

Date: 04 December 2023

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Dear Huw & Chris,

Scrutiny Performance Panel 28 November 2023: Mid-Year 2023/24

Please find attached a record of the observations and comments made by all five Scrutiny Chairs at our recent informal meeting to consider the Mid-Year Performance Assessment Report 2023/24.

Thank you for attending in person, this was a most useful discussion. We offer our feedback to inform your final draft report, and I look forward to pre-decision scrutiny of the final report at the December meeting of PRAP.

Yours sincerely,

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

cc Councillor Lee Bridgeman, Chair, CYP Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Owen Jones, Chair, Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Rhys Taylor, Chair, CASSC Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Peter Wong, Chair, Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities
Mel Godfrey, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships
Dylan Owen, Operational Manager Policy & Improvement
Suzanne Scarlett, Partnerships & Performance Manager
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee.
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

Mid-Year Performance Assessment Report 2023/24
Scrutiny comments and observations for further consideration

REF/PAGE	Comment / Observation
WBO1	<i>Cardiff is a great place to grow up</i>
MY report – page 6 K1.08 & K1.09	<p>School Attendance:</p> <p>Chairs noted that attendance isn't yet back to pre-pandemic levels, with Primary currently 91.7% and secondary at 88.2%. Acknowledge that it is moving in the right direction, but perhaps not quick enough.</p> <p>Chairs noted that, to aid acceleration, significant support is being provided to schools, including an attendance campaign including the use of multimedia assets. E&LL is also providing direct support where attendance is a particularly stubborn issue.</p> <p>Members recognised that attendance is wider than a school issue – it is a societal issue, so there is a need for more support for community focussed provisions. Some areas have community focus managers to link with families and align with other services if needed.</p> <p>Chairs acknowledged and supported the need to refresh and refocus services – not just physical attendance at school but a focus on ensuring teaching and learning. Flexi-school learning, hybrid learning and using technology more are a range of options E&LL are working through.</p>
MY report – page 7	<p>Electively Home Educated (EHE):</p> <p>Chairs noted the reasons why some children and young people are EHE, which were not as a consequence of the pandemic. Anxiety; lifestyle choice; and those who are not happy with school provision and “drop out” until they can find an appropriate place.</p> <p>Chairs heard that guidance on the process is low level, which states that one inspection is required per year for an individual young person but doing this for over 400 children and young people is a challenge. To combat this, an officer (with child protection expertise) is undertaking “risk based” inspection approach, with the inspection including testing that the young person is getting the right attainment and is safeguarded. If not, appropriate notices are served or discussions with the local school to try and get a return. Good headway is being made in this area and links with Children’s Services are in place as well.</p> <p>Chairs noted the Leader’s suggestion that some analysis be undertaken to better understand this area, including levels of attainment and the underlying reasons for EHE.</p>

K1.14	<p>ALN Funding:</p> <p>Chairs asked about ALN funding and support and difficulties with this, particularly in the primary sector. What is the response and how is it being addressed?</p> <p>Chairs heard that Primary heads are seeing this as a funding freeze, but this is not the case – it’s a change in mechanism. A formulaic process has been used to give them the funding up front, which links closely with the ALN reforms for schools to provide the support themselves.</p> <p>In terms of support, Chairs heard that there will be strengthened governance arrangements around an ALN Strategy Group. This means that the funding side of ALN and planning side will be brought together to tackle expectation of paperwork, manage workload and streamlining it to ensure support is on the ground and not spent filling in paperwork.</p> <p>ALN Strategy Group - three strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds are allocated in the right places • Strategic overview of ALN across the City • Ensuring that the right processes and tracking are in place <p>Chairs sought assurances that the funding formula is easy to understand and flexible. Members heard that, for the current year, it doesn't address schools where there has been a large increase in ALN numbers as it is predicated on the previous year. What will be done is make sure there is a formula waiting to address this over time. The reason for this is to limit destabilising schools during a time when stability is critical.</p> <p>Chairs recommend that the ALN funding model review include the relevant scrutiny committee and form a priority area of work for the service area.</p>
MY report – page 8 K1.20 & K1.21	<p>Children’s Services – Accommodation for CLA</p> <p>Chairs noted that improvements are being made in this area in shifting the balance of care towards the lowest level of intervention possible. Significant improvements in areas that have had to be used. Now down to 3 unregistered placements and these are currently in assessment with CIW. In-house opportunities have increased – quadrupling supply, but still a long way to go. Some delays due to building works.</p> <p>The Leader restated that unregistered does not mean unregulated, and there are examples and evidence where outcomes for individuals in this area have been very positive. The Chairs suggested that better communication on this could assure Members. Members noted that there had been a need to reshape provision in this area.</p>

<p>MY Report – pages 8 & 9</p>	<p>Children’s Services - Working with Others: Members heard that this is an area that has caused some concern. Discussions are ongoing with SWP colleagues, and it is important that we know exactly what this means, particularly around the types of response they won't be providing. There is a concern about what this means for the council and health.</p> <p>There are a series of workshops being arranged by SWP (with council colleagues nominated to attend), but currently, the Council is still not clear about what this will mean. Assurances were given that as things develop, CYPSC will be kept informed. Chairs request that CASSC also be kept informed of the implications of changes by SWP.</p>
<p>MY Report - Page 7</p>	<p>Decrease in Pupil numbers: Chairs sought assurances that the Council is constantly reviewing fluctuations and changes in pupil numbers and changing SOP proposals accordingly. Members were told that everything in this area is evidence based and has to be more flexible. This will be reflected in the SOP Strategy that is currently being updated, which will include flexible accommodation.</p> <p>Members also asked how much head teachers are told about changes in pupil numbers. It was responded that head teachers are very aware (the Director gave the example of a meeting with all Heads the previous week where they were informed of population and migration statistics), and it is a frequent and ongoing discussion around budgets and managing of school places.</p>
<p>WBO2</p>	<p><i>Cardiff is a great place to grow older</i></p>
<p>MY report - Page 11</p>	<p>Adult Services Budget: Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report details that ‘<i>an overspend of approximately £2m on care is projected, though this is offset by underspends and other budget planning arrangements, so a balanced position is currently shown.</i>’</p> <p>Chairs noted the verbal assurance provided at the meeting regarding overall cost pressures management in Adult Services – however recommend the narrative in the report be expanded to include this assurance / insight.</p>
<p>MY report - Page 12</p>	<p>Community Resource Team/ Hospital Discharge: Chairs noted the draft Report does provide an assessment of the issue of hospital discharge. Although the assessment provided does recognise issues remain, Chairs noted it makes no specific reference to the continued pressures on the Community Resource Team; or the initiatives CASSC Members are aware of to address ongoing pressures such as -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding a new call monitoring system for the carers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning the teams focus to only supporting individuals who require reablement (e.g., not double handed care) • Boost staff morale by providing the team with more regular updates / opportunities to contribute to the service areas vision for the future. <p>The Chair of CASSC also raised that in recent performance monitoring work undertaken by the committee, it was noted by CASSC Members that quarterly targets on the CRT KPI's had been removed.</p> <p>Chairs noted the explanation given on the target's removal (i.e., the need to better reflect the quality of service).</p> <p>Chairs noted the update that a national set of indicators (together with health) is being worked on regarding hospital discharge, and there is also internal discussion on preparing a new package of data as part of the process for developing the forthcoming Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Chairs agree the CRT KPIs (numbers of hours / people accessed services) may not best reflect the quality of service, however, recommend, given the substantive work ongoing in the CRT to address the ongoing pressures within the team, this is captured in the report.</p> <p>At the end of the meeting, Chairs asked how well this service was prepared for dealing with Winter Pressures. Chairs noted the service is well-prepared, with the joined-up discharge process working well; however, Chairs noted there are pressures elsewhere on the pathway and that the new national set of indicators should provide the metrics to enable nuanced conversations to resolve these issues.</p> <p>Chairs recommend that, in the absence of the new metrics discussed at the meeting, that the Q2 performance against the CRT targets are included in the report, to illustrate the pressures on the service.</p>
Corporate Plan – page 19	<p>Older People Employment:</p> <p>Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report does not contain an update on this Corporate Plan step. Chairs noted officers' response that there is a comprehensive update in the dashboard narrative, with good progress.</p> <p>Chairs therefore recommend a paragraph setting out progress in delivering the Older People Employment step is included in the Mid-Year Performance report.</p>

