



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	18 th February 2020
Report Author	Alyn Owen/Performance Team
Service Area	Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing
Committee Date	3 rd March 2020

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Corporate Self-Evaluation – Question 3 (Leadership & Management)

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 3 (Leadership and Management)**. The response directly relates to the Working Life theme laid down in the Council's Corporate Plan (Focus on the Future: wellbeing in our community).
- 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 3 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 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 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 self-evaluation 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 report links to the response for the service areas for which the **Chief Officer – Community Regeneration** is accountable (the **Working Life** theme contained within MTCBC's Corporate Wellbeing Plan). With support from the Performance & Scrutiny Team; a workshop was arranged to enable all relevant officers to have input to the production of the response document.
- 5.3 A 360 degree appraisal was used helped to capture staff views on leadership and management. Staff within the teams had an opportunity to provide feedback, submitting this directly to the Performance & Scrutiny officer who collated the data and undertook basic analysis of the findings. Findings were then forwarded to service leads to use when completing their Question 3 proforma. Members can find an overview of this this 360 degree feedback attached to this report as **Appendix 2**.
- 5.4 The key findings of the workshop session were identified as listed below:
- Feedback received from officers at all levels showed the overall satisfaction level of the leadership and management within the service areas to be **Good**:
 - The process required scores to be allocated across 6 themes (listed below); using the following sliding scale: 1 = poor to 6 = excellent. On analysis of the responses received, the following detail was identified:

Area of feedback	Average score across all services
Human skills	5
Leadership	5.5
Communication	5.4
Developing Others	5.6
Delegation & Instruction	5.6
Values	5.7

- Staff were asked to list the three things they found best about their manager. On analysis of responses the 'Top 3' themes were found to be:

- (1) Approachable, friendly and good sense of humour (**64%**)
 - (2) Clear communicator (**57%**)
Honest and trustworthy (**57%**)
Supportive, inclusive and enthusiastic (**57%**)
 - (3) Spends time working with staff / open door policy (**50%**)
Motivates and inspires / leads by example (**50%**)
- Staff listed the three things they found least helpful about their manager. On analysis of responses the 'Top 3' themes were found to be:
 - (1) Less accessible due to increasing management task demands (**36%**)
 - (2) Manager can seem worried or stressed and this can affect the team (**14%**)
Leans towards micro-management on occasion (**14%**)
 - (3) Could show more confidence when making decisions (**13%**)
- 5.5 An internal challenge session took place on Wednesday 12th February 2020. Officers from across the Community Regeneration, Leisure, Culture and Sports Development; Public Protection and Housing teams attended this session. Discussion and challenge took place around the first draft responses and this led to the identification of other factors for inclusion that could strengthen the report.
- 5.6 A precis of the key points captured in the narrative responses produced by the services is available for review by Committee Members in **Appendix 3**.
- 5.7 Through completion of this process a number of priorities for improvement have been identified. These include:
- Begin planning for the end of EU funding immediately to enable the Council to inform future funders of local needs so that future provision can be effectively shaped;
 - Gain clarity about the structure of the organisation going forward to ensure team priorities continue to be aligned to the corporate priorities;
 - Work on developing a clearer process for succession planning that includes way to reduce any over reliance on key officers that are SPODs;
 - Work with HR to secure further training on the Focus on my Performance process so managers and staff are clearer on its purpose, structure and timings;
 - Secure a corporate definition of value for money (what this means and how we measure it);
 - Look at further ways to improve collaborative/integrated approaches across the Council;
 - Further develop how customer feedback can be used to inform future service delivery;
 - Managers to refresh their knowledge and understanding of corporate policies and procedures; and
 - All staff to refresh their knowledge and understanding of GDPR.

- 5.8 Following completion of the six sub-questions, the following judgments were noted for each of the sub questions:

Question	Self-evaluative judgement
How effective is leadership of the service?	Adequate /Good
How effective is people management in the service?	Good
How effective is resource management in the service?	Good
Does the service set the right priorities?	Good
How well does the service engage with feedback from stakeholders and address issues they identify?	Adequate /Good
How does the service fulfil its statutory responsibility relating to safeguarding?	Adequate /Good

Reviewing the assessment judgements made above; the whole question judgment has been found to be **Good**.

6 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 6.1 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 will be confirmed.
- 6.2 A series of Business Improvement Plans (BIPs) will 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 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.
- 7.4 On completion of Question 3; the Chief Officer will review the key findings across all three questions completed and must make an overall summary judgement. This would be captured in a Position Statement – a precis document that outlines
- 7.5 The final step of this cycle of self-evaluation is for all Chief Officers to work with Performance and Scrutiny Team officers to produce an holistic report which would look at the findings across all four themes within the Corporate Plan to identify strengths and common priorities for improvement on an organisational level. This report will be presented at Governance Scrutiny.

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:
 - **Best Start to Life:** 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
 - **Living Well:** People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health

ALYN OWEN
CHIEF OFFICER: COMMUNITY
REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER: REGENERATION &
PUBLIC PROTECTION

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

DRAFT