

Appendix 6b

Date: 1 March 2023

Cllr Chris Weaver

Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance.

Correspondence Sent via e-mail.



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Dear Cllr Weaver,

CASSC Scrutiny Committee 27 Feb 2023: Draft Corporate Plan 2023-2026 and Draft Budgetary Proposals 2023-2024

Our sincere thanks, to you, your Cabinet colleagues and officers, for attending Committee on 27 Feb 2023, to facilitate our consideration of the draft Corporate Plan and budgetary proposals. Please find our comments and observations organised below, inline with the structure of the meeting.

Corporate Overview

The main service areas aligned to this committee are, Adult Social Services and Housing and Communities and we noted, and welcomed, the substantial increase in budget proposed for Adult Services for 2023-24. Yet, regardless of this substantial increase, Adult Services are still projecting to use £2.309m of earmarked reserves in 2023-24. Although we recognise the use of earmarked reserves is planned; it still generates suggestion that Adult Services may still face financial difficulties despite this proposed increase in budget.

Akin to this, it was somewhat perplexing that given the recognised (and well understood) challenges and demands Adult Services face, which provide the reasonings for their substantial increase in budget, they are projecting an underspend of £1.820m as of Month 9 (December, 2022). From both finance and adult service officers we were informed the reason for this underspend is due to difficulties with recruitment in a timely manner and increased use of grant funding (*later in the meeting it was also confirmed the current underspend position of Housing & Communities as of Month 9 - £2.378m is also attributed to these reasons*).

A key area of concern for the committee related to the employee implications of the proposed 2023-2024 budget (*total net FTE reduction of 172.9*). We held a number of reservations regarding the impact the removal of these post would have on the resilience of service areas, the implications for remaining staff, service delivery and overall pressure this would place on the authority.

We note the admission that FTE reduction, whether it be through vacant posts or voluntary severance will undoubtedly impact resilience of service areas and the authority as whole, and the relatively high number of FTE reduction can be attributed to the current financial context and overall budget gap this council is facing. However, assurance was given that when employee implications are present in efficiency savings, it is assessed that the removal of these posts will have no impact on service delivery. As offered at the meeting, we would welcome more information, on the 22.5 FTE posts categorised as 'TBC / Redeployment'.

Aligned to this, we sought clarity on the overall costing implications of voluntary severance, exploring how short-term costing against long term saving is determined. We note there is an initial cost commitment with money set aside for voluntary severance payments, however they in turn provide an ongoing base-budget saving, year after year. Although discussion held at the meeting are noted, reservations do remain around the use of voluntary severance, given we as a committee are acutely aware of the difficulties service areas, particularly those within our remit, face in the recruitment of staff. For example, later in the meeting we were informed, at present, there is a 14% vacancy rate for social workers.

Given the Covid-19 hardship fund has played a prevalent role in supporting service areas within our remit of late, we highlighted the release of the £10million covid-19 budget and sought clarity on how it has been utilised to address the overall budget gap. We note this money has been realigned and offered to service areas facing significant financial pressures.

With regard to the Capital Programme, we explored and questioned the council's overall reliance on grant funding – raising our concerns around risks and sustainability. We note the admission that reliance on grants does pose some risk, however grant funding for capital investment has been a feature of local authority

funding for many years with yourself and finance officers closely determining the use of grants based on intelligence and affordability, with other capital investments also pursued in the programme; for example, borrowing or invest to save schemes which in turn generates incomes.

Lastly, although not explored with yourself at the meeting, upon reflection, committee Members would appreciate further information on the council's debt spend. In particular, confirmation on how much of the council's overall 2023/24 budget will be toward debt repayment (for both new and historical debt). We note from the presentation, borrowing affordability and sustainability is undertaken within the council's Treasury Management Framework, however, we would appreciate a brief overview on how risk around borrowing is managed.

Cllr Sangani – Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equalities

Committee Members were pleased to see the proposal surrounding blood pressure loan schemes within the 2023/24 FRM, and we sought insight on the proposals intended arrangements. We note the scheme will be a pilot and so we wish to stress within its review, thorough consideration is applied to location of this equipment, given that not all Cardiff residents live within a close proximity to a hub, and the need to ensure mitigation measures are in place to avoid instances where equipment is not returned.

Given we as a committee have recently been briefed by council officers, and third sector organisations, on the pressures and capacity issues they face in terms of delivering asylum seeker and refugee support, we wished to explore the efficiency saving proposal titled 'Ukraine Refugees and Asylum Seeker support' (*proposed efficiency saving – income: £70,000*). From the response we were informed costings would be offset against the Ukrainian scheme; but we remain unsure what this means and would welcome clarity on this matter.

Cllr Norma Mackie – Cabinet Member for Adult Service

Members firstly wish to thank Jane for the presentation provided at the committee regarding the proposed service change, which alleviated many concerns we held prior to the meeting.

It was pleasing to be informed ensuring little to no impact of the service users will be at the forefront of this proposal. Further, the confirmation that individuals will not be required to move home, and the recognition on the need to ensure a phased approach for changes in personnel (support workers) is also welcomed. If currently known, Members would appreciate further insight on how exactly this phased approach toward change in personal will be implemented. Including how the service users and family members will be kept informed as change occurs, and the overall anticipated timescales.

Though this proposal relates to working with third sector organisations who already hold an established relationship with the council, given the current context, we questioned this feasibility noting the financial pressures and recruitment issues they too face. We were informed, initial conversations have been held with the third sector partners who have provided assurance they have the ability and capacity to effectively, and sensitively, manage this proposal.

We note within this service change proposal, 37 FTE posts have requested voluntary redundancy. In line with the ongoing concern around recruitment and retention, we raised what this indicates around work conditions, as this suggests a high number of individuals may sadly no longer wish to work in this vocation and are unable to be retained.

Given the significance of this service change proposal, some reservations remain and committee Members request, that if this proposal proceeds, at an appropriate juncture an update is provided to the committee. We have tasked our support officer to liaise with the service area regarding scheduling.

When considering the overall efficiency savings proposed for Adult Services, committee Members noted a significant number have been categorised as 'amber-green' for achievability, with the service change proposal categorised as 'amber-red'. So, we sought insight on the deliverability of implementing a volume of proposals which contain a level of uncertainty.

Within the discussion, we were informed the 'red-amber' classification for the service change proposal largely relates to timescales, and the efficiency savings proposed

align to the service area's strategic direction and ongoing work; thereby reducing its risk and strengthening its deliverability.

Turning our attention to the draft Corporate Plan, we explored resource levels in terms of the commitment for '*modernising our home care services to provide a full reablement service and short-term emergency care*'. Although we note difficulties in recruitment are still present, it was pleasing to be informed of the positive steps being taken to address challenges, such as an increase in wages and changes to staff rotas.

We also noted the recognition in the draft Corporate Plan, that all council staff require access to an appropriate level of training to meet the needs of autistic people, however there was an absence of KPI's measuring the performance of this commitment. From the response we note delivery of this commitment is monitored and recorded in the service area's Directorate Delivery Plan.

With regard to the Direct Payment efficiency saving, we are aware the rate of Direct Payments take-up in Wales is substantially lower than England and we have recently been briefed on the services area strategic direction through the use of microenterprise. At an appropriate time, we would appreciate an update from the service area on their work around Direct Payments and have tasked our support officer to liaise with the service area for this to be scheduled into our Work Programme.

Lastly, on reflection, Members would also appreciate confirmation on how the efficiency saving around the increase of equipment will be implemented. Including detail on the steps to safeguarding individuals to ensure equipment is not redundant and provides the intended relief and support.

Cllr Peter Bradbury – Tackling Poverty and Supporting Young People

As Cllr Bradbury will be aware, the level of funding allocated to his portfolio, although welcomed, raises concerns around sustainability. In particular, we raised the concern advice staff hold over job certainty, as a high level are on temporary contracts.

Within the discussions, we were informed although a level of grant funding is always present, and the service area benefits from a dedicated BID writer to ensure a consistent external income stream, work is ongoing toward making some positions permanent through grant funding. In addition, work is also ongoing toward providing staff who are on temporary contracts with assurances to alleviate uncertainties around job security.

It is well known that sadly demand for financial support is rising and so we sought explanation as why the 2022/23 FRM allocation for the advice team and into work services had not been utilised, and we were informed this was due to the money being replaced by the Shared Prosperity Fund.

In terms of the proposed efficiency savings (£90,000), Members note this is due to the implementation of Universal Credit which in turn lessens the caseload for Housing Benefit assessment thus allowing the release of staff.

Given the current context, we noted our recognition that third sector organisations are under considerable financial and capacity pressures, and we sought assurance this is, and would continue, to be taken into account within our partnership work. We were informed reliance on the third sector within the field of advice has subsided over recent years, with increased inhouse work. However, partnership work is continuously reviewed and assessed, with these considerations at the forefront. During the discussion we also highlighted the need to ensure we as a council recognise and support third sector organisations who offer support to specific vulnerable groups, as such groups may not feel comfortable approaching the council, and instead wish to receive support through dedicated organisations. We note from Cllr Bradbury's response he feels this is in place and welcome his offer of showing the committee organisations who demonstrate such work.

Lastly, with regard to the Corporate Plan, it was pleasing to be informed targets in relation to the number of people being assisted with support for benefits and the money provided have been realigned in line with the current output of the team.

Cllr Thorne – Housing & Communities

Regarding the service change proposal, we explored if the volunteers would have a set job description, and be offered a contract, which in particular will detail the number of hours of work requested from them, offering a degree of certainty for the volunteer and staff members.

We were advised contracted hours have not yet been considered as the ethos centres around 'giving what you can'. However, a job description will be provided and in terms of hours provided; restrictions may apply depending on if the individual is in receipt of benefits. However, the service area will look to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to ascertain the level of hours that can be provided.

The specific concerns raised around this proposal related to implications on service users and staff members should a volunteer not be able to fulfil their role. We were informed, it is intended volunteers will be able to select opportunities via the job descriptions available on the website, thereby potential offering expertise, and it is intended they will undertake 'light touch help' to allow staff members to give more dedicated, in-depth advice. Which in turn, should lessen risk and implication for staff members. Further, committee Members note this proposal will be a pilot approach to allow for assessment of its workings.

It was interesting to note the use of 'organised volunteers' is already a present in some hubs, who are recognised as offering excellent work and events. Given the current financial climate, it was also pleasing to note that 62 Into Work Service volunteers (99%) have moved on to permanent work, along with the other benefits outlined at the meeting such as providing individuals with new skills, and improvement to individual wellbeing.

With regard to the proposed Youth Hub, we sought an update on its progress and were informed officers are currently working to ensure there are no planning restrictions or technical issues with the identified site. Committee Members look forward to monitoring the development of this work.

In terms of the Corporate Plan, we sought explanation on why the yearly target for the development of new house builds has been replaced with a cumulative target. Although the response around external factors influencing yearly targets for this programme of work is both noted and understood, given the importance and acute need for social housing in the city, it is felt an annual target which allows for clear insight into the trajectory of this programme is of significance and so we **recommend** the annual target be reinstated either within the Corporate Plan, or the service area's Directorate Delivery Plan.

Lastly, Members explored the £200,000 allocation for Neighbourhood Regeneration Scheme in the 2023/24 FRM and concur with Cllr Thorne on the importance of regenerating local communities, particularly in the vein of how it can help address issues of ASB. Members would appreciate further information on how Councillors can make bids into the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme referenced at the meeting, including timescales on when bids must be made.

On behalf of the Committee, thank you once again to you, your Cabinet colleagues and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of this item.

To confirm a response to the letter which responds to the below bullet points is requested.

- Information on the 22.5 FTE posts categorised as 'TBC / Redeployment'
- Insight into how much of the council's overall 2023/24 budget will be toward debt repayment (for both new and historical debt), and a brief overview around how risk relating to borrowing is managed.
- Clarity on the proposed efficiency saving of 'Ukraine Refugees and Asylum Seeker support' (£70,000), what is being proposed and how it will result in a saving.
- For the proposed Adult Services service change; how the phased approach toward a change in personal will be implemented, how service users and family members will be kept informed as change occurs and the overall anticipated timescales.
- Confirmation on how the efficiency saving around the increase of equipment will be implemented. Including detail on the steps to

safeguarding individuals to ensure equipment is not redundant and provides the intended relief and support.

- Further information on how Councillors can make bids into the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme referenced at the meeting, including timescales on when bids must be made.

The recommendation we wish to receive a response on, including if it is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted is:

- Given the acute need for social housing, the yearly target for the council house development programme be reinstated in the Corporate Plan or detailed the service area's Directorate Delivery Plan.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR BABLIN MOLIK
CHAIR, COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Julie Sangani, Cabinet Member, Public Health & Equalities
Cllr Norma Mackie, Cabinet Member, Adult Services
Cllr Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member, Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People
Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member, Housing & Communities
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
Group Leaders
Cabinet Office
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations

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

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.



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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 a 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 through 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 Cyngorydd/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
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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

Ref: Scrutiny/AEJ/LB/CW/010323

1 March 2023

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



Dear Councillor Weaver,

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – 28 February 2023

On behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you, Councillor Lister, Councillor Merry, Cllr Bradbury and officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 28 February 2023 to consider the Draft Budget Proposals 2023-24 and Draft Corporate Plan 2023 - 26.

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 Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

❖ **Corporate Overview**

In terms of your Portfolio, Members felt there were a number of issues that would require your input and commitment going forward and would appreciate your views on.

Firstly, the Committee wish to commend you and Cabinet colleagues for the commitments given to budgets in Education and Children's Services. The uplifts were very welcomed and we will support you in ensuring Directorates are achieving their commitments and priorities and budgets are used effectively across all Directorates that fall within this Committee's Terms of Reference.

During our questioning, we asked you about the following issues and noted responses:

- What was being done to address budget overspends and bringing budgets back into line?
- We asked you about Corporate Risk and despite increase in budgets, assurances on whether the risk was manageable, given the ambitious commitments in the Corporate Plan and against the backdrop of overspends and demands on services?
- Grant funding and reliance on grants and sought assurance that services would not be affected by uncertainty of grant funding and resultant impact in planning and sustainability of services.
- 3.95% increase in Council Tax and how this compares with other local authorities in Wales, and what modelling on future projections had been undertaken.
- FRM - sought clarification in its purpose and what it is used for.

