

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Councillor Patel (Chairperson)  
Councillors Derbyshire, Philippa Hill-John, Owen Jones,  
Lancaster, Jackie Parry, Owen, Wong and Wood

### 59 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Michael.

### 60 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 61 : DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20 - CORPORATE OVERVIEW

The Committee received a report setting out the context for scrutiny of those sections of the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2019 to 2022 and the Draft Cabinet 2019/20 budget consultation proposals which relate to those functions under the remit of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that the Corporate Plan and the Well-Being Plan are key documents in delivering Capital Ambition as they translate the administration's priorities into deliverable organisational objectives. The Well-Being of Future Generations Act also places a statutory duty on the Council to publish well-being objectives. The Council and the Public Service Board have adopted the same 7 well-being objectives reflecting their shared aspirations for the City. The Corporate Plan is structured around Capital Ambition priorities and the 7 well-being objectives.

The Corporate Plan also sets out the performance measures and targets that will enable the Council to monitor delivery.

In terms of the budgetary position, Members were advised that the Council has a budgetary gap of approximately £32 million for 2019/20. The report provided details of the resources required to cover expenditure and how the funding shortfall will be addressed. In summary:

- Budget Savings - £19.157 million
- Partial Deletion of Financial Resilience Mechanism - £200,000
- Schools contribution to meeting pressures - £3,586 million
- Net Council Tax increase at 4.9% - £6.745 million
- Use of Reserves - £2.750 million
- Total - £32.438 million

In respect of the budget savings proposals of £19.157 million:

- £4.878 million are from employee costs
- £15.976 million are from other spend
- £1.697 million net reduction in income targets

The Chairperson welcomed Ian Allwood, Head of Finance and Allan Evans, Operational Manager, Accountancy to the meeting. The officers were invited to deliver a presentation. The Chairperson invited the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted that borrowing of the next 4 or 5 years was predicted to be in the region of £843 million. Members questioned whether this level of borrowing was feasible and sustainable if revenues were to fall. Officers advised that borrowing is currently sustainable but further borrowing will add additional pressure. The authority will increasingly be looking for contributions from Welsh Government and other partners.
- Members considered that it would be wrong to make assumptions regarding contributions from Welsh Government. Members were concerned that additional borrowing would result in less revenue. Officers were asked what impact this would have and what the longer term strategy is for the revenue account. The Head of Finance stated that it would be a mistake to assume that additional borrowing would not bring some benefit to the revenue account, for example, investment in the highway infrastructure avoids unnecessary maintenance and repairs. The only additional borrowing necessary over the next 5 years related to the delivery of an indoor arena.
- Members requested an update on the Council's liabilities in terms of teachers pensions contributions, and specifically, whether Welsh Government was intending to release additional funding. Officers advised that it was too early to provide an answer. There was still some dispute between the UK Government and Welsh Government as to whether the funding has already been passed to the Welsh Government. The authority could not rely on additional funding being released. The Cabinet Member considered that it was unreasonable for this additional expenditure to fall on the Council's budget and if and when the funding is released by Welsh Government it would provide a welcome boost.
- Members noted that further budget reductions and growth in demand for services was predicted over the next few years. There would be additional pressures particularly in schools, social services and environmental services. A Members asked whether the Financial Resources Mechanism was sufficient to support these services and whether it was prudent to call on reserves during 2019/20. The Head of Finance stated that the Medium Term Financial Plan considers the interactions along with inflationary pressures, assumptions and the additional complexity of the Local Development Plan are built in. Officers have a good picture in terms of financial planning and are looking to balance budgets.
- The Committee noted that in 2017/18 there was a shortfall of approximately £3 million on a savings target of £14.96 million. Members asked what assurances could be given that savings targets won't be

missed in 2019/20. The Head of Finance stated that colleagues in Finance has consulted with directorates and identified that the shortfall in savings targets are primarily a question of timing. Only 1 savings proposal has been written out. Directorates are fully aware of, and are committed to delivering, their savings. It is not possible to give assurance that 2019/20 savings proposals will be achieved as there are some red and red/amber risks. However, there has been an increase in the number of savings proposals that have a detailed plan in place.

- A Member suggest that if saving proposals are unachievable then they should not be put forward. The Head of Finance stated that no savings put forward are unachievable. Some savings carry high risk and there are an increasing number of red and red/amber risks. The Cabinet Member stated that savings on this scale, following on from the savings achieved over the last decade, there will inevitably be some risk. It was possible to reduce risk by closing down services, but this administration seeks to change how services are being delivered.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Members on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments.

## 62 : DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2019 TO 2022 & 2019/20 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS

### *Strategic Planning and Transport*

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and Andrew Gregory, Director, to the meeting. Councillor Wild was invited to make a brief statement.

Councillor Wild stated that the Directorate was continuing with its ambitious agenda and moving towards sustainable transportation in the City. Some progress has been made and there will be more progress this year. The Cabinet Member accepted that the Transport White paper is still awaited and the picture will become clearer once the Clear Air Strategy has been published. In terms of the budget, there was lots of dependency on grant funding and it was necessary to retain some flexibility.

The Committee received a presentation. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked whether smart traffic light systems, as used on the continent, are being considered. The Director advised that in terms of improving the network the directorate is looking at best practice in the UK/Europe. This is a basic element of traffic light renewal.
- Members asked whether the Financial Resources Mechanism (FRM) has been used for highway improvements over the last 4 years. Officers advised that he FRM has been accessed for highway enhancement and repairs and addition to the Active Travel Programme.

- Members noted that a £300,000 savings target was proposed in Civic Parking Enforcement. Officers were asked whether these savings would be achieved by increasing income. The Director stated that for increasing efficiencies fewer staff will be required to deliver the same outcomes. It would then be possible to relocate staff and encourage more flexibility.
- With regarding to the additional £250,000 proposed for road lining and road signs, Members asked how far the additional funding would go. The Director stated that the additional funding would be allocated in the most cost effective way and would complement other highway improvements. The Director agreed to provide further details outside of the Committee.
- Members asked if officers were confident that the £120,000 income from the removal of nuisance vehicles was achievable. Officers indicated that they were broadly confident the target could be achieved.
- Officers were asked to provide an update on the development of cycling superhighways in the City. The Director stated that 4 or 5 routes were proposed and these would be rolled out in phases. A lot of public consultation would be necessary and the Director anticipated an announcement in the near future.
- Referring to the £60,000 allocated toward electric fleet vehicles, Members asked how many vehicles that would procure. The Director stated that the intention was to provide 92 electric vehicles over the next 2 years.
- The Committee requested an update on progress towards the establishment of the Western Transport Interchange at Waungron Road. The Director advised that the project had been delayed due to contamination of the site and as a result of negotiations between the authority and a housing association. A planning application was imminent and the project would now be moving forward following a contractual agreement with the housing association.
- Members were advised that the capital funding bid for works to the Millennium Walkway was a pressure bid to address repair works needed. The authority is continuing to look for alternative sources of funding and nearby stakeholders form part of that conversation.
- Members asked whether the authority will still approve a loan to Cardiff Bus given their successful bid for funding to purchase 36 electric buses. The Director confirmed that the loan would still be provided.
- Members asked whether funding has been set aside following recent successful Court challenges to Moving Traffic Offences. The Director stated that the judgements were subjective rulings by an independent adjudicator. The sites in questions have been checked and were found to be compliant.

## *Clean Streets, Recycling and the Environment*

The Chairperson welcomed Jane Cherrington, Operational Manager Strategy and Enforcement. The officer was asked to deliver a presentation. The Chairperson opened the debate and invited Members to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked how much is paid to agency staff per annum. The officer advised that approximately £2 million is spent on agency staff per annum. Spend is higher during the summer months when green waste collections are at their peak. The £2 million figure represents approximately 20% of running costs for the Directorate and the Directorate is planning to recruit more permanent staff.
- Members asked whether Neighbourhood Services would be able to maintain the current level of service given the £160,000 savings proposed. Funding from the FRM for deep cleanse activities was for 1 year only. The Director stated that the FRM mechanism provided funding for 1 additional team. It was anticipated that teams/individuals would be moved to identified areas of greatest need.
- Members asked whether any consultation was being carried out with ward members in terms of service redesign. The Director stated that a ward action plan pilot was underway. A large amount of intelligence would be evaluated and services would be adjusted around that. Formal engagement will take place with ward members as part of that process. The Committee considered that it would be worthwhile engaging with ward members first, prior to changes being implemented.
- A Member referred to budget line 43 in relation to a north Cardiff Household Waste Recycling Centre. The Member considered that the budget line appeared to suggest that there may be a four-year wait. The Director stated that the Directorate was trying to identify a location and once identified due diligence and planning will be undertaken. A report on the assessment of potential sites was anticipated to be forthcoming in March.
- A Member considered that schools should be encouraged to recycle and asked, therefore, why some school waste collection contracts were externalised. The officer stated that a waste collection service is offered to all schools and 75% of school choose to use the service. However, schools hold their own budgets are free to decide on their own waste collection service. Discussions around this issue are being undertaken with the Welsh Government as part of the proposed 'Zero Waste Schools' campaign.
- Responding to a question from the Committee, the Director stated that the last major redesign of the service was undertaken in 2011. Best

practice suggests that services should be reviewed every 10 years.

- Members were advised that the Cardiff app was providing useful intelligence and was helping sift out repeat calls.
- Officers indicated that the recycling rate for the year would be between 60% and 61%. A targeted programme would help push the recycling rate towards 64%. However, to increase beyond 64% remains a big challenge and future legislation may also affect targets.
- Budget Line 42 – a Member asked whether start and completion dates for the coastal erosion project was known. Officers advised that design work has started and once the technical specification is known then it would be possible to provide a more accurate completion date. It was anticipated that the project would have a 3 or 4 year duration.
- In terms of the £550,000 set aside for electric vehicle charging, Members were advised that funding would be allocated towards match funding for private homes and some charging points would be provided for the authority's electric vehicles fleet.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Members on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments.

63 : CONSIDERATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
DRAFT REPORT TITLED 'LITTER & FLY TIPPING IN CARDIFF' - TASK &  
FINISH EXERCISE'

The Committee received the Draft Litter and Fly Tipping Task and Finish report. Members had previously been invited to comment on the draft report. A number of suggestions were received. The Principal Scrutiny Officer addressed each suggested amendment. Committee agreed that the report be amended as suggested.

Members wished to record their thanks to the Principal Scrutiny Officer and the Scrutiny Team for producing such a comprehensive report.

64 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME  
2018/19

The Committee discussed the Committee Work Programme. It was agreed that the Committee would sit twice during March. The meeting on 5 March 2019 would receive reports on Public Space Protection Orders, the Cardiff North HWRC and the Parking Appeals Policy. An additional meeting on 19 March 2019 at 5.00pm would consider Air Quality, Food Strategy, Public Transport and the Lamby Way Solar Farm. It was proposed that the April meeting of the Committee would be cancelled.

A new task and finish enquiry into the Biodiversity Policy would be undertaken.

65 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 5 MARCH 2019

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 5 March 2019.

66 : CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

The meeting terminated at 1.30 pm

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