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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** MONDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2020, 10.30 AM

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](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

19 February 2020

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



Dear Cllr Weaver,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 FEBRUARY 2020  
DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21**

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you, your Cabinet colleagues and officers for attending Committee and providing Members with an opportunity to consider the Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21 and Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you:

**Corporate Overview**

- Members firstly wish to note their frustration and disappointment in the late publication of the budget papers and wish to highlight that this late sight of the papers provides Committee Members with minimal time to explore and adequately analyse a wealth of information within a reasonable timeframe. Members note the comments made by yourself that the reasoning for the late publication is a knock on effect of the late announcement of the provisional and confirmed settlement by the Welsh Government. Members welcome your assurance that in future years the timetable which yourself and officers will be working towards will be much earlier, which will then allow for information to be shared within a more reasonable timescale. Members would also appreciate, if in future years the financial information provided to Committee comes with explanatory guidance regarding the appendices. For instance, in the 13 appendices we received, some cross-referenced each other, and this was only indicated with a column containing an acronym, if cross-referencing occurs between the tables provided they should be clearly marked so on the tables themselves. Such clarity would not only provide a welcomed ease of reference but also greater transparency in better informing both Committee Members and members of the public of the required detail under the proposals.

- During the meeting, Members queried the possibility of offsetting the proposed £1.630million savings within adult services against the net increase of £4.168million (3.7%) which had been allocated in funding in response to the recognised pressures and demographic growth. It was confirmed to Members that additional funding is offered in line with specific factors, and it is essential that clarity is provided on what resources are needed in order to understand if it can be delivered within a lower financial budget. This understanding of what is required within a service area provides the assurance that budgets are constructed and formed both efficiently and effectively.
- Members highlighted the importance in recognising the commitment of debt and its sustainability and sought clarity on the predicted interest debt repayment over the next five years. Although Members were advised that officers are confident that the repayment figures are affordable and will mitigate risks they still hold concerns with regard to their sustainability and would appreciate clarity on the figures referenced by the Corporate Director at Committee and how they have been formulated.
- Queries were also raised in terms of austerity and the projected perspective of its impact. Members were advised that the proposed settlement this year was/is better than expected, but that there is some uncertainty over the medium/long term. However Members were informed that in March 2020 Welsh Government will produce further information around their budget which will serve as a significant indicator toward the levels of funding for public services, providing a slightly clearer understanding of the Council's long term position and welcome your assurances that all Council Members will be made aware of this information when announced.
- In terms of income generation, Members sought clarity on whether we as a Council approach such measures in a proactive way by benchmarking and learning from other local authorities. It was confirmed to Members that each service area is fundamentally responsible for their fees, charges and income generation and do look to benchmark and learn from other authorities. Members would appreciate if examples could be provided in respect of Adult Services and Housing & Communities on the methods they undertake when determining possible income generation avenues.

## Social Services - Adult Services

- Members highlighted their overall concern in the difficulties in assigning monetary value toward services provided for vulnerable individuals. Members were advised that due to the considerable amount of money spent within adult services, reviews have to be undertaken in order to ensure the most effective methods are being applied.
- In terms of the rise in non-residential care service charge from £90-£100 (11.1%) Members queried if the potential impact of raising such charges on individuals had been measured and were assured to hear that the rise is means tested.
- Questions were raised with regard to the service change proposal to reduce double handed domiciliary care visits to single-handed carer calls (*proposed efficiency saving £100,000 across Adult and Children Services*). Members were pleased to note the assurances from officers and the Cabinet Member that the safeguarding of an individual and that their outcomes are not jeopardised is at the centre of this proposal. Members were also pleased to hear of the potential benefits this opportunity could produce, such as better identifying equipment needs and avenues for grants for the individual.
- With regard to the service change proposals to return five individuals placed within out of county residential care to lower costs provisions, Members sought clarification on how such individuals will be identified and the process of review within such instances. Members were advised that the figure 'five' incorporates individuals within learning disabilities and mental health out of county provisions, and were further advised that within the review process there would always be a high level of multi-disciplinary working in order to ensure any transition is undertaken in a planned and measured way. However, Members would appreciate further clarity on how these individuals are identified and confirmation that the multi-disciplinary approach referenced at Committee are in place for both adults with learning disabilities and mental health.
- Concerns were raised that for the past ten years social services have failed to meet their savings targets, and although the savings targets this year are more modest than in previous years, most proposed savings have been identified in the RAG Analysis (*detailed in Appendix 5*) as Amber/Green. Given this, it is the Committee's view that it is unlikely that the proposed savings will be met. Members appreciate the financial challenges social services face given that it is both demand and service led. And whilst Members appreciate there may be difficulties in achieving the savings proposals,

Members do wish to reiterate there should be a conscious effort to ensure that an overspend within the service area does not occur.

- With regard to Cardiff becoming a 'Dementia Friendly and Age Friendly City' enquires were made as to whether or not there are any known cost implications for such proposals. Although Members appreciate the difficulty in identifying such costs, Members would appreciate if a tangible figure in taking this initiative forward could be provided.
- As detailed within the draft Corporate Plan, the current key performance indicator for new cases dealt with at first point of contact is set at 70-80%. Members hold concerns that as this target is wide ranging in scope which it makes it difficult to monitor and would advise consideration be given to revising the target to one more clearly defined.

#### **Housing & Communities** (*Cllr Elsmore's Portfolio*)

- During the meeting Members highlighted that the proposal to improve hospital discharge could have a knock on effect on care at home costs and wish to request further information on if such consequences are anticipated and how they are being mitigated, for instance if additional allowance within this field of care at home costs have increased.

#### **Housing & Communities** (*Cllr Thorne's Portfolio*)

- With regard to the Capital Programme Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme, Members would appreciate if further information on how the projected figures between the years 2020 -2023 have been decided. Members also wish to highlight their disappointment that within the papers it appears that investment will cease from 2023 with the perception that no money has been put aside for the following years.
- Within the papers, Members were pleased to note investment within community safety with permanent funding being allocated for a Community Safety Manager. Within the field of community safety questions were also raised regarding alleygating and how this required investment could be seen as an indicator towards levels of anti-social behaviour within a community. Although Members appreciate the reasoning for alleygating and that it can act as a deterrent for a range of issues, Members believe more should be done toward looking and addressing the issue of community safety more proactively, and wish to note this cost of alleygating more only be required due to the need to better look at

preventative measures that more directly addresses the issue. Members therefore wish to reaffirm the need for the Community Safety Partnership Boards to look to introduce proactive measures within this field.

- During the meetings, questions were raised with regard to the affordability within the new build and acquisition line within the Capital Investment Programme. Members would appreciate it if clarity on how the figures within this line are worked out across the years could be provided.
- During the meeting it was confirmed to Members that the Welsh Government have acknowledged that the prisoner pathway (an individual leaving prison and requiring support) is not effective and does need reviewing. Members were pleased to note the recognition that more needs to be done within this field and look forward to seeing developments in due course that will ensure those leaving prison are suitably supported and the risks to communities suitably mitigated.
- Clarity was also sought around the reference within the budget papers of putting £100,000 back into the housing reserve. Although Members were provided with some reasoning at the meeting, it was still unclear to Members why or how the Housing reserve requires £100,000 repayment and Members would appreciate if further clarity could be provided.
- Lastly, Members wish to note that due to the relatively low savings proposals within the Housing & Communities directorate it does appear likely that the very modest proposed savings targets will be met.

I will be copying this letter to all the relevant Cabinet Members and Directors as well as the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee in advance of its meeting on Wednesday 19 February and it is possible that these points will be raised with you in greater detail at that meeting.

I hope that these comments will have been of assistance to you and the Cabinet in considering the Budget proposals on Thursday 20 February and look forward to your response to the points raised in the letter, from you and the other Cabinet Members, within the next month.

Thank you again to you and officers for attending

Yours sincerely,



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

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

Cc: Cllr Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being  
Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director  
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director  
Claire Marchant, Social Services Director  
Jane Thomas, Assistant Director  
Louise Barry, Assistant Director  
Councillor David Walker, Chairperson Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny  
Committee  
Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer  
Cabinet Support Office



Cyf/My Ref:CM43109

Eich Cyf/Your Ref:: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

Dyddiad/Date: 20 February 2020

Councillor Shaun Jenkins  
Chairperson Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Shaun

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 17 February 2020 Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21**

Thank you for your letter dated 19 February 2020 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 20 February 2020.

May I thank you firstly as a Committee Chair for your participation in the recent Performance Panel, where the Steps, KPIs and Targets included in the Corporate Plan 2020/23 were considered in some detail. I believe this process has helped strengthen the Corporate Plan as well as our wider planning arrangements. A response to the issues raised has been shared with the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee following their consideration of the Corporate Plan.

As I noted at the meeting, the Welsh Government Settlement timing this year has led to a delay in the budget preparation process but I remain committed to ensure that in future years, budget information will be shared earlier with a consultation commencing in November subject to a return to an early autumn grant notification timetable. In addition, I have asked the Corporate Director Resources to consider if there are steps that can be taken to make the various appendices easier to read in future years.

The costs of interest on existing and future borrowing requirements are estimated and factored into the Capital Financing Budget for the General Fund and HRA in 2020/21 and as part of Medium Term Financial Plans. It should be noted that the interest costs of borrowing are split between the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund via a formula to determine reasonable shares. Existing and future borrowing requirements arising from the Capital Programme are managed as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

You reference in your letter the potential for clarity on future budget projections in March 2020. Just for clarification, the reference at Committee was to the UK Government



budget not the Welsh Government and we are expecting this to be released on the 11 March 2020.

I have asked officers to provide a Briefing note on what methods they undertake in determining income generation opportunities in respect of Adult Services and Housing & Communities.

The implementation of the Closer to Home strategy is based on a person centred, best practice approach. The figure of five quoted in the budget report is indicative only of the predicted outcome of the strategy's implementation.

I note your concerns that Social Services has a history of not delivering against savings proposals. The directorate has worked very hard to provide a set of robust savings proposals which are primarily rated Amber / Green with one rated as Red / Amber as deliverable which highlights an element of uncertainty but not to a degree that there is a high level of concern. I can assure the Committee that the Social Services directorate is committed to doing all it can to deliver a balanced position in 2020/21.

In respect to Dementia Friendly/Age friendly, I have asked officers to consider how a response to this request could be best achieved although I would question the value of such an exercise. As you acknowledge, this is a challenging and potentially time consuming assessment to make as the initiatives are not one-off initiatives but actually provide a framework for a huge range of both Council and Partner activity. This is an area that I will seek to discuss with you in more detail to understand the requirements.

In reference to the issues raised concerning the Corporate Plan, we believe that, in some instances, having a threshold target is entirely appropriate. The range threshold for the Key Performance Indicator- "percentage of new cases dealt with directly at First Point of Contact with no onward referral to Adult Service"- reflects the fact that the activity centres on case based decision making. In effect, too few referrals or too many referrals would signal a need to review the onward referral decisions.

Whilst the budget has clearly picked up the increasing pressures on home care due to demographic growth, the impact of more effective hospital discharge is actually likely to reduce costs rather than increase them. As we discussed at the Committee, the negative impacts of unnecessary hospital stays can reduce independence and the purpose of our "Get me Home" and "Single Point" discharge arrangements is to avoid this happening wherever possible.

I note the disappointment of the Committee in respect to no further investment beyond 2023 in respect of Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes. This is an example where difficult choices need to be made between schemes having considered the Capital Strategy priorities and by implication, the level of Capital funding available and the subsequent impact on the Council's borrowing requirement.

As discussed and as requested the detail of the HRA business plan will be considered at CASSC in March. This will give members the opportunity to consider the ambitious Council build programme alongside all the information that is required to establish the 30 year business plan for all of our Housing Revenue Account activity.

The £100,000 queried in relation to the Housing Reserve is to base fund an element of expenditure on homelessness previously funded by a contribution from reserve. In

recognition that reserves are a finite resource this helps to ensure that current expenditure levels are sustainable over the medium term. This also provides an opportunity for the Council to consider the availability of other funding streams in respect of homelessness going forward.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Weaver', is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

**Y Cyngorydd/Councillor Christopher Weaver**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad/Cabinet member for**  
**Finance, Modernisation & Performance**

cc Cllr Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being Cllr  
Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities  
Chris Lee, Corporate Director  
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director  
Claire Marchant, Social Services Director  
Jane Thomas, Assistant Director  
Louise Barry, Assistant Director  
Councillor David Walker, Chairperson Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny  
Committee  
Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer  
Cabinet Support Office

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