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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2019, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

8 **Correspondence following Committee Meeting** (Pages 3 - 16)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

20 February 2019

Councillor Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-Being
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Dear Susan,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 FEBRUARY 2019
DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2019-22 AND 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 draft Corporate Plan 2019-22 and the Draft Budget Proposals for 2019/20 relevant to your Portfolio. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you:

Communities, Housing & Customer Services Directorate

In relation to your commitments within this Directorate, Members were very pleased to receive details on how you are continuing to drive forward services. This includes the planned provision of a Multi Agency Hub in the Cardiff Royal Infirmary and the use of Enable Grant funding to provide adaptations which facilitate the speedy return to the community following a period of time in hospital.

Social Services Directorate

Members of the Committee wanted to pass on their appreciation of how you and officers have worked to improve the delivery and efficiency of key services. Some further specific comments are:

- Elected Members provide a key interface with their constituents particularly with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities within their wards. However, concerns were raised regarding the proportion of BAME care workers, which did not reflect the same diversity as the communities that they supported.

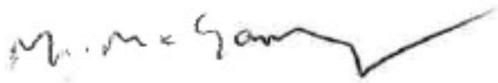
It was proposed that when services were commissioned, consideration be given to the proportion of BAME care workers being employed to better reflect the communities. This would also encourage greater engagement and enhance the provision of services to minority groups. The Committee was pleased to hear that the locality approach which was planned following a review of commissioning, would potentially address these concerns. Additionally, a bespoke workforce would be better positioned to serve our communities.

- 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 saving that were being made.
- Additionally, the committee welcomed the provision of the right services for individuals, which also enabled financial efficiencies to be made. This was also supported by the move away from institutional support to community-based services with appropriate levels of support.
- The committee also requested confirmation that the planned savings would retain enablement support rather than becoming a call centre service. It was pleasing to hear that the most appropriate services were to be provided for individuals and that services provided in the community continue to be improved.
- Members queried how the cost of supporting those individuals with the most serious learning disabilities could be achieved with the budget savings that had been identified. The Committee welcomed the explanation that the overall cost of the services was still cost effective as those with less serious learning disabilities balanced the costs of those with high level of need.

Members were very reassured by the work you and Councillor Thorne are doing together across both Directorates (and further) in ensuring that the Council continues to develop a more joined-up, communicative culture in delivering services.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary McGarry', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M^CGARRY

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
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People and Communities
Claire Marchant, Director of Social Services
Cabinet Support Office

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

20 February 2019

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member Communities & Housing
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Dear Lynda,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 FEBRUARY 2019
DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2019-22 AND 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 draft Corporate Plan 2019-22 and the Draft Budget Proposals for 2019/20 relevant to your Portfolio. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you.

- Members expressed their concerns that the rent increases of 2.4% will have a dual effect. Firstly, the rent increases which were lower than planned due to the cap imposed by the Welsh Government in advance of its review of Rent Policy would decrease the funding available to develop new homes. Secondly, this increased the burden on low income tenants who may not be able to afford this rent increase and result in the level of unpaid rent to increase. The committee welcomed the debt management arrangements and the explanation of the ongoing review of rent policy by the Welsh Government. Members were also supportive that the quality of new buildings would not be diminished with the reduction in funding.
- The Committee queried the proposed rise in Council Tax, which would result in an increase in arrears and reduce the overall collection rate and expected income. The explanation was that the collection rate was quite high and that the number of properties was increasing which enables the financial position to be

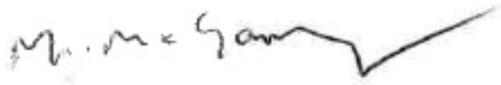
maintained. The support for those low income families who were experiencing financial difficulties had increased with the Hubs providing support to claim £11m in benefits over the last year. It was acknowledged that further work was needed to promote this support which was available to everyone and not just the unemployed.

- The Committee were keen to ensure that homeless people in Cardiff were provided with support rather than having enforcement action taken against them. The Committee welcomed that tents were not being taken and that Outreach and Highways Officers were working together to engage with rough sleepers to identify and provide the support they needed.
- Members queried if further funding was being sought from Welsh Government to support Cardiff Council with the additional austerity it faced as the Capital City. The Committee were grateful for the work that was ongoing to identify possible grant funding opportunities from the Welsh Government. These grants provided short term funding or possible additional financial support at the end of a financial period. Grant funding could not be guaranteed, but at present was supporting Housing First which provided opportunities for the Salvation Army and the authority to provide flats and enable homeless people to get off the streets.
- A reduction in the availability of the private rented sector housing was identified and the Committee queried how this could be addressed. It was explained that the Private rented sector was being engaged and encouraged in those locations where there was no social housing available.

Finally, Members were very reassured by the work you and Councillor Elsmore are doing together across Portfolios (and further) in ensuring that the Council continues to develop a more joined-up, communicative culture in delivering services.

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

Yours sincerely,

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M^CGARRY
Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Christine Salter, Corporate Director
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Councillor David Walker, Chairperson Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People and Communities
Jane Thomas, Assistant Director Communities & Housing
Nick Blake, Business Support Manager, Communities Housing & Customer Services
Steph Kendrick-Doyle, Community Safety Manager
Cabinet Support Office

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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;

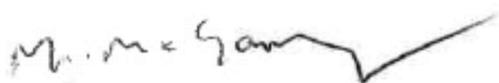
- Members were initially concerned that the level of savings (36%) identified for the service areas was significant and would impact on provision of services to the most vulnerable people. During the meeting, it was identified that these savings were a small part of a large budget; with many of the savings 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^CGARRY

Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Christine Salter, Corporate Director
Ilan 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

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**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM41055

Dyddiad / Date: 22 February 2019

Councillor Mary McGarry
Chairperson – Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Room 282
Atlantic Wharf
County Hall
Cardiff. CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear

**Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 18 February 2019
Draft Budget Proposals 2019/20**

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 20 February 2019 and for the letters to Cabinet colleagues, Councillor Thorne and Councillor Elsmore. We were grateful for the useful observations raised and can assure you that Cabinet were able to reflect on these prior to our meeting on 21 February 2019.

In respect of the particular comments addressed to Councillor Thorne, I would make the following points:

Rent increase

I recognise and share Members concerns about the possible impact that Welsh Government rent policy will have on future housing development and I will keep the Committee updated as and when further information is available.

With regard to impact of the rent increase on tenants, council rents remain very good value for money when compared with private sector rents. There are various measures in place to help tenants who struggle with their rent payments including a dedicated Welfare Liaison visiting team to assist with income maximisation and budgeting.

ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :

Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office, Ystafell / Room 518, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf , Caerdydd / Cardiff, CF10 4UW,
Ffon / Tel: (029) 2087

GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh, English or bilingually. We will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.



Council tax

I note Members concerns about those who may struggle to meet their council tax payments. The Money Advice service works very closely with the Council Tax teams to identify and assist anyone who is struggling with payments, whether they are in work or unemployed, and steps have been taken recently to promote the availability of Council Tax Reduction for those claiming Universal Credit. It is accepted however that more can be done to raise awareness and officers will consider any further steps that can be taken to publicise the services available, particularly to those in work.

Homelessness

I would like to reassure Committee that our key focus is to help homeless individuals into accommodation and provide the support they need to sustain that accommodation. Officers will work with Welsh Government to secure the funding necessary to maintain and improve services for rough sleepers and other homeless people in the city.

I hope that this letter captures all the points raised in your letter and thank you again for your support in the budget process.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Chris Weaver
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance
Aelod Cabnet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad