

My Ref: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 14 February 2018



Councillor Chris Weaver  
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Chris

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Corporate Plan and Draft Cabinet Budget proposals 2018/19**

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 13 February 2018. The Committee would also like me to thank Councillor Hinchey, Councillor Merry, Councillor Bradbury, Ian Allwood and relevant Directors and Officers for their attendance. The Committee welcomed the presentations on the Corporate Plan, Cabinet draft Budget proposals overview and the draft budget proposals for Children's Services, Education, and the Play Service.

The Committee welcomed the increases in funding for both Children's Services and Education, particularly at these difficult times.

The Committee considered the information presented and the answers provided to Members' questions, during the way forward section of the meeting. The Committee agreed to provide you and the Cabinet Members with the following comments, concerns and recommendations:

**Corporate Plan and Overview**

- The Members expressed some concern around the validity of the Budget Consultation as the majority of the respondents were white, over 45 and from the North of Cardiff, which does not reflect the demographics of Cardiff. The Committee therefore recommended that a more robust consultation exercise should be undertaken for next year's Budget.

## **Children's Services**

- The Committee discussed, at some length, the level of contingency required to fund any additional looked after children during next year. The Members welcomed the Cabinet Members observation that the current budget report is not an accurate reflection of the funding required. The Committee therefore recommended that the Children's Services budget should be reviewed to better reflect the anticipated number of Looked After Children, at the end of March 2019.
- The Committee also requested details of the split between Children and Adults services of the Budget realignment £3.99M, to be provided in time for the Council meeting on 22 February 2018.
- Members also requested clarification of the anticipated savings from the "Signs of Safety" and Children's Home, and whether these savings would start to be made after 3 years or 5 years.

## **Education**

- Members expressed some concern with the sudden loss of grants for Education, and its impact on school funds, in particular those schools which were already facing deficit balances. The Committee welcomed the assurance that both Education and Finance would be providing advice and support to these schools, Members agreed to keep a watching brief on this situation.
- Members also discussed the revenue budget impact of, what they considered a high level of borrowing, needed to implement the proposed Education Capital Programme. The Committee was assured that the Section 151 Officer had considered that the programme remains affordable.
- The Committee took the view that the savings in relation the introduction of the Travel Support Allowance (Line 73) must be reconsidered by Cabinet, as Members considered that it would have an adverse effect on the environment, infrastructure, and families themselves, particularly those in poverty.
- The Committee requested that the Directorate review the travel arrangement to Llanishen High, due to concerns expressed about the safeguarding of children and duty of care to our pupils.

## **Play Service**

- Members welcomed the positive briefing from the Cabinet Member on the operation of the new service. Members noted and welcomed the Cabinet Members proposals to align the Play Service with the Youth Service, under Education, to provide a fully joined up service for those between 0 and 17. The Committee therefore agreed to receive a further briefing report on the operation of the Play Service and plans for its future, to a forthcoming scrutiny meeting.

I will be copying this letter to all the relevant Cabinet Members and Directors as well as the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee in advance of its meeting on Wednesday 14 February and it is possible that these points will be raised with you in greater detail at that meeting.

Corporate Plan overview

I hope that these comments will have been of assistance to you and the Cabinet in agreeing the Budget proposals on Thursday 15 February and look forward to a positive response to the points raised in the letter, from you and the other Cabinet Members, within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Cc

Councillor Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Councillor Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment, Skill

Councillor Bradbury, Cabinet Members for Culture and Leisure

Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer

Tony Young, Director of Social Services

Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong learning

Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Jon Maidment, Operational manager, Parks and Sport

Steve Gerrard, Network Operations Team Leader

Rita Rohman