

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

20 February 2019

Councillor Chris Weaver  
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Dear Chris,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 FEBRUARY 2018  
DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20**

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending Committee and providing Members with an opportunity to consider the corporate overview of the Draft Budget Proposals 2019/20 and Corporate Plan 2019 – 2022. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you:

Members were pleased with the content of the presentation, given by Christine Salter, and appreciated the work that has been done for 2019/20 to address continuing challenges in balancing finite resources with increasing demand pressures. More specifically;

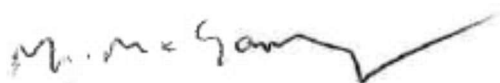
- Members were initially concerned that the level of savings (36%) identified for the service areas was significant and would impact on provision of services to the most vulnerable people. During the meeting, it was identified that these savings were a small part of a large budget; with many of the savings relating to service transformation rather than service reductions. In addition, the strong financial control and monitoring measures that were established during 2018/19 would continue and assist to minimise any risk to achieve the savings without adversely impacting service provision.
- Although the level of Red and Red/Amber savings risks were reduced compared with previous years, confirmation was sought to ensure that these savings would be achieved. The provision of detailed plans for progressing the savings was welcomed with an understanding that the growth in Social Services budgets from Welsh Government funding negated some of the savings that were being made.

- The indicative 4.9% annual increase in Council tax was likely to have a significant impact on the residents of Cardiff and needed to be kept under review. The continued development of creative solutions for service delivery and the identification of additional sources of funding could provide opportunities to minimise increases in the level of Council tax in future years.
- Concerns were raised regarding children and young people currently in out of county placements being brought back into Cardiff without the appropriate accommodation and support. The Committee were heartened to hear that the needs of the individual were the primary driver for service provision and that appropriate funding would be identified.
- The Committee were satisfied that due diligence had been taken regarding the savings proposals; and support the ongoing commitment made by Directors and other Senior Officers across the authority in working together to achieve a balanced set of proposals.
- Members were content with responses from yourself and officers in relation to the amount of borrowing by the Council, and the affordability of borrowing.
- Members were happy with the balance of delivering capital programmes and the effect that they have on the revenue budget.

In relation to the Corporate Plan, the Committee would be very grateful if you could take forward Members' thanks and appreciation to all involved in bringing together a Plan that not only addresses how the Council would deliver its services but also links with the commitments of the Capital Ambition and the wider commitments in relation to well-being objectives.

Thank you again to you and officers for attending. I hope you find the Committee's comments useful.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M<sup>C</sup>GARRY**

**Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Christine Salter, Corporate Director  
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance  
Allan Evans, OM Accountancy  
Councillor David Walker, Chairperson Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer  
Cabinet Support Office