

Springing Forward: combined report on Workforce and Assets – Cardiff Council

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Detailed report

Workforce

- The Council has made valuable progress in developing its hybrid working plans. It hasn't developed its longer-term workforce plans nor the resources and governance arrangements to support their delivery, fully shaped by the sustainable development principle:
 - the Council has prioritised the modernisation of its workforce but has yet to determine its longer-term workforce plans and how these will contribute to meeting increasing budget gaps.
 - the Council has made valuable progress in delivering its hybrid working plans, but it has not involved partners nor service users in this process which will be key to support further change.
 - the Council is improving the range of data available to manage its workforce, but governance arrangements to support hybrid working are underdeveloped.

Assets

- The Council has made good progress in delivering its property strategy and has the necessary governance arrangements underpinned by improved performance data, but its approach lacks a focus on service user and longer-term needs
 - the Council has a corporate property strategy for 2021-26 and is developing a core office strategy, this approach lacks a focus on service users and longer-term needs
 - the Council has well defined corporate asset management arrangements and made good progress in delivering its property strategy.
 - the Council has sound arrangements to monitor its assets underpinned by improved performance data, but there is scope to improve the range of data used to bolster learning and demonstrate value for money.

Summary

What we reviewed and why

- 1 As the world moves forward, learning from the global pandemic, this review has looked at how the Council is strengthening its ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, including those delivered in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
- 2 As part of Springing Forward we undertook this combined review of Workforce and Assets during the period March to April 2022. We focussed on how the Council strategically plans to use its assets and workforce, how it monitors their use and how it reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of its arrangements.
- 3 This project had three main aims:
 - to gain assurance that the council is putting in place arrangements to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.
 - to explain the actions that the council is taking both individually and in partnership to strengthen its arrangements as well as further embed the sustainable development principle; and
 - to inspire the council and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and learning and making appropriate recommendations.

This is important because Cardiff Council invests considerable sums in its building assets and workforce as shown in exhibit one below.

Exhibit 1: key facts and figures relating to workforce and building assets.

Number of staff	16, 989 headcount or 11, 878 FTE equivalent
Spend on workforce	£477m
Percentage of the workforce, of staff who were male	30.17%
Percentage of the workforce, of staff who were female	69.83%
Percentage of staff who work full time	54.46%
Percentage of staff who work part time	45.54%
Percentage of staff aged over 55 years	22.32%
Number of staff who left the Council by their own choice.	956
Number of Council buildings owned in 2020-21	750
Value of property, as of 31 March 2021	£1.6 billion

- 4 The Council began its work to develop its hybrid working strategy in June 2021 looking to implement remote working for staff (not working in an office) more formally. During July and August 2021, we undertook an interim piece of work entitled a review of arrangements to modernise workforce. This review is building on the findings from this project.
- 5 In that project, we looked at the Council's learning from its shift in service delivery to more agile working during the pandemic to shape its strategic approach to modernising its workforce. We also considered how the Council considered its estate, digital and technology resources in its pursuit of workforce modernisation. We concluded that:
 - the Council is harnessing the positive change in working practice arising from the pandemic to inform its future operating model for its workforce.
 - In a short period of time, it has developed a high-level vision and has embarked on a wide-ranging engagement programme to understand staff views and needs.
 - at this early stage, it recognises that its governance arrangements are underdeveloped including strengthening the links to its medium-term financial plan and key decisions for change have yet to be made involving all staff, partners, and service users.
- 6 The COVID19 pandemic has impacted on the way that staff work and resulting demand for buildings. This report examines some of these impacts and the way that the Council benefits from the positives and mitigates risks from the negative when planning future service delivery.
- 7 When we began our audit work under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 we recognised that it would take time for public bodies to embed the sustainable development principle, but we also set out our expectation that over the medium term we would expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what they do. It is now approaching seven years since the Well-being of Future Generations Act was passed and we are now into the second reporting period for the Act. Therefore, we would now expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate that the Act is integral to their thinking and genuinely shaping what they do.

