

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	7 th October 2020
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Service Area	Learning
Committee Date	19 th October 2020

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Corporate Self-Evaluation – Key Question 2 (Incorporating Inspection Area 2 of Estyn Framework)

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Self-evaluation is a useful process that is rigorous and 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 May 2019.
- 1.3 Completion of the process is undertaken in '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 multiple other priorities.
- 1.4 This report focuses on the completion of the self-evaluation undertaken by the Learning Department in relation to Key Question 2 (Provision and Service Delivery). The response directly relates to the Best Start to Life theme laid down in the Council's Corporate Plan: Focus on the Future. It also meets the requirements of the Estyn Inspection Framework – the inspectorate for education within Wales.
- 1.5 This report and its appendices highlight the key findings of the self-evaluation activity; outlines areas of good practice along with areas for development; and identifies the priorities for improvement which are incorporated in our Business Improvement Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Scrutiny Committee Members to provide officers with feedback on the content of the report developed 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 which 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 From using lessons learned over previous years, the format of the challenge of self-evaluation was developed. Self-evaluation was undertaken on a service-level basis, with challenge being offered by 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 and offered officers completing the forms opportunity to outline the current service position, highlight any good practice, note areas for development and identify the services' priorities for improvement. The documents were organised in the form of three key questions:
- Outcomes;
 - Provision and Service Delivery; and
 - Leadership and Management.
- There was no specific order in which the questions needed to be completed, as long as all three questions were 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 May 2019.
- 3.5 As part of the process cycle supporting the delivery of the self-evaluation process (see Appendix 1), it was proposed that completed questions should be presented before the sector-specific Scrutiny Committee which 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' feedback will be used when considering how these priorities will be progressed.

4.0 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 what should be done in order to meet the identified priorities for improvement.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 The overall judgement for KQ2: Provision and Service Delivery has been assessed as **Adequate**. A breakdown of the judgements has been included below. The rationale for each judgement can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

- How well does the service engage with corporate support services to help improve service provision and delivery? **Adequate**
- How well does the service understand and take advantage of opportunities for collaboration and partnership working? **Adequate**
- How well does the service understand and use the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working)? **Adequate**

Support for:

- School improvement: **Unsatisfactory**
- Vulnerable learners: **Adequate**
- Other education support services: **Adequate**

- 5.2 There are strengths in provision provided
- The department receives good support from Accountancy to ensure budgets are managed effectively
 - Support from the Legal department is effective in the very few tribunals that arise from Statementing processes
 - All schools have support from Improvement Partners
 - Good support for schools to improve standards of Welsh across schools
 - Established ALNCo Forums for schools with a detailed agenda for introduction of the expectations for the new ALNET Act
 - Good variety of support for schools and settings in relations to ALN in particular Education Psychologists and School Support
 - Good systems for identifying and supporting young people at danger of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
 - Good support for vulnerable groups such a Gypsy Travellers and children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
 - Improved relationships with The College
- 5.3 However there are a number of areas that need improvement so that they impact on the department and on standards in schools – the key priorities for raising standards are identified in 7.0 below but there continues to be a need for all service areas including schools to realise their role in ensuring the wider goals of the Raising Aspirations Raising Standards (RARS) Strategy are met.
- 5.4 We need also to reflect in section 2.4 of Appendix 2 the impact of work all service areas have on school outcomes.
- 5.5 The goals have been shared with Headteachers and Governors and are:

- to raise standards across all educational settings
- ensure the services within the local authority provide equality of opportunity for all children and young people
- ensure funding for our schools is fair and equitable, needs based and efficient

5.6 During this academic year these goals will be addressed through the following key priorities

- Activities to support the development of literacy – in particular, vocabulary
- Activities to develop leadership – in particular across our secondary schools
- Activities to develop more consistency in teaching & learning
- Activities to support the work of governing bodies

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

6.1 **By Autumn 2023** ensure at least 75% of reported outcomes are at or above modelled outcomes for schools across Wales.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

