



To:
Councillor David Hopkins,
Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services and
Performance

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Date
Dyddiad:

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Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance. The letter concerns the meeting held on 6 December 2022 and the Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report.

Dear Councillor Hopkins,

On the 6 December, the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met to discuss the Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report. The Panel are grateful to Richard Rowlands, Corporate Performance Manager, for attending to discuss and answer questions. Our observations focused on the following areas.

We noted that the Councils performance is still continuing to recover from the effects of the pandemic and that a review of performance indicators is taking place next year to reflect the new corporate plan.

The officer summarised the position that out of 23 comparable indicators within the report and 5 are shown improving or maintaining trends. Of the 18 that had dropped 6 were attributable to the pandemic and 9 were not. The remaining 3 indicators were small declines of within 5% of the previous result. There were also 18 new indicators that we couldn't compare either because there was no previous data available to compare with and 5 indicators which couldn't be compared to the previous financial year because data wasn't collected for those indicators during the period.

We were informed that safeguarding performance held up well in quarter one with fewer children and families escalating into statutory services. We were told that staff sickness particularly the workforce and especially acute in domiciliary care services remains a challenge.

We appreciate the disruption to education over the pandemic and the knock on affects this has had regarding exams, attendance and pupil progress. In regards to

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statements of special educational needs we can see the performance indicator for this is around time taken to produce a final statement, which has fallen due to the changes in Additional Learning Needs support. We felt that a quantitative measure does not consider the quality, impact and success of statements and whether the requirements set out in statements are being delivered. We understand that statutory indicators come from Welsh Government and that this measure will be replaced or added to, to reflect the changes in legislation and provision so we will wait to see if they consider more qualitative measures in future.

We heard that there are increased processing times for the Council tax and housing benefits, which is largely the result of staff being diverted to cover some additional work that's come from processing Covid and other Welsh Government grants. We were concerned whether this would be a long term issue however your officer assured us although this impact will continue because the grants are still being processed the housing benefits department have indicated they are not too adversely affected by this.

We commented on the number of online payments that were made through the Council's website as well and although understand there are some reasons for this drop, namely changes to banking, security measures and waiving some fees we were still surprised that with the phone lines often being difficult to get through and less footfall in offices that this figure has dropped. We wonder if this drop in online use is putting extra pressure onto the contact centre and will ask this question to the relevant Council officers.

We await further development of the Nature Recovery and Climate Change performance indicators that will come forward in due course.

In addition to this meeting, I attended the Governance and Audit Committee on 14 December and shared with them the scrutiny of the Annual Review of Performance 2021/22 which came to this Panel on 8 November. I shared with the Committee that we found the language very technical and streamlining would need to be considered before sharing wider with the public. I took on board further recommendations from the Committee that this Panel will consider for future Performance Reports.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but in this instance, we require no formal written response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
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