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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2023, 5.00 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

4 **Draft Corporate Plan 2023 - 2026 & Draft Budgetary Proposals 2023 – 2024 (Pages 3 - 26)**

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Ref: Scrutiny/AEJ/LB/CW/010323

1 March 2023

Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance,
Room 519,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Weaver,

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – 28 February 2023

On behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you, Councillor Lister, Councillor Merry, Cllr Bradbury and officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 28 February 2023 to consider the Draft Budget Proposals 2023-24 and Draft Corporate Plan 2023 - 26.

The meeting initially considered the Corporate Overview and was followed by scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and sections of the draft corporate plan relevant to the terms of reference of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

❖ **Corporate Overview**

In terms of your Portfolio, Members felt there were a number of issues that would require your input and commitment going forward and would appreciate your views on.

Firstly, the Committee wish to commend you and Cabinet colleagues for the commitments given to budgets in Education and Children's Services. The uplifts were very welcomed and we will support you in ensuring Directorates are achieving their commitments and priorities and budgets are used effectively across all Directorates that fall within this Committee's Terms of Reference.

During our questioning, we asked you about the following issues and noted responses:

- What was being done to address budget overspends and bringing budgets back into line?
- We asked you about Corporate Risk and despite increase in budgets, assurances on whether the risk was manageable, given the ambitious commitments in the Corporate Plan and against the backdrop of overspends and demands on services?
- Grant funding and reliance on grants and sought assurance that services would not be affected by uncertainty of grant funding and resultant impact in planning and sustainability of services.
- 3.95% increase in Council Tax and how this compares with other local authorities in Wales, and what modelling on future projections had been undertaken.
- FRM - sought clarification in its purpose and what it is used for.

In addition, we asked questions on the following areas. We request a response to these.

- Budget Consultation - we asked what the circa 6000 responses were as a percentage of the whole population of Cardiff. **Please provide this information.** In addition, we asked whether the timing of the consultation was most effective (over Christmas etc) and noted the response, linked to the next issue.
- We asked what impact of the timings or delays of UK and Welsh Government's announcements on budget settlements has had in terms of the in the budget setting process. We **request** that you provide a further narrative on this, and how the slow delivery of announcements that has happened this year has had an impact on council decisions and some further information on how you have had to overcome this.

❖ Children's Services

The Committee welcomed the 9.7% net increase in the Children's Services budget for 2023/24 and would like to thank the Cabinet for continuing to support this area.

Budget Proposals

During the Q&A session, we asked a number of questions on the budget, particularly around what the service wishes to deliver with additional funding; how the service will evaluate the changes it introduces, given the ambitions the service has under its "people, place and practice" priorities; whether the service is confident it can achieve its efficiency savings, given the demands on the service; and delivering the FRM commitment on increased activities for Children Looked After and those at the edge of care. We noted the responses given.

We asked questions in relation to how the budget will be used to increase the number of adopters; and **request** that you provide numbers of children and young people in this cohort awaiting adoption and for further information on those placed in county and out of county.

Corporate Plan 2023-26

In relation to the Corporate Plan, Members asked a number of questions in relation to commitments and KPIs. This included 3 x new KPIs on the Youth Justice Service (which had been set nationally by the Youth Justice Board); and KPIs K1.16 and K1.17 relating to care leavers in education and employment. We asked whether the targets were challenging enough, and the Director of Children's Services stated that she would provide more information on these KPIs. We would suggest that she take into account the following when providing a response.

Overall, the Committee sought clarity on the KPIs relating to Children's Services across the board. We questioned some of the wording of the PIs, particularly those set nationally, and would wish to know whether the Council has a say in the development of the PIs?

We would **request** that further information be provided on the Children's Services KPIs as to whether they have been developed locally or nationally; and (where appropriate) how the targets have been set and the rationale for developing and implementing them. We also felt that any previous performance should be included in the Corporate Plan to give an insight into the progress being made and allow us to measure the impact of the KPIs. We also need to be able to measure whether KPIs are realistic, achievable but also challenging.