7.1 In relation to provision within and across the Learning Department

- Publish the Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards Strategy
- Improve the quality of leadership at all levels (particularly middle leaders), including governance through increased engagement through CSC Leadership Programmes.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning especially in primary schools
- Improve wellbeing of all pupils but particularly SEBD pupils and other vulnerable groups.
- Work with Children's Services to improve outcomes for CLA.
- Develop a more effective and co-ordinated use of Capita One across LGES, including Inclusion, ALN, Admissions, Early Years, NEETs, YSS and agree a corporate position for use of Capita One within Early Intervention/Preventative services.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

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

8.2 This report specifically links to the Best Start to Life objective within the Council's Corporate Wellbeing Plan: 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

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

- People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health; and
- People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of

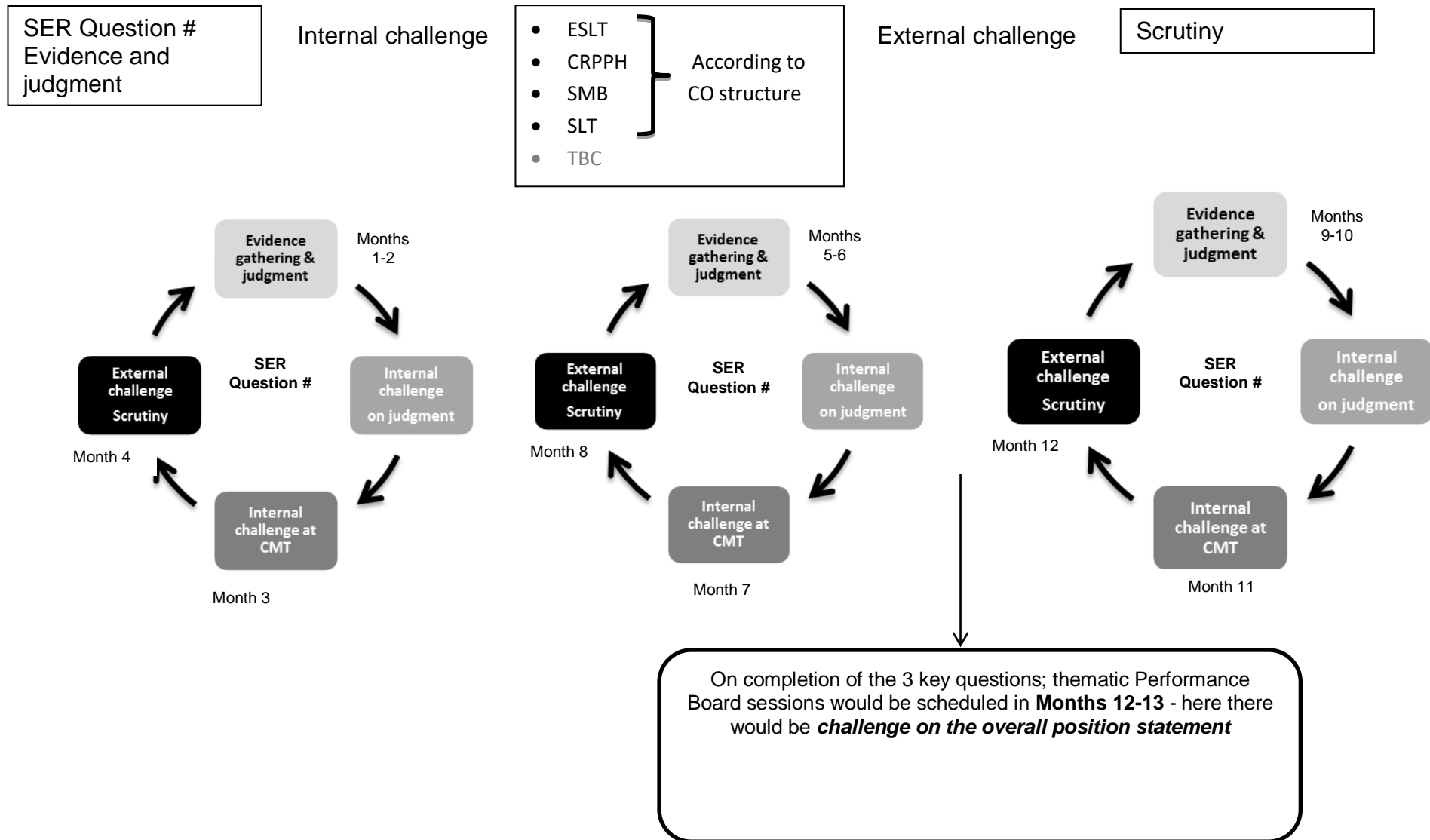
businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination.

SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER (LEARNING)

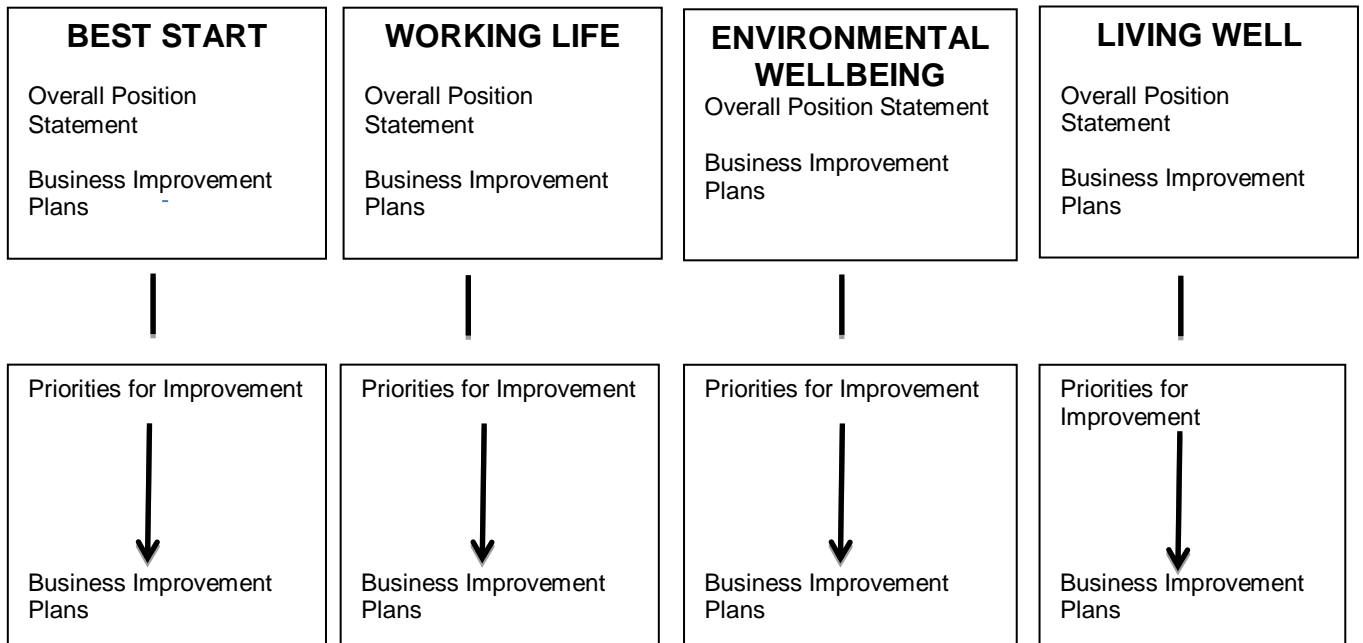
COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING

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

Self-Evaluation Process Cycle: 4 months x 3



Performance Board



Analysis of commonalities → Report to CMT to identify support needed to drive improvement