WBO3	<i>Supporting people out of poverty</i>
	<p>Council House Repairs:</p> <p>Although Chairs recognise Council House Repairs does not have a specific step in the Corporate Plan, through CASSC’s performance monitoring work Chairs are aware of the ongoing performance issue in the Responsive Repairs Units regarding the continued and notable number of outstanding repair jobs and significant pressures around damp and mould maintenance.</p> <p>Given the importance of this ongoing performance issue, and the importance of providing greater visibility, and the likelihood of high levels of public interest, Chairs recommend insight into the performance pressures within the Responsive Repairs Unit is provided in the final Mid-Year Performance report, including the extent of work undertaken by the team (e.g. the average number of repairs they complete and how long it has taken to respond to) against the number of outstanding repair jobs and the ongoing work to address this issue such as: the launch of a ‘Repairs Online’ service (in the summer of 2023), which allows contract-holders to report and monitor progress of their repair requests online; introduction of a dedicated damp and mould team; and commissioning of new resource within the in-house repairs team and through external contractors.</p> <p>Further, Chairs also recommend, in the forthcoming Corporate Plan development process, due consideration is given to this being a specific Step, with relevant KPIs, drawing on the KPIs provided in the service area’s Directorate Delivery Plan.</p>
	<p>Enforcement Powers on Landlords:</p> <p>Chairs noted the enforcement powers available to the local authority against poor landlords and therefore stressed the need for the authority to ‘lead from the front’ in terms of quality of council homes.</p> <p>Within the discussion, Chairs noted and welcomed the assurance that the Executive holds high significance in resolving repair issues for council contract holders.</p> <p>Chairs further noted that CASSC have recently been briefed that in some instances, particularly in the private rented sector, contract holders may refuse entry for repair services. If this is an issue also apparent for the council’s Response Repairs Service, where contract holders do not allow entry, this may be worthwhile including in the forthcoming Step or KPI (recommended above).</p>
MY report – Pages 14-15	<p>Into Work Services:</p> <p>Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report and KPIs associated with Into Work Services highlight the high numbers of people supported,</p>

	<p>with the cumulative total up to the end of Q2 nearly equalling the whole year target and asked whether there is sufficient resource available to assist all those who require Into Work services.</p> <p>Chairs note the Leader’s response that the Council has worked to attract different funding streams, such as Shared Prosperity Funding and DWP monies, to support this work and so there is currently sufficient resource; however, the concern is whether funding will continue post -2025.</p>
Corporate Plan – page 26	<p>In Work Support:</p> <p>Chairs highlighted that they had previously recommended an In-Work support step be included in the Corporate Plan and were pleased that this had been accepted; however, the draft Mid-Year Performance report does not include an update on this work and Chairs sought assurance on progress.</p> <p>Chairs therefore recommend a paragraph setting out progress in delivering the In Work Support step is included in the Mid-Year Performance report.</p>
WBO4	<i>Safe, confident and empowered communities</i>
MY report – Page 18	<p>Adult Protection Enquiries:</p> <p>The Report notes the number of adult protection enquiries recorded has increased significantly in 2023/24 with 1,280 enquiries received at Quarter 2, compared to only 654 at Quarter 2 in 2022/23.</p> <p>Though it is noted the increase in numbers is due to more effective ways of reporting enquiries, Chairs request further insight into what these enquiries are related to.</p> <p>Chairs noted this will be investigated and so recommend due consideration be given to whether this increase in number is primarily due to more effective reporting arrangements or if this increase in data, and the nature of the enquires, are signposting a particular issue in Adult Services that may need addressing. If so, this assessment / insight must be included in the final report.</p>
MY report – Page 17-18 K4.17	<p>Libraries & Hubs:</p> <p>Chairs noted the positive story shown by the number of Green indicators associated with this step, coupled with the recent Welsh Public Library Standards report that shows good service provision. However, Chairs highlighted the performance indicator for number of volunteer hours, K4.17, is Red and asked whether this is causing an issue with achieving the budget saving that was predicated on use of volunteers in libraries and hubs.</p> <p>Chairs noted the response that performance has improved to date in Q3, largely because volunteer mentors are now in place. Chairs note the Leader’s point that this illustrates the limitations of relying on volunteers to</p>