Unregistered Care settings

A Member of the Committee asked questions on this issue, and we would appreciate any information that could be provided on unregistered care settings in Cardiff. We would wish for the Cabinet Member and officers come to a future Scrutiny Committee to discuss developments and innovations in Children's Services, and request that this be part of these discussions.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

We asked questions in relation to plans for attracting new social work staff – what packages are available etc. and noted responses. We will monitor this issue via quarterly performance data submitted to the committee.

Ty Storrie

Members asked questions on proposals for Ty Storrie but seek further clarification on this proposal. We noted that there is a CHAD place at Ty Storrie and understand plans for other provisions coming into the provision.

We **request** that further information be provided on the following:

- What is the status of the CHAD bed currently at Ty Storrie?
- Is the CHAD place remaining at Ty Storrie or being moved into the community? If so, are we sure this is an efficiency saving if removing a niche/bespoke bed? If we subsequently need it, do we run a risk trying to find a private provider or out of county placement and therefore potentially negate the saving proposed.
- Further information on proposed services coming into Ty Storrie

Education & Lifelong Learning

Members of the Committee would like to again commend the Cabinet for retaining and protecting education and school budgets.

Budget Proposals

During the Q&A, we sought assurances that the service can mitigate risks, including any deficit budgets in schools. We asked questions around ensuring that schools are operating to their maximum efficiency and minimising waste. We heard that over the next couple of months, the picture will become clearer on the budgets of individual schools. Our work programme already contains a follow up session on post-pandemic recovery with Members, officers and head teachers to be undertaken at our meeting in July. We will follow up this issue with them then, but if you have any thoughts on this issue, it would be welcomed. In addition, we were informed that 5 schools were projecting overspends in the current year, and we would **request** that a list of who these are would be appreciated.

Fees and Charges

Members asked about the 5% increase in school meals, particularly what EIA informed us, and more details on what consultation had been done? We also asked about the potential impact on families; and how is the LEA supporting

schools on this; and sought clarification on price increase and how this interacts with WG Policy on universal free school meals. We noted responses on this.

We asked about the impact of increased fees and charges in use of Storey Arms and what support is available for schools and parents? We noted the response.

Corporate Plan

Due to time pressures, there were a number of questions relating to Corporate Plan that we were unable to ask. Therefore, we would seek a response on the following queries:

- Commitments S1.06 – S1.08 – there are a number of commitments in relation to refreshing, relaunching and redeveloping a series of documents and programmes. Please could you explain the rationale behind this? Are we not able to concentrate on delivering the plans and policies already in place so that schools have time to embed plans before we change them again?
- Linked with previous queries in Children’s Services KPIs – please can you provide more information in relation to K1.03 - *The percentage of children and young people between the age of 8 and 18 who state they are able to do their best to learn and progress at school all or most of the time*? The wording appears very woolly. What does this KPI mean? Who set it? What is the methodology for collecting this data?
- (K1.12) - *The number of added formal Additional Learning Needs places delivered across the City (Target to be achieved by September 2023).* The target is set at 151 by September 2023 – does this target need to be more challenging and cover the whole year? Why September 2023?

- Regarding the use of the pupil development grant for free school meals - how this will be impacted in relation to roll-out of free school meals across the primary sector? How are you going to identify these, what formula will be used?

Attendance Strategy

We welcomed the news that an Attendance Strategy was under development but would **request** that more information be supplied on any research being carried out on this issue, to build core data to underpin the Strategy. At our meeting in December, we heard a myriad of reasons lie behind attendance problems but would welcome any details arising from research. We will also ensure that this issue is addressed at the Pandemic Recovery update at our meeting in July.

During discussions on this issue, we queried whether the attendance target for primary schools in particular was challenging enough – notwithstanding the complexities surrounding non-attendance at the moment, and we would **welcome your feedback** on this.

