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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2023, 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

11 **Correspondence following committee meeting** (Pages 3 - 14)

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20 Sep 2023

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



Dear Cllr Thorne,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CHANNEL VIEW
REGERNATION PROJECT – 18 SEP 2023 - NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

Thank you, to you and officers for attending the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee to facilitate our consideration of the Channel View project, and for the in-depth presentation provided to us. The key observations discussed by the Committee on matters in the public domain are captured in this letter. A separate letter has been sent regarding our observations on the confidential matters.

One Bidder

It was disappointing that despite the attempts made, only one bid was received by a contractor to develop this project. We raised concern that having no alternative bids to allow comparison in the matrix scoring process could, in turn, weaken financial viability assessments. We were given insight into the reasons why only one bid has been forthcoming, including the complexity of the project, the current market conditions and the elements of risks in the homes for sale aspects of the project. We were pleased to hear that the reasons for only receiving one bid are being explored, and we would strongly encourage this learning to be put to effect for future schemes.

We note from the response there is satisfaction in the thoroughness of the viability assessments that have been undertaken on the bid received, and that the bid has been benchmarked against costings of other similar projects to ensure it provides value for money.

Future Costings and The Umbrella Agreement

We also held concerns regarding the Umbrella Agreement, and if this locks us into having to agree the price posed by the developer partner for the future phases of the project, or risks the delivery of the scheme.

We were pleased to hear about the 'period of review' between phases which will allow the council to undertake viability assessments on the proposed costings put forward by the developer at every stage. We were reassured to hear that there will be mechanisms in the contract to allow the council to address any concerns with price, and should we deem the price not feasible; not proceed.

Financial Stability of a Single Partnership Approach

We highlighted that when this project was first initiated in 2020 the intention was to have different contractors delivering each phase of the project – with the reasoning offered in 2020 that different contractors would help reduce risks around deliverability, given the scale of the project. We note in 2022 it was subsequently determined, given the complexity of the project, having one contractor delivering the project in its entirety could potentially lessen costs, shorten the process and be less resource intensive for the council.

Given the scale and complexity of this project, a degree of concern does remain around the financial stability of delivering this project through one developer partner. Particularly, as we have experience with other projects where developers have gone bust. From the discussion, we note this risk is recognised, and that such a risk would also be apparent even if there were a number of contractors involved in the project. Further, we were also informed part of the tender exercise is to evaluate the financial standing of the developer, and to enter into a partnership with a contractor who is of the right size, with significant experience of this work, which has been verified in the tender process.

Impact on Residents

Another key concern for the committee related to the implications for current occupants, including property rights for existing owners and the council's obligation to rehouse those residents affected by Phase 1 of the scheme into appropriate housing whilst work is carried out; particularly when considering the lack of available, affordable housing in the city.

From the discussions, we note the council will undertake a series of individual meetings with residents affected by future phases of the project to understand their circumstances and support requirements. Further, we note Phase 1 of the project (which only affects council tenants) is anticipated to take 2-3 years, so there is still sufficient time to support and work with tenants affected by other phases before work progresses.

We do wish to stress the importance of continued and effective collaboration with all residents of the site, by both the council and the developer partner. With both organisations taking onus

to ensure residents' views and needs are responded to, we hope this will ensure there is no need to undertake compulsory purchase orders. We would also welcome the views and wishes of residents being an integral aspect of the 'period of review' mentioned earlier in this letter.

Cost Trajectory

Given the scale of the project, the length of time it will take to complete, and the current financial market, concerns do remain regarding the cost trajectory of this scheme, and the likelihood of costs continuing to rise substantially. Although the need for more, good quality housing in the city is very much championed, we do wish to reiterate the need to remain prudent and exercise caution on what is financially viable for the council as this scheme progresses, not only for this scheme but for the wider housebuilding programme.

Given the complexity of this project, Committee Members wish to receive a response to this letter which provides clarity, or gives assurance on the following:

- Please can you confirm our understanding is correct, that all residents affected by Phase 1 of the project have been re-housed in secure, long term alternative accommodation and are not, or will not, reside in temporary or emergency type accommodation, and residents living in the 'high rise block' on the site, and those affected by other phases of the project, will not need to be rehoused until the new, alternative property on the site is complete.
- Provide insight into the development of the foot and cycle bridge on site. For example, which phase of the project it is in, how much it is estimated to cost, how it will be funded, and how you anticipate the project developer will support the council in attaining funding for the bridge.
- Provide clarity on the scheme of delegation for this project in its entirety.
To be clear, we wish to receive assurance that when costings for the other phases of the project are known, they will be brought to Cabinet and Scrutiny to provide checks and balances – particularly given the substantial costs of the scheme.
We are unsure if the Umbrella Agreement being proposed means agreeing future phases of this project will be delegated to relevant directors and therefore not be taken back through the Cabinet & Scrutiny process.

Thank you once again to you and officers for attending committee.



COUNCILLOR RHYS TAYLOR

Chair - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities

Dave Jaques, Assistant Director, Housing Development

Teresa Barnes, Operational Manager Major Projects – Channel View

Group Leaders

Chair of Governance & Audit

Tim Gordan, Head of Communications & External Relations

Cabinet Office

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14, 16, 21 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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20 Sep 2023

Councillor Norma Mackie
Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Cllr Ash Lister
Cabinet Member for Children Services
Sent via e-mail



Dear Cllr Mackie & Cllr Lister,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 SEP 2023 – LASSAR
2022/23**

On behalf of Community & Adult Services, & Children & Young People Committee Members, a sincere thanks, to you, and everyone present, for facilitating our consideration of the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2022/23. As mentioned at the meeting, we wish to thank you, and officers, for your continued positive engagement with both scrutiny committees, as we all work together to drive continuous improvement.

A summary of the key observations made at the meeting are provided below.

Report Layout

We acknowledge and commend the level of work that has gone into producing this report. However, we do wish to reiterate comments made in previous years at scrutiny meetings, and the comments made in the challenge document (Appendix 2), that the report would benefit from greater insight into the challenges and barriers faced in the year, providing a more balanced insight to both the success and challenges over the year. Further, the report would also benefit from more clear linkage between the priorities and challenges as this is not always apparent.

Financial Context

Due to the likelihood of new financial settlements in the coming year, we sought assurance on how challenges will be successfully addressed by both service areas if financial challenges continue, or indeed worsen. From the response, we note despite financial difficulties, there has been significant progress in children and adult services around integration; both across council departments, and with partners. We note the emphasis made that continuing to strengthen this partnership work will hopefully help manage the financial environment in which services operate.

Staffing

As highlighted in the Annual Report, both children and adult services continue to face ongoing challenges in terms of workforce recruitment and retention. We therefore wish to stress the need to ensure there is an integral focus on ensuring no additional pressures are placed on staff, so they do not 'burn out', particularly under the new children services operating model referenced in the report.

We note the '*All Wales approach to the use of agency workers in children services*' which came into force on 1st May 2023 is working well, and CYP Members look forward to monitoring and exploring the progress of this programme over the coming year.

Regarding the stark difference in vacancy rates between children and adult social service teams, we heard the reason why recruitment to children's services is more challenging, can largely be attributed to staff not wishing to join children services teams due to the perception that it is a particularly stressful and difficult job to undertake. However as detailed in the report, the service area will continue its endeavour in changing this perspective and ensuring adequate, effective support for staff is in place.

In relation to adults learning disabilities, Members are aware there are some complex cases who are not assigned a continuous social worker and so, receive support from a range of different social workers over a period of time. Although we heard in adult services it is typically the norm for individuals to enter the 'review team' (which means they could work with different social workers over a period of time), we do wish to stress the importance of individuals having continuity with their support. We would appreciate further consideration being given to this matter, both in terms of the possibility and practicality of providing adults in receipt of social services social worker continuity, and if this is a matter which should be referenced and assessed in the LASSAR.

Support for Care Leavers

The LASSAR provides detailed insight into the range of support available for care leavers, however it was noted that 1/3 of care leavers are not in education, employment or training. From the discussions, we heard transitioning planning to adulthood will be a key area of work for children and adult services in the forthcoming year. Both CASSC and CYP Members would be interested to be updated on this work, and to be involved and support the works development, particularly around assessing the strategic join-up of the work and its effectiveness.

Sustainability of Volunteers

We welcome over the course of the year; 299 volunteers have provided over 2,000 hours of support to older people in the city. Given the offering of this service is no doubt valuable to a number of people, we hold concerns regarding sustainability. From the response, we note it is acknowledged there is always a degree of uncertainty and instability with volunteering, but this is an additional service offering and is not relied upon to replace services.

Thank you once more to all attendees for facilitating consideration of the report.

As mentioned at the start of this letter, both committees look forward in continuing their work with yourselves and their respective service area in assessing the effectiveness of addressing the challenges, and achieving the priorities, set out in this report over the coming year.

To confirm, a response to this letter is not requested.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR RHYS TAYLOR
CHAIR, COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc. Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Jane Thomas, Director Adults, Housing & Communities

Deborah Driffield, Director. Children Services

Kim Brown, Service Manager, Policy & Performance

Cardiff Council Chair of Governance & Audit

Tim Gordan, Head of Communications & External Relations

Cabinet Office

Group Leaders

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**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref : [CE:0042282]

Eich Cyf / Your Ref :

Dyddiad / Date: 11th October 2023

Councillor Rhys Taylor
Chair
Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Taylor,

**Re: Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 18th September 2023 –
Channel View**

Thank for your correspondence regarding the above Scrutiny Committee and for your observations. I would respond to your queries as follows.

Non- confidential Section

Please can you confirm our understanding is correct, that all residents affected by Phase 1 of the project have been re-housed in secure, long term alternative accommodation and are not, or will not, reside in temporary or emergency type accommodation, and residents living in the 'high rise block' on the site, and those affected by other phases of the project, will not need to be rehoused until the new, alternative property on the site is complete.

Yes – this correct. All the council residents living within what will be Phase 1 of the project have been moved into secure, long-term accommodation.

Most of them moved into new homes on the Clive Lane development in Grangetown. Of the residents that have been moved, 4 have requested to move back into the new development in an appropriate phase.

All the residents living with the existing high-rise tower block will be rehoused into phase 1 once the new apartments are built.

The overall redevelopment is phased so that we can ensure that residents living in future phases can move straight into a new property.

Provide insight into the development of the foot and cycle bridge on site. For example, which phase of the project it is in, how much it is estimated to cost, how it will be funded, and how you anticipate the project developer will support the council in attaining funding for the bridge.

The new cycle and pedestrian bridge connection remains an important part of the overall redevelopment project, but its delivery has always been subject to achieving the funding required. We will have various teams working on securing the necessary funding including our

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.



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in-house Development & Infrastructure teams. The Developer Partner and relevant consultants will also help identify external funding opportunities and help with grant applications. We will also liaise with external partners such as Welsh Government and active travel agencies.

We estimate that the bridge to be in the region of £12-15 million and subject to funding will be in a future phase of the development. The overall phasing plan will evolve as the scheme progresses and planning is obtained for each separate phase.

We are currently working with consultants to finalise the bridge design and submit a planning application for it. We have also consulted the community on the location and design of the bridge ahead of undertaking the planning process.

Provide clarity on the scheme of delegation for this project in its entirety. To be clear, we wish to receive assurance that when costings for the other phases of the project are known, they will be brought to Cabinet and Scrutiny to provide checks and balances – particularly given the substantial costs of the scheme. We are unsure if the Umbrella Agreement being proposed means agreeing future phases of this project will be delegated to relevant directors and therefore not be taken back through the Cabinet & Scrutiny process.

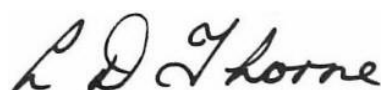
The delegation enables a construction contract for phase 1 to be entered into, subject to final costs and viability, and also to enter into Pre-Construction Services Agreements (PCSA's) for future phases. The PCSA's allow the Partner Developer and their design teams to design future phases, submit planning and undertake cost exercises.

All future phases will need to be brought back to Cabinet separately once the design, programme and costs are known for that phase, in order to seek Cabinet approval to enter into a construction contract for future phases. This will also enable us to provide regular updates on the overall project to Cabinet.

The Umbrella Agreement does not remove the requirement for the construction contract for each separate phase to be approved by Cabinet.

I hope the above is of assistance to you but should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



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