	deliver services, even where there is a good record of volunteering and where this is coupled with other aims, such as assisting people into work.
Corporate Plan – page 37	Shared Regulatory Services (SRS): Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report does not contain an update on this Corporate Plan step. Chairs noted the Chief Executive’s response that Cabinet are due to receive the SRS Annual Report shortly and therefore Chairs recommend a paragraph setting out progress in delivering the Shared Regulatory Services step is included in the Mid-Year Performance report.
MY Report – page 20	Fields in Trust: Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report does not contain an update on this Corporate Plan step. Chairs noted the Leader’s response that there has been dialogue with Fields in Trust, with a shortlist of potential sites due in Q3 and a report on progress to be included in the End-Year Performance report.
MY report - page	Healthy, Active Population: Chairs noted that achieving the overall aim of a healthy, active population relies on partnership working, with Public Health leading, and a whole system approach that encourages and supports people to move more and eat well. Chairs noted pilot interventions are underway in Riverside and Llanrumney focusing on supporting and motivating people regarding moving more and eating well.
WBO5	<i>A capital city that works for Wales</i>
MY report – pages 17 & 22	Recovery and Regeneration - 15-minute cities: Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report details successes and the current economic challenges but sought views on progress with steps on recovery and regeneration, including the 15-minute city approach and toolkit. Chairs noted the response that the report captures the notable wins to date and recognises delays that are beyond the Council’s control, such as delays related to Cardiff Parkway, and that, overall, there is significant confidence in the economic renewal direction.
K5.02	Jobs Created/ Safeguarded: Chairs noted indicator K5.02 is red but that it is anticipated the target will be achieved by year end, due to forthcoming announcements about jobs being created in Cardiff.
MY report – page 23	Venues and Income: Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report details good performance in terms of attendees at Council venues but note that this does not translate to meeting income targets for council venues and sought views on this and measures being taken to address this.

	<p>Chairs noted there are several reasons for this, including: during covid, free access to Cardiff Castle was introduced and this is still in place and this, coupled with the events programme at the Castle, has led to an increase in the numbers using this space, but this has not translated to visitors paying to enter the rooms of the Castle, which is reducing the Castle income; and the closure of St. David’s Hall.</p> <p>Chairs noted the covid recovery reserve has been used to mitigate the loss of income. Chairs noted the Leader’s comments that there needs to be discussion about how future budgets utilise income generation and whether there needs to be consideration of externalising certain assets, which would lead to surety of income generation, for example the Cardiff White-Water Rafting Centre could become part of the wider ISV package operated by a private company.</p> <p>Chairs noted the Council’s approach to income generation is set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and this is important for the Budget Strategy going forward, with challenge and review of the robustness of fees and charges.</p> <p>Chairs highlighted the need to ensure inclusive discussions about significant service changes happen as early as possible and in public, to enable interested backbench members and members of the public to be aware of issues and to work collaboratively to assist in identifying possible resolution of issues; this would also help ensure transparency. Chairs noted the Leader’s response that the administration aim to achieve this where possible, with decisions taken outside the budget process where possible, but that sometimes time pressures do not enable this.</p>
WBO6	<i>One Planet Cardiff</i>
MY report – page 28	<p>Recycling:</p> <p>Chairs note that while there are many reasons why Cardiff are not currently meeting our recycling targets and that there is a significant gap to where we need to be in a relatively short space of time, how patient/ tolerant will Welsh Government be?</p> <p>The Leader commented that the expectation from Welsh Government is that we need to roll out separated recycling across the city and that it is anticipated that this will deliver the desired outcomes, although it was acknowledged that this has been delayed.</p>
MY report – page 26	<p>Transport:</p> <p>Chairs noted that while many of the exciting projects happening in Cardiff are out of our control, many are, for example cycleways, and these have completion dates that continually slip. Does the delay and then the</p>

