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15 February 2018

Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance,
Room 519,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Weaver,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 14 February 2018

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 14 February 2018. As you are aware the meeting received items titled 'Draft Budget Proposals 2018/19 – Corporate Overview' and 'Draft Corporate Plan 2018 to 2021 & 2018/19 Draft Budget Proposals'.

The meeting initially considered the Corporate Overview and was followed by scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and sections of the draft corporate plan relevant to the terms of reference of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee. Presentations were made by officers from the Resources Directorate, the City Operations Directorate and the Economic Development Directorate on a range of services that will be delivered from the Transport, Planning & Environment Directorate as of April 2018. Following the presentations Members had the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders and supporting officers. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

Corporate Overview

- The Committee is concerned at the increasing borrowing costs associated with the Capital Programme – it was explained at the meeting that interest payments could account for 16.5% of the Council's revenue budget by 2022/23. While Members support the majority of the proposals contained in the Capital Programme they are conscious of not spending tomorrow's

money today. At the same time they acknowledge that interest rates are exceptionally low at the moment and so some of the Committee were of the view that now would appear to be a good time to borrow and invest. It is clear that the whole decision making process is a very difficult balancing act. Members concluded that it would be prudent that a review of the Capital Programme is undertaken so that essential projects can be prioritised. If a project is deemed non-essential then serious thought should be given to it remaining on the Capital Programme.

Strategic Planning & Transport Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2018/19 – Corporate Overview

- During questioning, I asked if there was a monitoring programme for the implementation of 20 mph zones in Cardiff. The Director for City Operations explained that a monitoring programme did not currently exist, however, he would be happy to look into introducing one. The Committee felt that this would be a good idea as it would provide an evidence base to support future decision making for 20 mph zones. Members felt that a 20 mph monitoring scheme should focus on speed reduction and not necessarily the number of people breaking the speed limit, it was also suggested that the data could be used to identify sites that might benefit from the implementation of traffic calming measures. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport mentioned that he was due to receive a report from South Wales Police which would publish new speeding results for one of the newly implemented 20 mph zones, I would appreciate it if a copy of this report could be provided to the Committee.
- At the meeting there was some discussion on the capital investment of £440,000 for intelligent transport systems and the tunnel. It was explained that this was a continuation of the CCTV system upgrade in Control Room and an asset renewal of the essential tunnel & telematics infrastructure. At this point the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport explained that the Control Room in County Hall was worth a visit and offered to arrange it for the Members of the Committee. I can confirm that

the Committee would like to take him up on the offer and I will ask the Principal Scrutiny Officer for the Committee to liaise with the Cabinet Member and service area to arrange a convenient date for the visit.

- Line 9 of the Capital Programme set out the 'Carriageway Investment' for the years 2018/19 to 2022/23 and prompted a discussion around why proposed funding fell from £3.517 million in 2018/19 to £1.95 million in 2019/20. During the discussion there was some debate around how and why funding was applied to different sections of highway asset. Despite some differences of opinion the Committee concluded during the way forward that investment should be driven by an evidence based methodology. They also concluded that as a group they would benefit from some Member training on how highway asset funding decisions are taken. With this in mind the Committee would be grateful if the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport could liaise with the City Operations Directorate and Scrutiny Services to arrange Member training on the topic.
- It was pleasing to see that £1.4 million had been included in the Capital Programme for the delivery of the Western Transport Bus Interchange. We agreed during the way forward that the creation of a series of transport hubs for the city were essential to keep the city moving and that they would support the operation of the new integrated transport hub in the city centre. The Committee noted that the funding was allocated for 2019/20 and were informed that some positive developments had taken place in terms of delivering the new development with a housing association that would substantially reduce any risks facing the Council – the only potential stumbling block was the potential cost of remediation works that would be identified in a a feasibility report that the Director for City Operations stated would be received next week. Taking all of this into consideration the Committee supports this capital investment, but at the same time urges the Council to ensure that at least some of the satellite transport hubs are operational by the time the new integrated transport hub is completed. In addition to this the Committee would be grateful if you could provide them

with a copy of the feasibility study for remediation work at the Western Transport Interchange site once it is available.

Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2018/19 – Corporate Overview

- At the meeting Members commented on Line 99 of the Capital Programme that referenced £3 million in funds for the design and construction of a solar farm at Lamby Way. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment explained that the project was complicated and that work was still ongoing in terms of finalising arrangements. He went on to state that a paper on the Lamby Way Solar Farm would be published in the coming months and that he would be happy to bring the proposal to scrutiny. The Committee welcome this offer and look forward to receiving the report at scrutiny in the near future.
- The Committee is concerned by the reduction in recycling income due to the global decline in prices. They agree with the provision of the financial pressure bid for £523,000 that will support the growth of dry recycling processing and compensate for the reduction in income. Members understand that this presents a difficult challenge for the Council and commend the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and officers from Commercial & Collaboration Services for taking positive steps to mitigate and solve the problem.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and work with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders to provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,



Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader, Cardiff Council;
- Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member Strategic Planning & Transport;
- Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment;
- Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources;
- Ian Allwood, Head of Finance;
- Andrew Gregory, Director for City Operations;
- Tara King, Assistant Director for Commercial & Collaborative Services;
- Matt Wakelam, Operational Manager, Infrastructure & Operations;
- Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services;
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee.