



Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report 2018–2019

June 2019



Cardiff Council

*This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.*

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Committee Membership 2018/19



Councillor David Walker
Chair



Councillor Rodney Berman



Councillor Bernie
Bowen Thomson



Councillor Joe Boyle



Councillor Lyn Hudson



Councillor Norma Mackie



Councillor Ashley Lister



Councillor Stephen Cunnah

Chair's Foreword

Scrutiny is central to the democratic process and, at its best, can make a positive impact on any organisation. In Local Authority terms such effectiveness depends on the level of support scrutiny receives from Members, Officers and the Cabinet. It requires a level of commitment from all three which can enable the Council to benefit from the added value scrutiny can offer. Members of all parties have worked hard over recent years to make Cardiff an authority whose scrutiny process has been held up as a model of good practice. For this success to be maintained, the support scrutiny receives at all levels will need constant assessment, review and improvement.

Scrutiny is the mechanism that allows many non-executive Councillors to enrich the decision making of the Executive. We need to increase efforts to encourage all non-executive Councillors to participate in scrutiny, bringing their own independent expertise to bear on strategy, policy and operational issues. A Scrutiny Committee marches on the strength of Members' questioning skills, their engagement and commitment over the year.

The Terms of Reference for this Committee require full commitment to understanding the complexities and challenges of running an efficient, effective organisation that can deliver the very best services. Its wide brief takes in all aspects of policy conception and development and the field of performance can touch on everything that the Council does, from activity at front line operational level to the important support work in the back office. Effective leadership at all levels is the key driver to departmental and organisational success.

Scrutiny has the potential to research and investigate problematic policy and performance areas, to propose and assess innovative solutions, and to break through conventional vested interests. However, it is not straightforward to quantify the impact of the Scrutiny process. Each in-depth scrutiny report produces a range of recommendations, many of which are accepted by the Cabinet. But are they all followed through and implemented and do they all make the impact predicted? How do we measure that and report it? For this reason the Committee is currently working on a model to capture the impact of scrutiny. There are few models available elsewhere so we will seek to design a model to measure scrutiny effectiveness which can be used in Cardiff and potentially elsewhere. It is hoped that the Wales Audit Office will be interested in our findings and recommendations having highlighted this as an issue worthy of research, analysis and reporting.

This year, the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee consolidated the benefit of scrutiny member engagement in corporate planning, leading the process which enabled all five Scrutiny Committee Chairs to assess Corporate Plan target setting in an open and constructive discussion with the Leader, Chief Executive and Cabinet Members. The Leader has stated that

this engagement helped to deliver an improved Corporate Plan 2019-22 for the citizens of Cardiff.

Delivering Capital Ambition Programme

The Capital Ambition Programme has been a central focus of our work throughout March, April and May 2019. We have welcomed the renewed traction of the Council's Digital Strategy as a long term plan central to delivering this programme. Having solidified our understanding of the Programme, in 2019/20 we will look for evidence that the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme (CADP) is delivering, and will encourage other scrutiny committees to factor CADP project monitoring into their work programming.

Sickness Absence

We have retained our focus on how the Council continues to tackle sickness absence levels, following up on our previous inquiries. We heard that there have been a number of recent initiatives in tackling sickness absence. However, the outturn in terms of employee days lost due to absence has risen and failed to meet the Council's Corporate Plan target by some distance. There is a substantial annual cost attached to high employee absence levels and other Welsh Councils report better results. We will continue to monitor closely.

On many occasions this year our feedback to the Cabinet has highlighted that, as local representatives, Members have considerable experience of the effectiveness of the Council's frontline services. We have urged those responsible to engage with all Members, including through the scrutiny process, in the search to make improvements. Members have experience of dealing with our customers at the 'coal face' and are informed about and help resolve those mistakes and service failures which can cause dissatisfaction. The Council should tap into this valuable experience.

