

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: County Councillor Mitchell(Chairperson)
County Councillors Aubrey, Awan, Clark, Chris Davis,
Keith Jones and Darren Williams

62 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Hill-John. Councillor Awan advised that he would need to leave the meeting at 6.30pm.

63 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

64 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

65 : DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

Corporate Overview

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance, Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources and Ian Allwood Head of Finance to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement in which he said that he wished to thank Officers for their work on this. He noted that the proposals were being brought forward earlier than they have been previously; the time has been used to de-risk and allow directorates to work on planning savings and risk assessments. Ask Cardiff was used in the summer months as well as the consultation on the budget; there had been over 6500 responses which compares well with other core cities. With reference to Neighbourhood areas, last year 4 out of 6 had responded compared to 5 out of 6 this year. Councillor Hinchey advised that this was due to better engagement within the communities.

Members were advised that finding savings was no easier this year and that austerity would be an issue for years to come.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Draft Budget Proposals 2017/18, after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- With reference to the consultation, Members asked what lessons had been learnt for future consultations. The Cabinet Member stated that this year there had been a significant number of responses and he was pleased that areas including Llanrumney had responded. He explained that this year Officers had gone into the communities to engage with people. Results of Ask Cardiff and Budget Consultation had brought about similar themes such as street scene

and cleanliness of streets, which were shared priorities between the Council and the public and that in times of austerity it was important to work in collaboration with each other.

- Members asked in relation to the budget themes 2017/18, whether themes such as commercialisation were near to exhaustion. The Cabinet Member stated that the key issue was technology as it brought so many benefits, such as Radyr Weir, In-cab technology for refuse vehicles, improvements in agile working has meant a better work life balance for employees. He added that the Public Audit Committee have liked what had been implemented so far.
- Members noted the proposed increase in Council Tax of 3.7% and asked how this compared to other Local Authorities and how it could be continued in future years. The Cabinet Member stated that last year Cardiff was fourth lowest of all 22 Local Authorities in Wales in relation to Council Tax increases; he added that future Council Tax would be set by future Councils.
- With reference to Cardiff Market and the proposed investment, Members asked if there was any income generated from the stall holders for this. The Cabinet Member stated that if there was no investment then income generation from the stall holders would go; with investment it could be possible to increase income from the market. Officers had looked at Belfast market and they have diversified into Opera performances and evening opening, all options would be explored in Cardiff.
- Members noted the 10 million for domiciliary care and sought clarification on this. Officers advised that this was for the national living wage, and further explained that there was three levels: The minimum wage, The National Living Wage and then the Voluntary Living Wage which is what Cardiff chooses to pay, as part of the Council's commitment to this, Cardiff must encourage its suppliers and providers to do the same although cannot be forced and is not an essential requirement in contracts. The Cabinet Member added that it was what the Council pays its own employees and agencies and encourages partners to do the same.

Transport, Planning & Sustainability Portfolio

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability, Andrew Gregory, Director for City Operations, Matt Wakelam Head of Infrastructure and Operations, Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources and Ian Allwood Head of Finance to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on the City Operations Directorate budget proposals relevant to the Transport, Planning & Sustainability Portfolio, after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked for an update on the parking sensor scheme that had been trialled two years ago. The Cabinet Member advised that it was a very innovative scheme whereby users have an App on their smartphone which can help them find a parking space quickly in the city thus reducing congestion, emissions and improving air quality. Officers stated that the pilot had been launched but they were awaiting full agreement on rolling out to key

areas across the city; positive press had been received from all over the world so far; the company were working to increase the functionality of App ready for the rollout so that it includes all parking in the city not just on street parking and would also include information on public transport .

- Members referred to the 20mph zones and asked if any costings had been undertaken to establish if these schemes could be carried on year on year. The Cabinet Member stated that lots of good press had been received on what had been done so far; £150k was listed as the figure as there were costs associated with determining the designating zones, legal notices etc., and ways of funding were being explored. Officers added that it was entirely within the remit of the parking reserve providing it was politically endorsed and wanted by the public.
- Members asked what areas had been earmarked as 20 mph zones and were advised that a map determining the most suitable sites was being developed; the pilot was in Roath/Cathays and Riverside/Canton and the roll out would be from the City Centre outwards as that is where the most pressures are.
- Members asked how much the pilot in Cathays had cost and were advised that Cathays had been cheaper at £60k but the costs depends on the size of the site, number of junctions/streets etc. The cost of the schemes were around 15% of a traffic calming scheme where raised tables and changes to drainage had to be undertaken. The ward member for Cathays was advised that she would receive an evaluation report on the scheme soon.
- Members sought clarification on the money being allocated in the budget for potholes. The Cabinet Member stated that £320k had been added last year and was being added again this year, in addition to the increase in the base budget. Members asked what percentage of parking enforcement revenue could be used to offset these costs, officers advised that this was difficult to predict as the revenue would plateau as people got used to the bus lanes.
- Members referred to Central Square and the Integrated Transport Hub, the figures contained within the report; whether planning permission had been submitted and if the NCP carpark was being demolished. Members were advised that the demolition on the NCP carpark had begun, the Draft Capital Programme includes the figures, if approved then expenditure would start and that information on planning application submissions should be sought by writing to the Cabinet Member directly.

