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Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM36992  
Eich Cyf / Your ref: RDB/PM/GH/14.02.17



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Dyddiad / Date: 16 February 2017

Councillor Paul Mitchell  
Chair, Environmental Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 263  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Councillor Mitchell

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – Budget Scrutiny Meeting – 14 February 2017**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 February 2017 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to meeting on 16 February 2017.

The following paragraphs set out responses to your specific points.

I agree with the Committee that the budget consultation process has improved this year, particularly the introduction of a two stage process. While Cardiff's budget consultation does compare very favourably in terms of numbers of respondents compared to other Core Cities, I agree with the Committee that there is always scope for improvement. I will therefore ask officers to conduct a review of how Cardiff's budget consultation work compares with other leading local authorities to ensure that the process can be further improved next year.'

I note your comment regarding lobbying efforts to extend the financial planning window. The Council's response to Welsh Government's (WG's) consultation on Local Government Settlement clearly set out the challenges associated with a one-year settlement window. The absence of indicative funding figures is also regularly raised by the Welsh Local Government Association. The inadequacy of one-year funding settlements from a financial planning perspective will continue to be raised with WG at every opportunity. However, we also recognise that to a certain extent, WG are in a similar position regarding the Welsh Block Grant and that it would be

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Cyflawni ein gwledigaeth o ddod y brifddinas orau i fyw ynddi yn Ewrop

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi

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equally unhelpful to be in receipt of indicative figures which subsequently undergo significant change, as has happened in the past.

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

Yn gwyir,  
Yours sincerely,



**Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Graham Hinchey**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad**  
**Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance**

Cc: Christine Salter – Corporate Director Resources  
Ian Allwood – Head of Service, Finance  
Paul Keeping – Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services  
Davina Fiore – Director of Governance & Legal Services  
Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee  
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager

Ref: RDB/PM/GH/14.02.17

14 February 2017

Councillor Graham Hinchey,  
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance,  
County Hall,  
Atlantic Wharf,  
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Hinchey,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – Budget Scrutiny Meeting – 14  
February 2017**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you, Christine and Ian for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 14 February 2017. As you are aware the meeting considered the 'Draft Budget Proposals 2017/18'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

- Members feel that budget consultation process improved during 2016/17; in particular they were pleased to see that over 6,500 people had taken part in the exercise. However, there is always scope for further improvement and with this in mind the Committee believe that it is important to review the 2016/17 process and compare the consultation work undertaken in Cardiff against other local authorities. Taking this approach will ensure that the process will continue to improve and ultimately better reflect citizen priorities.
- The Committee feel that the early start and improved planning for the budget process worked well, for example, 93% of the proposals had detailed plans and none of the budget proposals were 'red risk rated' – this was a significant improvement when compared to previous years. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to congratulate you and the supporting officers for creating such a detailed and well-organised budget.

- Members note the Council's commitment to paying of the voluntary living wage and the efforts it has made to encourage partners and contractors to do the same. While it is not possible to mandate that partners and contractors pay the voluntary living wage we would support your continued efforts to encourage them to follow this practice.
- During the meeting you explained your frustration at having to manage one year budget settlements instead of having the option of planning over a longer period, for example, a three year budget planning cycle similar to that used by the Local Health Boards. The Committee understands that the Council is limited in what it can do to change this one-year financial settlement process; however, we would support any lobbying efforts that you might make to attempt to extend the financial planning window.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,



Councillor Paul Mitchell  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

Christine Salter – Corporate Director Resources  
Ian Allwood – Head of Service, Finance  
Paul Keeping – Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services  
Davina Fiore – Director of Governance & Legal Services  
Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee