

**Item 7.3.1**



Sarah McGill  
Acting Chair  
Cardiff Partnership Board  
Room 305B  
Cardiff County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF CF10 4UW

14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Dear Sarah

At their meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, the CPB Scrutiny Panel concluded our scrutiny of Public Sector Asset Management (PSAM) in Cardiff as well as exploring the outcomes, partnership issues and role of the CPB in relation to the Urban Environment Programme. The Panel would like to thank both John Harrison and the members of the Board who were able to attend the meeting for their open and honest answers to the Panel's questions. The Panel are very conscious that all of those who attended are very busy people and gratefully appreciate the time taken to attend the scrutiny session.

As the Panel has explored PSAM in some depth we are in the process of writing a full report which will outline all of the evidence received and be accompanied by key findings and recommendations. This will be available in November and be distributed to all CPB members for their consideration.

However the Panel also scrutinised the Urban Environment Programme on 23 September, and would like to pass on our observations and recommendations in relation to this Programme.

## **The Urban Environment Programme :**

The Panel were encouraged to see that the workstreams for the Urban Environment Programme were running effectively and that progress was being made against their individual outcomes. The Panel also felt that the Programme's approach of exploring long term challenges (such as energy use and climate change) as well as local quality of life issues (such as litter and fly tipping) was an effective balance between work which could have an immediate impact and issues that needed to be addressed over the long term .

The Panel were also encouraged at how the Programme was now trying to focus its resources more effectively by using data to help prioritise areas for action. This was particularly important in the case of fly tipping where effective data was helping to highlight persistent offenders and specific trouble areas. The Panel felt that this was an approach which needed to be continued and used in all areas where resources are stretched, to ensure they are being used in the areas they can make the biggest impact. The Panel were also particularly encouraged with the work that was being undertaken across geographical boundaries with the Vale of Glamorgan and Newport. This was seen as especially important in helping to share data and resources in tough economic times.

However, whilst the workstream actions did appear to be effective, the Panel felt that the work of the Programme Board itself could be improved. John Harrison, as SRO for the programme, recognised that the Board had not met frequently as it could have and that the role of the Board was not always clear. The Panel understood that there were some factors that had inhibited the Board, with the change in political administration and also changes in key personnel. However, the Panel feel that the Board should have more frequent and regular meetings, and a clear idea of what they are trying to achieve. If their role is to provide strategic direction, share good practice, monitor workstreams and solve problems then this needs to be clarified and communicated to all involved.

The Panel also believe that, because the environment is such an important issue, it is vital that external changes in personnel and political leadership do not impact upon the work of the Board and the Urban Environment Programme in the future. The Panel therefore recommend that the Programme Board should increase engagement with all partners and political parties to gain a consensus on the direction in which they are moving forward. If all groups can agree on long term strategic goals then the work of the Urban Environment Programme should not be so significantly affected by external changes in personnel or political leadership.

The Panel also heard that the Environment Programme did not appear to be given as much priority as other more established partnership programmes and that not all partners were equally engaged in the environmental agenda. Whilst the Panel recognise that the CPB has to reconcile numerous and potentially conflicting priorities we would like to see all partners engaging with this programme. This is because the Panel feels that engaging with this Programme will not only have long term environmental consequences, but can also provide short term financial savings through reduced energy use, which can substantially cut overheads. The Panel would also like to see the CPB helping to promote the Urban Environment programme with direction from the top at both a partnership level and within their own organisations.

Finally, the Panel discussed the link between the Urban Environment Programme and other strategic documents such as One Planet Cardiff and the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Panel recognised that there were linkages with the priorities of One Planet Cardiff but that the LDP did not seem to be considered. The Panel felt that the Programme Board should look to improve these links as the LDP will have a long term impact on many environmental factors in the future of Cardiff.

The Panel therefore feel that the key findings in relation to the Urban Environment Programme are:

- The workstreams appear to be working effectively without strong leadership from the Programme Board.

- Resources are being prioritised according to data. This is very positive, and needs to be continued and extended to all relevant activities.
- Partnership working with neighbouring authorities has begun and this agenda needs to be continued.
- There was acknowledgement of the irregularity and lack of meetings held by the Board.
- The Panel felt there was a lack of clarity surrounding the role and purpose of the board.
- The link between the Urban Environment Programme and other long term strategic documents such as One Planet Cardiff, and particularly the Local Development Plan needs to be stronger.
- The differing engagement of partners in relation to the Urban Environment Programme needs to be addressed.
- The dramatic impact of external change on the work of the Programme board needs to be avoided in the future.
- Lack of political engagement in the Urban Environment Programme could be detrimental to its long term sustainability.

In light of these findings the Panel make the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1**

The Programme Board needs to clarify its role in relation to delivering the Urban Environment Programme agenda and state clear aims and objectives which all partners can agree to.

**Recommendation 2**

The Urban Environment Programme should timetable regular quarterly meetings with clear agendas to cement the Board and ensure regular monitoring of programmes and opportunity to share best practice.

**Recommendation 3**

The Programme Board needs to establish a clear strategic direction which links in with the significant existing strategies. This is particularly important in relation to the Local Development Plan which did not seem to be included in any of the strategic discussions.

**Recommendation 4**

The Programme Board needs to engage more effectively with elected Members. It may be beneficial to have an elected Member on the Programme Board to ensure political representation and political buy in to the Board's strategic direction.

**Recommendation 5**

The Programme Board should work with all partners and elected Members from all political parties to try and establish a consensus on their work moving forward. This should help eliminate the insecurity caused by changes in administration and personnel in future as there will be consensus on a long term strategy moving forward.

**Recommendation 6**

The Programme Board should continue to work closely with neighbouring authorities to help prioritise problem areas, use resources most effectively and seek joint agreement on priority areas moving forward.

**Recommendation 7**

The CPB should take a role in promoting the environmental agenda and ensuring that their own organisations are engaged with the work of the Urban Environment Programme.

I look forward to hearing your response to our observations and recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Warren', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.