

Cardiff Council

Annual Governance

Statement 2022/23

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Scope of Responsibility

1. Cardiff Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
2. The Council is responsible for the Cardiff Harbour Authority. The Council is also the Administering Authority for the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Pension Fund (the Pension Fund) and Cardiff Port Health Authority (CPHA) and is the Accountable Body for the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal. Cardiff Council has five wholly owned subsidiary companies of which three actively traded in 2022/23, most significantly Cardiff City Transport Services Ltd. (Cardiff Bus). The Council also has an interest in a special purpose vehicle (CSC Foundry Limited) which is governed by a Joint Committee for the CCR City Deal.
3. The governance arrangements detailed in this Annual Governance Statement (AGS) are documented in consideration of the Council's areas of responsibility, and the extent to which the Council is charged with governance.
4. The Council has adopted the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework (the Governance Framework), developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE). This AGS explains how the Council has complied with the Governance Framework and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

5. The Governance Framework comprises the systems, processes, culture, and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and the means through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services. The Council's Constitution sets out how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed through rules, codes of practice and protocols.
6. The system of internal control is a significant part of the Framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives but is based on an ongoing process to identify, prioritise, and appropriately manage risk.

7. The Code of Corporate Governance documents how we apply the principles of good governance (as summarised in Section 4 of the AGS – Assessment Process and Summary). This Code can be found within the Council Constitution (Part 5) and was last ratified in July 2023.

The Governance Framework

8. The Framework comprises two core principles and five supporting principles. Principles A and B run through principles C to G, but good governance is dynamic, and the Council is committed to improving governance on a continuing basis through a process of evaluation and review.

Core principles:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting principles:

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Assessment Process and Summary

9. The AGS summarises the assessment of governance against the Governance Framework and comprises three elements:
 - Statements from Senior Management, the Audit Manager and the Governance and Audit Committee (the 'Audit Committee' was renamed 'Governance and Audit Committee' following the financial year-end in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Its opinion was provided following the financial year-end)
 - Supporting analysis mapped to the core and supporting good governance principles that provides a judgement that is based on supporting information and evidence
 - A Senior Management judgement of the Council's significant governance issues

10. These three elements when taken together represent the assessment of governance, through the perspectives of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the independent opinions of the Internal Audit Manager and the Governance and Audit Committee based on their respective programmes of work and an assessment of the system of internal control.
11. For further information and detail, supporting information is mapped to the Governance Framework principles (A-G) within the AGS, and followed by an open disclosure from the SMT of the significant governance issues affecting the organisation as summary actions to take forward and address.

The diagram in fig. 1 sets out the components of this assessment.

Fig.1



Assurance Statements

12. The following statements are made at the year-end, having given consideration to the performance information, governance disclosures and audit and regulatory report findings from assessors both internal and external to the Council.

Senior Management Statement

13. The set of senior management assurance statements are used as a core measurement of assurance on good governance within each Directorate and for the Council overall.

14. As a Senior Management Team, we have undertaken a review of the self-assessment exercise to maintain assurance that the areas of consideration remain the right areas upon which to judge the organisation and to address the identified actions arising from last year's AGS relating to compliance, risk, performance reviews and Five ways of working. This review identified that there was a need to change the focus of some statements to effectively capture the emphasis of partnership working and engagement and equalities within the assurance process. Over the year, the nine broad categories for consideration are: Risk; Partnership Working; Engagement and Equalities; Compliance; Project initiation; Budget; Planning & Performance; Control and Fraud.
15. We continue to apply the self-assessment exercise as a primary means of measuring our delivery of good governance and this has been supplemented this year by each Directorate having an action plan which identifies the key areas of improvement. There continue to be challenge sessions chaired by the Chief Executive through which consideration is given to the current assurance position for each Directorate.
16. Our good governance assessment exercise has been undertaken during a period of economic uncertainty and significant spikes in both demand for our services, not least in Social Care and Education, and inflationary increases in both pay and in particular the energy, food and building sectors. We, as a Senior Management Team, continue to ensure that the self-assessment exercise reflects the current reality of service delivery so that any matters or improvement actions are captured.
17. The Senior Management Team has continued to meet on average on a twice weekly basis. There were times during 2022/23 that the Senior Management Team met more regularly to ensure that there was a swift, corporate, appropriate, and measured response to any pressing issues. The focus of these meetings throughout the year has been to ensure that resources are used appropriately, outcomes delivered, and controls remain in place or are amended to reflect the environment of the time.
18. The Senior Management Team has engaged with the self-assessment assurance process for 2022/23. The Senior Management Team took the opportunity to review the 2022/23 half yearly and end of year position and considered the body of work delivered over the last six months in the context of the uncertain economic environment.
19. The Senior Management Team considers that the 2022/23 end of year Senior Management Assurance Statement offers a true and fair reflection of the governance maturity of the Council for the year overall. This end of year assessment was based on the governance maturity which we could evidence within each Directorate against the half year position, the performance against individual Directorate action plans and identifying any change in position.
20. Accordingly, the Senior Management Team considers that despite the challenging external environment the Council is approaching strong application of good governance across the assurance areas, with examples of embedded and limited in some assurance areas in some Directorates. This assessment

was based on a self-assessment using a 5-point rating system ranging from 'not in place', 'limited application', 'mixed application', 'strong application' to 'embedded'.

21. This assessment has highlighted opportunities to further build on the three SMT Actions set out in last year's Annual Governance Statement. We recognise improvements have been made in the areas of performance, compliance, and the way we work but believe further improvement can be made. We continue to survey the assurance landscape and look for any weaknesses that need to be addressed through robust recovery procedures as well as looking to improve areas of strength. The Senior Management Team recognises that it is faced with a period of prolonged uncertainty both in terms of service recovery and responding to increased and different levels of demand across the spectrum of services offered. To support these aims it remains a priority to both implement actions for improvement and to retain a focus on needing to prioritise actions for enhancement to enable strong evidence of application across all areas going forward.
22. In relation to the work of the Senior Management Team in 2022/23 we continued to collectively own the Corporate Risk Register, we reviewed all corporate risks quarterly, and monitored progress against the action plan of significant governance issues.
23. The Chief Executive continues to emphasise that areas of weakness need to be addressed. As noted, the last couple of years have presented great challenge and uncertainty and this will continue for the forthcoming period, thus underlying the importance of maintaining the achievement of consistent standards of governance and control across all directorates.

Audit Manager Statement and Annual Opinion 2022/23 (PSIAS Standard 2450)

24. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) state that the 'Chief Audit Executive must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement.' This must be based upon an objective assessment of the framework of governance, risk management and control. It must also include an evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls in responding to risks within the governance, operations, and information systems.
25. This opinion has been prepared by the Audit Manager (Chief Audit Executive for the purpose of the PSIAS), based on the provisions of the PSIAS. In preparing and forming this opinion, a number of sources of information, assurance and insight have been taken into account, including:
26. **Assurance Audit Engagements** – The risk-based annual audit plan has been delivered through an approach to maximise assurance and added value. The audit plan is responsive to risk and informed by audit information and existing assurances, information from Senior Management, monitoring of Council activity, strategy, risks, and wider

assurance sources. For all audits, current risks, pressures, and priorities continue to inform the audit scope and testing.

27. **Consultancy Audit Engagements** - The Internal Audit Team provides insight and guidance on areas of control during process development / change. It has continued to provide advice and guidance on the design and implementation of effective controls in the administration of Welsh and Central Government grant schemes such as the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, to achieve compliance and control, and arrangements for the effective prevention and detection of fraud.
28. **Discussion with Senior Managers** – There have been quarterly relationship manager meetings with Directors or their representatives, Audit Manager attendance at Senior Management Team meetings where assurance items have been considered, and regular meetings with the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer).
29. **Risk & Governance Reviews** – Risk Registers and Senior Management Assurance Statements which underpin the Council's Annual Governance Statement are subject to regular audit review, and assurance audit engagements.
30. Based on the programme of audit work undertaken to assess the framework and application of governance, risk management and control, the annual opinion for 2022/23 is **effective with opportunity for improvement**. This opinion is based on the delivery of a sufficient Audit Plan, and with an acknowledgment of the significant pressure on Council resources in both demand and budgets, which has been managed through a resilient performance culture.
31. The audit opinion comprises assessments of governance, risk management and control, and includes an evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls in responding to risks within the governance, operations, and information systems.
32. Reviews have been completed in all planned fundamental system areas.
33. In accordance with an approach communicated to the Governance and Audit Committee, the majority of corporate governance audit engagements were completed during the year, supported by a spread of Directorate-level assurance audit engagements.
34. Corporate risk management arrangements have been maintained during the year, and a review of Directorate risk management has been completed and has reported that there is an appropriate level of risk management maturity in operation at directorate levels.
35. The Council has continued to administer emergency relief, grant payments and support services on behalf of the Welsh and Central Government, and the Internal Audit and Investigation Teams have advised management on the design of systems and counter-fraud checks

in accordance with scheme requirements.

36. The control environment for core financial systems was sufficient, and the majority of audits overall (87%) were allocated an opinion of 'effective' or 'effective with opportunity for improvement'. Eight audits have been given an audit opinion of 'insufficient with major improvement needed' recognising the need for attention to achieve sound controls, and one audit (in respect of the Central Transport Service) was given an 'unsatisfactory' opinion.
37. Audit assurance and support continues to target and follow up on high-risk areas. Focus is being given to finalising audits on a timely basis with audit clients and to the importance of the implementation of audit recommendations within the required timescales.

Governance and Audit Committee Statement

38. Based on the evidence presented to the Governance and Audit Committee during 2022/23, it is the considered view of the Governance and Audit Committee that the Council does have, for the most part, sound internal controls and governance arrangements in place. Strategic risks representing the true challenges facing the Council are captured and reviewed on a regular basis. Examples of where the Committee continues to have concerns, which will be incorporated into the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24, include:

Budget Management

39. The Committee recognises the sustained financial pressure that the Council is under and notes that whilst the overall financial position was balanced, some particular Directorates had significant overspends for which control improvements are needed, and management attention and actions are required in Directorates to achieve budget savings proposals put forward. Sound budget management is essential in the context of a challenging economic environment, continued constrained finances and an ever-increasing demand for services.
40. The financial challenge continues to be significant, with a budget gap of £113.4 million reported based on current financial modelling over the next four years. The Committee is keen to observe effective arrangements for budget management and control during 2023/24. The Committee will carefully consider budget management arrangements over the year to come, through observing the use of appropriate management controls and interventions and continuing to reinforce expectations for delivery.

41. Internal Control

42. Assurance on compliance and control is essential. For a number of years there have been continued constraints on resources, together with a growing population and greater demand for public services. As the Council faces significant challenges in how it delivers services, it remains essential that internal controls are not neglected or impaired, and that strong controls operate throughout reformed processes and systems. Additionally, the pandemic has necessitated the adaptation of systems, and in some cases the design of new systems, in order to respond to new priorities. We have been advised of the consultation, advice and guidance provided by the Internal Audit and Investigation Teams to support management to design and uphold robust controls as they have navigated new priorities and responsibilities.
43. The Committee has invited senior officers to attend its meetings this year, to account for their delivery of good governance, risk management and control. In addition, the Committee has continued to receive the details of all Internal Audits completed, and the respective assurance ratings. This year we have observed isolated internal control gaps through reports of insufficient assurance, and one unsatisfactory audit opinion. Whilst the number of unsatisfactory Internal Audit opinions remains low, management must maintain sound systems of internal control and promptly address identified weaknesses.
44. We have maintained close interest in the robustness of controls in relation to the Waste Management function. In recent years, alongside a police referral and investigation, a wide-scale internal investigation into allegations of fraud was completed and disciplinary proceedings have concluded. Through discussions with the Director and the Audit Manager we are advised that there has been steady and sustained progress in recent years in the internal control environment, led by the senior management in place. Our Committee has been advised that there are mechanisms for delivering and acting on improvement actions, and that there is a constructive two-way relationship with Internal Audit, in the planning of, and response to, assurance work. We recognise the progress made for which continued management attention and assurance are required.
45. The Committee has access to all Internal Audit recommendations raised and agreed, and visibility of updated management comments until the point of implementation. Whilst the Committee has an overall assurance of internal control, we continue to require officers to account for services or functions where internal control weaknesses have been identified. We continue to challenge any impairment in stewardship and control of public funds and assets, seeking prompt and proportionate management actions. The Committee has considered and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 and will closely monitor its progress and findings over the year ahead.

Financial Resilience (including Treasury Management)

46. In a position of constrained finances, the Committee will continue its consideration of the framework for financial decisions. The Committee has received regular updates on financial resilience and in recent years has welcomed the independent assurance of the Council Treasury Management activities by the Council's Treasury Management advisors, further to the regular assurance provided by Internal Audit.
47. The Governance and Audit Committee will continue to look to gain assurance of sound treasury management practices and strategy. This is vital work, which will both safeguard and deliver best value from the Council's borrowing and investments. The Committee has and will continue to seek assurance that the levels and profiles of investments and borrowing are appropriate and in line with the Treasury Management Practices, Strategy and Reports presented.

48. Schools Governance & Compliance

49. The Committee has sought regular reports from senior management in the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate seeking ongoing assurance on the arrangements to manage school balances, and to address audit recommendations. Our Committee has raised concerns over delays in implementing school audit recommendations, and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning has committed to providing a full analysis of outstanding audit recommendations by the end of this academic year.
50. Our Committee has noted positive improvements made, as recognised by Estyn, and we will continue to keep a keen interest in the governance arrangements and assurance we receive in respect of schools. This is with the understanding that the Governance and Audit Committee can request the attendance of those solely responsible for governance at an individual school level, to a Committee meeting, in the event that assurances are not considered as sufficient.
51. The Committee acknowledges that the Council is not able to set rules for schools to adhere to regarding contracting matters, albeit advice can be offered on good practice. This area of interest remains a priority of the Committee and we continue to support the production and use of best practice guidance in schools to strengthen financial stewardship and control.

ii) Governance Framework - Supporting Information

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

52. All Members and Officers in the Council are required to comply fully with Codes of Conduct as set out in the Constitution, which sets out the particular roles and

responsibilities of Officers and Members and provides clarity on the interfaces between these roles. These include:

- Functions and subsections delegated to Officers
 - Members' Code of Conduct (Including Social Media Principles)
 - Employees' Code of Conduct
 - Protocol on Member / Officer Relations
 - Cardiff Undertaking – signed by all Members upon election and underlines their duties to the city and its citizens.
53. The Director of Governance and Legal Services is the Monitoring Officer and has the specific duty to ensure that the Council, its Officers, and its Elected Councillors, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do based on Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by Schedule 5 paragraph 24 of the Local Government Act 2000. During 2023/24 the Director of Governance and Legal Services tendered their resignation and left the Council on 27 October 2023. As agreed at Council on 26 October 2023, interim arrangements were put in place for both the Council and the Cardiff Capital City Region in advance of anticipated conclusion of permanent appointments being made in the forthcoming months.
54. The Standards and Ethics Committee has a responsibility to monitor and scrutinise the ethical standards of the Authority, its Members, employees and any associated providers of the Authority's services, and to report to the Council on any matters of concern. The Committee is chaired by an independent person and its role includes determining the outcome of complaints against Councillors and Co-opted Members and monitoring the Council's whistleblowing procedures.
55. In 2022/23, the Monitoring Officer was notified of a total of seven complaints relating to Member conduct. The Public Services Ombudsman has considered six of the complaints and determined that there was no evidence of a breach of conduct and declined to investigate. The remaining complaint was informally resolved.
56. The Chair of the Standards and Ethics Committee the outgoing Chair presented the Committee's Annual Report 2022/23 on 30 October 2023 and outlined the work of the Committee. The report identified actions in respect to considering the Members Exit Survey of 2022, review of the Cardiff Undertaking, consideration of the use of Council IT for Political group meetings, continuing to observe Council and Committee proceedings and overseeing training on the Members' Code of Conduct following the local government elections in May 2022. In addition, the Committee has reviewed Personal interests for both Members and Senior Officers and issued periodic updates of the Committee's work to Council Members. The Annual report also noted that the planned review of the Whistleblowing Policy for 2022/23 was delayed and was to be rescheduled for the year 2023/24. The Committee believes that presentation of its Annual Report to Council serves to promote Members' understanding of the

important role of the Committee and its work; and that further Member briefings will continue to be issued as and when required.