Future Capital Project Join-up Opportunities

At the meeting, Members considered a range of Capital Programme Projects, including a range of community facilities (including a Youth Hub) and proposals in relation to the Community Focussed Schools Programme.

Members felt that joining up of these types of projects could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would **recommend** that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.

Supporting Young People

Youth Service

Members have, at previous meetings of this Committee championed the work of the youth service and would wish to state that it fully supports the work that Cllr Bradbury and officers are aiming to achieve in this area.

We asked a number of questions about the funding of this service – about the reliance on grants in recent years; the earmarked reserves (line 68 in Appendix 7 of Cabinet papers); efficiency savings proposals (Appendix 6a in Scrutiny papers only – ref EDUE9) to align budgets across youth services, Cardiff Commitment and Child Friendly cities teams; and numerous proposals within the FRM Appendix (Appendix 3 in Cabinet report papers).

Due to this, Members were unclear on what this means in terms of the Youth Service budget and would therefore **request** that some further detail on the makeup of this budget be provided, so that we have a clear picture of what funds are available; whether the service is gaining or losing funds; what parts of the service (and where) funds are being spent. Therefore, we request this be provided.

We noted the work being done across the service in retaining funding; tapping into grants available; mapping services; talking to young people at current youth centres; developing the Passport to the City etc. We also welcome the commitments by Welsh Government Interim Youth Work Board (and Task & Finish Groups) and the work of Keith Towler.

We feel confident that those responsible for managing and developing the Service will do so effectively; make the best use of the funds that are available; review and align services within the Youth Service itself and more widely across council; and make best use of partnership and collaboration in delivering an enhanced service.

We firmly believe that Youth Services should be prioritised as an invest to save service, which has a strong core budget to enable it to plan, build and develop appropriately. We were surprised to compare the budget of a secondary school at around £10m to a key service such as Youth Services that covers the whole of Cardiff and provides invaluable support to schools and the wider community having £1.5m, much of which is grant funding.

We therefore **recommend** that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.

Youth Provision/Facilities

During the meeting, Members sought assurances that youth facilities (including sport and music) are expanded and available/affordable for all young people, particularly vulnerable young people.

We noted the work that is already being done in this area and welcome some of the mapping work being undertaken in areas of Cardiff to establish what is already available; learning from good practice such as Cllr Bradbury speaking to young people in youth centres; realignment of services; developments such as Passport to the City; Cardiff's Little Gigs; focussing on getting females into sport and activities; building grants systems with providers etc. We also noted the external consultant's report in this area. Our work programme already has a commitment for "youth provision" to come to this Scrutiny Committee in June 2023, so we will discuss these issues further in due course.

Youth Hubs

Members wished to explore the development of the City centre (and other) Youth Hubs in the City. We recognise that this sits within Cllr Thorne's

Portfolio. We would therefore **request** that Councillor Thorne provide the Committee with details on proposals for Youth Hubs. We were particularly interested in whether the commitment (S4.06) to progress a Youth Hub in the City centre by Summer 2023 was on course and any details about it.

To recap, the Committee is requesting the following information:

Corporate

1. Budget Consultation – **Provide details of** what the circa 6000 responses were as a percentage of the whole population of Cardiff.
2. Provide a view on what impact of the timings or delays of UK and Welsh Government's announcements on budget settlements has had in terms of the in the budget setting process; and how the slow delivery of announcements that has happened this year has had an impact on council decisions and some further information on how you have had to overcome this.

Children's Services

3. Children Looked After - provide numbers of children and young people in this cohort awaiting adoption and further information on those placed in county and out of county.
4. KPIs - further information be provided on the Children's Services KPIs as to whether they have been developed locally or nationally; and (where appropriate) how the targets have been set and the rationale for developing and implementing them. Also provide some observations in relation to any previous performance being included in the Corporate Plan to give an insight into the progress being made and allow us to measure the impact of the KPIs. We also need to be able to measure whether KPIs are realistic, achievable but also challenging.