What we found – Workforce

- The Council has made valuable progress in developing its hybrid working plans. It hasn't developed its longer-term workforce plans nor the resources and governance arrangements to support their delivery, fully shaped by the sustainable development principle:
 - the Council has prioritised the modernisation of its workforce but has yet to determine its longer-term workforce plans and how these will contribute to meeting increasing budget gaps

- the Council has made valuable progress in delivering its hybrid working plans, but it has not involved partners nor service users in this process which will be key to support further change
- the Council is improving the range of data available to manage its workforce, but governance arrangements to support hybrid working are underdeveloped.

What we found – Assets

- The Council has made good progress in delivering its property strategy and has the necessary governance arrangements underpinned by improved performance data, but its approach lacks a focus on service user and longer-term needs:
 - the Council has a corporate property strategy for 2021-26 and is developing a core office strategy, this approach lacks a focus on service users and longer-term needs
 - the Council has well defined corporate asset management arrangements and made good progress in delivering its property strategy.
 - the Council has sound arrangements to monitor its assets underpinned by improved performance data, but there is scope to improve the range of data used to bolster learning and demonstrate value for money.

Recommendations

Exhibit 2: recommendations for the Council

The table below sets out the recommendations for the Council that we have identified following this review.

Sustainable Development Principle

- R1 The Council needs to strengthen its application of the sustainable development principle when developing its hybrid working plans.
- For example, by involving service users, securing further opportunities for collaborative/regional working, adopting a longer-term approach to both workforce and asset planning which are integrated with other planning frameworks such as Carbon Reduction Plans also factored into medium term financial planning.

Governance arrangements

- R2 The Council should establish governance arrangements for the hybrid working model that will help strengthen accountability and integration with other frameworks such as the Council's Carbon Reduction plan.

Equalities

- R3 The Council should comply with their Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2020-24 by completing an Equality Impact Assessment for its corporate property strategy, Leaner and Greener 2021-26. This will ensure the Council:
- demonstrates due regard for the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty;
 - identifies possible negative impacts of decisions on individuals and groups with protected characteristics and plan mitigating action; accordingly; and
 - identifies additional opportunities to advance equality within policies, strategies, and Services.

Benchmarking and lessons learnt

- R4 The Council should improve the range and type of information collected to monitor delivery of its hybrid operating model.
- R5 The Council should benchmark the Council's workforce and estates performance and processes with other bodies to explore how it can learn and strengthen its arrangements to demonstrate value for money.

Workforce

The Council has made valuable progress in developing its hybrid working plans. Although it hasn't determined its longer-term workforce plans nor the resources and governance arrangements to support their delivery, fully shaped by the sustainable development principle

The Council has prioritised the modernisation of its workforce but has not developed its longer-term workforce plans and how these plans will contribute to meeting increasing budget gaps

Why setting a clear vision is important:

- 8 A clear strategy for its workforce and well-developed delivery plans are important to ensuring an efficient and effective workforce over the short and longer term. It is also important to identify how the workforce strategy aligns and is integrated with other relevant strategies including, asset management, digital and carbon reduction. Learning from the changes brought about by the global Covid-19 pandemic, can help Councils strengthen their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.

We found that:

- Before the pandemic, the Council had expressed its intention to modernise its workforce. Its Corporate Plan 2020-23 Delivering Capital Ambition stated as a priority 'to implement modernised, more efficient, and more agile working practices across our workplaces'.
- The Council set out this priority to modernise in its workforce strategy 2017-2021 supported by a corporate workforce action plan 2020-21. This is a very high-level document setting out key actions in areas such as recruitment, retention, training and development and was last updated in November 2020.
- Since 2018 the Council began embedding workforce planning arrangements at a directorate and service level. Although this is not yet a mature process it, nevertheless, provided the Council with the workforce planning data necessary to better inform corporate decision making. For example, it was better placed to understand the implications of staff redeployment to key services during the crisis.

