

**SWYDDFA'R ARWEINYDD
OFFICE OF THE LEADER**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM36983
Eich Cyf / Your Ref:
Dyddiad / Date: 17th Feb 2017

Cllr Mary McGarry
Cardiff County Council
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Butetown
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Mary,

Re: Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 13th February 2017

Thank you for your letter following the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th February 2017. In reply, I would like to provide a cross-Cabinet response to the Committee's comments on the Corporate Plan 2017-19 and 2017/18 budget proposals, in view of the different portfolio responsibilities.

Draft Corporate Plan 2017-19

I am pleased that the Committee recognises the significant improvements which have been made to the Corporate Plan over recent years and would like to thank the Committee for its contribution to our improvement journey.

I agree that it is important to provide clear information in the main body of the plan to contextualise the targets provided. The plan does provide some contextual information explaining the rationale for each priority in the introductory section, as well as setting the scene. However, in order to make the document as accessible as possible, much of the technical information has been included in an appendix in order to provide an appropriate balance of information contained in the plan and appendix.

I have asked officers to explore opportunities to better link the information when it is published online in order to make it accessible for anyone who wants to find out more details about the Council's performance information. I have also asked the Council's Performance team to identify, as a matter of urgency, any changes that can be made to add further information to the appendix, which will provide further clarification to the reader about the level of performance.

Phil Bale
Arweinydd Cyngor Dinas Caerdydd
Leader of the City of Cardiff Council

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I agree that it is important to ensure that progress is made in the provision of support for the victims of domestic violence in Cardiff. As was explained to the Committee, the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate Delivery Plan will include more detailed actions and key milestones in delivering the overall Corporate Plan objectives. However, I see no difficulty in including more specific wording around the progress of the re-commissioning exercise commitment that will be completed by March 2017. In addition, officers will also ensure that the measure of training compliance is included in the "measuring progress" table on page 25 of the plan.

With regard to the performance measures to tackle homelessness, I believe the Committee held a successful performance panel meeting recently with officers from the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate to discuss the setting of targets across a suite of homelessness indicators. The inter-dependency of a number of the indicators was, I understand, a topic that was discussed and, therefore, I am sure you will agree that the inclusion of only one or two indicators would not provide the clear picture of progress that was recommended by the Committee. I am confident that, should the Committee wish to consider this important area of work in some detail over the coming year, officers would be happy to support that scrutiny exercise.

Consultation Processes

Thank you for your thoughtful comments with regard to the most recent public consultation on the budget proposals for 2017/18. I acknowledge your recommendations and accept that, moving forward, there are a number of improvements which can be made to our consultation and engagement work, particularly around ensuring that the voices of the city's more 'seldom heard' communities can contribute their views and experiences. I will therefore ask officers to review how Cardiff's engagement process compares with other leading local authorities to ensure that this can be further improved next year.

Economic Development and Partnerships

With regard to Capital Programme Line 5, I agree with the Committee's point about contingency planning in relation to commercial units and the Committee's plans for this issue to be prioritised as part of a future work programme is noted. Work is also ongoing between Planning, Estates and Economic Development to assist in supporting a more sustainable future for smaller neighbourhood shopping locations.

Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

Whilst I note the Committee's concerns in relation to Line 18 of the budget savings proposals for 2017/18, I do not agree that the proposed next steps for the development of the Council's Neighbourhood Partnership arrangements reflect a change in policy. Indeed, the proposed budget saving in staff costs is more a reflection of the success of the Cardiff Public Services Board in aligning a much wider range of partnership funding opportunities to reduce reliance on Council

funding alone. The proposed change to the staffing structure is not linked to the saving in Social Services specifically, but is part of the evolution of a more streamlined and locality focussed way of working that is supported by all our partners.

Change in this area is incremental. For example, the growing impact of our community hubs is providing a physical focus in many areas of the city that is assisting the development of new ways of working and I see the impact of community focused schools providing a similar and complementary role. The proposed overall approach has already been discussed with partner organisations, officers and lead Members and reflects a direction of travel that is fully supported. Further briefings and discussions involving Members on how the proposed new arrangements will support the strengthening of the role of elected members and opportunities for greater community and stakeholder engagement will be provided over coming months.

Social Services – Adults

I welcome the Committee's overall endorsement of the proposed budget provision for social services and employment of an additional 59 staff and recognition of the potential to set social services in Cardiff on a stable footing.

Savings

With specific reference to Line 76 of the budget savings proposals for 2017/18, the Committee's comment on the related narrative is noted and this will be adjusted in future to reflect the position fully and more clearly.

In terms of the RAG ratings used for residual risk and savings achievability, I note the Committee's comments about how the ratings raise questions about risk aversion or planning confidence. However, I would wish to reassure you that our budgetary planning process has been robust and subject to due diligence. Nevertheless, the nature of social services spend is predominantly (76%) accounted for by spend on multiple individuals and commissioned care in a volatile market. Given that these are factors that are not fully within the control of officers and that each and every decision contributing to the savings target entails a degree of risk, officers are minded to reflect that in the rating accordingly.

Yn gywir,
Yours sincerely,



**CYNGHORYDD / COUNCILLOR PHIL BALE
ARWEINYDD, CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD
LEADER, THE CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL**

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

14 February 2017

Councillor Phil Bale
Leader
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
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CF10 4UW



Dear Phil

Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 13th February 2017

Thank you for attending the above committee. This letter captures the agreed comments, observations and recommendations of the Committee with regard to the draft Corporate Plan 2017-19 and 2017-18 draft Budget Proposals. The structure of this letter reflects the structure of the meeting, commencing with general comments on the draft Corporate Plan, consultation and the overarching budgetary position before moving on to comments and observations for each portfolio, as determined by the terms of reference of this committee.

Draft Corporate Plan 2017-19

Members recognise that the Corporate Plan has improved significantly over recent years, to reduce its volume and make it more focused on clearly setting out the Council's priorities. To assist this improvement, Members recommend some further refinements, as follows:

- Ensure that there is enough information in the commentary to make the context clear for the targets set e.g. it is not clear whether the target to assist 144 rough sleepers into accommodation will require existing performance to improve, decline or stay at its current level.
- Similarly, where percentages are used, it would sometimes be useful to provide a baseline or overall figure, to make the quantum clear to the reader.

Members are pleased to see inclusion of the following commitment: '*Ensure that Domestic Violence Support Services meet the requirements of new legislation, including the recommissioning of the service*'. This helps to demonstrate our corporate responsibilities and raise awareness across staff, partners and the public of the role we need to play. However, Members feel it is important also to include a

measure and target for this commitment, in the main body of the report, to strengthen this message. Therefore, Members recommend that a suitable measure and target that shows progress in delivering the commitment is included in the final Corporate Plan 2017-2019. This should be in addition to the Welsh Government measure and target currently included in the Appendix to the Corporate Plan.

Members are pleased to see measures and targets included in the Corporate Plan regarding tackling rough sleeping. Members believe that it is also important to keep a close eye on performance in other areas of tackling homelessness. Members therefore recommend that the Corporate Performance report also include measures and targets that show performance re preventing homelessness and time spent in temporary accommodation.

Consultation Processes

Members are pleased that the description and analysis of the consultation results has improved in recent years and is now more measured in tone. In order to refine this further, Members recommend that the consultation report contextualises the responses received by stating the overall population figures and acknowledges that receiving approximately 6,000 responses, many self-selected, from a population of approximately 340,000, whilst an improvement on previous years, counts as qualitative feedback rather than statistically valid responses. This is not in any way to denigrate or downgrade the feedback, as qualitative data is meaningful and useful.

Overarching budgetary position

Members thank Councillor Hinchey, Christine Salter and Allan Evans for providing information on the overarching budgetary position. Members note that the proposed budget includes a 3.7% increase in Council Tax, use of £1.5M reserves, a 30% cap on schools non-demographic growth and £17M savings, in order to bridge the gap between resources available and resources required.

Members note that the proposed Capital Programme does not include City Deal projects or School Band B projects at this stage as more information is awaited on these and that therefore it is likely that the Capital Programme will be amended 2018/19 onwards.

With regard to the Capital Programme, Members note Christine's comments that the revenue funding of capital financing is at a higher level than in previous years and officers are aware that they need to keep a close eye on this.

Members note Christine Salter's point that 93% of savings proposals have detailed planning status, and that therefore it is proposed to reduce the £4M corporate contingency fund to £3M for 2017/18.

Economic Development and Partnerships

Members thank you and Sarah McGill for being available to answer questions on the budgetary proposals for this portfolio. Regarding the budgetary proposals for this portfolio, Members have the following points to make:

- **Capital Programme, Line 74** – Members are reassured by the responses received that the Investment Review Board has taken a rigorous look at the proposal to check investment return levels and are content with this.
- **Capital Programme, Line 5** – Members wish to restate the point made at the meeting that it is essential for there to be alternative plans made for these regeneration schemes, to ensure viability when commercial tenants are not forthcoming or sustainable. This is an area of concern for the Committee and we shall recommend to a future Committee that this area is prioritised for further scrutiny.

Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

Members thank Councillor Bradbury and Sarah McGill for being available to answer questions on the budgetary proposals for this portfolio.

Members have a number of concerns regarding the proposals to review Neighbourhood Partnerships and the associated **saving, Line 18**. Members do not think that there should be policy changes of this magnitude with such little information available or opportunity to undertake more detailed scrutiny than can be afforded during budget scrutiny. Members do not feel the information provided is sufficient to enable understanding of the proposals; at our meeting, Members had to seek an explanation of what is proposed and what this would look like, rather than this being self-evident from the information provided. As the meeting progressed, it became clear from our questions that these proposals also link to budget savings line 91 'locality based service delivery' listed under Social Services, Councillor Elsmore's portfolio. This is not clear in the budget report papers and is something that pre-decision scrutiny would have been able to explore. From the information available at our meeting, Members are not convinced that one annual roadshow will be sufficient to replace the valuable work undertaken by the existing neighbourhood partnerships. However, Members note the commitment not to lose the good practice and data analysis used by the existing neighbourhood partnerships. Members note the commitment to utilise community focused schools as part of the neighbourhood partnership approach; Members believe that this should be integrated from the

planning stage onwards and not be bolted on at the end when silo working would not have been addressed.

On a separate matter, Members note that **Savings Line 21** – Commercialisation – relates to generating income via charging for use of the Hubs.

Health, Housing and Wellbeing

Members thank Councillor Elsmore, Sarah McGill, Tony Young, Amanda Phillips and Jane Thomas for attending to answer questions on the budgetary proposals for this portfolio. Concerning the budgetary proposals for this portfolio, Members have the following points to make:

Overall

Members wish to acknowledge the good work of officers that has increased co-operation between Communities, Housing and Customer Services and Social Services, enabling improvements in services for citizens and savings to be realised.

Communities, Housing and Customer Services

Savings Post consultation

Members note that the Welsh Government has redistributed funding previously available to meet temporary accommodation costs and that this has resulted in Cardiff Council receiving less funding than previously. Members note that the Council has set aside £240,000 to help cover these costs and that discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government with the aim of recouping some of these losses.

Savings

- **Line 22** – Members note that meters are planned to be installed close to the start of the financial year to maximise the full year effect of the saving.
- **Line 25** – Members note that no services will cease because of this saving.

Supporting People

Members note that the budget for 2017/18 remains unchanged from 2015/16 at £16.2M but that there has been some realignment to afford more monies to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.

Fees and Charges

Members note the proposed rent increase (of 2.5% + £2 per week) is in line with Welsh Government guidance. Members have made space at their meeting 8th March 2017 to scrutinise the draft HRA Business Plan.

Members are pleased to note that there is no proposed increase in the cost of Meals on Wheels.

Social Services - Adults

Members note and welcome that an additional £9.2 million has been allocated to Social Services to reflect demographic pressures, cost increases and pressures resulting from the need to implement the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. This, alongside the agreed write-off of savings deemed to be unachievable, means that Social Services is now on a stable footing. Members are also pleased that an additional 59 staff will be employed, which should help to address performance pressure points in Social Services.

Regarding the commitment in the Corporate Plan to make Cardiff a recognised Dementia Friendly City, Members note that the work undertaken to date by the Neighbourhood Partnerships will be taken forward and will not be lost when Neighbourhood Partnerships is reorganised.

Savings

Overall, Members are pleased to see that 100% of savings proposed have detailed planning status. With this in mind, Members query why so many savings remain Red/Amber rated for residual risk and savings achievability. Members note that there is a corporate approach taken to this but are concerned that either the approach is over-cautious, or that planning is not sufficient in these regards, even though it is rated as detailed, or that more information should be supplied to make it clear why the RAG rating is as it is. Members would appreciate your views on this.

- **Line 76** – Members note that this involves adjusting the skills mix of social work staff working in hospitals, recruiting more social work assistants to provide more hands-on help, which should have a positive impact on service users. Members believe that this should have been more clearly spelled out in the narrative for this line, to avoid the impression that this team is being reduced.
- **Line 83** – Members note that this applies across the board, rather than to domiciliary care only.
- **Line 86** – Members note that this savings arises from implementation of the high cost authorisation process, which is resulting in costs being better controlled.
- **Line 87** – Members note that this saving is based on modelling the full year effect of trends in the first point of contact service assisting clients without the need for social service care packages.

Skills, Safety, Engagement and Democracy

Members thank Councillor De'Ath, Sarah McGill, Dave Holland and Joseph Reay for being available to answer questions on the Corporate Plan and budgetary proposals for this portfolio. Our comments on the Corporate Plan are included above.

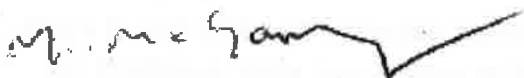
Regarding the budgetary proposals for this portfolio, Members have the following points to make:

- **Savings Line 2** – Members note that the £47,000 saving flows from previous changes to working patterns and usage of ICT, which will lead to reduced mileage costs and reduced ICT costs for Shared Regulatory Services. Members note that this saving is therefore achievable.

Once again, thank you to you and all the witnesses for your attendance and contributions; they are much appreciated. Members trust that our recommendations, comments and observations above are of help when finalising the Corporate Plan and Budgetary Proposals. To this end, please present this letter to Cabinet before the Corporate Plan 2017-19 and Budgetary Proposals 2017/18 are finalised.

This letter contains recommendations and requests for further information and so requires a response.

Yours sincerely,



COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY McGARRY

Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc:	Councillor Bradbury	Councillor De'Ath	Councillor Elsmore
	Councillor Hinchey	Christine Salter	Allan Evans
	Joseph Reay	Gareth Newell	Sarah McGill
	Tony Young	Jane Thomas	Amanda Phillips
	Dave Holland		
	Matt Swindell	Alison Taylor	Claire Deguara
	Rita Rohman	Liz Patterson	Paula Angel