

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 FEBRUARY 2018

Present: County Councillor McGarry(Chairperson)
County Councillors Ahmed, Asghar Ali, Carter, Goddard,
Kelloway and Lent

45 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shaun Jenkins.

46 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

47 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

48 : DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018/19 & CORPORATE PLAN 2018 - 2020

Corporate Overview

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver (Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance), Ian Allwood (Head of Finance) and Allan Evans (Operational Manager – Accountancy) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Weaver to make a statement in which he said that this had been a very difficult budget to set, there were real terms cuts while the net effect on social services is on the increase so there had been realignments to recognize the increase in demands and pressures faced. There was a focus on core services and building on improvements made over the past few years. Councillor Weaver added that Schools and Social Services were two areas seeing an increase in their budgets. He also added that he hoped that Members would welcome the joint equipment warehouse based at the Smarthouse.

Ian Allwood provided Members with a presentation and highlighted key information on the Final Settlement Overview, Consultation, Draft Revenue Budget, Medium Term Outlook and the Draft Capital Programme.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members noted the savings that were marked as Red/Amber and asked how realistic it was to achieve these savings and what process was undertaken to check robustness of savings proposals. Officers explained that proposals were signed off by Directors, it was their responsibility to ensure that due diligence had been undertaken to ensure they were robust and achievable. Officers added that there had been process improvements over the past few years to improve the due diligence and there was now constant communication between service areas and finance officers.

It was noted that for some proposals the risks and obstacles are known and as much as possible shown how these are mitigated. Cardiff wants to improve and change services at the same time as making savings, changes to ways of working will always carry a risk. Officers assured Members that Directors are committed to achieving the savings.

- Members noted that interest rates are starting to increase and asked how affordable the budget is and if interest rates are built in to the financial modelling. Officers stated that they can't predict the financial outlook going forward but there has been stress testing undertaken on the budget. Officers also added that increase in interest rates can have a positive and negative impact for the Council. When looking at the Capital Programme and fixed treasury ideas there was an element of certainty for borrowing now, there would be challenges in the next few years if extra capital investment was needed that didn't come with extra funding.
- Members noted the various large projects in the Capital Programme and asked what implications these have on Revenue Budgets. Officers explained that there was an element of trade off, 42% of additional borrowing to fund the Capital Programme will impact the Revenue Budget but there was a need to improve the Council's assets; if these assets are not improved then they will need more spent on them and the maintenance backlog would increase. The new large projects associated additional borrowing can be managed within the budget at the moment; it is an element of priority which is becoming harder in more challenging times.
- Members asked for clarification on the £8.4 million extra to Social Services; the Cabinet Member explained that there were net increases to Social Services as there were accepted demand pressures and demographic pressures to the service.
- Members asked what percentage of the Revenue Budget is interest payments and were advised that it was around 7% of the net budget.

Social Services (Adult Services) Directorate

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore (Cabinet Member – Social Care, Health & Well-Being), Tony Young (Director – Social Services), Amanda Phillips (Assistant Director - Adult Services) and Leon Goddard (Project Officer) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Elsmore to make a statement in which she wished to remind Members of the backdrop of Adult Services, explaining the population and demand trends going forward including there being a near doubling of local authority spend on older people by 2035; an 88% increase in over 85's and 1 in 3 over 65's developing dementia. The Cabinet Member also wished to note that unpaid carers in the City would rise to 57000, all of which putting huge pressure on the services.

Tony Young provided Members with a presentation on the Social Services Budget highlighting key information including an Overview, Additional Allocations, Accepted Specific Pressures, Savings Proposals for total Directorate, Adult and Children's Services, Approach to Budget Challenges and Financial Outlook.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- In relation to reablement, Members noted the financial benefits of the use of technology in social services but were concerned about the message this would send to people, particularly isolated, vulnerable people who may be concerned about less human interaction. Officers explained that the use of technology would be complementary to the service and not a replacement; it would be an aid to remind people to take medication in conjunction with their care plan, it would help people who chose to remain at home; officers were mindful of isolation at all times. In relation to savings, it was noted that 70% of people leave the Community Reablement Team with no service as they are independent, if this was translated to the whole community there would be a decreased reliance on care. The use of technology would support reablement and would not compromise duty and responsibility in terms of safeguarding.

Members asked if other authorities have used new technology in this way and whether it had been successful. Officers advised that yes, lots of authorities were trying different things in terms of new ways of working, Cardiff would look at all of these and see what would work best for Cardiff.

- Members asked how the success on the individual is evaluated and how the wellbeing benefits are measured compared to previous method used. Officers advised that they already report on this through the outputs on the Community Reablement Team (CRT). The Director stated that Providers were now keen to get into reablement and this can be incentivised through the contractual process, decoupling CRT from the hospital discharge process.

The Cabinet Member added that currently it was about re-engineering how we do things in Health and Social Care, there has been a marked improved in relations with Health in recent years; currently there was the lowest DTOC figures in 12 years, the service is in a positive place ensuring that individuals are getting what is right for them.

- Members asked why the DTOC figures were currently so low and were advised that this was due to a number of factors including the CRT and the very positive and buoyant domiciliary care market at present.
- Members noted that in the Corporate Plan there was 1 target for Adult Services, lots of the targets are listed as 'no target set' and asked for clarification on this. Officers advised that many are new measures introduced since the Social Services (Wellbeing) Act. Welsh Government had not published data as it was the first year of data and not deemed reliable. Data would be ready to use in around 2 years' time; local measures are still carried on and can be scrutinised as usual.
- Members referred to increases in user charges being the highest on the Welsh Government recommendation scale and the effect this may have on the service user. Officers advised that the increase was being introduced incrementally and were in line with the threshold increase for savings. Members were concerned for families that find themselves in a difficult financial position, but were informed that Welsh Government had enabled the Council to take the position and it cannot afford to not take it, otherwise

something else would have to give; this would enable the Council to provide a service to as many people as possible across the piece.

Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate

Councillor Susan Elsmore (Cabinet Member – Social Care, Health & Well-Being) and Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member – Housing & Communities), Sarah McGill (Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services), Jane Thomas (Assistant Director – Housing and Communities) and Nick Blake (Business Support Manager) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Elsmore to make a statement in which she reiterated the demographic changes that were expected in the next few years with regards to older people, stating that Independent Living Services would be growing to accommodate this and it was important that they are delivering excellent services. The great work across the partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan and Health colleagues was also reiterated. The Cabinet Member encouraged Members to visit the Smarthouse and Joint Equipment service warehouse, which now enabled service users to have equipment the same day or next day. The Cabinet Member was pleased to say that the Meals on Wheels Service was growing and there was a hope that this would become self-funding in the future; inter-generational projects were also growing.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Thorne to make a statement in which she said that she was proud that the Corporate Plan and this year's budget focuses on the further development of those services that help those most vulnerable in Cardiff.

A key theme for Capital Ambition is how to make sure everyone is benefiting from the growth of Cardiff and to support people out of poverty.

The Community hub programme, which this year will include the completion of the new hub in St Mellons, provides locally available services delivering practical help and support to those who need it. The integration of employment support services will start in April and Councillor Thorne was pleased that we are increasing the availability of advice and support to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit.

Lots of work has been done to tackle the causes of rough sleeping. The join up of interventions to successfully address an issue that is fundamentally not about the availability of accommodation is a big challenge. However Councillor Thorne was pleased with the developing partnership approach and encouraged Members to support the Give Differently campaign that is due to launch shortly.

To help the wider housing problem in Cardiff, Councillor Thorne was pleased to be able to tell Members that she has been able to extend the target for new council homes and intends to deliver 2,000 new properties of which at least 1,000 will be completed over the next 4 years. This level of increase in council homes is unprecedented and not matched by any other local authority.

Councillor Thorne added that the capital programme reflects the same priority to support the most vulnerable in the city. Funding has been made available for some really essential projects ranging from the Domestic Abuse multi-agency centre and the Butetown Pavilion Youth Hub to the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme re-introduction.

Sarah McGill provided Members with a presentation highlighting key issues on Corporate Plan Actions, Corporate Plan Performance Measures, Savings Proposals for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Communities, Capital Programme, Rent Increase, Financial Pressures Bids and Financial Resilience.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- With reference to the rent increases, Members asked what the money from this is usually used for. Officers advised that money from rent increases is put into a full range of services required through the HRA business plan; a few years ago it was used towards obtaining and then sustaining the WQHS, and more recently for Hubs and new builds. Full details would be in the HRA business plan which is due to come to committee in March.
- Members asked about the location of the proposed new council housing developments and were advised that there were a location of sites, around 40 across the City, which were reasonably well known. Officers were currently looking at the viability of the sites but they would be across the City and in mixed communities.
- Members asked what percentage of the HRA was spent on interest payment and how rigorous were the assessments that have been undertaken. Officers advised that of all investment opportunities available, pension funds always look at housing as it's considered a safe investment. Officers added that there were £3m less in interest payments; and that every decision taken with regards to investment was subject to a rigorous viability assessment. They added that Council works on a 40 year return in most cases.
- Members asked if there was any funding from Welsh Government for new housing and were advised that there was an Innovative Housing Grant; there was also a major repair allowance of £10million for maintenance of current stock; the income from rents going forward would enable the new builds; It was a hard decision to increase rents, the increase would enable 450 new builds, then the further rents would enable 450 more; there was a desperate need for new homes in the City.
- Members noted that there would be 1 and 2 bedroom new builds and considered there was a demand for 3 and 4 bedroom homes too; asking if enough of these were going to be provided. Officers explained that they will build larger houses where they can, they also buy back larger homes from the market and encourage older people to downsize with assistance provided with their move.
- Members asked what support was being offered to people with the rent increase and the introduction of Universal Credit to Cardiff. Officers explained that with the introduction of Universal Credit, the rent would be covered as it is now, the issue is with how benefits are paid as it is all done online. There have been an additional 96 PC's installed across the City, advice services would be available across the City; there would be a hardship fund available and help with people for transition into work. With regards to the arrears procedure, intervention would be earlier in the process.

- Members sought assurance that help and information with regard to Universal Credit would be available in different languages. Officers advised that there were a huge range of languages spoken in the Hubs, spoken support was provided in around 20 languages. If a community has specific language needs then information and advice would be translated in that area.
- Members referred to the £13million of additional weekly benefit identified for clients of the City Centre Advice Team and then to the Deletion of two vacant Benefit Officer posts to save £60k; and asked how the two correlated. Officers explained that the deletion of posts was in the Housing Benefit administration section as these would no longer be needed with the introduction of Universal Credit.
- Members referred to the Give DIFFerently campaign and asked if shops would be advertising the campaign with posters in windows providing advice to people wishing to give. The Cabinet Member explained that there would shortly be phase 2 of the Give DIFFerently launch, this would enable people to be able to swipe their bank cards at various places in the City Centre to give to the fund. Certain shops are displaying posters already and this would be further encouraged. It was noted that the initial launch had been a soft launch to get a feel for how people would respond to the campaign, and it had been well received. Members considered it would be useful to have a case study detailing how the fund had helped people.
- With regard to the practicality of the monies donated, Members asked where this was held. It was explained that it was held by a fund and not the Council, the money then goes to help people directly.
- Members considered it refreshing to see a Corporate Plan that has clear links to the Wellbeing Policy.
- Members referred to the Citizens Advice Bureau and the incremental decrease in its funding and asked if they had been able to replace this funding and maintain its services. Officers advised that they had.
- Members sought more information on the Youth Provision, noting the Butetown Pavilion and asked where the other provision would be located. Officers explained that it would be in the City Centre, incorporating the Grassroots building in Charles Street, the joint service with Children's Services and Llamau which is also located in Charles Street, bringing them together and adding housing, children's services, health and Into Work Services to provide a complete City Centre service.
- Members noted that Council tenants' rent used to be taken directly from their benefits and asked if this would still happen. Officers stated that Housing Benefit goes straight to the Housing account currently and any arrears have to be applied for. Universal Credit will change this and the Benefit will go directly to the individual who then pay the rent, again any arrears will then have to be applied for.
- Members were pleased to see no reduction in the Alcohol and Drug Misuse budgets.

- Members noted that in previous years, they had seen lists of organisations who were having a reduction in their grants; Members asked for the position this year and officers explained that there were no grant reductions this year.
- The Cabinet Member noted this was likely to be the Director of Social Services last Scrutiny Committee meeting and wished to thank him for his hard work, leadership and all that he had achieved. Thanks were also expressed to Finance and other officers for all their hard work on the preparation of this budget.

Performance and Partnerships Directorate

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member – Housing & Communities), Joe Reay, (Head of Performance) and Stephanie Kendrick – Doyle (Community Safety Manager) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Thorne to make a statement in which she outlined the following;

Review and Reform the Community Safety Partnership governance and delivery arrangements to focus on shared priorities, by October 2018.

The Public Services Board is reviewing its governance arrangements, including the function of programme boards tasked with the operational management of strategic areas of work. The day to day management of community safety is co-ordinated by the Safer & Cohesive Communities Programme Board. Membership and delivery arrangements are currently being reviewed for this board and draft terms of reference are being discussed.

It is anticipated that the membership of the new multi-agency programme board will be streamlined and of sufficient seniority to ensure resources across the partnership can be co-ordinated to address priorities that have already been identified. It is equally important that the board is able to mobilise resources quickly to respond to new and emerging issues such as recent concerns about increased levels of rough sleeping, rising levels of anti-social behaviour associated with drug and alcohol abuse and aggressive begging in the city centre.

A workshop is planned in the Spring to launch the new board which will look at refreshing priorities, reviewing the role and functions of associated groups and the development of a robust data set to ensure we have an evidence based approach to the delivery of community safety services.

Tackle substance misuse in the city by undertaking a review of the risk factors, with a focus on supporting young people.

As a result of concerns about drug dealing in Grangetown and Butetown, a Joint CYP & CASSC Scrutiny Inquiry has been launched. The inquiry will make recommendations for a city wide approach to prevent young people becoming involved in drug dealing. Over the last three months the committee has been meeting with a wide range of practitioners from statutory and third sector organisations to hear evidence. The Inquiry also plan to consult with young people about what they feel are the pull and push factors that lead young people in to dealing. A similar exercise will take place with adults, to ensure that we understand the impact drug dealing has on localities and the support needed for communities to

work with us to tackle the issue. The Committee is expected to present their findings in April 2018.

Deliver the Night Time Economy Strategy – working with Public Services Board partners (link with Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee)

Delivering a Safe & Welcoming Night Time Economy: Our Plan 2017 – 2022 was approved by Cabinet and the Public Services Board in December 2017. The plan sets out how the Council, with its partners, will work together to ensure the city's night-time economy is safe and welcoming.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with a range of partners from all sectors, including For Cardiff (the city's Business Improvement District) and the Licensees' Forum. The plan will work alongside a number of other key initiatives such as the Music strategy for the city.

The strategy has three actions plans that are being co-ordinated and monitored by the Night Time Economy Steering group. The new Programme Board for Community Safety will ensure that those responsible for actions are making good progress and any barriers to delivery are addressed.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked if there was funding available for the continuation of the Taxi Marshall Service. Members were advised that this was part of the strategy, the funding for the service had changed, there was no longer the same level of funding but the Council wanted to preserve the service and were working with For Cardiff to work through employment arrangements and to jointly fund what was considered to be a vital service and would be a part of the Night Time Economy going forward.

Members were pleased to hear the service would remain and sought assurances that while arrangements were being worked through there would be no gap in service. Officers assured Members that the details of the plans were with Economic Development and there was a robust plan in place to ensure no gap in service, there would be a seamless transition.

- Members noted that the scope of the Task and Finish Inquiry was not as wide as tackling drug use in the City. The Cabinet Member agreed that unfortunately it wasn't, the scope was to prevent young people being brought into drug dealing.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

49 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 14 March 2018 at 4.30pm.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg