



## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Date Written	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
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Service Area	Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing
Committee Date	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2020

*To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen*

### **Corporate Self-Evaluation – Question 2 (Provision & Service Delivery)**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Self-evaluation is a rigorous process that enables Chief Officers, Heads of Service and officers to be critically reflective about outcomes, service provision and leadership and management.
- 1.2 Following a refocus exercise of documentation to ensure it continued to meet the organisation's needs; the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) approved the re-introduction of the corporate self-evaluation process in June 2019.
- 1.3 The process is structured into 'bite-sized' chunks on a question-by-question basis. This aims to support all officers involved to contribute to the process whilst maintaining their ability to manage their other multiple priorities.
- 1.4 This report focuses on the completion of the self-evaluation undertaken by the Chief Officer: Community Regeneration and his teams in relation to Key Question 2 (Provision & Service Delivery). The response directly relates to the Working Life theme laid down in the Council's Corporate Plan: Focus on the Future.
- 1.5 This report and its appendices highlight the key findings of the self-evaluation activity; outline areas of good practice along with areas for development; and identifies the priorities for improvement that will be developed into a Business Improvement Plan.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Committee Members are requested to review the documentation and key findings following completion of Key Question 2 of the process.
- 2.2 Committee Members to review and scrutinise the evaluative judgements provided by officers within the report identified through completion of the self-evaluation process.

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Self-evaluation is a business process that is rigorous and enables organisations to be critically reflective about outcomes, service provision and leadership and management. In 2013/14, the Council introduced a self-evaluation process that was completed by officers at Head of Service level. The format of the challenge sessions was based on high-level challenge in a session lasting 2-2½ hours; with a number of Heads of Service.
- 3.2 Over time, using lessons learned over previous years, the format of the challenge of self-evaluation was developed (e.g.) self-evaluation was undertaken on a service-level basis; with challenge being offered a Performance Board consisting the Chief Executive, Directorate Lead; Portfolio Member and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee to which the service reported. The key outcome of the process was to identify areas of good practice; along with priorities for improvement.
- 3.3 In 2019, a refocus exercise was undertaken to ensure the self-evaluation documents continued to meet the organisation's needs (e.g.) offered officers completing the forms opportunity to outline the current service position; highlight any good practice; note areas for development and to identify the services' priorities for improvement. The documents were organised in the form of 3 key questions:
  - Outcomes;
  - Provision and Service Delivery; and
  - Leadership and management.

There is no specific order in which the questions should be completed as long as all three questions are completed within the year.

- 3.4 Following consideration of the updated documents by the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT); the new format was approved for re-introduction in June 2019.
- 3.5 As part of the process cycle supporting the delivery of the self-evaluation process (see **Appendix 1**), it was confirmed each completed question should be presented before the sector-specific scrutiny committee that normally scrutinises the outputs/outcomes for the relevant service area. This was seen as an opportunity for Committee Members to review and explore facets of the wide range of activities for which Chief Officers were accountable whilst for services, it was seen as an opportunity for details of their services to be brought before scrutiny to outline positive practice and achievements along with any challenges faced and areas for development.

- 3.6 Committee Members are asked to review the content of the completed questions and consider performance, areas of good practice, areas for development and, perhaps most importantly, the services' priorities for improvement for the coming year. Scrutineers are also required to assess whether the judgement reached through completion of the process is appropriate.

## 4 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 In previous years, the Council had undertaken self-evaluation activities annually on a service-by service basis. The process required Heads of Service to review project/programme activity and reflect on what had been achieved, as well as identifying what needed to be prioritised next with a view to planning how should be done.

## 5 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 Following approval of the refocused self-evaluation (both process and paperwork); discussions took place with each of the 4 Chief Officers who confirmed that a copy of the paperwork should be issued to their teams so they might consider how they wished to contribute to preparing a response.
- 5.2 This specific report links to the response for the service areas for which the **Chief Officer – Community Regeneration** is accountable. It also relates to the **Working Life** theme contained within MTCBC's Corporate Wellbeing Plan (Focus on the Future: wellbeing in our community). The Chief Officer requested that, with support from the Performance & Scrutiny Team, a workshop be arranged to enable all relevant officers to have input to the production of the response document.
- 5.3 In order to maximise the time allocated for the workshop, service managers were asked to work with their teams to prepare a service-specific response. This would then be submitted to the Performance & Scrutiny Officer who would produce one collated document for the Chief Officer and all attendees. The Performance Officer would also undertake some basic analysis of the key findings to support discussions and internal challenge at the workshop event.
- 5.4 The workshop session took place on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Led by the Chief Officer and supported by the Performance & Scrutiny Officer; the session was well attended by officers from across the Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing teams. Discussion and challenge took place around the first draft responses submitted and this led to the identification of additional priorities for improvement.
- 5.5 The key findings of the workshop session were identified as listed below:
- Officers completing the process reflected on how they worked with the Council corporate support services and evaluated the effectiveness of these working relationships; the collated results are listed in the table below:
    - Human Resources – **Mixed**
    - Corporate Communications – **Good**
    - Finance & Accountancy – **Good**
    - Legal Services – **Good**

- Procurement – **Good**
- Business Change – **Limited Contact**
- Performance & Scrutiny – **Good**
- IT Services – **Good**
- Democratic Services – **Limited Contact**
- Business Support Services – **Limited Contact**
- Contact Centre – **Mixed/Poor**

5.6 In relation to section 2.1 of the self-evaluation; when reaching the holistic judgements allocated; a number of impacting factors were identified in the final judgement, these included:

- The Community Regeneration team sourced some external funding that means they are able to 'buy in' a proportion of a Corporate Communications Officer's time. This means that there is bespoke support available four days per week that can focus solely on promoting the work of the programmes; projects and activities delivered by the team.
- There was a lack of clarity noted around the role of some of the corporate support teams in relation to what support their role was (e.g.) the Business Change Team.
- Where limited contact with support services was noted; it was also highlighted that where contact did take place, the quality of support was good;
- Some issues about the capacity of support teams to offer support required was noted by respondents (e.g.) the support received from the Performance and Scrutiny team was found to be good; however, due to reduced capacity within that team this support was primarily focused on meeting corporate requirements rather than 'business as usual'.

5.7 In relation to section 2.2 of the self-evaluation, there was strong evidence of service areas having a clear understanding of the value of collaborative and partnership working. Evidence was available to support contributions to corporate and partnership strategic plans; as well as clear evidence of cross-departmental work across the Council. There is also strong evidence of wider partnership and collaboration working on a local; regional and national levels.

5.8 In relation to Section 2.3 of the self-evaluation, there was strong evidence of improvement in how the five ways of working was becoming more commonly used across all service areas with an holistic self-assessed judgement of **Good** being reached.

5.9 Following completion of the three sub-questions, the collated findings led to the group reaching an whole question judgment of **Good**.

5.10 The findings of Key Question 2 were presented with Members of the Community Regeneration, Public Protection & Housing (CRPPH) Board at the meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The document and its findings were, reviewed, discussed and challenged. Some suggested amendments were identified through completion of this process and these have been actioned and are incorporated into the version of the collated document presented to Scrutiny Committee Members (Appendix 2).

## **6 WHERE WE WANT TO BE**

- 6.1 Through completion of this process; the Chief Officer: Community Regeneration and his teams have identified a number of areas for development upon which they should focus. By discussing and exploring these, and considering any other requirements such as proposals/recommendations for improvement from auditors and regulators, the key priorities for improvement were identified.
- 6.2 In order to provide a framework for the response to the identified priorities for improvement; a series of Business Improvement Plans (BIPs) are to be developed with the support of the Council's Performance and Scrutiny Team. These BIPs will again be collaboratively developed by the Working Life working group; the main aim of this will be:
- To clearly identify the actions to be undertaken to positively progress the priorities for improvement, giving a clear indication of the desired outcomes (i.e.) what the improvement would look like;
  - To identify who is accountable for the delivering the actions and provide clarity on what the required timescales would be;
  - To provide a tool for regular monitoring of the progress made; and the effectiveness of the actions identified to improve; and
  - To have a standardised corporate way in which improvement activities can be organised, developing supporting governance arrangements.
- 6.3 The findings of the self-evaluation activities will also support clearer identification of opportunities to develop more collaborative/integrated working processes across the organisation and more widely with external partners/stakeholders.

## **7 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT**

- 7.1 Secure the views and feedback of Scrutiny Committee Members the completion of the self-evaluation process; as well as discussion around the self-assessed judgements.
- 7.2 Continue to populate the Business Improvement Plans; and schedule a working group meeting to look at developing the actions required to progress these providing clarity around accountability for completion; timescales etc.
- 7.3 Continue to explore the five ways of working in more detail to develop a deeper understanding of these before moving on to consider Key Question 3 which focuses on Leadership and Management.
- 7.4 Look at how we ensure we build the proposed 'areas for development' highlighted by WAO into the developing BIPs (where appropriate) so that progress of these proposals can be monitored and evidence of action recorded as required.

## **8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The corporate self-evaluation process is based around the services/activities delivered and should reflect the contribution made in relation to the four wellbeing objectives set down by the Council in focus in the Corporate Wellbeing Plan.

8.2 This report specifically links to the Working Life objective within the Council's Corporate Wellbeing Plan: **People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses; with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.**

8.3 Through completion of the self-evaluation process; we are also be able to demonstrate our team's contribution to support progress against the following objectives:

- Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals
- People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health

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**CHIEF OFFICER: COMMUNITY**  
**REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS**  
**CABINET MEMBER: REGENERATION &**  
**PUBLIC PROTECTION**

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		