I offer my thanks to all Committee Members as well as to the witnesses that have appeared before Committee this year including Cabinet Members, officers of the Council and external witnesses.

I commend this 2019/20 Annual Report of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee.



Councillor David Walker

Chair, Policy Review &

Performance Scrutiny Committee

Overview

This Annual Report covers the work of the Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year, commencing in June 2018 and ending in May 2019. It explains the many different types of scrutiny the Committee has undertaken in this period, categorises the various topics considered, and presents the highlights and outcomes of its work in 2018/19, from *page 9* onwards.

This year the Committee has re-affirmed the benefit of scrutiny member engagement in corporate planning, hosting an informal session where all five scrutiny chairs brought their committees concerns to the table to inform corporate plan target setting. In an open and constructive discussion the Leader and Cabinet welcomed the breadth of informed scrutiny member views, and in response delivered a more meaningful and inclusive Corporate Plan 2019-22 for the citizens of Cardiff.

With the impact of scrutiny in mind the Committee is committed to ensuring that the value and usefulness of scrutiny's work in informing the Council's decision-making is recognised. To that end, an inquiry is on-going exploring models of capturing the impact scrutiny delivers. It will also seek to recommend appropriate systems for measuring the impact of scrutiny and monitoring how well recommendations accepted by the Cabinet are implemented.

The Committee continues to focus on Sickness Absence given that it remains a key challenge for the Council. We undertook an in depth short scrutiny in September 2018, and have successfully engaged with the Human Resources service area to commission scrutiny research that will benefit the service in tackling the issue.

Finally, this year we have received encouraging feedback from the Customer and Digital Services team, having received a positive Cabinet response and action plan for the future following our Customer Service inquiry in 2017/18.

We will continue to monitor how the aim of changing the customer focus and culture of the Council develops.

Committee Responsibilities

The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference confer upon it two distinct scrutiny roles. Firstly, an overarching responsibility to scrutinise, monitor and review the overall corporate performance and improvement of the Council. Secondly, to scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of specific functions, such as the Corporate Planning and Improvement framework, the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme, Finance, ICT, Human Resources, Governance, Legal Services, Property, Procurement, Customer Services and the Public Services Board.

Within the current organisational structure the Committee's Terms of Reference¹ determine that its responsibilities fall within three of the Council's Directorates; as follows

The **Corporate Resources Directorate** falls within the Committee's remit in its entirety and comprises; *Commissioning and Procurement; Finance; Human Resources; Digitalisation and Customer Services (including Corporate Complaints and Connect to Cardiff (C2C); Performance & Partnerships (including Bilingual Cardiff).*

The **Economic Development Directorate** includes *Corporate Landlord, Strategic Estates* (including both the *operational* and non-operational portfolios), *Facilities Management* and *International Policy*.

The **Governance and Legal Services Directorate** falls within the Committee's remit in its entirety and comprises; *Committee & Members' Services; Electoral Services; Equalities, Glamorgan Archives; Legal Services; and Scrutiny Services.*

¹ Terms of Reference for this Committee can be found on page 26.

Work Programme 2018/19 - the statistics

Throughout 2018/19 the full Committee has held 11 public meetings as programmed in the Council's calendar of meetings, scrutinising 23 reports, covering a wide variety of topics in line with its Terms of Reference. This activity culminated in 24 letters to the Cabinet and Senior Management Team, sharing the Committee's comments, concerns and recommendations following the scrutinies. In response the Committee received 16 letters from the Cabinet.

The success of Scrutiny is dependent on the capacity, skills and development of those Members that sit on Scrutiny Committees. There has been some movement in Membership of the Committee throughout the year, though generally good attendance has been maintained. In June 2018 the Annual Council meeting delivered two changes in membership. The Committee welcomed Councillors Hudson and Lister to replace Councillors McKerlich and Owen Jones. Sadly, Councillor Jim Murphy, a well-respected member of the Committee died in December 2018, having contributed many years' service to the Committee and its task groups. Councillor Stephen Cunnah recently left the Committee having been in post since its inauguration with the new administration in May 2017. This year three members volunteered to participate in a task and finish inquiry which is ongoing, *The Impact of Scrutiny*. The Committee also agreed to continue supporting a Performance Panel sub group, for which four Members volunteered, and which met twice during the year.

Webcasting proceedings remains an aspiration of the Committee and, whilst it has successfully webcast two meetings in 2018/19, going forward the majority of its 2019/20 meetings will be available for viewing by interested parties. The Committee therefore looks forward to continuing and improving on transparent engagement, and to playing its part in contributing to the Council's webcasting performance indicator.

To support its work the Committee continues to benefit from one full time principal scrutiny officer, a proportion of the scrutiny researcher post, and the support of a committee administrator. High level oversight of its work has been through the new Head of Democratic Services, who continued the work of the Committee between March and May in the temporary absence of its Principal Scrutiny Officer.

The Committee has used a variety of approaches to examine the topics scrutinised. All topics are listed below, analysed under the relevant type of scrutiny, and a selection have been highlighted to illustrate the Committee's impact in 2018/19.

Highlights of 2018/19

Partnership Scrutiny

Where the Committee has performed the statutory role introduced by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and conferred upon it by Council. In 2018/19 the Committee considered:

Cardiff Public Services Board Scrutiny

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG) subjects the Council and its partners with a duty to ensure that the governance arrangements in public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales take into account the needs of future generations.

The WFG Act established a statutory Public Services Board (PSB) for each local authority area in Wales, the core members of which include the Local Authority; the Local Health Board; the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority; and Natural Resources Wales. It also conferred a statutory remit for Scrutiny:

- To review decisions made or actions taken by the PSB;
- To review the Board's governance arrangements;
- To make reports to the Board regarding its function or governance arrangements; and
- To require PSB members to attend Committee.

To address this duty the Council's Constitution confers the statutory responsibility for upholding the requirements of the Act upon the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny of the Cardiff Public Services Board (CPSB). Therefore in 2018/19 the Committee continued to perform strategic overview scrutiny of CPSB, welcoming Cardiff & Vale Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, and South Wales Fire Service to Committee in June 2018 alongside the Council Leader as Chair of the CPSB. The purpose was to consider its governance arrangements.

The Committee was reassured that the Delivery Plan for the Well-being Plan agreed by all partners was in place, and that all partners strategic plans had been mapped in order to develop the shared Well-being priorities, and would therefore be taken forward within their own Strategic Plans.

Members sought clarity as to how the Committee would be able to measure progress, specifically what projects, proposals, and targets would enable it to hold the CPSB to account. The Leader explained that the Well-being Plan contains statutory 'steps' identifying practical actions and that the Council has aligned its Capital Ambition Delivery Programme to support key projects underway within the Programme Boards, whose work consists of multi-agency projects to deliver the Well-being Plan. The Committee will be able to measure progress by considering the CPSB's first Annual report in July 2019.

CPSB Programme Boards focus on key projects. However given that they are bodies that do not represent all stakeholders, the Committee stressed the importance of membership being constituted to ensure diversity.

Joint Scrutiny

Where the Committee has joined together with one or more scrutiny committees to examine a topic of a cross-cutting nature to enable collective consideration of the issues. In 2018/19 this included:

- Joint scrutiny of the Corporate Plan 2019-22 target setting (Feb'19)

Once again in a spirit of co-production the Leader enabled the Committee's Performance Panel to host an informal joint scrutiny of the Corporate Plan target setting process. All Scrutiny Chairs were invited to participate and a valuable session ensured policy development scrutiny impact for all five scrutiny committees within the Corporate Planning process. The session considered proposed targets in detail, providing an opportunity to feed cross scrutiny committee observations into Cardiff's final draft Corporate Plan 2019-22, before it was presented to formal Cabinet.

Members were able to ensure that any changes to the detail of the Corporate Plan Performance Indicators and Targets, made as a consequence of discussion with scrutiny chairs, were captured and thereby had a strong validating impact of the value of scrutiny.

Policy Development / Consultation Scrutiny

Where the Committee has contributed to the Council's policy development processes by considering draft policy documents. In 2018/19 the Committee considered;

- Budget Strategy 2019/20 – focussed on social services (Sept'18)
- Budget Reduction Requirement 2019/20 & Consultation Changes for Cardiff (Dec'18)
- Draft Corporate Plan 2019-22 (Jan'19)

Budget Strategy & Consultation Changes for Cardiff

The Committee considers it important that Scrutiny Members play an active part in scrutinising proposed changes to the budget, to ensure the Council has the finances in place to continue to deliver sustainable local services. This year the Committee undertook significant oversight of the Council's Budget Strategy focussing particularly on the challenges faced by Social Services (*Sept '18*), followed by consideration of the Budget Reduction Requirement for 2019/20 (*Dec '18*), and the budget consultation, Changes for Cardiff (*Dec '18*).

Focussing on Social Services in September 2018, was a good opportunity to provide Members with a fuller understanding of the financial resilience work underway to tackle the challenges the Directorate continues to face. Members heard that focus on prevention is crucial, noted that there is more work to do on demand management, endorsed an invest-to-save approach to developing preventative services, looked forward to hearing outcomes from a move away from the current model placing children out of county and the impact new ways of working with health partners would have on the Social Services budget.

This year the Committee expressed concern about the annual Budget Consultation 2019/20, Changes for Cardiff. It felt that the consultation was not straightforward to complete and required the respondent to make a judgement without the figures for informed judgement. Members suggested the questions be concentrated in a removable section, and pointed out that some of the questions were leading. They had concerns about an apparent lack of pre-launch testing, considering that the survey could have been improved had it been tested with Councillors, minority groups, and particularly with the Youth Council. The Committee did however support the Council in its focus group work with ethnically diverse minority groups, using sensitive and appropriate facilitators. Importantly, Members recommended that next year the Cabinet

factors engagement with scrutiny into its planning timelines for the 2020/21 budget consultation.

Pre-decision Scrutiny

Where the Committee has evaluated and commented on policy proposals before they are considered by the Cabinet, providing the Cabinet with an understanding of Scrutiny Member's views prior to making their decision. In 2018/19 the Committee considered;

- Band B Capacity and Governance arrangements (*July'18*)
- Purchase and sale of leaseholds (*Dec'18*)
- Emergency purchase of streetscene vehicles (*Jan'19*)
- Draft Corporate Plan 2019-22 (*Feb'19*)
- Draft Budget proposals 2019-20 (*Feb'19*)

Draft Corporate Plan 2019-22

The Committee followed up on December's policy development scrutiny of the draft Corporate Plan 2019-22, with early pre-decision scrutiny of the Corporate Plan 2019-22 at its January 2019 meeting. Members heard there were many examples of Scrutiny engagement having influenced and shaped the draft to date, and welcomed the inclusion of Steps within the Plan, inserted as a result of last years' Committee recommendations.

Members drew attention to the need for a further examination of Agency Costs, to identify those areas where the Council really could make a case for using short term agency staff, and highlighted the potential for savings by reducing the use of agency workers. The Committee advised Cabinet in its letter that it would like to see a strategy for reducing agency use, and plans to add this topic for consideration in the Committee's future work programming.

The Committee highlighted once again that some Directorates have too few KPI's to evaluate performance, and urged re-consideration of the number of performance measures (KPI's) within the Corporate Plan for the Economic Development Directorate.

The Committee welcomed significant adjustments and amendments made to the Corporate Plan following Members' comments and observations as a result of scrutiny engagement, providing evidence of the impact of scrutiny. Both Cabinet and PRAP Members recognise the value of effective collaboration between the Authority's strategic policy making and scrutiny functions in strengthening the governance of the organisation. The Committee recognised that the Corporate Plan could not be all encompassing, however stressed that having a performance target where there is a Step to achieve is important. The Cabinet explained that a one to one relationship between Steps and performance indicators is not always the most appropriate way of tracking performance, however, where it is appropriate the Plan will include a corresponding KPI.

Draft Budget Proposals 2019-20

In February 2019 the Committee once again scrutinised both the overarching Budget Proposals for 2019-20, and the specific budget proposals of three directorates relevant to its terms of reference, the *Resources, Economic Development, and Governance & Legal Services Directorates*. However this year it also dedicated time to scrutiny of the Capital Strategy 2019/20

During consideration of the *whole Council* budget the Committee was re-assured by Cabinet that scrutiny of the budget is valuable, illustrated by increases made in year to the contingency fund as a result of substantial debate between Cabinet and PRAP in the previous year. Members were assured that all anticipated savings were robust and achievable, even those risk assessed as red.

The Committee once again expressed its interest in having a clearer picture of the budget allocated to the employment of agency workers, particularly costs incurred by the Director of Social Services. Similarly, Members requested additional information in respect of employee turnover rates. The Committee request that external consultant expenditure for the financial year would be useful to consider when scrutinising the following year's budget was accepted.

Members expressed some concern that smaller service areas were expected to deliver disproportionately large savings in the proposals brought forward for consideration, such as the Governance and Legal Services Directorate compared with a larger directorates such as Waste Management. A good example being the Policy, Performance and Research restructure where the service was expected to propose a £204,000 saving on a £722,000 budget.

The Committee found the presentation on the Council's Capital Strategy 2019/20, highlighting the link between Capital and Revenue budgets, useful context to its scrutiny of the overall budget. During this Members explored the robustness of capital resourcing, receiving clarification that, where the budget includes proposed capital expenditure, then approval in principal is in place. A capital project must have grant approval before proceeding and a delay in grant funding can impact on decision making.

Monitoring Improvement

Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's improvement progress. In 2018/19, the Committee considered:

- Digital Ambition (*July'18*)
- Sickness Absence (*Sept '18*)
- Statutory Annual Well-being Report (*Oct'18*)
- Bi-lingual Cardiff Strategy Action Plan (*April '19*)

Digital Ambition

In July the Committee welcomed the Digital Strategy as a long term plan central to delivering the Capital Ambition programme. The Council's new senior management structure included the appointment of a Chief Digital Officer. The Committee noted the key principles of the strategy, and intends to factor the action plan that follows into its future work programme.

Members considered there was significant potential for the strategy to impact on staff, and drew the chief officer's attention to the implications for resources, and the savings that might unfold from greater digitalisation of Council services.

The Committee commented on the recently launched Cardiff App, that its functions were limited and members urged that there should be an increase in the services it offered. The Chief Officer offered the Committee sight of draft proposals for future proposed transactions. Members stressed the importance of all Councillors understanding how the App would support them in their representation of citizens. Highlighting some technical glitches that required ironing out, a Member of the Committee volunteered for the 'smart councillor' test group.

The Committee is particularly keen that the digitally disadvantaged remain central to the Digital Strategy. It expressed a note of caution that the Council must be able to deal with the potential increase in demand that ease of access to its services is likely to create.

Sickness Absence

In September 2018 the Committee followed up its January 2018 short scrutiny of sickness absence, and heard that there had been new initiatives in tackling

sickness absence. The Council's target for 2018/19 was set at 9.5 FTE days. The 2018/19 end of year forecast at quarter one anticipated that absence levels were expected to fall when compared with the previous two years. The forecast even suggested that sickness absence may fall below the Wales average for 2017/18 of 10.4 FTE days lost per employee. The actual outturn for 2018/19 was 11.53 days, greater than had been forecast throughout the year.

