



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2021, 1.30 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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

23 February 2021

Councillors Chris Weaver, Susan Elsmore & Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance
Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Sent via e-mail



Dear Cllr Weaver, Cllr Elsmore and Cllr Thorne.

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 FEBRUARY 2021
DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 & CORPORATE PLAN 2021/24**

As Chairman 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 Budget Proposals 2021/22 and Corporate Plan 2021-2024. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you:

Corporate Overview

- During the meeting, questions were asked about whether the efficiency savings proposed for adult services and people and communities within last year's budget (2020/21) had been met, and Members were signposted to an appendix of the Budget Monitoring - Month 9 Cabinet Report which provides a summary of such information. Members were further advised that social services unachieved savings in 2020/21 across both adult's and children's totalled £2,075,000. Along with requesting if the document could be sent to this Committee's support officer for circulation to Committee Members, we also wish to request if, in future years, this document could be provided within this scrutiny committee's budget papers. As, along with providing important background information on previous saving proposals that are relevant to this Committee, it would also help aid Members' understanding and consideration of savings achievability.
- Members would further appreciate if, going forward, the latest target results for the previous year's Corporate Plan KPIs could be included either within the Corporate Plan document itself or provided to scrutiny for incorporation in its meeting papers. However, please note, due to the volume of information provided to scrutiny regarding the budget and Corporate Plan, it is requested this be provided and presented succinctly.

- Questions were also raised at committee about whether the proposed savings for the next financial year could be considered as modest in nature. Members heard that there was a better than anticipated settlement from the Welsh Government (as was the case last year), but that it is important that the budget be considered against a period of continued financial pressures for the service areas'. Due to the relatively low efficiency savings proposed for both adult services and housing and communities' proposals which fall to this Committee, and given their nature and the assurances provided at Committee, it is hoped and expected they be achieved.
- With regard to the Changes for Cardiff 2021/22 budget consultation, Members raised their concerns on how representative it was, along with its reach and cited particular groups of people where low levels of engagement had been achieved. Members heard, and recognised, the impact the pandemic has had and the constraints it placed on the consultation in terms of both methods and timescales. Members welcomed the comments that work will likely be undertaken later in the year addressing how consultations can have a greater reach and ensure responses are better representative of the community. Members wish to acknowledge and encourage such work being undertaken and if Covid-19 restrictions allow, Members would also encourage and support a range of alternative methods within the consultation process being taken forward.
- Members highlighted the significant amount of additional borrowing within the Capital Programme and sought assurance in terms of both sustainability and affordability of repayments. Members were advised that this is tested against financial resilience and affordability for instance through KPI's and monitoring undertaken by the Cabinet and Audit Committee process. Members also note the comments made that a lot of the borrowing relates to projects or developments which will become assets. In addition, Members also heard that whilst the level of borrowing is increasing, so too is the level of income for support repayments.
- During the meeting, clarity was also sought regarding the Financial Resilience Mechanism (FRM). Members heard how it has no correlation to rises in council tax and that its purpose is for funding uncertainty, however it could also be allocated as a one-off use for designated priority areas, but only if a "good" settlement is achieved. In terms of how the FRM is being utilised this year, Members wish to seek clarity on how the categories were determined. Members of course understand this is policy driven, however wish to enquire if there are any specific mechanisms in place for determining allocation and spend.

- In terms of the bids made to the Welsh Government regarding loss of income and expenditure due to the pandemic, Members heard how over 95% of the council's claims have been successful however there is still potential risk regarding the last quarter. Members understand that a claim for the final quarter is due to be submitted to the Welsh Government during the next two weeks, and note the comments made regarding the challenges surrounding estimating loss of income for this period.

Cllr Elsmore's Portfolio

- In terms of the work detailed in the Corporate Plan regarding working with partners to prevent hospital admissions and reduce the need for care; questions were asked around if there was potential to add a specific KPI linked to this target. Members welcomed the response that this would be looked into and acknowledge the comments made regarding the need to address the difficulties regarding measuring prevention along with taking into account the rise in population numbers.
- With regard to the KPI's detailed in the Corporate Plan, comments were also made regarding the realistic nature of the targets set and Members acknowledge and welcome the approach to not set targets which could potentially jeopardise well-being.
- Questions were also raised regarding the lack of narrative within the Corporate Plan towards people experiencing social isolation and loneliness who are not in the older age group. Members note this was acknowledged along with the comments made that a corporate approach to this issue is required along with an expansion on the ongoing work with partners. Members wish to encourage this work being more widely communicated along with the recognition that social isolation and loneliness affects all age groups.
- Members explored if there is any potential risk in resource levels to mitigate digital exclusion; particularly if the current pandemic continues for longer than expected. Members note the comments that at present, officers are content that the level of resource available will meet demand, and welcome the comments that grants and additional resources which may become available in addressing this issue will continue to be monitored.
- In terms of the £300,000 proposed efficiency saving for internal supported living accommodation, Members sought clarity on its potential impacts and were informed that the individuals living at the property would not be impacted, nor too would the staff as they would be redeployed to other schemes which have vacancies. In line with this Committee's recent

task and finish inquiry, Members welcomed the comments made at Committee along with the Invest to Save Bid detailed within the Capital Programme, to develop accommodation in response to community requirements.

- With regard to the 'Inclusive Cities Project' referenced in the Corporate Plan, Members note the overview provided that it is an EU funded project. Members would appreciate if further detail can be provided on this work in order to determine if this is a piece of work which falls into the remit of this Committee as Members would be keen to receive a briefing on the matter.

Cllr Thorne's Portfolio

- In terms of the Council House Build Delivery Programme, Members heard how due to problems amongst developers managing sites during the pandemic and its subsequent lockdowns, the target of delivering the first 1,000 homes within the project has been delayed from May 2022 to December 2022. Members look forward and welcome the development of these properties, and although this delayed delivery target is not ideal, Members appreciate and understand the reasons provided at Committee and wish to thank you for your open and candidness in response to this question.
- Reference was also made to the Corporate Plan objective surrounding working in partnership to tackle violence and organised crime through an enhanced, preventative approach. Given the importance of this work and that community safety and tackling ASB was identified as a top three priority amongst the respondents' of this year's budget consultation, it was questioned if there was scope to deliver specific KPI's in relation to this objective. Members note the comments made that such areas of work is undertaken through a partnership and integrated approach and KPIs need to be reflective of this. As the cabinet member is co-Chair of the Community Safety Leadership Board, Members wish to **recommend** the need to develop an effective KPI to measure this work, and that consideration of how such a measure is determined and deployed be taken to a Community Safety Partnership meeting for formal consideration.
- During the meeting, members were informed that Cardiff rents are below 'living rent levels'. As offered at Committee, Members would appreciate sight of the Report referenced along with clarity on how far below the living rent level Cardiff is.

- Due to the nature of comments received by respondents to the budget consultation, Members explored if there was scope and a need, for additional initiatives to be undertaken in order to tackle aggressive begging, and Members heard how the activities scheme, which is currently being developed, along with providing the right level of support for individuals should address this issue.
- In terms of the efficiency savings proposed for reduction in benefit assessment staff, Members sought confirmation that this was being considered in line with projected demand, particularly given the current context. Members were assured to hear that due to changes in approaches to assessment these proposed savings would not result in an impact on service.
- Finally, in terms of the Housing Retrofit Programme, clarity was sought on its funding, and Members heard how an element of funding is providing with from the Welsh Government along with an allocation of funding within the Capital Programme. Members appreciate the overview provided and look forward to monitoring its developments.

I have copied into this letter, the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee in advance of their meeting on Wednesday 24 February, so it is possible that some of these points may be raised in greater detail at that meeting.

I hope that the comments provided will be of assistance to you and the Cabinet in considering the Budget proposals on Thursday 25 February, and look forward to your response to the points and recommendation raised in this letter.

Thank you once more to you and officers for attending Committee.

Yours sincerely,



COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Chris Lee, Corporate Director

Ian Allwood, Head of Finance

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director

Jane Thomas, Director

Councillor David Walker, Chair Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer

Cabinet Support Office

This page is intentionally left blank

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**



Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088
www.caerdydd.gov.uk
County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087
www.cardiff.gov.uk

Fy Nghyf/My Ref: CM45291
Eich Cyf/Your Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins
Dyddiad/Date: 24 February 2021

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

Annwyl/Dear Shaun

**Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 22 February 2021
Draft Budget Proposals 2021/22**

Thank you for your letter dated 23 February 2021 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 25 February 2021.

Some specific comments in respect of the points made are included below:

- The Committees comments and recommendations in relation to the Corporate Plan 2021/24 were welcome. Moving forward, the intention is to share performance updates, which includes performance information over time and against targets for the key performance indicators within the Corporate Plan. With regards to the Inclusive Cities project, I will request officers to provide the committee with further detail on the nature of the work whilst updating on the latest position.
- I agree with the committee that community safety and tackling ASB are priority issues for residents in Cardiff, as highlighted again in this year's budget consultation. For that reason, the Corporate Plan will include the following new key performance indicator, which is collected annually in the Ask Cardiff survey: *"The extent to which citizens agree that police and other local public services are successfully dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime in their local area"*.
- A report on how Cardiff's rents compare to the Living Rent will be made available as requested.
- With regards the request for clarity on how the Financial Resilience Mechanism (FRM) investment is determined, I can confirm that Directorates submit proposals for policy driven investment for Cabinet's consideration. Areas taken forward for investment are determined in the context of the Corporate Plan, and with reference to consultation findings. This is evidenced by the strong correlation between FRM

GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI
Mae'r Gyngor 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 anwain at oedi.

WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

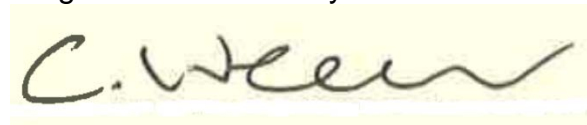
The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh, English or bilingually. We will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.



investment, the Corporate Plan and consultation responses, as set out in the 2021/22 Budget Report.

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

Yn gwir/Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow background. The signature appears to be 'C. Weaver' written in a cursive style.

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

cc Chris Lee, Corporate Director
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director
Jane Thomas, Director
Councillor David Walker, Chairperson Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer
Cabinet Support Office