Environment Portfolio

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bob Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for the Environment, Matt Wakelam Head of Infrastructure and Operations, Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources and Ian Allwood Head of Finance to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Derbyshire to make a statement in which he said that there had been better news in terms of the settlement, this would enable more positive proposals.

Members were provided with a presentation on the City Operations Directorate budget proposals relevant to the Environment Portfolio, after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members made reference to liveable streets and intensive street cleansing and asked when this would be rolled out to outlying wards to ensure equality. The Cabinet Member stated that the inner city wards have the biggest issues therefore they are concentrated on first of all; going forward the intention was to look at issues in outer wards, where the challenges are and if any extra cleansing was required i.e. on shop fronts. He added that it was important that people feed in any issues they see that need addressing. Officers added that the third round on the inner city wards would be completed by the end of March after which they will start on the outer wards, officers would shortly write to local Members to identify areas. Members were advised that enforcement figures were up by 75% in the last quarter as there had been reinvestment in the teams; Cabinet had supported the Investment of £350k into the base budget for the blitz team, for deep cleaning in inner wards and the teams would also be taking responsibility for leaf fall issues and for parks in peak times such as summer holidays. Officers were also looking at the teams areas/rounds to ensure they are the most impact effective due to demands.
- Members referred to the refurbishment of sports facilities and asked if these were Council owned facilities. Members were advised that they were unless they have a vested interest a building where a partner is running a service on the Councils behalf; the aim was to raise standards across the city.
- Members asked about noise pollution fines and if the money from these go back into the service. Officers advised that this was the remit of the Shared Regulatory Service, the money from smaller fines was used to pay for legal services and money from larger fines went to Central Government after legal costs had been deducted.

Commercial & Collaborative Services

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bob Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for the Environment, Tara King, Assistant Director for Commercial & Collaborative Services, Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources and Ian Allwood Head of Finance to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Derbyshire to make a statement in which he said that it had only been around 8 months since the switch had taken place and so far it had been very successful; they had achieved all they had hoped for and now there was more confidence in it working going forward.

Members were provided with a presentation on the areas of Commercial & Collaborative Services relevant to the Environment Portfolio, after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked for clarification on the pest control service and were advised that previously they had bought external services, and were now using internal services so it was circular spend; Cardiff also now undertakes some work for

Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Cabinet Member added that lots of people don't realise what services Cardiff Council can provide and that there is work to be done on improving advertising and marketing.

Members asked what marketing was currently being done and were advised that it was being reworked, the offer was being rebranded and costs and budget controls were being looked at. The offer needs to be right for the customers, going forward Apps and webpages would be used more as well as the usual In Cardiff publication. There is a new advertising unit in Economic Development which would be utilised and there were good design teams in the Council; advice had also been received from People 2.

- Members asked if it was anticipated that any new residential development would be occupied this year and if so does the Council have the capacity to service these. Officers explained that there were growth bids in based on data from the planners demographics; the Council gets notified quickly when people move into properties and plans are put into place.
- Members asked if the 6.7% revenue grant would be sustained for the next few years; officers explained that there had been investment in the Ministerial Board and it was proposed that this becomes part of the single revenue grant. Discussions on this were ongoing; in 2018/19 it would be part of the main RSG, officers did not think that 6.7% per year would be sustainable with an increase in recycling targets.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Welsh Government had set recycling targets for Cardiff higher than the rest of Wales, the grant had been to help with those targets; he added that he would liaise closely with the WLGA to achieve them.

- Members asked for the costs of Bulky Item Collection and the cost of the White and Red bags. Officers did not have the costs to hand but noted that this question had been answered in Council recently so that information would be forwarded on. Officers added that they were looking for the Bulky Item Collection to be cost neutral.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Member to convey their comments and observations.

66 : ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to be considered.

67 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 7 March 2017.