Headline suggestions for improvement falling out of this scrutiny included Members recommending that in all schools sickness absence became a standing item on Governing Body agendas. Consequently, in addition to sending quarterly benchmarked data reports to the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher of each school, for discussion at the next governing body meeting, clerks to the governing body were requested to ensure sickness absence was included on the agenda. The Committee also urged continued development work on monitoring schools' application of the Council's sickness absence policy.

Members considered it would be useful to see the sickness absence data for Education presented without the catering service. This had already been an area of focus for the Education Directorate and an action plan has been developed for the catering service. The information was subsequently provided.

The Committee requested a more detailed comparison of best practice with Merthyr Tydfil Council, which had reported low levels of sickness absence. A detailed comparison of sickness absence practices will be reported to the Committee's June 2019 meeting.

Members felt strongly that there was value in the Council recording '*work related*' back and muscular-skeletal sickness absence figures. The Chief

Officer Human Resources agreed to discuss the suggestion further with the Council's Health & Safety manager.

The Committee expressed an interest in the sickness absence figures for service areas that hold vacant posts. The Chief Officer agreed to explore this further, informing Members that Health & Safety colleagues were reviewing stress risk assessments across Directorates, which would be used to inform preventative interventions and support for staff in reducing stress in the workplace.

Monitoring Performance

Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance. In 2018/19, the Committee considered:

- Quarter 4 performance 2017/18 (*June '18*)
- Quarter 2 performance 2018/19 (*Nov'18*)

Over the year the Committee has continued to monitor performance, and has importantly sought to influence the accessibility of the performance reporting style. It has developed a positive relationship with performance lead officers, and consequently the Committee's concerns and observations have been constructively received. Members have fed back on the following issues that will continue to inform performance scrutiny in 2019/20:

- **Presentation/design** - the importance of Members being able to access performance information successfully, whether digitally, or by A3 colour scorecard sent well in advance to aid preparation for Committee.
- **Performance mechanisms – Red Amber Green (RAG) Assessment and Self-Evaluation** -. the Committee raised concerns about the quality of self-evaluation, and how effectively the organisation was questioning the effectiveness of its performance. Members identified a need for better understanding of the criteria that are being applied to the internal RAG

self- assessment. Later in the year Members were assured that self- assessment by services had improved, and that new mechanisms were in place so that the quarterly monitoring of issues of corporate significance were emerging earlier. The Committee's challenge on such issues was acknowledged as an important part of the process.

- **Consequences** - the Committee expressed its view that missed targets and budget overspends by Directorates should not be without consequence and action where appropriate, as in the future the Council may not have the capacity to cope with overspends. Members felt senior managers need to be accountable for overspends which have not been specifically authorised by the Senior Management Team or the political leadership.
- **Benchmarking** – Members noted that progress continues to be made in creating appropriate data set comparisons for the Council. This is a development which is long awaited.
- **Performance and finance** -The Committee re-iterated the importance of strong links between finance (budgeting) and performance reporting. Target setting should include financial parameters and savings goals
- **Predicting trends** - Members consider effectively predicting local and national trends for children's services is important and noted the Council's work on early preventative measures.
- **Capturing the position** – The Committee observed that the narrative of the quarterly performance report could better illustrate the pressures the Council faces in some areas. This may require a preventative focus. Members requested that in future the report provides a snapshot of progress against each priority and aim early in the report.