	<p>increased costs impact the deliverability of these projects that are within out control?</p> <p>It is recommended that when the new Corporate Plan is written, if projects are no longer included, that a clear and full explanation/rationale is provided. The Leader noted that where projects are within our control, we have more confidence they will be delivered. It was also noted that much of the monies spent in relation to the South Wales Metro are currently being spend outside Cardiff.</p>
Corporate Plan – page 50	<p>Llanrumney Bridge: Chairs noted the draft Mid-Year Performance report does not provide an update on this step and sought a progress update.</p> <p>Chairs note and accept the Leader’s offer to provide a written update on this step to the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee, as the committee that has previously scrutinised this issue, and to all Scrutiny Chairs.</p>
WBO7	<i>Modernising and integrating our public services</i>
K7.04	<p>Capital Receipts: Chairs noted that delivery of capital receipts at Q2 is below target, with K7.04 marked Red, and asked for views on this. Chairs noted the response that the Council takes a long-term view and seeks to achieve the best possible capital receipt, which can mean in-year targets are missed, but that, overall, there is confidence that the target will be met.</p>
	<p>Customers: Chairs highlighted that whilst the draft Mid-Year Performance report includes a KPI for customer satisfaction, there is a need to ensure a more systematic approach to capturing citizen voice. The Chairs request that the Ask Cardiff survey results, which include customer satisfaction, be made available to the Scrutiny Committees when published in January 2024.</p>
MY report – page 32 & 33 K7.11	<p>Workforce: Chairs sought views on the challenges facing the Council regarding workforce issues. Chairs noted that local government pay has dropped in value since 2010, leading to recruitment issues in some areas, which the Council addresses via market supplements if required. Chairs noted that, in relation to strike action, the Council is keen to make reasonable adjustments to resolve disputes and reduce disruption to residents, working across all unions to enable this. Chairs noted that, in relation to grievance complaints, the Council has a process for dealing with these that looks at the specificity of complaints, investigating and testing these independently whilst also ensuring that the Council’s duty of care to all staff is maintained.</p>

GENERAL	<i>Cross Cutting Issues</i>
	<p>Workforce:</p> <p>Chairs noted their awareness that vacancies and sickness rates in Adult Services has gone up and welcomed the recognition in the draft Mid-Year Report on the services area’s Workforce Development Plan to mitigate pressures.</p> <p>During the discussion Chairs sought insight and assurance on the use of agency social workers in Adult Services including the cost pressures this measure may present. Chairs wish to thank officers for their initial insight and advise the CASSC Committee have confirmed they wish to explore this issue of the use of agency workers in Adult Services in detail and have scheduled it as an agenda item in a forthcoming committee meeting.</p> <p>On general workforce matters, Chairs stressed the importance of remaining mindful to deliverability and capacity when managing workforce pressures (across the authority) and were informed there is an awareness within the executive on the possibility of moving resource around the authority as a way of managing workforce pressures.</p> <p>Chairs also sought assurance the work force pressures apparent in the Council’s Community Resource Team will be effectively managed and addressed; particularly in light of forthcoming winter months.</p> <p>Chairs note the progress being made in the wider hospital discharge pathways and were informed key issues in delay can be more aligned to issues within the ward part of the process.</p> <p>Chairs also wish to confirm ongoing conversation are being had between CASSC Members and the service area on which data metrics could be reported to the committee in their Quarterly Performance Reports to provide CASSC Members with a full insight into the hospital discharge process (alongside the national KPI’s being drawn).</p>