <p>Cabinet indicated this will be an area of continued focus to ensure that the challenge via <i>the Central South Consortia</i> in schools is appropriate to each school. The School Improvement Team and the Consortia work “hand in glove” and the Council is satisfied with the work done between the two. Cabinet is also putting in place a local approach which has a comprehensive view of individual schools across a range of factors (e.g., attainment, health and well-being, governance and leadership) and will target resources accordingly whilst working alongside the Consortia.</p> <p>The Cardiff Schools Report by the Consortia confirms schools are meeting the improvement priorities identified. Twice termly meetings take place between the LEA and Consortia “All Schools Risk Meeting” to monitor and track the performance of schools.</p> <p>National Assessment Framework – The sector would benefit from clarity around the National Framework. This is very important, and the Council would like to see the publication of the Framework, as there is some uncertainty for schools around comparative performance and data sets nationally. Qualifications for next year – currently being told that the exam process for 2022 will go ahead but will be adapted should there be any need to do so arising from the Pandemic.</p>

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WBO2	<i>Cardiff is a great place to grow older</i>
	<p>Quality of Care - The Panel noted the significant pressure and increased demand on adult services and questioned which KPI provides insight into the quality of care being delivered. Advised the service area captures a range of data which provides this insight, which is reported quarterly to CASSC.</p> <p>The Panel suggested consideration be given to including the data on quality of care within the KPIs.</p>
	<p>Social Care Workforce - Panel suggested more emphasis is placed in the Mid-Year Performance Report on the demands and challenges facing the social care workforce. Panel was advised this is a theme captured throughout the report and specifically detailed on <i>page 15</i> of the draft report.</p>
KPI2.5	<p>First Point of Contact - Given the results for number of cases dealt directly at First Point of Contact the Panel asked the Cabinet's thoughts on raising the target. Panel was advised Cabinet would be cautious of taking this approach, due to the importance of ensuring inappropriate decisions are not made.</p>
	<p>Joint Equipment Service – Lack of Aids. Due to the challenge facing the Joint Equipment Services (shortage of equipment and aids), the Panel recommends this challenge is better reflected in the Mid-Year Performance Report.</p>
WBO3	<i>Supporting people out of poverty</i>
Challenges & Risks	<p>Removal of EU funding for Into Work posts – Members note that the Leader has a high expectation that the UK Government will provide central monies to meet the gap left by removal of EU funding following Brexit. Members note the Chief Executive's comment that the Council has been working with colleagues in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal area on a regional approach as it is believed monies may come to the City Deal via the Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the Levelling-Up process, although there is no certainty on this yet. Members are concerned at the lack of certainty, as £1million is a big gap to fill without additional monies and this service is vital to the wellbeing of citizens, both in terms of gaining employment and in terms of encouraging employment in critical areas such as social care roles and other roles important to Cardiff's economy, such as leisure and hospitality. The Panel concurs that this is a risk that needs spotlighting in the mid-year assessment.</p>
Challenges & Risks	<p>Impact of covid pandemic on volunteering – Members were interested to understand what the Council is doing to encourage and support people back into volunteering, following suspension during earlier covid pandemic</p>

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	lockdowns. Members note the Council is promoting volunteering this week, as part of Volunteering Week, particularly in areas such as social care where there are current staff shortages and increasing demand. Members also note that the role of volunteer coordinators within specific service areas is crucial in terms of identifying bespoke support needs to encourage volunteers to return and that these staff are best placed to manage concerns and put in place mitigations.
KPI3.7	Universal Credit – The Panel was advised the spike in demand of applicants for Universal Credit is a result of the pandemic and the expectation is that the trend should go downwards. Given the possibility of long-term impact from the pandemic, the Panel feels consideration should be given to raising the target for this KPI in line with demand.
KPI3.15	Homelessness - The Panel explored why roughly 38% of rough sleepers housed are not maintaining their accommodation. The Panel was advised there are a range of reasons such as the individual having a high level of complex needs, not wishing to engage, and not wishing to remain in accommodation provided. The Panel was advised the service area will continue to work with and support such individuals.
WBO4	<i>Safe, confident and empowered communities</i>
Challenges & Risks	Libraries and Hubs attendance visits – Members were interested to understand what the Council is doing to encourage usage of libraries and hubs, to encourage people to feel safe to use these and other community facilities, for the good of residents’ health and wellbeing and to assist the Council in generating income. Members note the Leader’s comments that the Council faces a balancing act of wanting to encourage usage and build the public’s trust in the safety of these services but also needing to adhere to and wanting to reinforce the pandemic messaging regarding safety in the middle of a pandemic – this was the case given the high case rates in Cardiff and has been brought into sharper focus by the arrival of the Omicron variant. Members further note the Leader’s points regarding working differently to assist residents’ health and wellbeing, for example via digital, schools, Youth Service, Summer of Smiles and the ‘Move More: Eat Well’ strategy that Public Service Board partners are signed up to implement. Members agree that the challenge of boosting usage for libraries and hubs should be flagged as a challenge & risk in the mid-year assessment.
Areas of Focus	Work with GLL – Members highlighted that the work with GLL is referenced in earlier sections but is not listed as an Area of Focus in this report. Members are surprised by this, given the importance of the work in reviewing the contract and determining its sustainability. Members note the Leader’s point that not all work is listed in the Areas of Focus sections but believe the work with GLL is of sufficient significance to warrant inclusion.

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	The Panel also stressed due to the changing and competitive nature of the market it is important Council expertise informs our liaison with GLL - particularly around staff wellbeing, including hours worked and rates of pay, to attract the right staff and encourage gym membership.
Areas of Focus	Regional Sports Partnerships – Members are undertaking an inquiry into Community Sport in Cardiff and are aware that Sport Wales is proposing a regional sports partnership to cover the following local authority areas – Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend, Merthyr, and Rhondda Cynon Taff. Members wondered why this is not reflected in the mid-year performance assessment report given its significance for Cardiff and why it is not included in the Areas of Focus list. Members note the response from the Leader that the Administration will work to ensure community sport proposals are fit and right for Cardiff.
Areas of Focus	Shared Regulatory Services – Members note the challenges and risks flagged for Shared Regulatory Services. Given the importance of this service area, particularly but not solely in being at the forefront of pandemic management, Members are surprised this is not included in the Areas of Focus list, a view which is strengthened by the Chief Executive’s comments that there is work going on at a national level regarding the future role of Environmental Health Officers. Members believe the Areas of Focus list should include work re Shared Regulatory Services.
KPI4.1	New Build Council Homes - Panel sought assurance that the target to deliver 1,000 new council homes by December 2022 will be complete. The Panel note it has been impacted by inflation and workforce pressures however the target is on track.
KPI4.14	ASB – Panel stated it is pleasing to note that following the panel’s recommendation, a KPI on ASB will be included from year-end. The Panel requests information on how this data will be collected. The Panel recommends a KPI detailing the instances of ASB across the city is also developed.
WB05	<i>A capital city that works for Wales</i>
Challenges & Risks	Labour Shortages – leisure and hospitality – Members noted these and linked this to the earlier comments made regarding the removal of EU funding for Into Work services. Members note the Leader’s agreement with this and that this reinforces the importance of the Into Work services.
Challenges & Risks	Cost inflation and materials shortages – Members note the risks of these to some major projects and that these are being monitored.
Challenges & Risks	St David’s Hall – Members highlighted the report references a report will be taken in Quarter 3 on St David’s Hall but that this has not happened.

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	Members note the Chief Executive clarified the report was the Corporate Property Strategy, which included reference to a condition survey of St David's Hall that showed significant issues and costs re asset management and renewal. Members note discussions are ongoing to maximise the usage of St David's Hall going forward.
Challenges & Risks	Furlough Scheme – Members highlighted that the wording in this section does not make clear the relevance of this to the work of the Council. Members note the Corporate Director, Resources response that the end of the furlough scheme will deprive the Council of an income stream to offset the loss of income from income-earning service areas particularly hit by the pandemic lockdowns where staff have been furloughed. Members also note the Operational Manager – Performance and Policy comments that the end of furlough will affect other service provision, such as Into Work and Universal Credit advice services. The Panel recommends that the wording be amended to clarify the relevance to the Council of the end of the furlough scheme.
WBO6	<i>Cardiff grows in a resilient way</i>
KP16.4	Electric Vehicles – It was confirmed to the Panel work has commenced with Pod Point for the fleet infrastructure project, and the 59 charging units scheduled to be completed by Christmas are broadly on target.
KPI6.5	Electric Vehicles – The Panel welcomed the planned approach to delivering on-street public electric charging points and noted the comments made regarding limited intervention at this point ahead of further developments in technology. The Panel advised feedback they have received from some residents is that public pavement charging is not viable due to differing tariffs. The Panel recommends a careful and cautious approach. Recognition of developments in technology highlighted at the meeting should be better reflected in the KPI and a rewording of the KPI title is required.
KPI6.6	Commuting – The Panel questioned whether the increase in commuters indicates a real increase in people travelling to work by sustainable transport or is because there is a reduced number due to more people working from home. Panel was advised a survey was last conducted in 2019, is historical and further work is required to ensure it now reflects people's movements post pandemic. The Panel recommends that as the KPI is reported in %, the baseline (i.e., number of respondents to the survey) is included in the notes at the bottom of the KPI.

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KPI8.3	<p>PPE – Panel questioned the cost implications of increases in PPE and how the council is managing the disposal of PPE.</p> <p>Panel was informed to date all costs have been recovered from WG Hardship Fund however it has been indicated to the council this fund will end from 1 April. The Panel were informed sensitivity analysis around the length of time PPE is required is currently ongoing.</p>
KPI6.16	<p>Recycling – The Panel sought assurance that the Council will reach its recycling target by 2024 and 2025 and questioned the risk of not achieving this target. The Panel was informed movement is in the right direction and the new recycling strategy due to be considered by the Environment Scrutiny Committee at their December meeting.</p>
WBO7	<i>Modernising & integrating our public services</i>
KPI 7.8	<p>Reduce the total running cost of occupied operational buildings -</p> <p>The Panel highlighted the potential for a large budget saving in the cost of running occupied operational buildings, however the current year target is £400k.</p> <p>Members note that the core office estate has undergone a period of rationalisation over the past 5 years totalling a 15% reduction in running costs between 2015-2020. We also note that ending the Wilcox house lease was a large element of reducing running costs. However, despite a limited return to core offices there are other variables to consider and the requirement to heat offices applies irrespective of the number of staff present. The Corporate Director (Resources) offered to provide a breakdown of running costs by core office.</p> <p>Cabinet confirmed there has been no change in policy with regard to the Council estate and within the forthcoming Property Strategy there will be new targets for running costs and reducing the maintenance backlog. When looking at property disposals over time it will very much depend on how the Disposals Programme is running.</p>
KPI 7.10	<p>Capital income generated - The Panel highlighted a substantial difference between the target of £10m and the actual result (£1.2m) at the end of 20-21.</p> <p>We note this KPI is a cumulative 5-year target and over the past 5 years the profile has been lumpy. We look forward to the forthcoming new Corporate Property Strategy and sight of new targets.</p>
KPI 7.12	<p>Sickness absence. Given sickness absence levels improved last year the Panel considers (2019/20) it is disappointing that the outturn forecast for 2021/22 is 10.76 against a target of 9.5. We note your confidence that some</p>

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	<p>Council systems are working to contain sickness, however a combination of Covid-19 absence, increased mixing, restricted access to hospital treatment for other illnesses, increases in other communicable diseases and staff wear and tear following the pandemic, has resulted in the increase. We also note the 3 areas that have concerning long term sickness, Schools, Adult Services, and Waste Management.</p> <p>As short-term sickness absence continues to fall, we recommend you consider separating out the short and long-term sickness results, introducing a new KPI for long-term sickness absence.</p>
WB08	<i>Managing the Pandemic</i>
	<p>Commendation - the Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee considers the Committee has been instrumental in monitoring the impact of the pandemic and recovery for Children & Young People for the past 18 months. We receive bi-monthly reports from Education and Lifelong Learning, updating us on progress in this area, bi-monthly updates from the Youth Justice Service, and we have received further briefings and quarterly performance reports from Children's Services on the pressures they face, with the latest update being brought to CYPSC this week. The Chair commends the Cabinet and Service Areas for their response and proactive approach to dealing with this and would echo the comments from Estyn, as set out in Appendix A to the papers. CYPSC will continue to closely monitor progress going forward</p>
	<p>Ongoing Cost of PPE - The Panel stressed the importance of analysing the ongoing cost of providing PPE and the urgency of using this information to adequately inform the budget setting process.</p> <p>Panel was advised for the forthcoming budget setting the cost is likely to be taken as a one off due to unknown in length of time PPE will be required, rather than adding it to the base budget.</p>
General	
Cllr Howells	<p>Mid-year performance report shows there has been a lot of good work undertaken across service areas, coping with the pandemic, and delivering services for citizens. It is pleasing to see so many Indicators with a green status.</p>
Cllr Howells	<p>Very pleased to see previous recommendation of this panel has been taken on board and that this report now includes the number of employees who have benefited from Living Wage work and the value of this to the economy.</p>