Briefings post Cabinet

Where timescales have not allowed for pre-decision or policy development scrutiny, and to ensure the Committee is kept informed of developments, proposals or progress, in 2018/19 the Committee considered:

- WAO Review of Scrutiny (Oct'18)
- Facilities Management (Nov'18)
- Delivering Capital Ambition – Modernisation Programme (March'19)
- Delivering Capital Ambition – Resilience Programme (April'19)
- WAO Review of Delivering Capital Ambition (May'19)

Delivering Capital Ambition

The Council's Delivering Capital Ambition Programme, established in 2017, has been a central focus of the committee's work throughout March, April and May 2019. The scale of the programme justified two separate briefings. In March Members were briefed on the *Modernisation* portfolio of the programme, considering projects that will deliver the transformation of corporate systems and processes that support service delivery (*Corporate Landlord, Digital First and Service Reviews*). In April Members were briefed on the *Resilient Services* portfolio, considering projects that will deliver the transformation of front-line services (*Improving outcomes for children, improving outcomes for adults, Inclusive growth and Streetscene*).

Members were advised that appropriate structures, clear milestones and governance arrangements were in place to effectively progress the delivery of the Capital Ambition Programme. However following the briefing on the Modernisation programme they expressed concerns regarding how future service reviews would be identified, highlighting that there did not appear to be a systematic selection process or set of criteria for identifying those service areas which would benefit from review. Members indicated that councillors

could contribute to such selection, and would welcome the opportunity to assist in the identification, selection and prioritisation of those service areas in need of modernisation and performance improvement.

Following its briefing on the *Resilient Services* portfolio the Committee advised the Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation and Performance that, as the presentation had been primarily to inform scrutiny members of the scope and range of the portfolio, going forward further in depth scrutiny of specific project areas specific to all five scrutiny committees could be undertaken. Importantly as Councillors, Members have considerable experience of accessing the Council's frontline services, and urged those responsible for frontline services to engage with all Members in seeking to assess failures and make improvements.

Over the period September 2018 to March 2019 the Wales Audit Office (WAO) carried out a review to monitor the development and implementation of the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme, to observe the governance arrangements in practice. Its report was published in April 2019 and presented to the Committee in May 2019. A proposal for improvement was that the Council needs to *strengthen the role of scrutiny in engaging with, and challenging the delivery and impact of, the Programme to increase accountability and help provide momentum*. Members sought clarification from the WAO as to what exactly strong scrutiny of the programme would look like. The Committee will factor monitoring of the programme's delivery into its forthcoming 2019/20 work programming discussions.

Wales Audit Office Review of Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?

In July 2018 the WAO published its review of scrutiny in Cardiff undertaken as a part of the Fit for the Future national inspection of all 22 councils in Wales. The review concluded that "*scrutiny arrangements in Cardiff are well-developed and supported by a culture that makes them well-placed to*

respond to current and future challenges, but the Council could be more innovative in how it undertakes scrutiny activity”.

The Council was issued with five Proposals for Improvement, to consider more innovative scrutiny methods; consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need for future challenges; make scrutiny committees’ forward work programmes more accessible to the public; and to review the type of support required to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges. An action plan to address the proposals was presented to the Committee, and there was recognition that this would provide Members with an effective monitoring tool to evaluate progress over time.

Task & Finish Scrutiny

Where the Committee considers there is an opportunity to examine in detail the issues and wider options available, to assist the Council in improving the way a service is delivered:

- The Impact of Scrutiny (*on-going*).
- Cabinet response to *Managing the Estate under a Corporate Landlord Model (Nov '18)*
- Cabinet response to *Customer Leadership (Dec'18)*

The Impact of Scrutiny

This year the Committee has prioritised a task and finish inquiry to evaluate the impact of the scrutiny function on the delivery of Council services. It will do this by reviewing existing evidence of scrutiny impact on Council decision-making and service development since 2012, and proposing a mechanism for measuring and capturing the future impact of scrutiny. This is has involved identifying theoretical models for recording and capturing impact; seeking

evidence of successful approaches to monitoring impact by other Councils in England and Wales; and identifying a practical model of recording and capturing impact, appropriate for use in Cardiff.