- As part of its recovery planning framework in May 2021, the Council set a high-level vision for its workforce centred around a hybrid working model. Like many other organisations, the pandemic served to accelerate some of the Council's workforce plans prompting it to review its future operating model.
- The Council sees hybrid working as being part of a systemic change to delivering services in the future. It is recognised as being part of a broader agenda to support remote working across the Council affecting office and non-office-based staff.
- The focus of the hybrid working programme until now has been on short term activity in 2022. The project timelines include the following key dates:
 - development and approval of Hybrid Working strategy to support the Core Office Business Case (May 2022);
 - Cabinet report on Organisational Development which sets out Cardiff's vision and strategy for Hybrid working (July/Sept);
 - agree and roll out new HR policy to reflect Hybrid Working principles (Sept 2022); and
 - use approved Hybrid Working strategy to support the development of the Core Office business case (Oct 2022).
- Crucially, the Council recognises that it needs to ensure that its new operating model shapes its new workforce strategy and contributes directly to its increasing savings requirement over the next four years.
- The Council has made provision in its 2022-23 budget to support the development of the hybrid working model. The Council anticipates making significant changes to the way it delivers services moving away from traditional methods. As such, it is positive that the Council has recognised the need to increase capacity in its corporate functions to support development and delivery of its hybrid working operating model. For example, investing in Human Resources, Project Management, Communications and Digital services. For the first time in many years there is a net increase of 58.3 full time equivalent (FTE) posts in the 2022-23 budget.
- However, the Council has not yet identified the medium to long term resource implications of implementing its hybrid model as these delivery plans are not yet sufficiently developed. This is significant as the Council has recently forecast a £91 million budget gap over the next four years and this in a backdrop of economic uncertainty.

The Council has made valuable progress in delivering its hybrid working plans, but it has not involved partners nor service users in this process which will be key to support further change

Why effectively managing the delivery of planned changes to the workforce is important

- 9 It is important that workforce plans deliver the intended outcomes efficiently and effectively so that actual expenditure is as close to the levels planned as possible and councils meet their statutory duties. Effective collaboration with other organisations and involving communities about their needs can improve the services delivered to residents. Where councils do not have the range of skills, knowledge, and expertise to effectively manage both ongoing workforce issues and deliver strategic changes, this may reduce the ability to deliver the intended outcomes.

What we found

- Since our review 'Modernisation of Workforce' in July/August 2021 the Council has made good progress in developing its hybrid working model. It set up high level arrangements in the Recovery and Renewal Programme Plan to oversee progress, including a 12-month project timeline, and delivered an initial programme of engagement with trade unions and with staff.
- It has also begun to review its workforce policies including its Homeworking Policy, associated Agile Working policies, and revised its performance appraisal methodology to ensure it supports staff in the shift to adopting its 'hybrid working' model. The hybrid working project timeline states the necessary policy and supporting guidance for all office-based staff will be ready in time to support implementation of the model in autumn 2022.
- Since the announcement of its high-level vision for its workforce in May 2021, we found that the Council has been effectively engaging with its staff and trade unions. The Council's engagement programme included a variety of different mechanisms to involve staff and increase awareness of its vision for its workforce including:
 - an online staff survey to understand behaviours and attitudes both retrospectively from the start of the pandemic and looking to future working patterns;
 - a short video explaining the proposed options for hybrid working models with links to the online survey;
 - service area specific packs;
 - emails to staff and messages via the intranet; and

- series of focus groups with a cross section of staff such as apprentices, new starters, carers, parents of young children, those identifying as disabled, those living alone, and managers.
- It was positive that the people we interviewed as part of our review reflected a keen sense of awareness and understanding of the hybrid working model.
- The Council is analysing and correlating a host of workforce and service-related data from these engagement exercises to inform future plans. It has not yet involved service users in this development phase of its hybrid working model. Officers told us that engagement with all service users and maintaining a customer focus are key parts of the hybrid working programme development. The Recovery and Renewal Programme Plan customer workstream is currently the least well developed.
- In the future as hybrid working is rolled out across a broader range of council services the Council will need to engage with service users, but this scenario has not yet arisen.
- The Council's new administration policy statement for the next four years 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' emphasises the pivotal role that partners will need to play in delivering its corporate plan wellbeing objectives.
- The Council is, therefore, committed to working in partnership as part of its corporate plan. There are lots of examples of co-locations and integrated delivery with other public sector partners such as Park View Health and Wellbeing Hub which includes accommodation for agile working. Working collaboratively needs to form a critical part of the Council's 'systemic change' programme for its workforce as it develops in the short medium and long term.
- The Council is planning a post pandemic review of its arrangements for regional working across the Cardiff and Vale footprint to strengthen and build on the improved networks developed during the crisis. At the time of the fieldwork, the Council has begun discussions with partners as part of this review. but made limited progress in securing collaborative solutions for its hybrid working model.

The Council is improving the range of data available to manage its workforce, but governance arrangements to support hybrid working are underdeveloped

Why effectively reviewing the workforce is important:

- 10 Councils should use data to monitor whether they are achieving their intended outcomes effectively and efficiently over the short and longer term. Using benchmarking data can provide useful insight into Councils individual performance and can identify opportunities for learning from other organisations.

We found that:

- The range of performance information relating to the Council's workforce is improving. At the time of the fieldwork, officers had more workforce planning/data available to improve the Council's ability to understand workforce issues at both an operational and strategic level.
- The Council has also improved the range of workforce related indicators it monitors and reviews. Directorates are responsible for monitoring and updating key workforce related corporate health information such as sickness absence, staff turnover, personal appraisals, training compliance and staff composition.
- These indicators are reviewed at twice-yearly assurance sessions between each Directorate and the Chief Executive/Leader, and forms part of the Council's Mid-Year and End of Year Assessment of Performance. It is positive that Directors are being directly held to account for their workforce performance. This self-assessment process has also helped raise the profile of workforce related issues and assisted in the challenge and identification of cross organisational workforce issues.
- The Council has invested in Power-BI a system which allows it to systematically extract data from compatible systems across a range of different services. The Human Resources system 'Digi-gov' is a recent addition. However, this data range is currently only available in reports at a strategic level. It will need to cascade down through to managers and their Directorate Delivery Plans to form a key piece of workforce planning and performance data going forward.
- The Corporate Director Resources chairs a Recovery Programme Leadership Group overseeing the development of the Hybrid working model. It includes senior officer representation for each of the four supporting workstreams namely accommodation, technology, people, and customer with a view to ensuring close alignment between services. Each workstream has a separate high level action plan in the Recovery and Renewal Programme Plan (RRPP).
- The Recovery and Renewal Programme Plan currently provides the main source of hybrid working project monitoring information at a very high level, based on an excel spreadsheet 'programme plan' used to update Senior Management Team and Cabinet briefings. However, the governance arrangements to manage delivery of this plan have not yet been decided. The Council needs to develop these arrangements which set out clear accountabilities for delivery with timescales, provide clarity on resource requirements, support integration across council plans (such as finance, assets, digital and carbon net zero), and reporting arrangements more broadly.
- The Council's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee (PRAP) reviewed the Council's plans for Home and Agile working and reported to

Cabinet in March 2022. Cabinet accepted the nine recommendations from this report. The review reflects a keen interest and awareness by members of the Council's hybrid working plans.

- Following the PRAP review, the Council has contacted other councils such as Bristol and Monmouthshire to learn from their experiences of introducing different ways of working prior to the pandemic.
- The Council is also benchmarking its performance against a range of specific Human Resource measures with other Welsh Local Authorities and with Core Cities. As it develops its future operating model, the Council should review the range and type of information it collects to manage and support delivery of its new operating model.
- Except for the engagement programme with staff, the Council has not formally assessed lessons learnt from working remotely during the pandemic across the organisation. Officers agreed this would be a helpful exercise. Bringing together benchmarking and lessons learnt were also raised within the PRAP recommendations referenced above and agreed by Cabinet.

Assets

The Council has made good progress in delivering its property strategy and is developing its core office strategy. It has the necessary governance arrangements underpinned by improved performance data, but its approach lacks a focus on service users and longer-term needs

The Council has a corporate property strategy for 2021-26 and is developing a core office strategy, this approach lacks a focus on service users and longer-term needs

Why setting a clear vision is important

- 11 A clear asset management strategy and well-developed delivery plans are important to identify the intended usage of assets over the short and longer term; the funding available to maintain and develop assets, as well as the anticipated future level of demand for, and cost of, providing services. It is also important to identify how the asset management strategy aligns and is integrated with other

relevant strategies including, agile working, workforce, digital and carbon reduction. Learning from the changes brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic, can help councils strengthen their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.

What we found:

- The Council has a detailed corporate property strategy, Leaner and Greener 2021-26 (the strategy), which acknowledges its pivotal role in facilitating service change. It sets out the Council's strategic direction, performance targets, key processes and governance relating to management of its estate over five years. The strategy has five objectives and contains targets relating to those objectives. The targets cover carbon reduction, programmed maintenance, running cost reductions, capital receipts and rental income.
- The property strategy aligns with other key services and plans. It sets out how the Council's estate will contribute to the delivery of the One Planet Cardiff carbon reduction strategy and how the Council's property estate will support the transition to hybrid working.
- In December 2021, when Cabinet endorsed its corporate property strategy, there was no Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) presented to Cabinet at that time. The Council's Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2024 states 'it is good practice when developing a policy or strategy or a new initiative to anticipate the likely effects it may have and to take steps to prevent or minimise any likely harmful effects especially on persons who share any of the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act'. In addition, having an EIA will 'enable the Council to:
 - demonstrate due regard for the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty;
 - identify possible negative impacts of decisions on individuals and groups with protected characteristics and plan mitigating action; accordingly; and
 - identify additional opportunities to advance equality within policies, strategies, and Services'.
- The Council has, therefore, not followed its own Equality and Inclusion strategy in producing an EIA at the time Cabinet endorsed the PASS. This would also help the Council to demonstrate its application of the sustainable development principle, particularly in terms of the "involvement" way of working.
- As part of the development of the future Hybrid working model the Council has sought staff views on their experiences and views of home working during the pandemic via a questionnaire and focus groups. Results of that engagement have been shared with managers and members.
- However, the Council has not involved the wider population in developing its plans for its assets. We would expect the Council to seek out opportunities

to work co-productively with diverse groups of residents to understand their needs and challenges and help deliver better outcomes. We would also expect the Council to engage with its service users when there are changes to the way services are delivered.