5. Ty Storrie – provide further information in relation to the following:
- What is the status of the CHAD bed currently at Ty Storrie?
 - Is the CHAD place remaining at Ty Storrie or being moved into the community? If so, are we sure this is an efficiency saving if removing a niche/bespoke bed? If we subsequently need it, do we run a risk trying to find a private provider or out of county placement and therefore potentially negate the saving proposed.
 - Further information on proposed services coming into Ty Storrie

Education & Lifelong Learning

6. Corporate Plan – responses on the following additional queries:
- a) Commitments S1.06 – S1.08 – there are a number of commitments in relation to refreshing, relaunching and redeveloping a series of documents and programmes. Please could you explain the rationale behind this? Are we not able to concentrate on delivering the plans and policies already in place so that schools have time to embed plans before we change them again?
- b) Linked with previous queries in Children's Services KPIs – please can you provide more information in relation to K1.03 - *The percentage of children and young people between the age of 8 and 18 who state they are able to do their best to learn and progress at school all or most of the time*? The wording appears very woolly. What does this KPI mean? Who set it? What is the methodology for collecting this data?
- c) (K1.12) - *The number of added formal Additional Learning Needs places delivered across the City (Target to be achieved by September 2023)*. The target is set at 151 by September 2023 – does this target need to be more challenging and cover the whole year? Why September 2023?

d) Regarding the use of the pupil development grant for free school meals
- how this will be impacted in relation to roll-out of free school meals
across the primary sector? How are you going to identify these, what
formula will be used?

7. Attendance Strategy – provide more information on any research being carried out on this issue, to build core data to underpin the Strategy. We would also welcome views on our query whether the target for attendance in primary schools in particular was challenging enough – notwithstanding the complexities surrounding non-attendance at the moment.
8. Overspends information - we were informed that 5 schools were projecting overspends in the current year, and we would **request** that a list of who these are would be appreciated.

Supporting Young People

9. Youth Service budget - further detail on the makeup of this budget be provided, so that we have a clear picture of what funds are available; whether the service is gaining or losing funds; what parts of the service (and where) funds are being spent.
10. Youth Hubs - request that Cllr Thorne provide the Committee with details on proposals for Youth Hubs. We were particularly interested in whether the commitment (S4.06) to progress a Youth Hub in the City centre by Summer 2023 was on course and any details about it.

Recommendations to be monitored following this Scrutiny.

To summarise, the Scrutiny Committee made two formal recommendations which is set out below. As part of the response to this letter we would be grateful if you could, for the recommendation, 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.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
<p><u>Future Capital Project Join-up Opportunities</u></p> <p>1. Members felt that joining up of some of the new capital projects around community facilities and schools could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would recommend that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.</p>				

<p><u>Youth Services:</u></p> <p>2. We recommend that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.</p>				
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I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and work with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders to provide a response to the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Councillor Ash Lister, Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children’s Services)
Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People
Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas, Programme Director of School Organisation Planning.

Steve Morris, Operational Manager, Sport, Leisure and Development,
Economic Development
Neil Hardee, Head of Services to Schools
Suzanne Scarlett, Suzanne Scarlett, Operational Manager –
Partnerships & Performance, Education & Lifelong Learning
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office
Members of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Support Office
Tim Gordon & Jeremy Rhys, Media and Comms
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee

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SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Cyf/My Ref: CM49269

Eich Cyf/Your Ref: Scrutiny/AEJ/LB/CW/010323

Dyddiad/Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Lee Bridgeman
Chairperson Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Lee

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – 28 February 2023 Draft Budget Proposals 2023/24

Thank you for your letter dated 1 March 2023 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 2 March 2023.

The following paragraphs address each of the Committee's further information requests:

Budget Consultation

Consultation on the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24 ran from 23rd December 2022 to 29th January 2023. The survey was available online and in hard copy, in English, Welsh, Arabic and Polish, with the Council working closely with partner organisations to ensure as representative a response as possible. Targeted engagement work was also undertaken in areas with traditionally low response rate as well as with Children and Young People. The Budget Consultation received a total of 6,047 responses which represents a statistically significant sample size. Based on the latest midyear population estimates, the number of responses represents around 2% of the total population over 10 years old. Compared with major surveys undertaken by other cities that the Council is aware of, the number of respondents to the Budget Consultation represents the largest response rate.

Settlement Timing

Prior to the 2020/21 Budget Round, the Provisional Settlement was communicated to Local Authorities each October, with the Final Settlement in December. In 2019 these dates were delayed, to December 2019 and February 2020 respectively, due to changes occurring within UK government at the time, which led to the snap General Election of December 2019. The understanding of Local Authorities at the time was

that this would be a one-off situation and that timings would revert to their usual October/December basis in future years. However, issues since then (not least the Covid pandemic) have meant that Welsh Government have continued with the later dates and have, as yet, not returned to the traditional settlement timings.

Settlement figures are a critical part of overall budget planning and so current timescales, coupled with indicative settlement figures that often change are very challenging from a financial planning perspective, particularly in an economic environment as unsettled as recent times. Local Authorities are obliged to set a balanced budget by 11th March each year, so current settlement timescales significantly condense the period in which the Local Authority has the clearest picture of the forthcoming financial year.

Where there are significant changes between indicative settlement figures and Provisional Settlement, as has been the case in each of the last two years, this affects the significant planning work that has occurred up until that date. In recent years, the Provisional Settlement has been more favourable than the previously issued indicative. Greater risk would be posed in a situation where Provisional Settlement was less favourable. However, neither situation is ideal from a planning perspective. The timing of the Provisional Settlement, in December, also necessitates the delay of public consultation. This is because consultation in advance of settlement would be based on a position that would be highly likely to change.

Children Looked After Numbers

There are currently 22 children with a Placement Order who are not yet placed with prospective adopters. All of these children are currently in foster placements - 15 in Cardiff and 7 out of area. When adoptive placements are identified for these children, they will often be out of area as this is often considered to be more appropriate and in the best interests of the child. Additionally, a number of young people from other authorities are placed with adopters in Cardiff.

Children's Services KPIs

Please see the updates in relation to individual indicators at Appendix 1.

Ty Storrie

For context Ty Storrie, run by Cardiff Council is located in the west of Cardiff near Ty Gwyn School. It is a purpose built registered Childrens Home for children and young people aged between 6 and 17 with disabilities and complex needs. The following link provides a short video on the building and facilities at Ty Storrie [Ty Storrie English](#).

There are currently 27 children accessing Ty Storrie as well as 12 children and young people currently going through their induction / settling in period, which includes visits to the site with family, tea visits after school leading up to their first stay. There is a plan to significantly increase the usage of the building allowing much more children to access this provision. In August 2022 only one, sometimes two, children per night were accessing this provision. In February 2023 this has increased to at least two children every night, and for eight nights in February, three children received overnight short breaks.

We are currently proposing a change to the shift patterns for staff to both make it a more attractive role and assist with recruitment and retention, plus assist with increasing the usage of the building. With that being in place from April we aim for four children per night to start attending regularly. The outcome of this increased usage is the immediate stepping down of alternative community-based support or increased provision going into the home. We also know the significant positive benefit this short-break provision provides to the young person and their family, so we would see a reduction in families reaching crisis and needing the child to access full time residential provision; provision that in the current market is not there, and where there is no other option, is met by expensive bespoke placements.

We believe that the demand for a bespoke placement for a child or young person with a disability or complex needs will reduce if we increase this capacity, however we have the option of meeting this need through the use of an additional room in the building and not a reduction to the availability of overnight short breaks to other children.

Corporate Plan Commitments

The Cardiff 2030 Vision was launched in November 2019, pre-pandemic, and whilst the goals, values and desired outcomes remain constant, there is a need to revisit the commitments to action in the context of the challenges and opportunities being faced by children and young people after two and a half years of disruption. This work is being completed in partnership with schools.

Within this review, there is a key and essential need to focus upon workforce development. The actions proposed in the Corporate Plan are not new, these were stated in the Cardiff 2030 vision, and are acutely relevant. The inclusion of these actions here signals an acceleration of activity to make change happen.

In relation to School Improvement, we need to respond to a period of significant national reform in education, whereby curriculum, qualifications and the accountability framework for school performance are all transforming. It will be essential for Cardiff to ensure that our local arrangements are robust, effective and responsive to the needs of children and young people in our city, and proactive in supporting our schools to deliver upon their School Improvement Priorities.

KPIs – Children and Young People – more information on K1.03

This KPI is collected via the Bi-Annual Child Friendly City Survey, which will next be delivered in early 2024. The survey is made available via schools and youth support services and this question sits within the context of a range of other questions on children's rights. The resulting data set is available to all participating schools and settings, the Youth Council, the Council and Public Service Board members.

Additional Learning Needs Places Delivered Across the City - Target

The formal places proposed in the target is in line with the Cabinet approvals brought forward in 2022. These are formal places that have been brought forward in line with the School Organisation Code 2018 and have been scheduled to be in place from September 2023. The number of ALN places stated has been a challenging target alongside significant increases from September 2022. Further increases of formal places will need to be brought forward through further school organisation proposals, which are planned to be brought forward within

the next 6 months. **If Cabinet deem the proposals appropriate the earliest proposals could be implemented would be September 2024.**

Pupil Development Grant and Free School Meals

Welsh Government have asked Local Authorities to continue to administer the process for identifying pupils who would be eligible via the means test for a free school meal, whilst this is not ideal it will enable WG to identify amounts required by schools for the PDG allocation process. As this is also used to identify eligibility for the PDG Access grant (old school uniform grant) WG believe this will continue to provide an incentive for parents to continue to apply. This will run alongside the roll out of the universal free school meal provision for all primary aged pupils so should not have a direct impact on this initiative.

Attendance Strategy

There is no specific research being undertaken in relation to attendance, but the Education Welfare Service has a good insight into the issues affecting attendance through their Persistence Absence Reviews. These are being undertaken in every school to highlight pupils with poor attendance and ensure that there is support and interventions in place to secure a improvements and a return to school which has given them so have a clear picture of the current challenges and issues.

In 2011 when Cardiff reorganised the EWS, delegated funding to schools to employ School Attendance Officers and implemented a new 5 step approach to attendance, primary attendance had been consistently between 92.5 – 92.8% for the previous 5 years. It took a lot of hard work to get to 94.8 – 95% pre-covid as improvements were incremental year on year. Given that primary attendance is currently running at 88.9%, 92.5% is an ambitious target given the current challenges schools face. We have to change the culture that's crept back in relation to casual attitudes to attendance, anxiety and caution about illness etc. It is considered unrealistic and unachievable to set targets any higher at the current time.

Schools in Deficit

At the start of the year 2022/23, five schools indicated that they needed to go into deficit protocol. Through working with the schools, this list reduced to three schools entering the protocol for 2022/23. The schools are Cardiff West High, Allensbank Primary and St Albans Primary. For the year 2023/24, we anticipate an increase in the number of schools applying for a deficit, and we will keep the Committee updated during the course of the year.

Youth Services Budget

I have asked officers to provide the Committee with a detailed breakdown of the spend and funding components of the Youth Service Budget within the next few weeks.

