

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Jenkins(Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Gibson, Philippa Hill-John, Lent, Lister,
Mackie and McGarry

51 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Carter. Cllr Ahmed sent notice that he might be delayed in joining the meeting.

52 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest was received from Cllr Mackie.

53 : DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2025 & DRAFT BUDGETARY PROPOSALS 2022/23 - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson introduced the following items, which were to consider the elements of the draft Corporate Plan and Budget Proposals that fall within the remit of the Committee.

The proposals were due to be considered by Cabinet on Thursday the 24th of February, before being considered by Council on the 3rd of March.
The meeting began with Members receiving a Corporate Overview of the budget.

The budget proposals, and parts of the Corporate Plan relevant to this committee, were then considered in two parts.

The first part was:

- areas relevant to Councillor Elsmore's Portfolio;

and the second part was:

- areas relevant to Councillor Thorne's Portfolio.

54 : CORPORATE OVERVIEW

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance; Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources; Ian Allwood, Head of Finance; and Julie Richards, Operational Manager for Budget Strategy and Financial Planning, to the meeting.

Councillor Weaver was invited to make a statement, following which Ian Allwood provided a presentation outlining elements of the draft Corporate Plan and Budget Proposals.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on the amount that was set aside in the Budget for debt repayment. Officers advised that it was £35 million and that all borrowing is carried out within the Council's prudential framework.
- Members sought clarification on the amount being spent on community safety and whether there was scope to increase it. Members were directed to the total amount being spent on community improvement and safety under different headings and advised that one-off expenditure needed to be seen in addition to the £1 million being spent in the base budget.
- Members discussed the small number of responses to the consultation. Members were advised that the low response was in part due to the absence of face-to-face interviews and physical distribution of consultation papers. Once Covid restrictions are lifted it should be possible to revisit these aspects of carrying out consultations.
- Members were concerned about the short period of the consultation. Members were advised that the length of time available was determined by the late receipt of the Provisional Settlement.
- Members were advised that the size of the Council Tax increase reflected the fact that the Provisional Settlement was more generous than expected. The Cabinet took into account the rise in the cost of living when setting the new rate.
- Members sought clarification on the impact of the withdrawal of the Covid Hardship Fund. Members were advised that the Budget took into account the additional costs that might arise as a result of the Hardship Fund being withdrawn.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the Way Forward.

55 : ADULT SERVICES, HOUSING & COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS AS RELEVANT TO CLLR ELSMORE'S PORTFOLIO

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing, Sarah McGill, Jane Thomas, and Helen Evans to the meeting.

Councillor Elsmore was invited to make a statement, following which Jane Thomas provided a presentation outlining those parts of the proposals within the purview of the Committee.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members discussed the social care technology strategy and the unachieved savings in the last Budget. Officers advised that the strategy was intended to help identify and achieve savings. All staff involved in prescribing care will be trained to make sure they supplement or reduce the need for care through the

use of aids, adaptation and technology. Staff training and information for the public will be provided at the Independent Living Wellbeing Centre.

- Members requested sight of the statement of requirement that went to tender for the tech strategy.
- Members sought clarification on the unachieved savings in Internal Supported Living. Officers advised that it related to a resident whom it had not been possible to move out of Internal Supported Living. Care must be taken in ensuring suitable provision before moving residents out of residential care.
- Members discussed the cost implications attached to moving young people with mental health problems on from residential care. Officers advised that a scheme to provide young people with more independent living had been delivered from which savings had arisen. Another property had been identified and was due to open in the new financial year. There will be a support package for the residents. Members were advised that every effort is made to ensure that the clients and their families were content with the arrangements.
- Members referred to Wellbeing Objective 4 S4.1, Improve the support available to people with mental health issues, and sought clarification on identifying additional accommodation to support people moving on from residential care to independent living. Officers provided more details of the scheme that had already been delivered, which comprised flats within a shared accommodation block, with space for care workers on site. With experience it has been possible to reduce from 24-hour to daytime care. Tenants rent their flats with support adjusted as needed.
- Members discussed Wellbeing Objective 2 Cardiff is a great place to grow older S2.3, Work with the Regional Partnership Board to develop integrated local multidisciplinary teams that prevent hospital admission and facilitate hospital discharge, and sought clarification on identifying easily accessible locations within the community. Officers advised that such locations would be for co-located teams of officers and external care providers. The scheme will be piloted in 2 locations this year. It is anticipated that co-locating will create a team ethos and approach. The Council is investigating using pre-existing Council properties to house the teams.
- Members sought clarification on the additional £5.6 million for demographic growth within the Budget. Officers advised that different settings, types of care and service users had been modelled together with the impacts of Covid, forward projections and elements of the new strategy to ensure that the financial forecasts aligned with the Council's objectives. Costs projections were uncertain because of the fluidity in the market due to Covid, and the additional amount includes a reserve.
- Members sought clarification on whether the additional £16 million for disabled facilities adaptation would be financed by borrowing. Officers advised that the Council looks at its overall spending requirement and does not assess borrowing against individual spending lines. Part of the cost of adaptations is met by direct grant. Additional funding is being made available.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the Way Forward.

56 : HOUSING & COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS AS RELEVANT TO CLLR THORNE'S PORTFOLIO

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, Sarah McGill, Jane Thomas, and Helen Evans to the meeting.

Councillor Thorne was invited to make a statement, following which Helen Evans and Jane Thomas provided a presentation outlining those parts of the proposals within the purview of the Committee.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on the overall capital cost allocated for disabled facilities adaptations. Officers advised it was £8 million per annum.
- Members sought clarification on the plan to build 4,000 homes by 2030. Officers confirmed that the scale of the house building programme had increased. The confirmed sites have the capacity for 4,600 homes. The programme includes homes for sale through the Council's Cardiff Living partnership with Wates Construction and the Low Cost Home Ownership Programme, renamed as First Homes Cardiff, in addition to Council homes. The programme also seeks to close the gap between the standard of homes delivered and those available on the private market.
- Members discussed the target of building 1,000 new homes by end of March 2022. Officers advised that difficulties in the construction market due to the pandemic had caused a delay in the building programme. The number of homes completed and under construction together is close to 1,000. There are several hundred with planning consent and more sites in the planning pipeline. The Croft Street scheme utilised factory build homes which were constructed on site within 5 days. A new method of tendering is expected to speed up delivery.
- Members enquired as to whether there were sufficient funds allocated for homelessness. Officers advised that there was £1.7 million allocated and £390,000 committed with an estimated balance of just under £1.3 million, which was considered to be sufficient. There is ongoing funding in addition to reserves.
- Members sought clarification on the responsibilities of the new staff being recruited for Community Safety. Officers advised that there was £25,000 in the FRM to support problem solving groups, and approximately £100,000 for additional Community Safety officers. This is to provide additional capacity in problem solving. In addition there are 2 Violence Prevention officers proposed who would be involved in safeguarding.

- Members enquired about progress with the Prisoner Discharge Service. Officers advised that great strides had been made in improving relationships with the Prison Service and the Probation Service, and that would continue to be embedded. There are still cases of people leaving prison and going straight onto the streets. That is not necessarily a failure of the pathway but may be down to the individuals, some of whom are reluctant to engage with services.
- Members sought clarification on whether new homes would be built without gas boilers. Officers advised that it had been the case for some time and was a response to the anticipated change in building regulations. Home building across Wales is being moved towards a low carbon standard, including the removal of gas, improvement in building fabric performance and harnessing of renewable energy. The modular scheme at Cross Street achieves a zero carbon standard, and the former Rumney High School site is a pilot project for delivering low carbon housing in volume with ground source heat pumps, EV charging points and high performing building fabric. The current spending plans account for the additional technology currently being incorporated. The additional cost per home is around £15,000. The additional technology is making new homes resilient for the future. The aim of the programme is to make homes that are affordable to power and heat moving forward. Every project is required to go through a viability assessment and all homes have to pay for themselves within the agreed financial viability model. Welsh Government provides a significant amount of grant funding.
- Members referred to item K4.14 Creating safe and inclusive communities and enquired as to the absence of KPIs in relation to public services dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime. Officers advised there were high level figures in relation to public perception of crime gathered through Ask Cardiff which provided a baseline that could be used for monitoring purposes. Members were advised that Community Safety required an effective use of different services.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the Way Forward.

57 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

58 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 9 March at 4.30pm.

The meeting terminated at 4.05 pm