- The Council would benefit from taking a longer-term view for its property assets, beyond the five-year timeframe. The Council's property strategy covers a relatively short five-year period from 2021-26. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales recommends a multi-generational planning horizon such as 25 years. This based on current and future risks/opportunities, assessment of resources needed to deliver it and a focus on longer term milestones and outcomes. The Council is demonstrating that it is open to new ways of working which could help deliver benefits over the long term as its hybrid working model is adopted more broadly.
- The Council is aware that the transition from office based to a hybrid working model will have a significant impact on its core office accommodation requirement as well as on its carbon reduction plans. For example, County Hall and City Hall have significant maintenance issues and high carbon emissions, which will need a solution which will allow the Council to meet its:
 - short and medium term needs for office accommodation;
 - longer term obligations on carbon and energy efficiency; and.
 - need for modern working environments that will facilitate hybrid working.
- Because of these significant impacts and to support its broader Capital Strategy the Council is developing its Core Office strategy. It has made provision in its revenue budget for feasibility and options appraisals for potential future projects, such as City Hall.
- It has a significant capital programme to finance in the medium to long-term. The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31 March 2022 i.e., capital expenditure incurred but not yet paid for (Borrowing Requirement) is £868 million, £543 million for the General Fund and £325 million for the Housing Revenue Account.
- Capital financing costs amount to over 70% of the Council's capital budget. In addition to Social Services and Schools building programmes, it is also undertaking major capital projects to help regenerate the capital city, including Central Square, and a new 17,000 capacity arena.
- Increased costs from supply chain issues and pinch points in sectors of the local employment market could place further unplanned calls on capital funding. The Council needs to assess how it can effectively mitigate against these and associated implications for revenue budgets, including the impact of additional borrowing beyond that reflected in the current programme. In the light of these uncertainties we understand the Council intends to further risk assess its capital programme this autumn.

The Council has well defined corporate asset management arrangements and made good progress in delivering its property strategy.

Why effectively managing the delivery of planned changes to assets is important

12 It is important that asset management plans deliver the intended outcomes efficiently and effectively so that actual expenditure is as close to the levels planned as possible and councils meet their statutory duties. Effective collaboration with other organisations and involving communities about their needs can improve the services delivered to residents. Where councils do not have the range of skills, knowledge, and expertise to effectively manage both ongoing asset management and deliver strategic changes this may reduce the ability to deliver the intended outcomes.

What we found

- The Council has adopted a centralised, corporate landlord model to oversee its estate. The aim of this is to create a central team with the necessary property skills, knowledge, and expertise to effectively and consistently manage both ongoing asset management responsibilities and deliver strategic changes.
- Key responsibilities of this central team include:
 - work to better understand and collate the value, costs and utilisation associated with all the Council's buildings and land assets.
 - work to ensure the Council's buildings are safe and comply with statutory Health and Safety regulations.
 - work to ensure better value for money from every pound spent on property by the Council.
 - work to improve the reputation of the Council as a Landlord through better communication with users of buildings and more clearly defined responsibilities.
- The Council's land and property assets are overseen centrally by the Chief County Estates Officer based in the Economic Development Directorate. The Council has centralised nearly all (non-domestic) property related budgets.
- The Chief County Estates Officer also oversees the Recovery and Renewal Programme Plan Assets workstream and is a member of the Recovery Programme Leadership Group. This Officer continues to play a key role at Senior Management Team in all property related decisions and provides one point of contact for all property issues except for Housing.
- The Council has rationalised elements of its core office estate. For example, in November 2020 the Council relocated most of its staff from Wilcox House to County Hall. This has reduced the Council's accommodation footprint. and released costs of £1.5million.

- Maximising its digital capability continues to be a key part of the Council's corporate plan and is vital to support continued modernisation of its estate and workforce. For example, the Council has appointed consultants to identify further systems and processes to automate as part of its Digital First 'Automation and Artificial Intelligence' programme.
- As part of the delivery of its previous property strategy, the Council engaged a third party to do condition surveys. The Council commissions buildings surveys every 5 years, or more frequently for historic buildings. The Council maintains survey data held centrally on a software database to help inform the planned maintenance plan.
- For schools, the Council has completed all condition surveys over the last two years and intends to survey schools annually going forward. From the school condition surveys, the Council has developed a 10-year programme of work specifically for school buildings. For example, Estyn reported in November 2021 that the County Estates team had recently commissioned a survey of all schools and settings to determine the efficiency of buildings to inform future investment and reduce energy costs. This is helping the team to plan a substantial investment programme over the next five years to support the required improvements to around two thirds of school buildings.
- Although officers have shared this plan with key stakeholders including school leaders, chairs of governing bodies and elected members, the School Organisation Plan team recognise the need to improve communication with schools particularly in relation to the roll-out of the programme and the prioritisation of urgent repairs and maintenance.
- The Council's new administration policy statement for the next four years 2022-23 to 2026-27 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' emphasises the pivotal role that partners will need to play if the Council is to deliver its well-being objectives
- Partnership working was already a priority for the Council. The Cabinet report in May 2021 'Organisational Recovery and Renewal' prioritises strengthening partnership arrangements and locality working as a key step in its delivery. This builds on the actions already taken to rationalise and use its estate differently. For example, the Council is delivering some social care services from the same location as health services. This includes its Team around the School social care model, and multi-functional facilities in Ely and Maelfa.

The Council has sound arrangements to monitor its assets underpinned by improved performance data, but there is scope to improve the range of data used to bolster learning and demonstrate value for money.

Why effectively reviewing the delivery of planned changes to assets is important

13 Councils should use data to monitor whether they are achieving their intended outcomes effectively and efficiently over the short and longer term. Using benchmarking data can provide useful insight into Councils individual performance and can identify opportunities for learning from other organisations.

What we found

- The Council has clear governance arrangements to monitor and review its assets assisted by the centralisation of the property management function into a corporate landlord model. The Director for Economic Development is the senior responsible officer at Senior Management Team for County Estates supported by the Chief Officer for County Estates.
- This central team are the lead officers for the implementation of the Annual Property Plan. An integrated, Cross Service Strategic Asset Group is responsible for reviewing progress against the plan. The Council also has working groups of staff involved in managing property performance and delivery of various aspects of the estate which are all set out in the property strategy document.
- The Council attends a Partnership Working Group which provides oversight of collaborative projects attended by representatives from the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, South Wales Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The Council is exploring opportunities for sharing its buildings for example, it has had early discussions with Welsh Government about the possibility of regional working hubs, where public sector employees can use office space nearest to their home, regardless of their actual employer. This will form a key part of its joint solution to effectively rolling out its hybrid working model across the Council and the region.
- The Council has arrangements in place to help it understand how its assets can support its plans to modernise services. Every year officers report performance against the Council's Annual Property Plan to Cabinet. This is a retrospective report setting out progress made against targets in the property strategy. In 2020-21 despite the pandemic the Council exceeded two targets, only narrowly missed its total running cost target but missed its capital receipts target of £10 million by £8.7 million. This was due to the pandemic and diversion of staff focus to managing the crisis.
- The Council uses the RAMIS software system to monitor and manage building compliance against health and safety legislation. Although collecting

the relevant data was challenging, the Council is now in a position where its information is accurate and up to date and it understands its own performance in this area.

- The Council uses core cities data to compare the performance of its assets, but it is not benchmarking its processes to explore how it can learn and strengthen its arrangements to demonstrate value for money. The ability to compare data and performance with other organisations will continue to be an important element of arrangements to assess value for money. Although we appreciate this has been more difficult during the pandemic the Council should establish how it can strengthen these arrangements: including how it compares and analyses its data, arrangements, and learning from other organisations.
- This point was raised in the recent PRAP enquiry of Agile working (referred to above in Workforce) which recommended that Cabinet introduce a framework for the continual sharing of service area hybrid working experiences.
- It is evident that the Council has been learning from the way it has managed services from its buildings during the pandemic. For example, the strategy highlights the positive impact the pandemic has had on partnership working. It cites examples of shared use of facilities, such as Covid-19 testing and vaccination centres, and the hubs at Maelfa and Ely. The Council is clear in its strategy that it wants to build on this and pursue further sharing of assets with its partners. It is important the Council develops its arrangements to manage and oversee the outcomes from these initiatives, for example by agreeing and developing shared performance measures to understand their impact upon each of the well-being goals and shared wellbeing objectives.



Audit Wales

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

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