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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020, 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](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

10 **Correspondence Following Committee Meeting** (Pages 3 - 6)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/CllrBridgeman

13 March 2020



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Councillor Sarah Merry  
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills  
County Hall  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah,

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2020, providing an opening statement and answering questions on the **School Organisation Programme – Update Report**.

I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning for the update report, advice and answering Members questions.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the progress being made in the School Organisation Programme and Members were very pleased with progress made to date. Following Members consideration of the report and answers to questions, the Committee during the way forward identified a number of comments, and concerns, namely:

- In terms of asset management, and in order to understand the full depth of the challenge, the Committee would welcome further information which details how many properties sit in the 'urgent need' category. In particular, Members hold concerns as the Band C phase has not yet been confirmed by the Welsh Government.
- With regard to the programme being supplemented by £25m of funding via capital receipts, Members would appreciate clarity on if this funding will be provided by education only assets or if it will be funded through other Council assets.
- Committee were concerned to hear that under the current arrangements of the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) the authority has less control over building specifications and the possible implications this could have in terms of community availability. Members would appreciate further information detailing the current arrangements in this respect.

#### 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.



- Whilst Members appreciate the difficulties explained at Committee with regard to developing specific 'masterplans' for developments, Members do hold concerns over restrictions especially given recent initiatives such as the development of Welsh medium provisions. Members believe it essential that information which captures need, benefit and risk is drawn upon formally and would like further information on how such information, captured through consultations and other means, is both captured and utilised when developments are being progressed.

I hope that the comments and requests mentioned above will be welcomed by the Directorate and be of use. The Committee wishes for these comments to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 March and a formal response provided within one month.

Thank you again for your attendance at Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR Lee Bridgeman**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
Cabinet Office.

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/CllrBridgeman

13 March 2020

Councillor Graham Hinchey  
Cabinet Member – Children & Families  
County Hall  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you, Claire Marchant, Director for Social Services and Deborah Driffield, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2020 to present the **Children's Services Quarter Three Performance Report** and to provide a **Progress Report on the Out of County Placements Inquiry**. The Committee have asked that I pass on their sincere thanks and appreciation for the open and honest approach taken during the discussion of both reports.

Following Members consideration of the reports and answers to questions, the Committee during the way forward identified a number of areas they wished to raise.

- With regard to fostering and the differences between Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) and in-house fostering, Members note and appreciate the past differences in approaches toward fostering by the authority and private companies and commend the work of yourself and officers in addressing the disparity within this area. Members agree with comments made by yourself and officers that support for foster carers still requires further development and is a crucial component in further addressing the disparity. In order to better understand the challenges, Members would appreciate a briefing note which details the following: the specific changes to packages for in-house Foster Carers and alliance of profits, a further breakdown of the comparative costs between IFA's and In-house fostering which includes operational costs, and clarity on the recruitment target for foster carers over a 12 month period which provides information on specific conversions such as the review process.

- In terms of a possible alliance with not for profit foster care providers, Members wish to request this as an avenue to be considered and would appreciate further information in terms of possible timescales and perceived benefits from such partnership working.
- In terms of the recruitment and retention of social workers Members welcome the comments with regard to this Committee undertaking a Task and Finish inquiry in this area and would appreciate a breakdown of the known barriers within this field which details the scope of Cardiff Council, Welsh Government and Trade Unions in addressing the barriers. In addition, and as offered at the meeting, Members would like to request the performance data referenced at Committee for agency and permanent social workers from Quarter 4, 2018/19 onward.
- As offered at the meeting, Members would appreciate an amended response to Recommendation 12.
- With regard to Care Homes, Members note and welcome the comments made about the ongoing work, particularly around the development of an assessment unit which provides detailed multi agency assessment.
- For future reference, Members wish to provide clarity on Recommendation 15 and wish to advise that the recommendation looks to place emphasis on the need to develop in house care home provision. In addition, Members would also like to request financial information on the costing between in-house and private care home providers.

Members welcome the positive gains and developments discussed throughout the meeting in addition to the open and frank dialogue in terms of budget. I hope that these comments and request for further information will help support you and the Directorates continued work in improving outcomes for children and ask that a formal response to this letter with the requested information is provided within one month.

Yours sincerely



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Claire Marchant – Director of Social Services  
 Deborah Driffield – Interim Assistant Director for Children’s Services