

COUNCIL, 24 SEPTEMBER 2015 : WRITTEN QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CO-OPERATIVES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (COUNCILLOR PETER BRADBURY)

W1	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES</u></p> <p>Please can you provide an update on your (and your officers') discussions with St Joseph's Amateur Boxing Club to try and identify suitable alternative accommodation for them in the city?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I can confirm that a meeting has taken place with officials from the club at their current clubhouse at the Mynachdy site. I was delighted to see at first hand the great work the club do in attracting young people from the area to take part in meaningful sport and physical activity. Gyms like this, in such areas are a valuable asset which I am very keen to support where possible.</p> <p>It is my current understanding that Schools Service have no immediate plans to close the site as they will continue provide the Pupil Referral Unit here. I have informed the club of this but also suggested they continue to search for alternative property in the area in order for them to develop and secure themselves for the long term.</p>
W2	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOODMAN</u></p> <p>Will the Cabinet members for Equalities & Sport and the Diversity champion meet with members of the Jewish community to discuss the recent events in relation to the withdrawal of an exhibition at Central Library , and consult with all faith leaders in this city as to how protocols for acceptance and withdrawal of council premises bookings are dealt with?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I have asked the Director of Communities, Housing and Customer services to urgently review our processes and to make recommendations to Cabinet to ensure that this we learn from this very regrettable situation in relation to the exhibition at the central library.</p> <p>As part of that process we are hoping to work with the Interfaith group of organisations in the city and have written to a number of faith leaders including of course the Jewish Board of Deputies to</p>

	<p>invite them to a meeting in the near future to discuss the initial findings of the review.</p> <p>I fully expect that the recommendations coming from the review will provide a robust and comprehensive process to ensure that full consideration is given in the future to the community impacts of the acceptance or withdrawal of any exhibition or display.</p>
W3	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOODMAN</u></p> <p>How soon will a protocol be designed to determine how the council would deal with a booking of a council owned premises that Cabinet Members/officers/Councillors deem necessary to withdraw? Also , how soon will the council review the current policy as to how the council accept bookings for an exhibition/event to be held on council owned premises?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I refer you to the answer provided to Written Question 2 above</p>
W4	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOODMAN</u></p> <p>Will the Diversity champion for Cardiff Council be involved in discussions to work up a protocol to determine how in the future , the council would deal with matters should it be deemed necessary to withdraw a council booking to hold an exhibition or event in a council owned premises .</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I refer you to the answer provided to Written Question 2 above</p>

W5

WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDERS

The recently published report by the Local Government Data unit shows that overall when evidencing comparator improvement 2013/14 to 2014/15 across all 41 indicators, Cardiff had only shown improvement in 17 (page 2 graph and narrative) indicators, less than half of all indicators.

Of the remainder the majority are reported as having declined in their performance since the previous year. This places Cardiff at the foot of the 'improvement' table.

When setting out the various service improvement actions covered by these indicators over the last year, was this decline in performance anticipated, planned for or recognised? What remedial specific action is being taken to ensure this decline overall does not continue and the Welsh Audit Office visit in October as your press statement sought to assure the residents of Cardiff "...we are fully expecting the WAO to find that further significant improvements have been made since its last visit in 2014....." will be their outcome statement.

Could you set out why you view "..the indicators published today have some use, overall these figures give a very simplistic view of the performance of the council " (press statement attributed to Cllr. Hinchey)

Reply

Thank you for your question and the opportunity to address this issue.

It is no secret that this Council has faced historic and long standing performance issues. This was clearly spelled out in the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment last May.

This administration is responding positively to the challenges it faces. We have put in place the structures and measures required to ensure that the Council understands its performance profile, and has a culture of accountability and responsibility at every level of the organisation. This has been progressed through:

- Challenge Forum – bringing together senior Executive and Non-Executive members, senior officers, and external advisors to consider organisational challenges and the Council's

response to these.

- Star Chambers – quarterly meetings through which Cabinet Members and Senior Officers hold candid discussion on performance across budget management, people management and service delivery.
- Accelerated Improvement Groups – Chaired by the Chief Executive to provide intensive challenge and support in Education, Children’s Services and Health & Social Care, involving both service management teams and external advisors to provide informed challenge.
- Effective Personal Performance & Development Reviews – The Council has secured a step change in this area, with over 90% of employees having agreed objectives, and twice yearly formal reviews.