57. Members and Co-opted Members are required to register their personal interests in any business of the authority, and to comply with the rules on personal interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct. Significant work has been undertaken this year to ensure that Members complete all relevant forms. All personal interests disclosed by Members are published on the Council's website within the Member's profile information. The Council's Policy on Officers' Personal Interests & Secondary Employment requires all staff to disclose any personal interest which actually or potentially conflicts with their duties to the Council and all secondary employment. The policy sets out how all Council employees are obliged, under the Employees' Code of Conduct, to ensure that their private interests do not conflict with their public duties, and to comply with the Council's rules on the registration and declaration of financial and non-financial interests.
58. The Council's Corporate Values focus on fairness, openness and working together. The Council supports a culture of behaviour based on these values which guide how the long-term vision of the Council is put into effect, as well as how Members and Officers deliver their day-to-day roles. Corporate and Directorate planning and personal performance and development arrangements are aligned to delivering corporate values and priorities.
59. The Workforce Strategy and Employee Charter continues to ensure that there is alignment between the Council's vision and values and the Corporate Plan:
 - The Employee Charter sets out the expectations of all staff (employees, managers, and senior managers) and has formed part of the objective setting process for personal reviews
 - The Workforce Strategy seeks to deliver outcomes for and with employees, within a culture that supports a flexible, skilled, engaged, and diverse workforce
60. The Council takes fraud, corruption, and maladministration very seriously, supported by the following strategy and policies to prevent and manage such occurrences:
 - Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy
 - Financial Procedure Rules
 - Contract Standing Order and Procurement Rules
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
 - Anti-Money Laundering Policy
 - ICT Security Policy
 - Data Protection Policy & Procedure
 - HR policies regarding investigation and discipline of staff

61. The Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy has been in place since July 2019 with over 6800 staff and school governors having undertaken the course or attended face-to-face training / workshops. The Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy is scheduled to be updated in 2023/24 with refreshed training material to support its launch. The Council continues to be supported by a range of policies, procedures and regulations which are reviewed for appropriateness, including those relating to Financial Control, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Equalities, and IT Security.
62. The Council has a Whistleblowing Policy in place through which staff and contractors are encouraged to speak out on misconduct or illegal behaviour within the organisation, which affects the public or other people (making a disclosure in the public interest). In 2022/23 a total of seven whistleblowing cases have been reported to the Monitoring Officer.
63. The Corporate Director Resources has both overall responsibility for the financial administration (S151 Officer) and the information governance arrangements of the Council (SIRO). The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government which is set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code (2020).
64. The Council continues to consider its financial management against the CIPFA Financial Management Code (the Code). The focus of the Code is to improve the financial resilience of organisations by embedding enhanced standards of financial management. Inevitably, the impact of wider geopolitical and economic factors continued to test that financial resilience in 2022/23. The Code is intended to support good practice in financial management and assist Local Authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The Code translates principles of good financial management into a series of standards against which Local Authorities should measure themselves.
65. Building on the Assessment undertaken in 2021/22, a further self-assessment against the FM code was undertaken in 2022/23 by senior accountancy officers and the results presented to the Section 151 Officer to identify opportunities for improvement. Considering the significant financial uncertainty facing the Council, the Section 151 Officer agreed that the self-assessment continued to focus on the three previously identified areas for the forthcoming period months. Firstly, recognising the increasing volatility and uncertainty of financial challenges to further build on the work undertaken in increasing the range of suitable sensitivity analysis when determining the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Secondly, the financial resilience of the Council will be enhanced by building on the work undertaken to ensure strong links between business cases and plans to spend. The third recommendation was to maintain focus on service area budget spend with the need to find increased level of budget savings to be delivered but the heightened need to identify any financial issues quickly to have time to put remedial action in place. In addition, the work undertaken in 2022/23 on income culminated in the Income Generation Framework being produced as part of the Council's 2024/25 Budget Strategy.

66. The requirements of the Code and the need for evidence has been a major consideration in the development of the Council's key financial strategies such as the Medium-Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy, and the Treasury Management Strategy.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

67. Through its Corporate Values, the Council outlines a commitment to being "open and honest about the difficult choices we face and allowing people to have their say on what's important to them and their communities." Consultation, engagement, and joint working with citizens are central to delivering this value and are outlined as follows.

68. Meetings have remained open to the public to attend except where confidential or exempt information is being discussed, as defined by the law. Full Council meetings continued to include a facility for public questions, and the Council's Scrutiny Committees have invited stakeholder contributions to their scrutiny programme, both through research and consultation exercises and through direct access to Committees.

69. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, temporary legislation required all Council meetings to be made publicly available which was achieved by either by live streaming meetings or recording them to be subsequently uploaded to the web due to the public being unable to attend meetings in person. The implementation of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 superseded this legislation and required principal councils to develop and implement a Multi-Location Meetings policy. The Council approved its Multi-location Meetings policy in March 2022 for implementation following the Local Government Elections on 5 May 2022.

70. The policy exceeded the legislative requirement to broadcast Council meetings and identified additional committee meetings of public interest or those with a governance role to be webcast. These meetings included Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee, Governance and Audit Committee, Standards and Ethics Committee and Scrutiny Committees with other meetings being recorded and kept for reference.

71. The following table highlights the activity of webcasting through the last five years. Although the number of meetings webcast has reduced, the average number of live views for a meeting has doubled from 25 in 2021/22 to 55 in 2022/23. There has been a 70% increase in archive views for a meeting from 88 in 2021/22 to 151 in 2022/23. In total, all views for a meeting have increased by almost 82% from 113 in 2021/22 to 206 in 2022/23.

72.

Webcasting Data				
Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of Meetings webcast	54	105	155	88
Number of Committees (Types) webcast	10	21	19	14
Total Hours Webcast	126:50:24	202:36:54	269:39:22	177:55:44
Live views	1960	4594	3965	4871
Archive Views	6909	10963	13644	13287
Total Views	8869	15557	17609	18158

73. There has been open debate and challenge on performance and risk management with quarterly reporting and review in SMT and further challenge and oversight in Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee meetings. An assurance role continues within the SMT environment where the Chief Executive and Directors discuss aspects of assurance, for example safeguarding, procurement compliance, performance management, outcomes and progress on audit recommendations made by internal and external auditors, bodies, and regulators. This continues to highlight the connections between these assurance pieces and create a more joined up version of the assurance picture. The meetings between the Chief Executive, Directors, and Cabinet Members to agree actions arising from an open debate of performance and service delivery challenges have continued for 2022/23.
74. The public and other stakeholders are given the opportunity to tell the Council what they think about the services provided through the Council's Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy. It reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints, as well as guidance received from the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales and places a greater emphasis on a prompt resolution of complaints. Cabinet is informed annually of the number of complaints received.
75. Citizens, communities, and partners continue to be engaged through a programme of citizen engagement, budget consultation, Ask Cardiff surveys that seek opinions of a range of Quality of Life and Quality of Services statements. The output of these is used to inform proposals and decisions of priorities and planning for the provision of services. The participation levels for these engagement sessions continue to leave room for improvement particularly in respect to building up participation numbers.
76. Regular meetings are held with institutional stakeholders to whom the Council is accountable, which include the Welsh Government and the Council's External Auditors (Audit Wales). Efforts have also been made to foster open and effective relationships between the County Council and the six Community

Councils in Cardiff through a Community Councils Charter (“the Charter”). It reflects the model Charter issued by the Welsh Government in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and is based on equality of partnership between the two tiers of local government.

77. The Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) represents a statutory partnership of public and voluntary sector organisations, chaired by the Leader of the Council to deliver the city’s Well-being Plan. The Well-being Plan, which responds to the evidence from the Well-being Assessment, focusses on the areas of public service delivery which fundamentally require partnership working between public and community services, and the citizens of Cardiff. The Well-being Assessment agreed by the PSB in March 2022 and the draft Well-being Plan was considered in October 2022 prior to public consultation. Cardiff PSB is supported by partnership governance and delivery arrangements, reporting by exception into the PSB on a quarterly basis. Over the course of the pandemic, the Cardiff PSB met on a more regular basis to lead a co-ordinated strategic response to critical issues across the city’s public services. The Cardiff Local Wellbeing plan was considered by the Cardiff PSB in April 2023.
78. The PSB delivered a review of its partnership governance in February 2023 and concluded that there was a need to build on the partnership approach that arose during the pandemic, characterised by day-to-day strategic and operational working across organisational boundaries, of sharing assets in support of shared goals and of moving quickly in a rapidly changing environment, enabled by technology and supported by data.

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

79. Following the local government elections on 5 May 2022, a new Council administration was formed. To make clear its ambitions for the city, the administration set out a new policy programme and associated delivery commitments for the coming municipal term, entitled ‘Stronger, Fairer, Greener.’ This was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 14 July 2022, and set out the Council’s policy agenda and programme for delivery for the next five years, based on the following commitments to make Cardiff:
 - **A stronger city**, with an economy creating and sustaining well-paid jobs, with an education system that helps our young people reach their potential, with good, affordable housing in safe, confident, and empowered communities, all supported by well-resourced, efficient public services.
 - **A fairer city**, where the opportunities of living in Cardiff can be enjoyed by everyone, whatever their background, where those suffering the effects of poverty are protected and supported, where a fair day’s work receives a fair day’s pay, and where every citizen is valued and feels valued.
 - **A greener city** which, through our One Planet programme, takes a lead on responding to the climate emergency, which celebrates and nurtures biodiversity, with high-quality open spaces within easy reach for rest and

play that are connected by convenient, accessible, safe sustainable transport options.

80. Where 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' provided a clear articulation of the administration's policy priorities, the Council's policy framework translated these into organisational objectives with associated delivery milestones, key performance indicators and the necessary resources to ensure progress.
81. The Corporate Plan, therefore, plays a key role in translating the administration's policy ambitions into clear organisational objectives. In this way, the Corporate Plan sets out what the Council wants to achieve, and how it will organise itself to achieve it. In accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Corporate Plan is framed by Well-being Objectives, Steps and performance measures. The Corporate Plan is set at a strategic level and is supported by directorate delivery plans, which set out in greater detail how Corporate Plan objectives will be delivered, as well as how directorate business will be taken forward.
82. The Council has responded to performance requirements arising from the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2022 which are set out in the Annual Governance Statement of 2021/22.
83. The development of the Annual Well-being Report, in effect the Council's self-assessment of performance, involves the political and managerial leadership of the Council, with enhanced roles for both Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee. This will include:
 - Directorate self-evaluation of service performance, governance & financial challenges, and priorities.
 - Performance and budget assurance sessions with each Director that are convened by the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to consider findings of directorate self-assessment.
 - Progress and performance session with Cabinet and the Council's Senior Management Team;
 - The Performance Panel, convened by the Chair of the Policy Review and Performance (PRAP) Scrutiny Committee, and involving the Chairs of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees
 - Consideration by both the PRAP Scrutiny Committee and the Governance & Audit Committee
 - Consideration of the End-of-Year Assessment (the Annual Well-being Report) by Council.
84. A Mid-Year Self-Assessment was considered by Cabinet on 19 January 2023, following engagement with the PRAP Scrutiny Committee. The report set out challenges in six areas; The pressures on the organisation in respect to workforce, financial resilience, Housing, Children's Services, within Health and Social Care (thus requiring a heightened partnership approach) and the continued need to respond to the pressures of the cost of living.

85. Thematic Challenge Sessions are convened by Well-being Objective each January/February. The challenge sessions are chaired by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance and involve the lead Cabinet portfolio holders, Chief Executive, and relevant Directors. The challenge sessions consider progress and challenges in relation to each of the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan, and provide an opportunity to consider priorities, steps, Key Performance Indicators, and targets for the year ahead.
86. There is Engagement with the Performance Panel each January/February. The Performance Panel allows the Chairperson of each Scrutiny Committee, to:
 - i. Consider the Mid-Year Assessment and make recommendations for improvement as well as strategic policy suggestions for consideration as part of Corporate Plan development
 - ii. Corporate Plan development: with a focus on the priorities, steps, Key Performance Indicators, and targets proposed for inclusion within the revised Corporate Plan.
87. The Corporate Plan is part of the Council's Policy Framework and this, as set out in the Constitution of the Council, ensures that the Corporate Plan is formally subject to consideration by all elected members. Engagement occurred throughout February 2023 with all Scrutiny Committees including PRAP Scrutiny Committee as part of pre-decision scrutiny of the Corporate Plan. Formal consideration by Cabinet and Council concluded on 9 March 2023.
88. The Corporate Plan is developed alongside the Council's Budget, thereby ensuring that the Council's resources are aligned behind the delivery of its policy priorities. The Corporate Plan and Budget are approved alongside one another by Council in February / March of each financial year. Both the Council Budget and Corporate Plan were approved on 9 March 2023.
89. The financial uncertainty over the last couple of years has led to delays in Budget Settlement from Welsh Government and this continued for both the budget setting process of 2023/24 and the forthcoming budget of 2024/25. The Council's 2023/24 budget proposals ran from 23 December 2022 to 29 January 2023, whilst the budget consultation for 2024/25 budget proposals was launched on 8 January 2024 with an end date of 4 February 2024. As outlined under principle B of this AGS, ensuring openness and comprehensive engagement, several mechanisms were used to ensure the consultation was as accessible as possible, but improvements are required in the number of engagements achieved. The consultation enabled members of the public to communicate their views on the budget proposals. It informed the final decisions on service changes, which focussed on delivering valued public services in the face of ongoing austerity.
90. Building on the approach to the Council's Budget Strategy over the last few years is key to planning for future years. The Council Budget report of 9 March 2023 identified for 2023/24 a budget gap of £113.4 million gap for the period

2024/25 to 2027/28. The outlook over the short term is particularly challenging but with signs that the medium to long term will become significantly harder. These pressures are due to the challenge of managing the increase in demand for services, rising cost pressures and recovering lost income levels in other areas such as cultural venues and school catering. Looking further forward, Cabinet considered a Budget Strategy refresh both on 13 July 2023 and 8 January 2024, both of which outlined the unabated financial pressure on the Medium Term.

91. Delivering the ‘Stronger, Fairer, Greener’ policy agenda will also require coordinated action by the Council and its partners. The Cardiff PSB, chaired by the Leader of the Council, brings together the city’s public and third sector leaders, and builds on the long-established platform of partnership working in the city. The Well-being of Future Generations Act has placed in statute the role of PSBs and requires PSBs to publish an assessment of local well-being, a local well-being plan and annual progress reports.

D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

92. As in previous years, it continues to be the case that all Cabinet and Council decisions taken by Members are supported by authored reports from Officers on the legal, HR, property and financial implications arising from the decision. These reports are also required to outline the economic, social, and environmental outcomes, member consultations, the key risks and alternative courses of action which are available.

93. To meet requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Council has published well-being objectives and a well-being statement as part of the development of the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan does ensure ongoing consideration of the sustainable development principle with a focus placed on considering the 5 ways of working at the earliest stage of policy development. Policy development across the organisation is encouraged to consider:

- **Long term:** Defined as the trends that affect Cardiff both today and in the future.
- **Prevention:** Intervening earlier to prevent problems affecting citizens from occurring or worsening.
- **Involvement:** Engaging with citizens, particularly the most vulnerable in society.
- **Integration:** Working across boundaries to deliver the administration’s policy agenda for the city.
- **Collaboration:** Working with others to have a greater impact.

94. The Council uses several sources of information to self-assess progress against Well-Being Objectives, including:

- **Progress against the Council’s Key Performance Measures** – Several performance measures are identified within the Council’s Corporate Plan which help show the progress made in delivering the Well-Being Objectives. Where applicable, targets are set against these performance measures to demonstrate the desired level of achievement. Performance measures are assigned a RAG status: GREEN where the measure is on or above target, AMBER where the result is within 10% of the target and RED where the result is greater than 10% from the target.
 - **Progress against the Steps in each Well-being Objective** – The Council included a number of Steps in the Corporate Plan to help achieve the Well-Being Objectives. Monitoring the progress of these Steps provides an understanding of what has been achieved and where further work is required.
 - **Inspection Reports** – The Council is subject to inspections from regulatory bodies including Audit Wales, Estyn (Education) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). Their findings help the Council to assess areas of strong performance, as well as identifying areas that require improvement.
 - **Surveys and Citizen Feedback** – The annual Ask Cardiff survey, as well as more specific consultation and engagement work, provide residents an opportunity to share their views on a wide range of the Council’s services.
 - **Finance Monitoring** – The Council’s Outturn Report and Budget Monitoring Reports are considered by Cabinet and full Council throughout the financial year.
 - **Feedback from Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee** – The Council responds to the issues raised and recommendations made by Committees, which help inform performance improvement.
 - **Risk** – The Council’s Corporate and Directorate Risks are considered as part of a rounded view of performance.
95. By using this information, the Council monitors progress but also identifies areas of improvement, celebrates success, and identifies areas where performance may not have been as good, and therefore the areas that may require further attention.
96. The Council also has in place a robust performance and accountability regime which involves the wider political governance of the Council. In developing the self-assessment of performance, the following steps have been undertaken to ensure a full and balanced assessment:
- Directorate Analysis of Performance
 - Assurance Sessions convened by the Chief Executive with each Director
 - Assurance Sessions, convened by Cabinet, with the Chief Executive and the Council’s Senior Management Team

- Performance Panel Review, convened by the Chair of the PRAP Scrutiny Committee, and involving the Chair of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
 - Consideration by the PRAP Scrutiny Committee
97. Communication to staff remained a key focus and to ensure staff were consulted and involved in decision making. Various channels of communication were used including the Chief Executive's Update, Core Brief, Staff Information messages, the Staff App, and DigiGov (the Council's HR system).
98. The engagement of citizens has continued to be an important means of identifying and designing services to meet the needs and expectations of service users and citizens in Cardiff in the context of budgetary constraints. Improvements have been identified and put in place to ensure that impact assessments are put in place to ensure that all groups are engaged when considering service change or budget proposals. To support project-based decision making, the Council continues to have in place a Business Case template using the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) "Five Case Model" but with a focus in ensuring that the process does not become overly bureaucratic and remains a value-added activity in delivering assurance on risks and opportunities. The Capital Programme development process requires a robust full Business Case to be allowed for consideration in the following year budget determination.
99. The Council's Budget Strategy is based on an incremental budgeting approach where budgets are informed to a greater extent by corporate priorities and the required future shape of the organisation. The themes for savings in the Budget Strategy for 2023/24 were categorised as Efficiencies, Service Change and Income Generation and were a reflection of the challenging financial climate with inflationary costs and demand pressures exceeding funding increase changes. The 2023/24 budget monitoring reports have detailed a reduction in performance compared to that of 2022/23 and this reflects the increasing degree of difficulty in savings proposals being made.
100. During 2022/23, there was consideration of the need to review governance and reporting in Council subsidiaries. During 2023/24 this work has progressed and looks to cover three broad areas in respect to subsidiaries through a high-level review of governance approach. A high-level comparison of identified best practice for subsidiaries and the shareholder will be undertaken and will set out some initial recommendations that the authority could consider, for existing and future subsidiaries, where there are identified gaps in governance and reporting.

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

101. Decision making responsibilities and authority are clearly set out in the Council's Constitution. It documents the roles and relationships for decision

making, between the Full Council, the Cabinet, Scrutiny, and other Non-Executive Committees. It also details decisions delegated to senior officers through the different management tiers.

102. The Cabinet is the part of the Council which is responsible for most major decisions. The Cabinet is made up of the Leader elected by the Council, and up to nine other portfolio Cabinet members whom he/she nominates for approval by the Council. As of 2021/22 the legislation now provides for Cabinet Members to job share and that has been considered for 2022/23 with two portfolios being shared. The Cabinet must make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council to decide.
103. The senior management structure of the Council for 2022/23 did not change. The statutory responsibility for Social Services is delegated to the Corporate Director of People and Communities. The Statutory roles of the S151 Officer (Finance) and the Monitoring Officer continue to be discharged by the Corporate Director (Resources) and the Director of Governance and Legal Services, respectively. During 2023/24, the Chief Executive was absent for the period of June 2023 to October 2023 and the delegations of this role were split and provided to the Corporate Director of People and Communities and the Corporate Director of Resources.
104. The Council aims to ensure that Members and Officers have the skills, knowledge, and capacity to discharge their responsibilities effectively and recognises the importance of well trained, competent people. For the intake of May 2022, all 79 Members were invited to attend an induction programme to introduce them to or refresh them on the Council and its values, objectives, policies, and procedures. The Programme was a mix of online and face to face modules which was evaluated by those who attended to provide insight into future needs or preferred delivery of training. The attendance figures were significantly higher for new members with the overall participation rate being 97.47% for the five mandatory training topics.
105. All new Officers undertake the appropriate level of induction which includes a suite of mandatory e-learning training modules. Each mandatory training module has its own target date for full compliance. The mandatory training modules for all staff cover Corporate Safeguarding, Cybersecurity, Data Protection, Fraud Awareness, Introduction to Welsh Language, Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and Children's Rights. The performance against each modules reported and linked with individual personal reviews. Work was undertaken during 2022/23 to refresh some of these modules with new versions of Cyber Security, Fraud and Data Protection due to be issued in 2023/24. There are also training modules designated as mandatory for those staff who perform particular roles, and these modules include VAT Awareness, Payment Card Industry and Buying Responsibly.
106. The in-house Cardiff Manager Programme represents a commitment to increasing the learning and development of staff with line management

responsibilities. The programme continues to be offered more widely across the Officer body without the requirement to sit a formal ILM level 3 qualification.

107. Officer performance is primarily evaluated through the Council's Personal Review process, which provides a framework for employees and managers to discuss work performance and behaviour, as well as to identify learning and development needs. It enables employees to be clear about their roles, responsibilities and the behaviours expected of them whilst giving a clear understanding of how their job and efforts contribute to the Council's objectives. Member Personal Reviews are also in place to help them update their knowledge and learn new skills, where required, to be more effective in supporting their communities. The Cardiff Council Academy delivers a comprehensive suite of learning and development programmes and courses which can be accessed and delivered remotely.
108. The Council's Workforce Strategy has employee health and well-being as a priority. The Council continues to support the 'Time to Change' Pledge, has been recognised as a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer with the accreditation having been extended to October 2026, and continued to adhere to the Dying to Work Charter and the Corporate Health Standard Silver Award.
109. The Council approved and published the 2022/23 Annual Well-being Report in September 2023, in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. This provides a retrospective summary evaluation of performance for 2022/23 and building on the midterm assessment identified areas of focus moving forward as being: managing sustained increase in the complexity and scale of demand across Council services; responding to new risks and issues; workforce pressures now impacting on all council services; ensuring continued financial resilience.
110. The Council has determined that two independent Non-Executive Directors with proven skills in governance and transport services should be co-opted to the Board of Cardiff City Transport Services Ltd. (Cardiff Bus), one of the Council's wholly owned subsidiary companies. One appointment has been made following the Council meeting on 30 March 2023, with completion of the recruitment process to take place and be considered by Council in 2024.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

111. Risk management is an integral part of strategic decision making, forming a key element of business planning, budget proposals, budget strategy, and programme and project considerations. A Corporate Risk Register (CRR) is maintained and reviewed by SMT each quarter to ensure it includes key risks to the corporate vision, objectives, and priorities. A Corporate Risk Map has also been used throughout 2022/23 to provide a transparent representation of the status of corporate risks and to support a proportionate management response.

112. The Risk Management Strategy and Policy continued to be supported by a nominated Member Risk Champion, Senior Officer Risk Champion, and a network of Directorate Risk Champions. This process is designed to ensure clear ownership of risks which are identified, reviewed, and escalated systematically each financial quarter. There has been an increasing trend to highlight target dates for individual risk actions for each area of the CRR and this will look to be extended across all corporate risks in the next year.
113. The Council's five standing Scrutiny Committees are designed to support the Cabinet in providing accessible, efficient, and effective services for citizens. There were 40 Scrutiny Committee meetings held during the municipal year 2022/23.
114. Scrutiny Committees undertake pre-decision scrutiny, policy monitoring and review and launch in-depth inquiries to help the Cabinet develop and review policies and services. Most recommendations raised to Cabinet following Scrutiny Inquiries are fully accepted. A number of the Council's collaborative activities are governed by Joint Committees which can be identified on the Council's website.
115. The Council has robust arrangements for internal control which are set out within the three assurance statements contained within this AGS from the Audit Manager, Governance and Audit Committee and Senior Management, respectively.
116. There continued to be formal engagement on Health and Safety between appointed Elected Members, Union Representatives, and relevant Council Officers. The Health and Safety Forum met four times during the year with the focus being on the consideration of accident and violence at work statistics and providing regular updates of the management of Health and Safety reporting and Statutory Obligations Contract management.

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

117. The Council continues to aim to ensure that all reports for the public and other stakeholders are written in a fair, balanced and understandable way. It remains the case that there is a need to achieve a balance between providing full and complete information to demonstrate clear transparency without being onerous or overly complex.
118. The Council also aims for information to be easy for the Council and the public to find and use. The Council has where practicable looked to publish information in advance rather than await Freedom of Information requests. The Council takes careful consideration of the model publication scheme set out by the Information Commissioner which sets out the classes of information that should be routinely available. The Council acknowledges that it has not fully conformed with the model publication scheme due to practical reasons such as capacity and ease of accessing information. However, the Information

Commissioner's Office has recently revised its model publication scheme and the Council is currently reviewing its position against the new expectations and will seek to improve the level of its adherence to the expectations set out in the document.

119. The AGS is an assessment of the governance of the Council applied to the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' CIPFA / SOLACE framework, as outlined in the Assessment Process and Summary. SMT hold an action plan of significant governance issues, representing an open disclosure of the most prominent issues of governance which require attention following the Senior Management Assurance Statement review. Outstanding items from the AGS Action Plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23 are included in the following section.
120. In May 2021, the Council met to establish Committees: their size, terms of reference and allocation of seats. Most meetings have sought to encompass hybrid meeting technology which commenced in June 2022. The Council's Constitution is reviewed at least twice a year and sets out the terms of reference for each of its committees and the decisions that can be taken by each of those Committees. Council has appointed a number of Committees to discharge regulatory and scrutiny services and they deliver annual reports on their performance and findings.
121. Prior to services being delivered through third parties or via joint working arrangements, the Legal Services Team assist Directorates to ensure responsibilities and accountabilities for governance and risk management are adequately documented. The risk management strategy and policy require clear risk management arrangements in whichever model of service delivery is used.
122. Peer challenges, reviews, and inspections from regulatory bodies are welcomed by Cardiff Council to provide assurance over service delivery or identify opportunities for improvement.

2022/23 AGS Action Plan – Significant Governance Issues

123. An action plan of significant governance issues is owned by SMT and is formally reviewed and updated on a bi-annual basis. The review is supplemented by Challenge sessions for each Directorate chaired by the Chief Executive and accompanied by the Corporate Director of Resources. The three areas considered for 2022/23 were carried forward from 2021/22 and were considered to be the main areas of focus or governance improvement. The actions and progress to date are set out below.

ACTION: Extend and deepen the areas of SMT investigation in respect to compliance, risk, and outcomes. – CLOSED

The challenge of delivering services with increased demand and less available financial resources has highlighted the importance of compliance areas being reported and considered at Senior Management level. This action was proposed to be closed as it now forms part of the working model going forward. Regular reports on individual Directorates have been considered and discussed at SMT level on areas such as service delivery issues, safeguarding, risk, procurement, sickness absence, Performance Reviews and Internal Audit recommendations have been received during the year. Data has accompanied reports that enable SMT to identify areas of improvement and to ensure that progress where needed is achieved.

ACTION: Extend the assurance on the quality of performance reviews through evidence gathering at Directorate level. – Taking forward to 2023/24

SMT have regularly received reports on compliance on Performance Reviews. The Directorate delivery plans continue to be the source of personal and team objectives although it continues to be acknowledged that this is not the case at all levels due to the scope and scale of some Directorates. The quality of Performance Reviews remains an area where further improvements are required to ensure that this is fully embedded throughout individual Directorates.

ACTION - Embed into the Self-Assessment on Assurance the Five Ways of Working in respect to the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. – Taking forward to 2023/24

The Self-Assessment on assurance has been amended to include a specific set of questions which covered the Five Ways of Working in respect to the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Directorates have assessed themselves against these objectives for the period of 2022/23 but there was a need to keep this action for 2023/24 to ensure sustainable improvement has been made across all Directorates.

Certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive



Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader of Cardiff Council

Date: 28/03/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Orders', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Date: 28/03/2024