Youth Hubs

Details on proposals for Youth Hubs can be shared with the committee. With reference to step 4.06 within the Corporate Plan, it relates to progressing, not completing, the Youth Hub in the City centre. This step has been amended to clarify the next milestone; *progressing plans for a youth hub in the city centre and agree a preferred option by Autumn 2023.*

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - *Members felt that joining up of some of the new capital projects around community facilities and schools could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would recommend that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.*

Accept - The Council welcomes the positive comments regarding the community facilities provided on the flagship Fairwater Campus project and the recommendation is fully accepted. It is expected that Community Focussed Schools will also form a key part of the School Organisation Programme Strategy that is due to be developed within the next 12 months and has also recently been announced as an objective of Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Work is underway with Youth Services, Children's Service and Communities to consider options to collaborate in the provision of services for children and young people through shared facilities.


In addition, all Band B schools to date have prioritised working with communities in their school visions and through the asset programme work is also underway to provide a range of community sports provision in schools such as Cardiff West Community High School, Corpus Christi Catholic High School, St Illtyd's Catholic High School, and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Eder.

Recommendation 2 - *We recommend that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.*

Partially Accept – we will review the youth service budget, including how the service will move away from grant funding within the context of available resources. In terms of partial acceptance, what cannot be predetermined at this stage is the overall quantum of resources available to the Council in future years and the choices that the Council will have to make in terms of how funding is prioritised.

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

Yours sincerely,

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

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

Councillor Ash Lister, Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children's Services)
Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People
Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas, Programme Director of School Organisation Planning
Steve Morris, Operational Manager, Sport, Leisure and Development
Neil Hardee, Head of Services to Schools
Suzanne Scarlett, Operational Manager – Partnerships & Performance, Education
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office
Members of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Support Office
Tim Gordon & Jeremy Rhys, Media and Comms
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee

Appendix 1

KPI	Target	Update	National or Local ?
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4* who have completed at least three consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care	65%	Target setting is difficult because the cohort of young people is relatively small and changes from one year to the next. 2021/22 performance was 64% - our target is to maintain with small improvement.	National
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4* who have completed at least three consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13-24 months since leaving care	65%	Target setting is difficult because the cohort of young people is relatively small and changes from one year to the next. Performance for 2021/22 was 68%; current performance for 2022/23 is 65% - our target is to turn around the reduction and at least maintain. It will be kept under review.	National
The number of children looked after fostered by Local Authority foster carers	130	Current performance is 117. It is challenging to increase the number of in house foster carers against a national context of a reduction in the numbers of people expressing an interest in fostering.	Local
The number fostered by external foster carers as a percentage of regulated placements (excluding kinship)	60%	Current performance 58% and decreasing - challenging.	Local
The number of children looked after placed in in house residential placements	15	This target is in line with the recently approved Children's Services Accommodation Strategy.	Local
The number placed in external residential placements as a percentage of regulated placements (excluding kinship)	17%	Current performance 18% and increasing - challenging. (Lower is better.)	Local
The number of children returned home from care during the year	60	Target setting is difficult as reunification decisions are made on a case by case basis. This target will remain under review to ensure that children are only returned home when it is safe and appropriate to do so.	National
The percentage of children looked after in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff	60%	Current performance 56% - challenging.	Local
The percentage of children looked after in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff or a neighbouring Authority.	80%	Current performance 76% - challenging.	Local
The percentage of permanent social worker vacancies in Children's Services.	24%	Current performance 27% - challenging target in the context of the national shortage of social workers.	Local
The number of young people in receipt of a prevention service from the Youth Justice Service	130	Current performance 103 - challenging.	Local
The number of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System	60	Target reduced from 70 in 2022/23 and will be subject to ongoing review. Current performance is 31.	Local
The percentage of children re-offending within six months of their previous offence	40%	Current performance is 44% - challenging	Local
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who were living in suitable accommodation	Baseline	This indicator is new for 2023/24 so a baseline is required before future targets can be set.	National

KPI	Target	Update	National or Local ?
	being set		
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who were in suitable education, training or employment	Baseline being set	As above.	National
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who had an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN)	Baseline being set	As above.	National