These measures are beginning to have an impact. The WAO have acknowledged a “*step change*” in our Improvement Planning arrangements. And the NSIs and PAMs confirm a significant improvement in the underlying performing of Education over the last 2 years. Estyn also recognised progress in the most recent monitoring letter on education services for children and young people, noting that “*overall, there is an emerging culture of more rigorous performance management...*”

I would therefore argue that while your analysis of the position in respect of our performance against the National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) and Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) sets is correct - and this does not make easy reading when looking at a raw comparison – these figures give a very simplistic view of the performance of the council.

Any league table produced from these figures would be superficial as it would not take into account the different priorities and demands faced by individual local authorities. For example, Cardiff clearly faces additional pressures in its role as the Capital City of Wales.

Furthermore, it is not credible to attach equal weighting to the performance indicators across the board. For example the Council would not attach the same weighting to the educational attainment of looked after children as it would to the percentage of fly tipping incidents cleared within five working days, and I doubt the public would either.

Indeed, the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee in

their letter to me on 15 September accepted that *“the annual media assessment of Local Authority performance is a crude mechanism and note there is some evidence of a possible move away from Performance Indicators by Welsh Government.”*

A more nuanced analysis of performance data is required if we are to have the self-awareness to understand our strengths and weaknesses and put in place the right responses to tackling poor performance.

For example, when Social Services measures are discounted, 70% of National Indicators have improved or been maintained.

And in Children’s Services, for example, during 2014-15 the Directorate focussed on improving performance in relation to indicators that have the greatest significance for safe and effective practice concerning children.

These indicators were based on guidance agreed between the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), the Care & Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and sit outside of the NSI and PAM data sets.

Our annual outturn demonstrated overall improvement against these PIs, with some exceptions. Feedback provided by CSSIW’s Regional Director on 19th August, acknowledged that although there is a mixed picture in terms of overall improvement, performance indicators evidence a good direction of travel.

We therefore recognise that performance challenges remain in Social Services, and we are working hard to address these. Again, I would say again, this is a far more nuanced picture than reading the media analysis or simply the headline KPIs would suggest.

I will also take this opportunity to highlight that the NSIs and PAMs data sets do not cover the complete range of services delivered by the Council. For a fuller picture of performance across all Council services we must look to our Corporate Plan, through which we as a Council have set out our priorities and the measures we will use to understand how we are performing.

The Wales Audit Office visit in October will give a clearer picture of the progress the Council is making. But I believe we are an improving Council, one which now has the self-awareness to know where it is good and where it is underperforming, and the ability to act to tackle this in a robust fashion.

TRANSPORT, PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY QUESTION (COUNCILLOR RAMESH PATEL)

W6	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES</u></p> <p>What business case has been carried out as part of preparations for the Cardiff Metro project on the potential costs/benefits of a train station serving Mynachdy & Talybont? If no business case has been prepared, will you agree to ask officers to undertake this work?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I can confirm that the Council has not carried out any work to assess the costs/benefits for a station to serve Mynachdy and Talybont. Any work of this type associated with the Cardiff Metro project would be for the Welsh Government's Metro team to undertake. As far as I am aware the Metro team is not looking to provide a station in this location, however I will ask officers to pass on your request to the Metro team.</p>
W7	<p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES</u></p> <p>I am aware of several complaints of gridlock at UHW, with many people citing the changes to the Gabalfa Interchange as making the problem worse because motorists are now using the UHW site as a cut-through. What work has been carried out to assess the changes to traffic on the UHW site?</p> <p><u>REPLY</u></p> <p>I can confirm that Council Officers have been assisting UHW staff and their appointed Transport Consultant with regard to the traffic movements through the hospital site. Surveys have been carried out by UHW and the results of those surveys will be shared with the Council in a meeting to take place in October.</p> <p>There is a need to understand the full nature of traffic movements in and around the UHW site so that any decision that UHW decide to take with regard to controlling traffic flows can be managed in conjunction with the management of the adjacent highway networks.</p>