
FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

AGENDA ITEM:

It gives me great pleasure to be able to make this statement as Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board.

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an important issue in which we all have a role to play. Safeguarding is about what we can do to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, with a particular emphasis on protecting them from abuse and exploitation. It is also about being able to respond quickly and appropriately to concerns or allegations that come to our attention. This requires us to have clear and appropriate policies and procedures that are understood by staff and members.

The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Board was established in March 2015 and was previously chaired by Cllr. Hinchey in his role as Cabinet Member of finance and now chaired by myself in my current Cabinet Member role.

The Corporate Safeguarding Board includes senior representation from all Directorates to ensure that all public facing services integrate safeguarding awareness into their operations. The Board does not cover operational practice in Adults or Children's Social Services or in schools but aims to promote effective cross Directorate safeguarding practice particularly in terms of information sharing and data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and the vetting and barring of staff who have significant or unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults or children.

I am very pleased to have taken on the role of Chairing the Board and would wish to emphasise my commitment and the commitment of the whole Cabinet to this very important agenda. I also want to take this opportunity to share with you the Corporate Safeguarding policy, which was launched during the National Safeguarding Week in November 2017.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for every Directorate within the Council setting out responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk, drawing together the corporate policies and guidelines for safeguarding, and agreeing the methods by which the Council will be assured that it is fulfilling its duties.

As part of the policy, a new e-learning safeguarding training module has also been launched and it is expected that all staff across the council will engage in this training.

This will make sure that all our staff understand what to look for and what to do when children or adults may be experiencing or at risk of harm or abuse.

The links to the Policy and the e-module will be circulated by email.

Wales CIPD People Management Awards

As I mentioned at Council last month, Cardiff was shortlisted in the Wales CIPD People Management Awards – ‘Best Employee Engagement Initiative’ category. The good news is that the Council was successful in winning this award, beating off competition from Welsh Water and Wales & West Utilities. This achievement is recognition of the work undertaken across all directorates and, more importantly, recognises the contribution that all our staff make to the delivery of council services to the citizens of Cardiff.

UK Government Budget

Last week, the Chancellor set out the UK Government’s Autumn budget. The full consequences for the Welsh Government’s budget, and the potential impact on Local Authority funding in Wales are being assessed. Following on from this, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM, gave his reaction when speaking at the WLGA Autumn Seminar on 23 November, in which he warned that the Westminster budget does not signal an end to austerity, or any significant impact on expected future settlements. He stated that the Welsh Government’s own budget will be 5% lower in real terms in 2019-20 than it was in 2010-11. A headline figure of an additional £1.2 billion for Wales refers to money up to 2021, of which approximately £1 billion is capital funding. More than half of this amount is made up of loans that will have to be repaid to the UK Government. The Welsh Government’s final settlement for local authorities will be announced in December.

Equalities Update

The Equality Impact Assessments of the Budget Proposals have been published on the Council’s website. The budget consultation is up and running and will end on 14 December 2017.

The Equality Team is assisting the Cardiff Academy who are currently developing equality training around race and religion.

The Council’s submission to the Stonewall Workplace Index through an online survey of Council employees has been completed. Feedback is expected from Stonewall in the New Year.

Equality Officers are working with the Communities, Housing & Customer Services Directorate to implement a Sign-Video Relay Service in the Central Hub, which will provide real-time British Sign Language for deaf customers.

A Focus Group was also held at Cardiff Deaf Centre on 27 November 2017 to seek the views of deaf people with regard to Cardiff’s Well-being Plan.

Wales Interpretation and Translation Service

Cardiff Council is hosting two engagement workshops for the Deaf Community in Cardiff as host of the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS). The first took place on Monday morning 27 November from 9am to 12pm in Committee Room 1 at County Hall and the second will be held on Monday evening 4 December from 5pm to 8pm in Committee Room 2 at County Hall.

The purpose of the workshop is to meet with members of the deaf community, allowing them to share their experiences with us, so we can develop and improve our service where possible; ideally, helping to strengthen relations with them following feedback from service users of some issues with the service. There will be further opportunities next year to engage with other deaf communities across Wales.

Website

It's great to see our online services being accessed more and more in line with our Digital First approach. This provides our citizens with digital access in line with everything they can access digitally outside of the Council. Some highlights for October included:

- Over 56% of visitors to the Council's website were using a mobile device – smart phone or tablet.
- Parking permit online applications are increasing and are up 3% on last year.
- Use of the online waste collection look up has increased. In October 2017, almost 11k more residents checked their collections than in October 2016.
- Visits to Parking, Roads and Travel increased 3.9% on September 2017; with over 15k visitors viewing travel advice for the Anthony Joshua fight (3,124 on the day of the fight).
- With Secondary school admissions opening, visits to the School Admissions pages increased by 2.3% on September with almost 24k page views in total.
- 539 people visited the Emergency Contact Number page during the month. This is likely to be as a result of fallen trees/ blocked highways caused by Storm Brian. People also took to social media to report instances of fallen trees to the Council. These were logged and communication was issued by the Council's Communications & Media Team to alert residents on which roads were still blocked or had re-opened once cleared.

Councillor Chris Weaver
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance
29 November 2017