



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** WEDNESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2021, 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)

11 **Correspondence Following Committee Meeting**(Pages 3 - 12)

This page is intentionally left blank

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

22 Sep 2021

Councillor Lynda Thorne  
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities  
*Sent via e-mail*



Dear Cllr Thorne,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 SEP 2021 – OVER-CLADDING OF HIGH-RISE BLOCKS**

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee to both yourself and officers for attending the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee to facilitate our consideration of the Over-cladding of Council High Rise Blocks Cabinet Report.

As you are aware, considerable concern was raised due to the substantial increase in cost detailed in the Cabinet Report and Members note the assurance provided that tenders, estimations and processes undertaken pre-pandemic were correct. It was explained the change in costing is due to the exceptional ramifications of the pandemic and delays to the project's progression in line with the Welsh Government's and Fire Service's required process. Given the considerable increase in costing trajectory since April 2020, we questioned the project's financial viability and if the cost to the Council could further increase as the scheme develops. It was explained that during the next stage of the process, 'Stage Two', the Council will draw a contractual agreement which will provide a guarantee on the pricing and Members received, what appeared to be concrete assurance, that if the contract is agreed soon, the pricing detailed within the Cabinet Report will be set and will not change. Against the backdrop of costings, during our 'way forward' deliberation, the Committee explored the possibility of recommending that the project does not proceed and further analysis on alternative options be undertaken. Whilst there was not a consensus at Committee for this recommendation, the Committee Members present did express concern at the inflating costs. The Committee understands the urgency of the situation and need to provide residents with a swift resolution to their current living conditions however we do hold concerns surrounding the trajectory in cost displayed in the Cabinet Report and wish to stress the need to ensure it does not escalate. As a result, Members **recommend** that to avoid further increase in cost, thorough due diligence is conducted for Stage Two as swiftly as possible to ensure a guarantee in price.

The project's costing is substantial and so Committee sought assurance that diligent assessment has been conducted to ensure this proposal is the most financially viable option to adequately address residents' issues and, that a proportionate decision has been reached based equally on the urgency of the situation and cost to the Council. During the meeting we explored if removing the site and replacing

it with a different scheme, such as that of a low-rise calibre, had been considered and, if there was a possibility of undertaking further assessment to determine if it would be a viable, more cost-effective option. Members were informed due to the condition of the properties faced by current residents along with the challenges in rehousing residents and development constraints of the site this makes the option not viable.

Regarding the financial implications for leaseholders, the Committee sought clarity on if they would be required to pay a contribution toward the project costs. It was confirmed that although leaseholders would not be required to pay toward the cladding system it is the norm for leaseholders to contribute towards other elements such as windows within such projects. However, due to the revised costings further work on the cost for leaseholders is required. Members would appreciate if further insight, albeit provisional insight, could be provided on how much each leaseholder may be expected to pay as a result of these works.

Thank you once again to you and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of this Report and we hope the comments, observations and recommendations captured within this letter are of use.

For ease of reference, the recommendation and request captured within this letter is as follows:

**Requests following this scrutiny**

- Indicative insight into the potential costs for Lydstep Flat leaseholders.

**Recommendations to be monitored following this scrutiny**

The Committee makes 1 formal recommendation which is set out below. As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
To avoid further increase in cost, thorough due diligence is conducted for Stage Two as swiftly as possible to ensure a guarantee in price.				

Yours,



**COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

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

cc. Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities

Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities

Colin Blackmore, OM Building Improvement & Safety

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations

Cabinet Office

This page is intentionally left blank

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM46466

Dyddiad / Date: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Councillor Shaun Jenkins  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear Shaun

### **CASSC Chair's Letter - Sep 2021 - Overcladding Of Council High Rise Blocks**

Please may I thank you and the other committee members for your time in considering the cabinet report Over-Cladding of Council High Rise Blocks.

I understand and share the concern expressed about the increase in cost. As set out during the meeting, we are currently operating in exceptional and unprecedented times, however it is important that we deliver on our commitment to the residents of Lydstep Flats, particularly given the difficulties their living conditions are currently causing.

I accept in principle the Committee's recommendation that the due diligence for stage two of the project should be conducted as soon as possible with a view to ensuring that prices do not increase further. Officers will do all they can to expedite these matters and will seek to ensure that the project is delivered within the current estimates.

With regards to the potential costs to leaseholders, the commitment was previously made to charge residents only the costs that would apply to residents of low rise blocks for the windows and balcony upgrades. This is still the intention and we will seek to protect leaseholders as far as possible from the exceptional inflationary pressures being experienced in the building industry at present.

#### **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.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present to the Committee on this issue.

Yn gywir  
Yours sincerely

Lynda Thorne

**Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Lynda Thorne**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Dai a Chymunedau**



My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

20th October 2021

Councillor Lynda Thorne  
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities  
*Sent via e-mail*



Dear Cllr Thorne,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 SEP 2021 – CARDIFF DESIGN GUIDE**

A sincere thanks to you, Sarah and Dave for providing Committee Members with a further opportunity to consider and feed into the development of the Cardiff Design Guide. We sincerely appreciate the open and receptive response to our continued involvement in the document's development.

A fundamental objective for this Guide will be to set the framework and guidance toward the minimum standards required for our housing developments. Enabling Cardiff Council to deliver pioneering, exemplar houses and communities which push boundaries and stimulate inspiration across the country. As a Committee we fully endorse and commend this objective and wish to stress the need to ensure this objective remains prevalent. Not only within the Guide, but throughout all aspects of the design and development process the Council has involvement, or influence on. We also note to achieve this substantial yet significant objective, this Design Guide will be required to work in alignment with an array of documents and policies design teams and contractors will have to have regard to. We suggest, that where possible, this significant objective is reiterated throughout all the additional documents and policies involved in the development process.

In terms of the Guide's authority, we note it will set in place the Council's minimum standards and will be used at all stages of the design and construction process, however it will not allow the authority to stop developments if they meet all planning policy. Instead, the Guide will provide a clear framework to design teams, setting the minimum requirements developments have to achieve. In addition, the Guide will also provide a baseline on how designs will be assessed. We note and welcome that the Guide will take into consideration the importance of financial viability, issues of site constraints along with the crucial recognition that design

standards will undoubtedly evolve. We also welcome the emphasis that this Guide sets out the *minimum* standards and where possible projects will go above and beyond the standards set out in the document. We wish to stress the importance that this is clearly conveyed in the final Guide, ensuring readers understand the standards set are a minimum, baseline requirement and aspiration should always be that these standards are surpassed.

As a Committee we have continuously reiterated the importance of architectural legacy within Council developments and have previously recommended this be an integral focus for Council developments; to provide lasting, positive effects both for the initial estate and its wider area. It is pleasing to note the importance of a development's legacy is shared by yourself and officers and is a key, overarching objective for this Guide.

Further to this, it is also pleasing to note that our previous discussions and recommendations such as the importance of energy efficiency, community space and ensuring each and every property developed adds a real, lasting positive impact to a resident's quality of life also plays a leading part in the Guide.

During the meeting we raised the issue of density and the importance of having due regard to liveable space. We referenced the Princes Foundation Nansleden development which has been developed with a central focus on urban design and placemaking, resulting in a notable balance between density and liveable space. As confirmed at the meeting, this is a recognised objective for the Council's current and future developments and is addressed through the recognitions of local issues, the inclusion of wider footways, green infrastructure and so on.

Members note that officers have benchmarked and taken inspiration from Design Guides across the county in the development of the document. In line with this, and as suggested and agreed at the meeting, we strongly endorse liaising with the Princes Foundation to feed into the Guide's development. As a Committee, we would like to see the feedback received by Princes Foundation in the document's consultation and to also be informed if their feedback has been included. I have tasked our scrutiny officer to liaise with officers to ensure we receive this information.

We note the next steps for the Design Guide will be to finalise the content and format the document with images from exemplar schemes and we remind you of our previously agreed recommendation to include images from Princes Foundations developments such as Nansledan and Poundbury to help shape the Council's approach to urban design. We also

note that it is the intention the Guide is finalised in December 2021 following stakeholder consultation.

Thank you once more to yourself and officers for providing us with a continued opportunity to feed into the Guide's development. A response to this letter is not required however we hope our comments and observations have proved useful to you and officers. Should you or officers wish to share any further draft ideas or content for feedback either within a Committee meeting or informally outside of a meeting please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Jenkins', with a horizontal line underneath.

**COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

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

cc. Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities

Dave Jaques, OM Housing Development

This page is intentionally left blank