

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY 2020

Present: Councillor Patel(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Parkhill, Owen,
Wong and Wood

1 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jacqui Parry and Andrew Gregory.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Parkhill to the meeting following his appointment to the Committee by Council. The Committee wished to extend their thanks to Councillor Boyle for his contribution to the work of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee during his term.

2 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor Owen Jones	Item 4 – Personal	Non-Executive Director of Cardiff Bus
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3 : DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21 - CORPORATE OVERVIEW

The Committee received a report providing context for the scrutiny of those sections of the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 and the Draft Cabinet 2020/21 budget consultation insofar as they relate to those functions under the remit of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that in July 2017 the Cabinet set out a policy programme and associated delivery commitments entitled 'Capital Ambition'. This established the Cabinet's key priorities for the municipal term and outlining a programme to continue to drive the city economy forward, whilst ensuring the benefits of success are felt by all residents. Capital Ambition was refreshed in February 2020 to reflect the continuing commitments for the administration.

The Corporate Plan and the Well-Being Plan are key documents in delivering Capital Ambition as they translate the administrations priorities into deliverable 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 wellbeing 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 and its scrutiny committees to monitor delivery.

The report provided a summary of the budgetary position in terms of the resources available to cover base expenditure, commitments and budget realignments. Savings of £9.764 million are required as follows: £5.048 million from efficiency savings; £2.541 million from income generation; and £2.175 million from service change. The report provided an indication of the level of savings required in each directorate and as a percentage of the overall savings required.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member for Finance; Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources and Ian Allwood, Head of Finance 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 sought assurances that the £2.63 million savings proposals in the Social Services directorate were achievable given the demographic pressures on the service area. The Cabinet Member stated that the savings are a small proportion of the overall budget. The proposals take account of demographic pressures and demands and are achievable. Officers stated that the level of savings required represents a reduction on previous years.
- Members referred to the damage caused from recent storms and asked where the resilience funding comes from and how such events impact on the budget. Officers stated the first priority would be to make an assessment of the damage. Welsh Government are able provide emergency assistance but it was also a reason for retaining a contingency budget. Additional funding may also come from insurance and the capital programme.
- Members considered that the impacts of climate change were already having an effect. The Committee asked, that given Cardiff is a coastal city, what budget is being put in place to address these issues, e.g. more regular drain/gulley clearance and flood defences. The Cabinet Member stated that the budget recognises climate change; the budget is preventative and aims to mitigate of the effects of climate change in the longer term. Extra funding has been provided for drainage and flood defence works. Other projects including green energy and recycling will feed into the climate change agenda. The Capital Programme also will feed into the assessment.
- A Member stated that flood defence schemes are costly and asked whether sufficient funding was available. The Cabinet Member stated that the authority, in partnership with the Welsh Government, was putting millions into a coastal flood defence scheme. New housing developments in the city will include sustainable drainage schemes (SUDs). The Corporate Director Resources stated that the budget attempts to take a long-term preventative view and will link schemes to Welsh Future Generation Act requirements.
- Members asked whether the budget has taken account of the potential impacts of Brexit, for example rising costs. The Cabinet Member stated that Brexit is on the administration's radar and is included on the Corporate Risk Register. The UK was still in the transition period and the effects are unknown at this stage. The authority will need to take a prudent, pragmatic approach and think about its medium to long term resilience. The Corporate Director Resources advised that

the UK Government will announce its budget in 11 March 2020. If the MTFP needs to be updated as a result of the UK Government budget then it will be reported to Cabinet in June. Members were asked to note that Appendix 9B of the report sets out the financial challenges and mitigations in relation to Brexit.

- Members noted that Capital Borrowing was in the region of £1 billion. Members asked whether the authority's credit rating could change and whether that eventuality has been taken into consideration. The Corporate Director Resources stated that there is no indication of any reduction in the authority's credit rating. However, the change in PLB interest rates was an issue to be considered and is addressed in the financial implications of the budget report. The Corporate Director stated that as Section 151 Officer he was satisfied that the budget is deliverable and affordable.
- Members asked the witnesses to comment on income generation. The Cabinet Member stated that income generation closes the funding gap. The authority is looking at best practice on other local authorities in terms of their income generation and the Cabinet will always welcome the sharing of ideas.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

4 : DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2020 TO 2023 & 2020/21 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS

Planning, Transport and Environment

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director in Planning, Transport and Environment. The Assistant Director was invited to deliver a presentation on the budget proposals in relation to the Planning, Transport and Environment Directorate.

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

- Members raised concerns regarding the directorate losing 5 FTE staff. The Assistant Director stated that the directorate will see a net gain in staff numbers as an additional 30 officers will be required to deliver the Capital Programme. Members asked whether the directorate is confident that they will be able to attract the calibre of staff required on short term contracts. The Assistant Director stated that the authority is seeking to deliver an ambitious programme and were not expecting significant difficulties attracting the right people. Three-year contracts are being considered.
- Members referred to the Capital Programme investment proposed for bus corridors and electric vehicle charging points. Member sought assurances around the proportion of the funds allocated to each of these and whether the funding was sufficient. The Assistant Director agreed to provide further details to the Committee. In terms of electric vehicle charging, the funding would be

used to fund pilot schemes, specifically in the City Centre and car parks to test the technologies available and whether there was public appetite for such facilities.

- Members asked whether new build housing developments are providing electric vehicle charging points as standard. The Assistant Director noted the point made and advised that it was for developers to decide whether they provide vehicle charging points. It was suggested that this issue could be revisited during the forthcoming review of the Local Development Plan.
- Members raised concerns that should there be a large scale shift towards electric vehicles then not only are the insufficient charging points but the UK was not currently generating sufficient electricity to meet this increase in demand. Officers stated that this was an issue of national concern. The authority is working with Western Power Distribution regarding the capacity of the network in the City. The authority has contributed to electricity generation in the City via Prosiect Gwyrdd, the Radyr Weir scheme, the anaerobic digestion scheme and the new solar farm at Lamby Way.
- The Committee asked whether the new housing developments built on greenfield sites would cope with surface water or whether they would add to the problems already occurring. The Assistant Director stated that such developments would be designed on SUDs principles and they would discharge low levels of surface water into rivers. The majority of the surface water would be held and the impacts would be managed.
- Members asked for comments on the new Llanrumney Bridge scheme specifically with regard to its potential to contribute to flooding. Officers stated that the bridge would be designed and constructed in such a way that it would not contribute to flooding.
- The Committee asked when the coastal flood defence scheme would be completed. Members were advised that the scheme would be completed by 2022. The scheme was currently in the design phase. Recent flooding was river related but this scheme would protect properties and residences from the impacts of the sea and high tides.
- Members noted the £150,000 allocated for a Food Strategy Co-ordinator. The Assistant Director confirmed that this sum was to provide 1 officer and the resources required to deliver a food strategy for the city. The figure represented 3 years funding.
- A Member referred to the £125,000 for City Centre Cycle Parking. The Member observed that a number of cycle parking facilities in the City Centre were under-utilised. Members asked whether the investment represented value for money. Officers stated that more secure and covered sites would be provided. Members asked how the location of sites would be determined. Members were advised that the new sites would be located on or near cycle routes. The authority is engaging with cycling groups regarding this. Members considered that it was also important to gauge the opinions of casual cycle users.

- Members referred to Line 8 – carriageway investment and Line 52 – highway /footway resurfacing. Members asked for further information. The Assistant Director advised that Line 8 refers to an annual sum and Line 52 refers to additional funding in this year’s budget. Engineering inspections will be undertaken and work will be prioritised depending on the level of deterioration.
- Officers confirmed that vehicle clamping has started. Officers are focussing on the removal of problem vehicles. The Assistant Director agreed to present figures relating to the numbers of vehicles being clamped to the Committee.
- Officers confirmed that the Western Bus Interchange was programmed to be delivered by 2021. The new cemetery provision in the north of the city was at the design phase and will soon be put out to tender. The Assistant Director offered to present updates to the Committee regarding these projects.
- Members noted the proposals to provide funding to Cardiff City Transport Ltd (Cardiff Bus) for the next two years. Members asked whether Cardiff Bus would be a viable entity at the end of the two year period. The Corporate Director Resources advised that the proposal would be subject to a further report and full approval by Cabinet and the Welsh Government. The further report will include full reference to due diligence and will include financial and legal advice from external experts.
- Officers stated that capital loans are used to provide moving traffic cameras. The payback period would be 2 or 3 years. The cameras are generally used in bus lanes and for ‘no entry’ turns. Officers were happy to receive suggestions from Councillors with regarding suitable locations for these cameras.
- Members noted that there was no detail in the budget regarding the Transport White Paper. Officers advised that the White Paper was a discussion document and was unfunded at present. Projects would be undertaken in partnership with the Welsh Government.
- Members raised concerns regarding taxi vehicles parking in bus lanes and the effect this was having on air quality and congestion in the City Centre, particularly around Castle Street. The Assistant Director stated that attended cameras will focus on problematic hotspots and will support enforcement.
- A Member asked for an update on improvement works at the Millennium Stadium walkway and whether the Millennium Stadium Plc might be in a position to make a contribution towards improving the walkway. The Assistant Director stated that the authority has an historic undertaking to ensure that the walkway supports the operation of the Stadium. Consideration is being given to improving the walkway in terms of the materials used.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

People and Communities

The Chairperson welcome Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment and Sarah McGill, Corporate Director and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene. The Corporate Director was invited to deliver a presentation on the budget proposals in relation to the People and Communities Directorate.

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

- Members noted that £200,000 has allocated towards the acquisition of land in the north of the City for a new HWRC. Members suggested that considerably more funding would be required. Officers advised that the figure related to works due to be undertaken on the option appraisal. There was a commitment deliver further funding through the Capital Programme.
- Members raised concerns regarding proposals to reduce staff numbers. The City is growing and service demands are increasing. The move toward kerbside sort should also be considered. Members asked how the service would be managed with fewer staff. The Assistant Director advised that 2 FTE posts would be lost. Strategic changes to service delivery were being looked at and demand from new developments in the City will be factored in. Rounds are kept under review and there was a need to be clear about areas of pressure on the service. Budget realignment will enable these issues to be addressed.
- In terms of vehicle replacement, Members asked how many new vehicles will be provided, of which type and whether any savings will accrue. The Assistant Director stated that 9 or 10 refuse vehicles will be replace alongside a number of heavy plant vehicles. Procurement would commence at the conclusion of the budget setting process. The Cabinet Member stated that a number of options were considered. The authority is currently holding discussions with the Welsh Government regarding a pilot for hydrogen fuelled vehicles. Welsh Government are also considering an 'all-Wales' option. The only viable option at the moment was to procure Euro 6 rated vehicles.
- Members noted Cardiff's ambition to become the World leading recycling city. Members asked what more could be done to reach that level. The Assistant Director stated that Cardiff was already one of the top performing cities in the world and we are committed to achieving the Welsh Governments 70% recycling target. Officers are working with partners to look at different service models in different parts of the City and are studying residents' behaviours. The Cabinet Member stated the 24% of recycling currently collected is contaminated. Simply driving that figure down would allow Cardiff to improve. The Cabinet Member invited all Councillors to work with the Cabinet to get that message out to residents.
- Members asked why the service area is not hitting its 95% enforcement target in terms of fly-tipping. The Assistant Director stated that officers attend 95% of the fly-tipping incidents reported are visited within prescribed timescales. All incidents are investigated to see if prosecution is possible. Fly-tipping is defined as anything from black refuse sacks to construction materials.

- Members were asked to note that Cardiff is audited by the Welsh Government differently and more rigorously to many of its global competitors. Trade waste also negatively impacts on recycling targets equating to around 4-5%.
- Responding to a question the Corporate Director stated that the service is seeking to extend enforcement powers to more officers in order to increase capacity.
- The Committee welcomed the £60,000 put towards the 'Love Where You Live' scheme. Members were advised that this figure represents the total budget available.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

5 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20 - VERBAL UPDATE

The Principal Scrutiny Officer provide a verbal update on the Committees Work Programme for 2019/20.

Members were advised that the Cabinet is due to consider a report on the review of the Local Development Plan in March. The Committee requested a briefing note regarding this issue.

The Committee also agreed to hold an additional special meeting in order to scrutinise the One Planet Cardiff strategy should it be made available for Cabinet on 2 April 2020.

6 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

7 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 3 March 2020.

The meeting terminated at 5.25 pm