



Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088  
www.caerdydd.gov.uk  
County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087  
www.cardiff.gov.uk

## SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Cyf/My Ref: CM49269  
Eich Cyf/Your Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Molik

Dyddiad/Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Bablin Molik  
Chairperson Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Bablin

### Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 27 February 2023

#### Draft Budget Proposals 2023/24

Thank you for your letter dated 1 March 2023 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 2 March 2023.

Please find contained within this letter our response to your recommendations and some of the points raised.

#### Post Reductions

The total net FTE reduction of 172.9 is a Council-wide figure which is set in the context of circa 7,500 budgeted FTE in non-school settings. As noted in your letter, careful consideration is given to the employee implications of efficiency proposals, to determine that the removal of the posts will have no adverse impact on service delivery. Of the 172.9 net FTE to be deleted, 54.3 FTE are currently vacant.

Your letter raises concern regarding the overall reduction in staffing linked to budget proposals, given the current levels of vacancies in some areas (eg Social Workers). It is important to note that the 172.9 FTE reduction across the Council encompasses a variety of roles and so the skill sets and qualifications of post-holders being released are not such that they would be immediately transferable into areas currently experiencing higher levels of vacancies. I would provide assurance that the proposals within the remit of this Committee contain no deletion of Social Worker posts, and that the 2023/24 Budget includes a £450,000 investment into Social Worker salary budgets to increase a market supplement aimed at supporting recruitment and retention in this area.

With regards the 22.5 FTE post deletions across the Council that are “to be confirmed,” this indicates that the exact release mechanism is pending final confirmation.

#### 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.



It will be informed in coming weeks by restructures associated with proposals, and discussions with affected-postholders.

### **Use of Adult Services Earmarked Reserve Funding**

The £2.3 million indicative use of earmarked reserve funding in 2023/24 is a planned use of reserve which predominantly relates to funding pilot initiatives and other one-off costs. The existence of the reserve to support such initiatives is intended as an enhancement to the financial resilience and flexibility of the directorate rather than a cause for concern. The £2.3 million also reflects use of the reserve as a guaranteed funding source to enable initiatives to progress in instances where grant funding is likely, but has yet to be confirmed. In instances where the reserve supports the funding of posts, they are temporary, and over and above the existing establishment. As is the case with all earmarked reserves, planned use is carefully modelled and monitored over the medium term.

### **Debt Repayment**

The Council's borrowing requirement has two main costs 1) interest payable and 2) a sum deemed prudent provision for repayment of principle (Debt repayment – see Annex 3 Capital Strategy page 18 for the Approach to Prudent Provision). These are the main costs which form part of the Capital Financing Budgets of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account Budget. For 2023/24 these are forecast to be c£36 million and £28 million respectively, and these assume any borrowing on an invest to save basis is repaid from directorate budgets so is net neutral.

Page 21 of the Capital Strategy (Annex 3 of the Budget Report) includes an affordability indicator that shows the proportion of capital financing costs as a percentage of Net Revenue Stream, for the general fund and Housing Revenue Account. This also makes assumptions for future years as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In respect to risk in relation to borrowing, there are two interlinked elements to the response.

#### Risk in relation to affordability when determining capital programme

The Council complies with CIPFA and statutory guidance on the Prudential Code. This requires us to present various indicators to allow members to take a view on the prudence, affordability and sustainability of borrowing proposed, not only now, but in the future. Where borrowing is increased to pay for investment, such investment, in line with best practice, should be undertaken after consideration of an approved business case, viability assessments e.g. in respect of housing schemes and also be in line with approved asset management plans. This is an area where all Scrutiny Committees can play a key role in understanding and managing risk.

#### Risk in relation to borrowing itself

When borrowing is approved as part of an investment programme, the Treasury Management Strategy, Annex 4 of the Budget papers set out the approach to managing the Council's existing and future borrowing requirements. Treasury advisors are in place to support decisions in terms of borrowing and timing, with Governance and Audit Committee also playing a key role in scrutinising risks and controls in respect to Treasury Management. Most borrowing is at fixed rates of interest, but once an

investment programme is set, a key risk that remains is future interest rates. This is why it is essential that the investment programme is reviewed annually for affordability and the S151 is required as part of the budget to make a statement as to the affordability and risks of the Capital Programme, which is included in the budget report along with an overall consideration of financial resilience.

