

Date: 13 July 2023

Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader  
Councillor Chris Weaver,  
Cabinet Member, Finance, Performance & Modernisation  
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Dear Huw & Chris,

### **PRAP 12 July 2023: Annual Well-being Report 2022/23**

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee thank you for facilitating pre-decision scrutiny of the Annual Well-Being Report 2022/23. Please also pass on our thanks to the Corporate Directors, Head of Performance and Head of Policy & Improvement for the overview of end-of-year performance. We offer the following comments and observations for your consideration. You will find our requests for additional information/clarification at the end of the letter.

#### **Overall assessment**

The Committee acknowledges that there has been strong progress in 2022/23 in education, social services, housing, major regeneration projects, and in dealing with climate change; however, we also note the big challenges highlighted in the Annual Well-being Report; school attendance rates; recycling rates, complex and increasing demand for children and adult services, private rental cost pressures and the economic climate. We are therefore reassured that the Council has in place a robust self-assessment procedure based on multiple data sources that enables a balanced assessment of performance.

#### **Accessibility of the document**

The Committee is pleased to note that following the recent Performance Panel there has been the addition of a summary of performance with the aim of increasing accessibility. This is a public facing document and, whilst we take your point that a live database link sits behind the narrative illustrating where performance has not met targets, we feel the public may not access the database, and on its own the document appears bland.

## **Digital poverty**

The Committee acknowledges the need for digitalisation in service delivery but urges that minority groups are not disadvantaged as the Council advances, and so we welcome the face-to-face support provided at hubs to assist in improving digital skills. As discussed at the meeting we **request** that you confirm such training to increase skills sets is still made available at local hubs across Cardiff.

## **Public Health & poverty**

Members continue to be concerned about the difference in life expectancy between North and South Cardiff. We note that the Council is just one of many agencies addressing this issue and public health colleagues are working on the specific issues that need to be addressed, such as obesity linked to poverty. We acknowledge that, in contrast to England, the Wales Public Health service sits within the health service, and that you continue to lobby for greater power over public health matters for local authorities.

## **Capital Programme costs**

The Committee concurs with the Leader's caution that servicing the debt that supports the Capital Programme could lead to necessary changes to both capital and revenue budgets. We note that a significant part of the Capital Programme comprises invest -to-save projects but wish to register our concern that increasing interest rates could pose a risk to resourcing essential services.

## **House building programme**

Members are assured that the Council will continue building social housing, recognising the inadequacy of the private rented sector. We note that a 30-year business plan has assisted in building and retaining a resilient internal team with housebuilding skill sets.

## **Workplace challenges**

Members highlighted once again the importance of managers engaging with staff and understanding the challenges they are facing, particularly as we know the retention of staff will be essential in the coming year. We note that sickness absence rates have marginally improved but remain a challenge and we will continue to monitor progress throughout coming year.

## **Council venues**

The Committee is interested to establish whether the fall in attendance at council venues this is due to post COVID bounce back or is indeed peculiar to Cardiff. We therefore **request** more information on the reasons for the fall.

## **Homelessness**

Members are concerned at the levels of demand for housing and homelessness. We are seeking confirmation that where service areas face increasing complexity of demand, Equality Impact Assessments form a part of decision making.

Finally, Members noted that Cardiff has led the way in terms of the introduction of 20 mph zones and a significant number of cycle lanes, and consequently over the past 5 years congestion in the City has improved.

## **Requests following this scrutiny:**

- That you confirm face-to-face support to assist in improving digital skills is still made available at local hubs across Cardiff.
- Clarification of whether the fall in attendance at council venues is due to post COVID bounce back and more information on the reasons for the fall.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended PRAP Scrutiny Committee to assist us in consideration of the Annual Well-Being Report 2022/23. I would be grateful for a response to the request and recommendation proposed.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS**  
**CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Leaders of Opposition Parties – John Lancaster, Rodney Berman &  
Andrea Gibson  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities  
Gareth Newell, Head of Partnerships and Performance  
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office  
Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee  
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit;  
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications  
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs  
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Office Manager  
Debi Said, Cabinet Support Officer  
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer  
Andrea Redmond, Committee Support Officer  
Mandy Farnham, Committee Support Officer