Customer Leadership

In December 2018 the Committee received the Cabinet's response to its task group report, published in May 2018, identifying opportunities for placing the customer at the heart of Council's service delivery, and requiring elevation of the profile of customer service, both politically and operationally. Just seven recommendations stemmed from the inquiry, however the Cabinet's response clearly demonstrated that the Committee's work had provided a platform and the impetus to strengthen customer focus within the Council, facilitating a step change in customer service awareness, and council-wide consistency of customer service standards. The Committee's recommendations required a culture shift that would demand new behaviours from managers and staff, essential as the Council moves forward its digital ambitions.

The Customer Services service area has taken a project management approach, with clear milestones and responsibilities set out for each of the Committee's seven recommendations, and the Committee was briefed on the positive way customer services managers had embraced the recommendations. There are clear plans to motivate staff with a new strategic suite of customer focussed documents as the starting point for a customer roadshow and a Customer Charter which will be launched at the commencement of the 2019/20 personal review cycle.

Customer focussed training will ensure all staff understand who their customers are, and therefore the Committee welcomed the proposal of robust

training for all, stressing the importance of full staff coverage, which it will monitor in the future.

The Committee once again highlighted that Members have considerable experience of accessing the Council's frontline services, and urged the service to engage with all Members in evaluating the Council's customer service strategy and where improvement is required.

Managing the Estate under a Corporate Landlord Model

In November 2018 the Committee considered the Cabinet's response to its task group report, published in May 2018, examining the challenges of managing the Council's non-residential estate centrally, under a Corporate Landlord model. The inquiry delivered three emerging themes: *securing corporate buy-in* for the model, *policies and processes* connected to implementation and the *benefits of successful implementation* of the model. The Committee again issued a carefully considered number of recommendations for Cabinet's consideration and focus.

The inquiry was positively welcomed by the Cabinet, and the Council has made progress in implementing the recommendations. We heard that staff supporting the schools investment and estates function had moved into the Investment and Development Directorate, and consequently implementation of the Corporate Landlord Model now sat within a single Cabinet portfolio. Looking ahead many changes were planned for the Building Services function of Property Services, with a view to improving the quality of building work through effective commissioning and inspection.

The Committee recommended that a preventative maintenance programme should be in place for all Council assets. Members were advised there is insufficient budget to address the full maintenance programme required for existing assets, and a condition programme is under development, to enable

priorities to be set. We will therefore programme scrutiny of the next Corporate Land and Property Maintenance Plan.

In respect of schools the Committee concurred that it is critical to prioritise and maximise value from the Band B money available, such as combining similar repairs to procure better tender prices. Members are therefore keen to ensure that schools are clear about the point at which they require Corporate Landlord support in using use local builders.

Future Work Programming Opportunities 2019/20

There are a number of items that will need to be carried forward and re-visited following this year's work. Topics commended to the Committee of 2019/20 for consideration in its work planning include:

- The first annual report of Cardiff's Public Services Board.
- Continuing the Committee's interest in how the Council can reduce its use of agency workers.
- Pre-decision/publication involvement in the 2020/21 budget consultation.
- Scrutiny of/access to external consultancy expenditure for the current financial year when scrutinising the proposed draft budget.
- Digital Strategy- scrutiny of the action plan that follows the key principles of the Digital Strategy, also scrutiny of draft proposals for future proposed App transactions.
- Delivering Capital Ambition - monitoring of the programme's delivery.
- Annual Performance Well-being Report.
- Progress updates of corporate focus on customer leadership.
- Scrutiny of the Corporate Land and Property Maintenance Plan
- Continued monitoring of the Council's absence and sickness record.
- Review progress of the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy Action Plan

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To scrutinise, monitor and review the overall operation of the Cardiff Programme for Improvement and the effectiveness of the general implementation of the Council's policies, aims and objectives.
 - To scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Council's systems of financial control and administration and use of human resources.
 - To assess the impact of partnerships with, and resources and services provided by, external organisations including the Welsh Government, joint local government services, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-government bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.
 - To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance Council performance in this area.
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