### **Ukraine Refugees and Asylum Seeker Support**

The £70,000 reflects the fact that existing Council staff have been and will continue to support the delivery of the city-wide response to the Ukraine Refugees and Asylum Seeker scheme and the Afghanistan Support Scheme. It is therefore appropriate that the value of work being undertaken is recompensed through the available grant stream.

### **Internal Supported Living Service Saving**

#### **How the phased approach towards a change in personnel will be implemented?**

The phased approach will ensure that supported individuals are placed at the centre of everything we do. The staff who will exit the service will have at least a 3 month lead in period from the point that their Voluntary Severance has been agreed to their exit date and therefore is expected that there will be a substantial handover period where current staff can work alongside staff from the third sector providers who are re-starting the schemes that Adult Services are closing. Detailed individual transition plans will be developed so that supported individuals have time to build relationships with new carer workers who will be supported and guided by those care workers who know the individuals well and are able to ensure that an individual's daily routines will not be disrupted.

Therefore, whilst there will be changes to the people who provide care and support to individuals, consistency of care will be maintained throughout the transition period with no interruption of service.

#### **How Service Users and their families will be kept informed as change occurs**

We are committed to working collaboratively with family members in order to support individuals in the most appropriate and inclusive way. For some supported individuals, family members will assist in communicating transition plans and we will engage with professionals such as advocates and the Speech and Language Team to ensure that the type of communication methods we use appropriately meet individual needs (e.g. using pictures where the written or spoken word is not appropriate).

A consultation plan has been put in place that provides the opportunity for family members to have written information about the proposals as well as individual meetings with managers of the service. Additionally, family members of individuals whose future care and support will be provided by an external provider, will have the opportunity to meet with the external provider to learn about the organisation, and to raise any queries or concern they have directly with the provider. All feedback received as part of the 6 week consultation period will be comprehensively considered and addressed to inform the final decision-making process which is expected to take place in May.

#### **Overall anticipated timescales**

It is anticipated that if the proposals are agreed, implementation of the new

arrangements would commence in June with a 3-4 month transition period where staff exiting the Local Authority and those remaining would work in partnership with family members and third sector providers and other professionals in Adult Services to implement the change.

### **Use of Occupational Therapists to Review Double Handed Care Packages**

The efficiency saving that refers to the use of aids and equipment is an occupational therapy led project to reduce double handed care. Our occupational therapists are well trained in understanding the equipment that is available and how this can be used safely. Normally this project will not result in the removal of care entirely, it will mean that one care worker, rather than two, can deliver the care, for example by the use of specialist equipment such as hoists, specialist beds etc. The care workers are provided with any necessary training to use the equipment safely. This is an extension of an existing project which produced savings while not diminishing the quality of the care provided or the safety of the service user.

### **Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes**

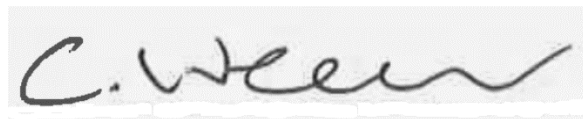
The new 3-year programme was launched in November 2022 and all local members were invited to submit one project idea for their ward. Two drop-in sessions were held in November to enable Local Members to come and discuss their project ideas with officers prior to submitting project ideas. A total of 13 project proposals were put forward by Members, by the closing date in December 2022. The project ideas are currently being assessed and letters notifying ward councillors of the outcome will be issued in the coming weeks. The FRM funding will enable a greater number of schemes to be delivered this year.

### **Recommendation - Housing Development Programme Target**

The recommendation with regards yearly targets is partially accepted. Given the challenging delivery environment, as set out in the Mid-Year Self-Assessment of Performance, and the phased nature of housing delivery, it is considered inappropriate to set an annual target. Delivery, however, will be reported on an annual basis allowing opportunity to consider and assess progress as part of the Council's established performance arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely



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

Cllr Norma Mackie, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being  
Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities  
Cllr Julie Sangani, Cabinet Member, Public Health & Equalities  
Cllr Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member, Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People

cc

Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Joel Williams, Chair – Policy, Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resource

Ian Allwood, Head of Finance

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities

Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities

Helen Evans, Assistant Director, Housing & Communities

Gareth Newell, Head of Performance & Partnerships

Dylan Owen, OM Policy & Improvement

Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager

Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations