

Ref: RDB/RP/CW/17.02.2020

18 February 2020

Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance,
Room 519,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Weaver,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 17 February 2020

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you, Councillor Wild, Councillor Michael and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Monday 17 February 2020. As you are aware the meeting received items titled 'Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21 – Corporate Overview' and 'Draft Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 & 2020/21 Draft Budget Proposals'.

The meeting initially considered the Corporate Overview and was followed by scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and sections of the draft corporate plan relevant to the terms of reference of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee. Presentations were made by officers from the Resources, Planning, Transport & Environment and People & Communities Directorates. Following the presentations Members had the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders and supporting officers. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

Corporate Overview

- **Climate Change & Brexit** - During the meeting Members expressed concern on the potential financial risks presented by climate change and Brexit. Given recent developments they felt that the risks were very real and potentially very expensive to address, therefore, I would be grateful if you could confirm the scope and scale of the Council's planning and preparation for dealing with the potential impacts of both climate change

and Brexit, particularly where the Council believes that the greatest threats exist to provision of front line services.

- **Capital Borrowing Concerns** - During the meeting Members asked how sustainable the Council's proposed Capital Programme was over the next five years, and questioned the impact that this might have upon the wider revenue budget. The five year capital programme contains £938,875 million in proposals; much of which needs to be repaid by funds from the Council's revenue budget. An officer explained to the Committee that the current proposals had been assessed during the budget setting process, and that they were deemed both deliverable and affordable. Given the wider uncertainty and risk facing the United Kingdom economy, I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with assurance that the current capital budget is affordable.

Strategic Planning & Transport Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21

- **Staffing for Transport Projects** – A Member expressed concern that the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate was reducing staff numbers at a time when the number of schemes coming through was increasing (particularly transport related). He was told that most of the capital funds for the new transport schemes would include provision for the temporary recruitment of staff to help deliver the projects. He and the Committee were satisfied by this answer, however, they would like assurance that:
 - The Council will be able to recruit the required number of staff, with the appropriate skills, and within the necessary timescale to deliver the new transport schemes;
 - The Council will be able to employ suitably qualified staff on short term contracts to deliver the work, rather than have to rely on expensive consultants.

- **Capital Line 37** – Line 37 allocates £5.678m towards transportation and environmental improvements, bus corridors and electric charging points. It does not provide any details on how the five year capital allocation will be split, for example, by geographical area or scheme type. Please confirm how this money will be split, including how it is allocated between the headline areas, i.e. transportation and environmental improvements, bus corridors and electric charging points.

- **Cycle Parking Provision** – At the meeting a Member questioned why some of the cycle parking provision in the city centre was so poorly located, and asked what could be done to identify better sites in future. As an example he referred to separate cycle parking facilities adjacent to Marks & Spencer and close to Miller & Carter – both in the city centre. I would be grateful if you could:
 - Confirm the current process that is used to identify suitable cycle parking facilities in Cardiff;
 - Provide details of any consultation that might take place prior to deciding on where to locate cycle parking – Committee Members believe that the Council should identify a mechanism to consult with ‘everyday cyclists’ instead of relying on responses from established cycling groups.

- **Vehicle Clamping** – At the meeting I asked if the Council’s new vehicle clamping scheme had actually started. I was told that it had commenced, however, the service was in the early stages of development and was focusing on the removal of problem vehicles. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a short update on the new vehicle clamping contract, to include the number of vehicles clamped / towed away; the income generated; the resources currently employed by the Council in this area; agreed contacts with third parties to deliver the service and details on how the service plans to develop in the next twelve months.

- **Western Transport Bus Interchange** – The capital programme allocates a £1.4 million investment in 2020/21 and 2021/22 for the development and completion of the Western Transport Interchange. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a completion date for this new transport scheme.
- **Capital Allocation – Cardiff City Transport Services Limited (Cardiff Bus)** – Capital line 59 allocates £13.6million for Cardiff Bus across the financial years of 2020/21 and 2021/22. The budget line explains that the funding will be *‘subject to a further report to and decision of Full Council, due diligence and other matters’*, with the ultimate aim of providing *‘a package of support for Cardiff City Transport Services Limited’*. The Committee is concerned by the amount of capital allocated to support Cardiff Bus over two years, and ask that you provide the Committee with regular updates as developments unfold.
- **Moving Traffic & Attended Parking Enforcement Cameras** – Line 93 of the capital programme allocates £475,000 towards the installation of ‘moving traffic cameras’ and ‘attended parking enforcement cameras’ on new routes in the city centre. The Committee welcome the introduction of these cameras in the city centre, particularly if they are used to target problem and illegal parking, for example, blocking of bus lanes. I would be grateful if you could let the Committee know which routes these new cameras will target, which offences they will prioritise and when they will be introduced.

Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21

❖ Delivered by the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate

- **Flooding** – At the meeting reference was made to the flooding that took place over the weekend and the impact that this had on local residents and the Council. Comments were also made about the growing threat of climate change, and the potential implications that this could have upon

coastal and river flooding. I would be grateful if you could explain to the Committee what the Council is currently doing to mitigate all types of flood risk, the resources being allocated and any long term forward thinking that is taking place.

❖ **Delivered by the People & Communities Directorate**

- **New Household Waste Recycling Centre in North Cardiff** – Line 39 of the capital programme allocates £3.325 million across the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 for the provision of a new Household Waste Recycling Centre in North Cardiff. At the meeting it was explained to Members that creating such a site in the north of the city was still a political commitment, however, the practicality of identifying a suitable site remained a challenge. The Committee was told that work would continue to identify a suitable site, and that capital funding had been committed to the scheme. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a progress update on identifying a suitable scheme, to include details of sites that have been considered along with a realistic timescale for delivering the new facility.

- **Love Where You Live** – Members welcome the additional £60,000 that was included in the budget to help with the delivery of the revamped ‘Love Where You Live’ campaign. They feel that the scheme is an excellent educational / awareness raising tool that encourages volunteer participation and, therefore, provides excellent value for money. The wider budget allocates £4.446 million of new monies for dealing with the collection, removal and processing of waste; this is a huge amount of money when compared to the resources put towards the ‘Love Where You Live’ campaign. Improving how we manage waste and achieve cleaner streets is not just down to how we process, collect and remove waste, it also involves raising awareness and better public education. With this in mind the Committee ask that you:
 - Provide details of what the £60,000 for ‘Love Where You Live’ will provide, for example, staff, equipment, promotional budget, etc.;

- Increase the funding for 'Love Where You Live' as the scheme sends out a very positive message and engages with lots of volunteers providing excellent value for money.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and work with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders to provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,



Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader, Cardiff Council;
- Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member Strategic Planning & Transport;
- Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment;
- Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources;
- Ian Allwood, Head of Finance;
- Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport & Environment;
- Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities;
- Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director Street Scene;
- Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services;
- Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services;
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee.