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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM41050

Dyddiad / Date: 22nd February 2019

Councillor Lee Bridgeman  
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee  
Room 279  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff. CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Lee

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Corporate Plan and Draft  
Cabinet Budget Proposals 2019/20**

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 2019 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 21 February 2019.

**Consultation**

In this year's consultation we endeavoured to engage with our city's most seldom heard communities through a variety of approaches to supplement the online consultation. To ensure that the approach we adopt is as inclusive as possible, and to strengthen the approach to consultation more generally, officers have agreed to work with the Policy Review and Performance Committee on the development of the consultation document for the 2020/21 budget and will seek to engage with all Scrutiny Chairs via the Scrutiny Liaison Forum as this work develops.

As stated at the committee, the need to do more to engage with Children and Young People in our consultations and in the wider civic conversation is recognised, and is one of the central themes of our approach to becoming a Child Friendly City.

**ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :**

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**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.



Finally, in targeting selected areas of low response with hard copies, work was undertaken in the following wards: St Mellons, Llanrumney, Ely, Caerau. Further details will be provided to the committee on the streets and the effectiveness of this initiative.

## **Revenue Budget**

The Council's Digital Strategy has enabled a range of savings to be achieved in the current financial year, with £479,000 of savings specifically linked to digital technology anticipated to be achieved and reflected as such in the Month 9 Monitoring Report. In addition, a number of other 2018/19 savings proposals linked to digitalisation are also continuing to be progressed and these will realise further savings during 2019/20. The budget proposals for 2019/20 also include a number of savings specifically linked to the Council's Digital Strategy and these total £925,000. The Digital Strategy will also support a range of other savings linked to changes to business processes and will continue to be a key driver for change within the Council.

## **Children's Services**

The realignment of Children's Services, alongside investment in pressure areas including early help, fostering and expanding 'ARC' edge of care services, mean that new models of service can be developed which should enable more children and families to be supported to stay together. This is the right outcome for children and families but is also more cost effective than independent foster agency and residential placements. The level of investment means that overall assurance can be given that Children's Services should be in a position to balance their budget allocation, whilst recognising the shift to work more preventatively is a long term strategy.

The challenges of the social work vacancy position in Children's Services are recognised. It is right that there is an ambitious target which is kept under close scrutiny. In response to the recommendation that a phased approach should be adopted in achieving the 18% target set against the percentage of Children's Services Social Worker vacancies, it is recognised that this would enable the recruitment and retention strategy and refreshed workforce plan to be fully embedded. It is therefore proposed that a phased target is adopted, with a target of 24% by the end of March 2020, working towards achieving 18% by March 2021.

The Directorate will also prepare a briefing report for the Committee, to be brought forward in due course, on the development of the recruitment and retention strategy together with an updated workforce plan. It will be helpful to discuss the Strategy and workforce plan with scrutiny as there are a number of actions that need to be taken to retain and attract social workers and to review the skill mix across the service.

## **Education**

Your comments on these points are noted:

- The Committee's support of the pressure bid for EOTAS funding is appreciated and Councillor Merry has agreed to bring back a briefing paper explaining how this additional funding will assist young people who are educated other than at school to a future Committee meeting.

- Your comments regarding the utilisation of additional grant to support service improvements are noted, as confirmed by officers in responding to the specific question regarding the Music Service grant.
- I can confirm that officers are working with Welsh Government officials to formulate potential Welsh Government funded proposals for Minority Ethnic Achievement and Travellers support after the end of the current transitional grant in April 2020.

### **School Transport**

The directorate will develop a briefing paper on the uptake and effectiveness of the travel support allowance and will liaise with Scrutiny Services to programme this accordingly. A paper will also be prepared on the implementation of active travel plans for schools for the Committee's consideration later in the year.

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

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



**Y Cyngorydd/Councillor Christopher Weaver**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad/Cabinet member**  
**for Finance, Modernisation & Performance**