In addition, we asked questions on the following areas. We request a response to these.

- Budget Consultation - we asked what the circa 6000 responses were as a percentage of the whole population of Cardiff. **Please provide this information.** In addition, we asked whether the timing of the consultation was most effective (over Christmas etc) and noted the response, linked to the next issue.
- We asked what impact of the timings or delays of UK and Welsh Government's announcements on budget settlements has had in terms of the in the budget setting process. We **request** that you provide a further narrative on this, and how the slow delivery of announcements that has happened this year has had an impact on council decisions and some further information on how you have had to overcome this.

❖ Children's Services

The Committee welcomed the 9.7% net increase in the Children's Services budget for 2023/24 and would like to thank the Cabinet for continuing to support this area.

Budget Proposals

During the Q&A session, we asked a number of questions on the budget, particularly around what the service wishes to deliver with additional funding; how the service will evaluate the changes it introduces, given the ambitions the service has under its "people, place and practice" priorities; whether the service is confident it can achieve its efficiency savings, given the demands on the service; and delivering the FRM commitment on increased activities for Children Looked After and those at the edge of care. We noted the responses given.

We asked questions in relation to how the budget will be used to increase the number of adopters; and **request** that you provide numbers of children and young people in this cohort awaiting adoption and for further information on those placed in county and out of county.

Corporate Plan 2023-26

In relation to the Corporate Plan, Members asked a number of questions in relation to commitments and KPIs. This included 3 x new KPIs on the Youth Justice Service (which had been set nationally by the Youth Justice Board); and KPIs K1.16 and K1.17 relating to care leavers in education and employment. We asked whether the targets were challenging enough, and the Director of Children's Services stated that she would provide more information on these KPIs. We would suggest that she take into account the following when providing a response.

Overall, the Committee sought clarity on the KPIs relating to Children's Services across the board. We questioned some of the wording of the PIs, particularly those set nationally, and would wish to know whether the Council has a say in the development of the PIs?

We would **request** that further information be provided on the Children's Services KPIs as to whether they have been developed locally or nationally; and (where appropriate) how the targets have been set and the rationale for developing and implementing them. We also felt that any previous performance should be included in the Corporate Plan to give an insight into the progress being made and allow us to measure the impact of the KPIs. We also need to be able to measure whether KPIs are realistic, achievable but also challenging.

Unregistered Care settings

A Member of the Committee asked questions on this issue, and we would appreciate any information that could be provided on unregistered care settings in Cardiff. We would wish for the Cabinet Member and officers come to a future Scrutiny Committee to discuss developments and innovations in Children's Services, and request that this be part of these discussions.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

We asked questions in relation to plans for attracting new social work staff – what packages are available etc. and noted responses. We will monitor this issue via quarterly performance data submitted to the committee.

Ty Storrie

Members asked questions on proposals for Ty Storrie but seek further clarification on this proposal. We noted that there is a CHAD place at Ty Storrie and understand plans for other provisions coming into the provision.

We **request** that further information be provided on the following:

- What is the status of the CHAD bed currently at Ty Storrie?
- Is the CHAD place remaining at Ty Storrie or being moved into the community? If so, are we sure this is an efficiency saving if removing a niche/bespoke bed? If we subsequently need it, do we run a risk trying to find a private provider or out of county placement and therefore potentially negate the saving proposed.
- Further information on proposed services coming into Ty Storrie

Education & Lifelong Learning

Members of the Committee would like to again commend the Cabinet for retaining and protecting education and school budgets.

Budget Proposals

During the Q&A, we sought assurances that the service can mitigate risks, including any deficit budgets in schools. We asked questions around ensuring that schools are operating to their maximum efficiency and minimising waste. We heard that over the next couple of months, the picture will become clearer on the budgets of individual schools. Our work programme already contains a follow up session on post-pandemic recovery with Members, officers and head teachers to be undertaken at our meeting in July. We will follow up this issue with them then, but if you have any thoughts on this issue, it would be welcomed. In addition, we were informed that 5 schools were projecting overspends in the current year, and we would **request** that a list of who these are would be appreciated.

Fees and Charges

Members asked about the 5% increase in school meals, particularly what EIA informed us, and more details on what consultation had been done? We also asked about the potential impact on families; and how is the LEA supporting

schools on this; and sought clarification on price increase and how this interacts with WG Policy on universal free school meals. We noted responses on this.

We asked about the impact of increased fees and charges in use of Storey Arms and what support is available for schools and parents? We noted the response.

Corporate Plan

Due to time pressures, there were a number of questions relating to Corporate Plan that we were unable to ask. Therefore, we would seek a response on the following queries:

- Commitments S1.06 – S1.08 – there are a number of commitments in relation to refreshing, relaunching and redeveloping a series of documents and programmes. Please could you explain the rationale behind this? Are we not able to concentrate on delivering the plans and policies already in place so that schools have time to embed plans before we change them again?
- Linked with previous queries in Children’s Services KPIs – please can you provide more information in relation to K1.03 - *The percentage of children and young people between the age of 8 and 18 who state they are able to do their best to learn and progress at school all or most of the time*? The wording appears very woolly. What does this KPI mean? Who set it? What is the methodology for collecting this data?
- (K1.12) - *The number of added formal Additional Learning Needs places delivered across the City (Target to be achieved by September 2023).* The target is set at 151 by September 2023 – does this target need to be more challenging and cover the whole year? Why September 2023?

- Regarding the use of the pupil development grant for free school meals - how this will be impacted in relation to roll-out of free school meals across the primary sector? How are you going to identify these, what formula will be used?

Attendance Strategy

We welcomed the news that an Attendance Strategy was under development but would **request** that more information be supplied on any research being carried out on this issue, to build core data to underpin the Strategy. At our meeting in December, we heard a myriad of reasons lie behind attendance problems but would welcome any details arising from research. We will also ensure that this issue is addressed at the Pandemic Recovery update at our meeting in July.

During discussions on this issue, we queried whether the attendance target for primary schools in particular was challenging enough – notwithstanding the complexities surrounding non-attendance at the moment, and we would **welcome your feedback** on this.

Future Capital Project Join-up Opportunities

At the meeting, Members considered a range of Capital Programme Projects, including a range of community facilities (including a Youth Hub) and proposals in relation to the Community Focussed Schools Programme.

Members felt that joining up of these types of projects could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would **recommend** that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.

Supporting Young People

Youth Service

Members have, at previous meetings of this Committee championed the work of the youth service and would wish to state that it fully supports the work that Cllr Bradbury and officers are aiming to achieve in this area.

We asked a number of questions about the funding of this service – about the reliance on grants in recent years; the earmarked reserves (line 68 in Appendix 7 of Cabinet papers); efficiency savings proposals (Appendix 6a in Scrutiny papers only – ref EDUE9) to align budgets across youth services, Cardiff Commitment and Child Friendly cities teams; and numerous proposals within the FRM Appendix (Appendix 3 in Cabinet report papers).

Due to this, Members were unclear on what this means in terms of the Youth Service budget and would therefore **request** that some further detail on the makeup of this budget be provided, so that we have a clear picture of what funds are available; whether the service is gaining or losing funds; what parts of the service (and where) funds are being spent. Therefore, we request this be provided.

We noted the work being done across the service in retaining funding; tapping into grants available; mapping services; talking to young people at current youth centres; developing the Passport to the City etc. We also welcome the commitments by Welsh Government Interim Youth Work Board (and Task & Finish Groups) and the work of Keith Towler.

We feel confident that those responsible for managing and developing the Service will do so effectively; make the best use of the funds that are available; review and align services within the Youth Service itself and more widely across council; and make best use of partnership and collaboration in delivering an enhanced service.

We firmly believe that Youth Services should be prioritised as an invest to save service, which has a strong core budget to enable it to plan, build and develop appropriately. We were surprised to compare the budget of a secondary school at around £10m to a key service such as Youth Services that covers the whole of Cardiff and provides invaluable support to schools and the wider community having £1.5m, much of which is grant funding.

We therefore **recommend** that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.

Youth Provision/Facilities

During the meeting, Members sought assurances that youth facilities (including sport and music) are expanded and available/affordable for all young people, particularly vulnerable young people.

We noted the work that is already being done in this area and welcome some of the mapping work being undertaken in areas of Cardiff to establish what is already available; learning from good practice such as Cllr Bradbury speaking to young people in youth centres; realignment of services; developments such as Passport to the City; Cardiff's Little Gigs; focussing on getting females into sport and activities; building grants systems with providers etc. We also noted the external consultant's report in this area. Our work programme already has a commitment for "youth provision" to come to this Scrutiny Committee in June 2023, so we will discuss these issues further in due course.

Youth Hubs

Members wished to explore the development of the City centre (and other) Youth Hubs in the City. We recognise that this sits within Cllr Thorne's

Portfolio. We would therefore **request** that Councillor Thorne provide the Committee with details on proposals for Youth Hubs. We were particularly interested in whether the commitment (S4.06) to progress a Youth Hub in the City centre by Summer 2023 was on course and any details about it.

To recap, the Committee is requesting the following information:

Corporate

1. Budget Consultation – **Provide details of** what the circa 6000 responses were as a percentage of the whole population of Cardiff.
2. Provide a view on what impact of the timings or delays of UK and Welsh Government's announcements on budget settlements has had in terms of the in the budget setting process; and how the slow delivery of announcements that has happened this year has had an impact on council decisions and some further information on how you have had to overcome this.

Children's Services

3. Children Looked After - provide numbers of children and young people in this cohort awaiting adoption and further information on those placed in county and out of county.
4. KPIs - further information be provided on the Children's Services KPIs as to whether they have been developed locally or nationally; and (where appropriate) how the targets have been set and the rationale for developing and implementing them. Also provide some observations in relation to any previous performance being included in the Corporate Plan to give an insight into the progress being made and allow us to measure the impact of the KPIs. We also need to be able to measure whether KPIs are realistic, achievable but also challenging.

5. Ty Storrie – provide further information in relation to the following:
- What is the status of the CHAD bed currently at Ty Storrie?
 - Is the CHAD place remaining at Ty Storrie or being moved into the community? If so, are we sure this is an efficiency saving if removing a niche/bespoke bed? If we subsequently need it, do we run a risk trying to find a private provider or out of county placement and therefore potentially negate the saving proposed.
 - Further information on proposed services coming into Ty Storrie

Education & Lifelong Learning

6. Corporate Plan – responses on the following additional queries:
- a) Commitments S1.06 – S1.08 – there are a number of commitments in relation to refreshing, relaunching and redeveloping a series of documents and programmes. Please could you explain the rationale behind this? Are we not able to concentrate on delivering the plans and policies already in place so that schools have time to embed plans before we change them again?
- b) Linked with previous queries in Children's Services KPIs – please can you provide more information in relation to K1.03 - *The percentage of children and young people between the age of 8 and 18 who state they are able to do their best to learn and progress at school all or most of the time*? The wording appears very woolly. What does this KPI mean? Who set it? What is the methodology for collecting this data?
- c) (K1.12) - *The number of added formal Additional Learning Needs places delivered across the City (Target to be achieved by September 2023)*. The target is set at 151 by September 2023 – does this target need to be more challenging and cover the whole year? Why September 2023?

d) Regarding the use of the pupil development grant for free school meals
- how this will be impacted in relation to roll-out of free school meals
across the primary sector? How are you going to identify these, what
formula will be used?

7. Attendance Strategy – provide more information on any research being carried out on this issue, to build core data to underpin the Strategy. We would also welcome views on our query whether the target for attendance in primary schools in particular was challenging enough – notwithstanding the complexities surrounding non-attendance at the moment.
8. Overspends information - we were informed that 5 schools were projecting overspends in the current year, and we would **request** that a list of who these are would be appreciated.

Supporting Young People

9. Youth Service budget - further detail on the makeup of this budget be provided, so that we have a clear picture of what funds are available; whether the service is gaining or losing funds; what parts of the service (and where) funds are being spent.
10. Youth Hubs - request that Cllr Thorne provide the Committee with details on proposals for Youth Hubs. We were particularly interested in whether the commitment (S4.06) to progress a Youth Hub in the City centre by Summer 2023 was on course and any details about it.

Recommendations to be monitored following this Scrutiny.

To summarise, the Scrutiny Committee made two formal recommendations which is set out below. As part of the response to this letter we would be grateful if you could, for the recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
<p><u>Future Capital Project Join-up Opportunities</u></p> <p>1. Members felt that joining up of some of the new capital projects around community facilities and schools could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would recommend that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.</p>				

<p><u>Youth Services:</u></p> <p>2. We recommend that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.</p>				
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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.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Councillor Ash Lister, Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children’s Services)
Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People
Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas, Programme Director of School Organisation Planning.

Steve Morris, Operational Manager, Sport, Leisure and Development,
Economic Development
Neil Hardee, Head of Services to Schools
Suzanne Scarlett, Suzanne Scarlett, Operational Manager –
Partnerships & Performance, Education & Lifelong Learning
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office
Members of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Support Office
Tim Gordon & Jeremy Rhys, Media and Comms
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee

SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Cyf/My Ref: CM49269

Eich Cyf/Your Ref: Scrutiny/AEJ/LB/CW/010323

Dyddiad/Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Lee Bridgeman
Chairperson Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Lee

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – 28 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.

The following paragraphs address each of the Committee's further information requests:

Budget Consultation

Consultation on the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24 ran from 23rd December 2022 to 29th January 2023. The survey was available online and in hard copy, in English, Welsh, Arabic and Polish, with the Council working closely with partner organisations to ensure as representative a response as possible. Targeted engagement work was also undertaken in areas with traditionally low response rate as well as with Children and Young People. The Budget Consultation received a total of 6,047 responses which represents a statistically significant sample size. Based on the latest midyear population estimates, the number of responses represents around 2% of the total population over 10 years old. Compared with major surveys undertaken by other cities that the Council is aware of, the number of respondents to the Budget Consultation represents the largest response rate.

Settlement Timing

Prior to the 2020/21 Budget Round, the Provisional Settlement was communicated to Local Authorities each October, with the Final Settlement in December. In 2019 these dates were delayed, to December 2019 and February 2020 respectively, due to changes occurring within UK government at the time, which led to the snap General Election of December 2019. The understanding of Local Authorities at the time was

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.



that this would be a one-off situation and that timings would revert to their usual October/December basis in future years. However, issues since then (not least the Covid pandemic) have meant that Welsh Government have continued with the later dates and have, as yet, not returned to the traditional settlement timings.

Settlement figures are a critical part of overall budget planning and so current timescales, coupled with indicative settlement figures that often change are very challenging from a financial planning perspective, particularly in an economic environment as unsettled as recent times. Local Authorities are obliged to set a balanced budget by 11th March each year, so current settlement timescales significantly condense the period in which the Local Authority has the clearest picture of the forthcoming financial year.

Where there are significant changes between indicative settlement figures and Provisional Settlement, as has been the case in each of the last two years, this affects the significant planning work that has occurred up until that date. In recent years, the Provisional Settlement has been more favourable than the previously issued indicative. Greater risk would be posed in a situation where Provisional Settlement was less favourable. However, neither situation is ideal from a planning perspective. The timing of the Provisional Settlement, in December, also necessitates the delay of public consultation. This is because consultation in advance of settlement would be based on a position that would be highly likely to change.

Children Looked After Numbers

There are currently 22 children with a Placement Order who are not yet placed with prospective adopters. All of these children are currently in foster placements - 15 in Cardiff and 7 out of area. When adoptive placements are identified for these children, they will often be out of area as this is often considered to be more appropriate and in the best interests of the child. Additionally, a number of young people from other authorities are placed with adopters in Cardiff.

Children's Services KPIs

Please see the updates in relation to individual indicators at Appendix 1.

Ty Storrie

For context Ty Storrie, run by Cardiff Council is located in the west of Cardiff near Ty Gwyn School. It is a purpose built registered Childrens Home for children and young people aged between 6 and 17 with disabilities and complex needs. The following link provides a short video on the building and facilities at Ty Storrie [Ty Storrie English](#).

There are currently 27 children accessing Ty Storrie as well as 12 children and young people currently going through their induction / settling in period, which includes visits to the site with family, tea visits after school leading up to their first stay. There is a plan to significantly increase the usage of the building allowing much more children to access this provision. In August 2022 only one, sometimes two, children per night were accessing this provision. In February 2023 this has increased to at least two children every night, and for eight nights in February, three children received overnight short breaks.

We are currently proposing a change to the shift patterns for staff to both make it a more attractive role and assist with recruitment and retention, plus assist with increasing the usage of the building. With that being in place from April we aim for four children per night to start attending regularly. The outcome of this increased usage is the immediate stepping down of alternative community-based support or increased provision going into the home. We also know the significant positive benefit this short-break provision provides to the young person and their family, so we would see a reduction in families reaching crisis and needing the child to access full time residential provision; provision that in the current market is not there, and where there is no other option, is met by expensive bespoke placements.

We believe that the demand for a bespoke placement for a child or young person with a disability or complex needs will reduce if we increase this capacity, however we have the option of meeting this need through the use of an additional room in the building and not a reduction to the availability of overnight short breaks to other children.

Corporate Plan Commitments

The Cardiff 2030 Vision was launched in November 2019, pre-pandemic, and whilst the goals, values and desired outcomes remain constant, there is a need to revisit the commitments to action in the context of the challenges and opportunities being faced by children and young people after two and a half years of disruption. This work is being completed in partnership with schools.

Within this review, there is a key and essential need to focus upon workforce development. The actions proposed in the Corporate Plan are not new, these were stated in the Cardiff 2030 vision, and are acutely relevant. The inclusion of these actions here signals an acceleration of activity to make change happen.

In relation to School Improvement, we need to respond to a period of significant national reform in education, whereby curriculum, qualifications and the accountability framework for school performance are all transforming. It will be essential for Cardiff to ensure that our local arrangements are robust, effective and responsive to the needs of children and young people in our city, and proactive in supporting our schools to deliver upon their School Improvement Priorities.

KPIs – Children and Young People – more information on K1.03

This KPI is collected via the Bi-Annual Child Friendly City Survey, which will next be delivered in early 2024. The survey is made available via schools and youth support services and this question sits within the context of a range of other questions on children's rights. The resulting data set is available to all participating schools and settings, the Youth Council, the Council and Public Service Board members.

Additional Learning Needs Places Delivered Across the City - Target

The formal places proposed in the target is in line with the Cabinet approvals brought forward in 2022. These are formal places that have been brought forward in line with the School Organisation Code 2018 and have been scheduled to be in place from September 2023. The number of ALN places stated has been a challenging target alongside significant increases from September 2022. Further increases of formal places will need to be brought forward through further school organisation proposals, which are planned to be brought forward within

the next 6 months. **If Cabinet deem the proposals appropriate the earliest proposals could be implemented would be September 2024.**

Pupil Development Grant and Free School Meals

Welsh Government have asked Local Authorities to continue to administer the process for identifying pupils who would be eligible via the means test for a free school meal, whilst this is not ideal it will enable WG to identify amounts required by schools for the PDG allocation process. As this is also used to identify eligibility for the PDG Access grant (old school uniform grant) WG believe this will continue to provide an incentive for parents to continue to apply. This will run alongside the roll out of the universal free school meal provision for all primary aged pupils so should not have a direct impact on this initiative.

Attendance Strategy

There is no specific research being undertaken in relation to attendance, but the Education Welfare Service has a good insight into the issues affecting attendance through their Persistence Absence Reviews. These are being undertaken in every school to highlight pupils with poor attendance and ensure that there is support and interventions in place to secure improvements and a return to school which has given them so have a clear picture of the current challenges and issues.

In 2011 when Cardiff reorganised the EWS, delegated funding to schools to employ School Attendance Officers and implemented a new 5 step approach to attendance, primary attendance had been consistently between 92.5 – 92.8% for the previous 5 years. It took a lot of hard work to get to 94.8 – 95% pre-covid as improvements were incremental year on year. Given that primary attendance is currently running at 88.9%, 92.5% is an ambitious target given the current challenges schools face. We have to change the culture that's crept back in relation to casual attitudes to attendance, anxiety and caution about illness etc. It is considered unrealistic and unachievable to set targets any higher at the current time.

Schools in Deficit

At the start of the year 2022/23, five schools indicated that they needed to go into deficit protocol. Through working with the schools, this list reduced to three schools entering the protocol for 2022/23. The schools are Cardiff West High, Allensbank Primary and St Albans Primary. For the year 2023/24, we anticipate an increase in the number of schools applying for a deficit, and we will keep the Committee updated during the course of the year.

Youth Services Budget

I have asked officers to provide the Committee with a detailed breakdown of the spend and funding components of the Youth Service Budget within the next few weeks.

Youth Hubs

Details on proposals for Youth Hubs can be shared with the committee. With reference to step 4.06 within the Corporate Plan, it relates to progressing, not completing, the Youth Hub in the City centre. This step has been amended to clarify the next milestone; *progressing plans for a youth hub in the city centre and agree a preferred option by Autumn 2023.*

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - *Members felt that joining up of some of the new capital projects around community facilities and schools could present an excellent opportunity across the City to join-up developments of new community facilities and schools. The Fairwater Campus proposal has already been cited an example of doing this, and the Committee would recommend that the Cabinet explore and commit to this option going forward.*

Accept - The Council welcomes the positive comments regarding the community facilities provided on the flagship Fairwater Campus project and the recommendation is fully accepted. It is expected that Community Focussed Schools will also form a key part of the School Organisation Programme Strategy that is due to be developed within the next 12 months and has also recently been announced as an objective of Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Work is underway with Youth Services, Children's Service and Communities to consider options to collaborate in the provision of services for children and young people through shared facilities.

In addition, all Band B schools to date have prioritised working with communities in their school visions and through the asset programme work is also underway to provide a range of community sports provision in schools such as Cardiff West Community High School, Corpus Christi Catholic High School, St Illtyd's Catholic High School, and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Eder.

Recommendation 2 - *We recommend that the Cabinet agree to undertake a review of the Youth Service budget, and report back on how it intends to strengthen the budget going forward. This would include how it will move away from the reliance on grant funding; and how it will grow the base budget and sustain it in the coming years.*

Partially Accept – we will review the youth service budget, including how the service will move away from grant funding within the context of available resources. In terms of partial acceptance, what cannot be predetermined at this stage is the overall quantum of resources available to the Council in future years and the choices that the Council will have to make in terms of how funding is prioritised.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature appears to be 'C. Weaver' written in a cursive style.

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

cc

Councillor Ash Lister, Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children's Services)
Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People
Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas, Programme Director of School Organisation Planning
Steve Morris, Operational Manager, Sport, Leisure and Development
Neil Hardee, Head of Services to Schools
Suzanne Scarlett, Operational Manager – Partnerships & Performance, Education
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Dylan Owen, Head of Cabinet Office
Members of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Support Office
Tim Gordon & Jeremy Rhys, Media and Comms
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee

Appendix 1

KPI	Target	Update	National or Local ?
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4* who have completed at least three consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care	65%	Target setting is difficult because the cohort of young people is relatively small and changes from one year to the next. 2021/22 performance was 64% - our target is to maintain with small improvement.	National
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4* who have completed at least three consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13-24 months since leaving care	65%	Target setting is difficult because the cohort of young people is relatively small and changes from one year to the next. Performance for 2021/22 was 68%; current performance for 2022/23 is 65% - our target is to turn around the reduction and at least maintain. It will be kept under review.	National
The number of children looked after fostered by Local Authority foster carers	130	Current performance is 117. It is challenging to increase the number of in house foster carers against a national context of a reduction in the numbers of people expressing an interest in fostering.	Local
The number fostered by external foster carers as a percentage of regulated placements (excluding kinship)	60%	Current performance 58% and decreasing - challenging.	Local
The number of children looked after placed in in house residential placements	15	This target is in line with the recently approved Children's Services Accommodation Strategy.	Local
The number placed in external residential placements as a percentage of regulated placements (excluding kinship)	17%	Current performance 18% and increasing - challenging. (Lower is better.)	Local
The number of children returned home from care during the year	60	Target setting is difficult as reunification decisions are made on a case by case basis. This target will remain under review to ensure that children are only returned home when it is safe and appropriate to do so.	National
The percentage of children looked after in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff	60%	Current performance 56% - challenging.	Local
The percentage of children looked after in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff or a neighbouring Authority.	80%	Current performance 76% - challenging.	Local
The percentage of permanent social worker vacancies in Children's Services.	24%	Current performance 27% - challenging target in the context of the national shortage of social workers.	Local
The number of young people in receipt of a prevention service from the Youth Justice Service	130	Current performance 103 - challenging.	Local
The number of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System	60	Target reduced from 70 in 2022/23 and will be subject to ongoing review. Current performance is 31.	Local
The percentage of children re-offending within six months of their previous offence	40%	Current performance is 44% - challenging	Local
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who were living in suitable accommodation	Baseline	This indicator is new for 2023/24 so a baseline is required before future targets can be set.	National

KPI	Target	Update	National or Local ?
	being set		
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who were in suitable education, training or employment	Baseline being set	As above.	National
Youth Justice – the percentage of children with an order ending during the period who had an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN)	Baseline being set	As above.	National

Ref: Scrutiny/Env/27/03/2023

Date: 1st March 2023



Councillor Chris Weaver

Dear Councillors,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 27th February 2023.

DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24 & DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2026

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you, your Cabinet colleagues and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the Draft Budget 2023/24 and the Draft Corporate Plan 2023-26.

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. At the meeting Members had the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders and supporting officers on their draft budget and Corporate Plan proposals for the coming year. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations to inform Cabinet discussion later this week. You will find our recommendations and requests, listed at the end of the letter.

Corporate Overview

Members sought assurance that the 'grant' funding identified in the papers would be available and not withdrawn. Officers confirmed that the Welsh Government (WG) was the primary source of grant funding and that it was usually made available for a specific purpose e.g. highways and down to successful bidding. However, they acknowledged that this would need to be kept under review and assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Plan are refreshed.

The Committee asked about the causes of the £1.7m overspend in Recycling & Neighbourhood Services and it was noted that the volatility in the recycle

market which had been producing good prices early in the year but had now reduced.

Members asked about corporate advice in relation to setting fees and charges as there appears to be no consistent rationale in the application of increases. Finance Officers clarified that each directorate would have their own approach and strategy to managing fees and charges and that there were different components that require consideration i.e. fees and charges are not necessarily about income generation but could be used to drive behaviour change.

Cllr Wild - Recycling & Neighbourhood Services

Members raised concerns that the proposed closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) could result in additional fly tipping. Officers clarified that data from the booking system in place suggests that the days used least are at the start of the week i.e., Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, however closing on a Monday would be avoided due to the number of Bank Holidays that fall on this day. Officers also noted that both centres would not be closed on the same day ensuring access to a centre 7 days a week. The committee asked about working hours for staff affected by the proposed closures and officers reassured members that currently staff are working more than their contracted hours so they will be working with all concerned to reduce hours to contracted levels.

Officers were asked about progress in relation to the HWRC proposals for the north of the city given the increasing capital allocation in forthcoming years, however the absence of revenue funding to support a new/additional service was also noted. Members were informed that the proposal for a service in the north of the city would not be the same model as those at Lamby Way and Bessemer Close. It is proposed that the new service would be run in partnership with third sector partners, e.g. Keep Wales Tidy, Benthylg, NU Life and would provide a broader range of services that would include repair and reuse of larger items. A sustainable model is being investigated similar to the service operated in [Manchester](#). The committee were reassured that this

facility remains a priority for the Cabinet and that an appropriate site is being sought.

The committee asked about the possible continuation of the 'pop-up' recycling centres. Officers commented that they had been successful initially, however, going forward they were looking to provide a mobile targeted service at locations throughout the year.

Members noted concerns regarding the roll-out of the separated waste service to HMOs and flats with communal bin areas, officers noted that the roll out to these types of dwelling is to follow, and investigations are ongoing into available types of community bins.

The committee noted £815,00 of capital funding over two years for Waste Recycling and Collection Review for '*implementation of approved options arising from a review of the Recycling Service Strategy that meets current and future targets and aspirations,*' and asked for further information on what will be funded. Officers clarified that it will be used to fund the purchase of the reusable bags, communications, officer support during the roll-out and implementing any lessons learnt from the pilots across the city.

It was also noted that the budget for vehicles will not change and the model going forward will be for separate vehicles to collect the separated waste as this will retain the quality of recyclable materials, i.e., 'Separate vehicles for glass, food wastes plastics / cardboard & paper. However, segregated vehicle will be used in less densely populated areas. It was also confirmed that vehicles are not purchased but hired, so as vehicle needs change during roll-out the vehicles used can be changed.

Members sought clarification regarding the waste collection charges being proposed, and in particular lines 253 and 254 below:

No.	Income Source	Current Charge	Proposed Price Change	% Change	Effective Date	Comment
253	Bulky Item Collections	£12.50 for every 2 items	£7.50	60%	1 April 2023	The proposed new charge is £20.00
254	Bulky Item Collection Booking Fee	New Charge - See Comment				New charge for 2023-24. The proposed charge is £5.00

Officers appeared not to be aware of 60% rise, from £12.50 to £20.00, for every two items, however, they confirmed that the booking fee relates to items that a free to be collected in an attempt to prevent the non-presentation of items when a vehicle has been arranged to collect them.

The Committee noted the provision of bottled water in schools and asked about the environmental impact. Officers noted that ‘refill’ sites were being piloted across the city and work was ongoing with schools too. They also noted that if the bottles were disposed of appropriately, they can be recycled.

Cllr Wild - Climate Change

Members asked about the provision of ‘real-time’ air quality monitoring, officers responded confirming that they are looking to increase the network of monitoring site and Air Quality Monitoring Areas and that further work will be undertaken following recruitment to a vacant post.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the £300,000 (one off FRM) being made available to enable taxis to transition to cleaner diesel due to the cost of electric vehicles, due to the limited number of licences being granted. Officers confirmed that a wider taxi strategy that will support the funding is being developed to incentivise a low carbon taxi fleet, and that any outcomes from the consultation currently in progress will be taken into consideration. It was also noted that the structure of the taxi trade needs to be reviewed to maximise benefits.

An accessible affordable electric vehicle charging structure was also raised an issue that impacts on the delivery of an EV taxi fleet. Officers informed the Committee that suitable locations for charging stations are being sought that will hopefully meet the needs of taxi drivers.

CIlr De'Ath - Transport & Strategic Planning

The Youth Council representative noted concerns regarding the increase in costs related to bereavement services and asked if there was any support for low-income families. Officers informed members that costs have been benchmarked against other local authorities and cities and that the increased costs remain below the median, however, details of an initiative in relation to low-costs services will be provided.

Members noted the differential in cost between 1st and 2nd residential parking permits has reduced and therefore the incentive not to have a second car also. Again, officers noted that a bench- marking exercise had been undertaken when setting the new charges and that they remain below the average charge for other local authorities and cities, they also stated that charges in relation to parking permits have not risen for a number of years.

Members also asked if in future the cost of permits could be linked to emissions/size of vehicle? It was noted that this would be complex and that it may disadvantage those unable to afford an electric vehicle.

Parking charges across the city were highlighted and officers asked how the city compares. It was confirmed that benchmarking had been undertake and that charge across the city are aiming to be at or below the average over a number of years as historically they have been cheap, however there is a balance as they need to be at a level that does not discourage visitors to the city.

The Committee noted that a potential unintended consequence of the reduction of school crossing patrols (PTEE4) was an increase in traffic i.e., more parents dropping children off. Officers clarified that many crossings and locations have improved safety and that there was a possible communications issue.

Both Members and officers noted concerns in relation to bus services and the withdrawal of WG funding that had been made available following the COVID pandemic. Officers note that the Transport Team were looking at mitigation actions in an attempt to reduce the impact to services

Members noted that the fees for Pre Application Advice (lines 457 -461) appear to be undervalued for a professional service and that no increase is proposed. Officers confirmed that some fees are statutory prescribed by WG, however they were investigation ways to introduces supplementary charges for larger schemes and were working with developers.

The committee sought clarification regarding PTEE14, and whether it could be made compulsory and not discretionary as stated in the text below:

Drainage - Sustainable Drainage Approval Body substantial price increase to Pre Application -Discretionary charge to be increased taking into account benchmarking with other Local Authorities. Only possible on pre-application as this is the discretionary charge. There is a risk that increasing the charge may result in reduction in the take up of the service but benchmarking gives some confidence on this point.

To confirm a response to the letter which responds to the following points is requested:

- Please provide clarification in relation to line 253 regarding proposed increase in charges for bulky waste collections.
- Further details in relation to low cost bereavement services for low-income families.
- Clarification in relation to PTEE14

No formal recommendations were made.

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and observations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Owen Jones

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc: *Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee*

Cllr Caro Wild, Cabinet Member, Climate Change

Cllr Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member Transport & Strategic Planning

Cllr Joel Williams, Chair of PRAP

Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources

Ian Allwood, Head of Finance

Neil Hanratty, Director, Economic Development

Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning, Transport & Environment

Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene

Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations

Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager

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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM49269

Dyddiad / Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Owen Jones
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Owen,

**Environmental 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.

Some specific comments in respect of the points made in your letter are included below:

Line 253 Fees and Charges – Bulky Waste Collections

I can confirm that the Bulky waste collection increase will be amended at Cabinet. This should have read nil increase and was an administrative error. No savings / income were attached to it in the budget build for 2023/24.

Low-Cost Bereavement Services

Further information is set out below:

Cardiff Council Funeral Service - A fixed price option provided in partnership with a professional funeral director (Penarth Funeral Home). This provides a specified funeral (Burial or Cremation) for a fixed price with no hidden extras. The current fee for a cremation including all funeral director, medical and cremation fees is £1,712 and for burial including the purchase of a new grave is £2,740. Further details are available at [Cardiff Council funeral service - Cardiff Bereavement Services : Cardiff Bereavement Services](#)

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.



The service offers a Direct Funeral Option that is promoted to all funeral directors. A direct funeral is one where the deceased is brought to the crematorium by a funeral director but no service takes place and no family attends. Many organising this type of funeral may arrange to have their own ceremony at an alternative location, for example their own church or club. Our fee for a direct cremation is currently £500 but subject to the fees and charges being approved will drop to £450 from 1st April 2023. The local funeral directors will add to this their own fees which will vary but a direct funeral should be able to be provided completely for under £1,000.

The DWP also provides a Funeral Expenses Payment if the applicant is receiving certain benefits. This can cover the following:

- burial fees for a particular plot
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the cost of moving the body within the UK, if it's being moved more than 50 miles
- death certificates or other documents

You can also get up to £1,000 for any other funeral expenses, such as funeral director's fees, flowers or the coffin. Therefore, effectively if someone on a low income and claiming certain benefits was to utilise the Cardiff Council Funeral Service the DWP are likely to be able to cover all funeral costs. A deposit however is likely to be required to be paid to the funeral director.

As a last resort, under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act the Local Authority are legally required to undertake the funeral of a person dying within its area and where no one is willing or able to arrange a funeral. The service area arranges these types of funerals, which are restrictive in terms of demands that can be made on the council (i.e. date/time, service content, officiant). The service area also looks to recover any costs from the deceased's estate.

PTE14 – Sustainable Drainage Price Increase – could this be compulsory?

There would need to be a change to the SAB legislation to make pre-application charges compulsory and this could only be undertaken through a legal process led by the Welsh Government. Under the current legislation, developers are not legally required to undertake a pre-application but it is strongly encouraged by the SAB team that they do so, as it provides them with a better understanding of the requirements for the development and their options with regards sustainable drainage features, site layouts and therefore optimisation of space. Cardiff Council are then able to set the fees for the development based on the size and complexities of the site.

Should Welsh Government be minded to change the legislation and make pre-application compulsory, it is then likely that they would set the fees, as they have done with the formal application process. This would then add risk to the suitability of the fees against actual cost. It must be recognised that the current statutory fees are very low, and Cardiff Council would lose the ability to adjust the fees to meet demand and actual cost recovery.

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

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature appears to be 'C. Weaver' written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Chris Weaver
Aelod Cabinet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance

cc

Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Caro Wild, Cabinet Member, Climate Change
Cllr Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member Transport & Strategic Planning
Cllr Joel Williams, Chair of PRAP
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Neil Hanratty, Director, Economic Development
Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning, Transport & Environment
Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene
Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives
Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground
Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager



Date: 01 March 2023

Councillor Weaver
Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation and Performance
Cardiff Council
County Hall
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CF10 4UW

Public Letter

Dear Councillor Weaver,

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee: 28 February 2023

On behalf of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee, please accept Members' thanks for attending, along with Cabinet colleagues and officers, for our scrutiny of the draft Corporate Plan 2023-2026 and Budgetary Proposals. Members have asked that I pass on the following comments and observations, which are set out to mirror the structure of the meeting.

Corporate Plan 2023 – 2026

Members looked at the proposed steps, measures, and targets in the areas of the Corporate Plan relevant to our terms of reference. Members highlighted that the only section of the Corporate Plan that seems to reference Arts and Culture is Well Being Objective 5. Members believe Arts and Culture can also play a key role in addressing other areas, such as Well Being Objective 4 – Safe, Confident and Empowered Communities. Members note a new Culture Strategy is being prepared to align with Welsh Government's new Culture Strategy.

Therefore, **Members request** that the next Corporate Plan considers how arts and culture can help and be used across the city to achieve a Stronger, Fairer and Greener Cardiff and meet our Future Generations ambition, and that this is reflected in wider incorporation of arts and culture across the Well Being Objectives.

Overall Budget

Members note the following points in particular:

- The level of FTE posts being lost is approximately the same as 6/7 years ago
- Approximately a third of FTE posts being lost are already vacant
- Some of the FTE posts shown as being potentially transferred relate to St David's Hall, with a decision on this yet to be taken
- The £10million Covid-19 budget is being released and used towards realignments
- The Economic Development Directorate base budget has been realigned to address pressures.

Cllr Merry's Portfolio

Thank you for covering this portfolio following apologies from Cllr Merry and Suzanne Scarlett who were unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment. Members are pleased to note that Cardiff Commitment is to receive an increase in funding, via £400,000 increased income from external grant funding.

Councillor Bradbury's portfolio

Members are pleased to note the Into Work service area has received an overall increase in funding via creative use of grants, including via the Shared Prosperity Fund where funding is guaranteed until 2025.

Members are pleased to note that the recommendations made following the Scrutiny Chairs Performance Panel – to add a step regarding in-work support and to add a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) regarding Into Work clients who identify as being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background – have been accepted and included in the draft Corporate Plan. However, Members would like there to be a target set against the new KPI and I **wish to accept** Cllr Bradbury's offer to work with me to ensure the spirit and letter of the Scrutiny Chairs recommendation is addressed in full.

Regarding HACE3, Members note the Achievability and Residual RAG ratings should be showing as Green now, as both posts are now vacant.

Cllr Thorne's portfolio

Members highlighted the wording used in the Finance section of the cover report, at point 25b, which state *'In respect of Hubs and Libraries, proposals to reduce opening hours and / or close on weekends have not been taken forward and any changes are being limited to removing a small number of long-term vacant posts in the service'*. Members queried why vacant posts were identified as 'long-term' in this statement but not in the relevant budget lines and HACE4, which also includes 1 voluntary redundancy, and HACSC1, which states posts will be deleted as they are vacated. Members note Cllr Thorne's response that the wording of 25b should be amended.

Members note the officer's response that the vacant posts referred to in HACE4 had been vacant for circa 6 months and that, in relation to HACSC1, the intention is to have a gradual move to volunteers to ensure there are sufficient resources in hubs.

Members queried how staff are to be re-allocated following the deletion of posts and are pleased to note the officer's assurances that staff will be moved across the service to ensure each library and hub has adequate resources in place, and that other teams such as Into Work staff can open/ close buildings to ensure opening hours remain.

Councillor Thomas's portfolio

Members note that the location of trees in Central Square is led by expert guidance on crowd management and crowd control, required to deal with the high footfall experienced on event days, such as the recent Six Nations matches hosted in Cardiff.

With regard to work to develop south of Central Station, Members note this project is led by Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, that the intention is for this site to host National Express, and that recently confirmed Levelling Up funding for the Metro across Callaghan Square will assist the work south of Central Station.

Councillor Goodway's portfolio

Members wish to pass on their thanks to Cllr Thomas for remaining to answer questions on this portfolio, in the absence of Cllr Goodway who had prior commitments preventing his attendance at the meeting.

Regarding ECDE18, Members note that, as the four posts proposed for deletion are vacant, there will not be a reduction in existing capacity. Members also note officers are seeking external funding to complement existing resources and increase service delivery.

Members note that ECDE14 relates to officers seeking to claim for the administrative work undertaken in regard to applying for and administering grants, resulting in more income from grants, as well as utilising grants more, such as Transforming Towns grants.

Members highlighted that consultation responses and feedback received from their constituents often question why the Council is prioritising major projects such as the Indoor Arena and Canal Quarter at a time when resources are stretched. Members therefore sought an explanation to allay these concerns. Members note Cllr Thomas's response that major projects provide employment, training and business during construction, result in a more attractive public realm, and ultimately will lead to more visitors, higher footfall and dwell-time, which in turn supports existing businesses, as well as other benefits, such as the SUDs scheme at the Canal Quarter. Members also note that, in respect of the Indoor Arena, the development partner will repay costs to the Council and will meet inflationary pressures, and the Indoor Arena will be owned by the Council at the end of the contract. Finally, Members note that significant parts of the Canal Quarter scheme are grant-funded and so do not impact on monies available for council service delivery.

Members sought the rationale for not increasing filming charges in the city given that this could raise revenue, given the likely increase in filming in Cardiff. Members note the explanation that these fees and charges relate to the film office and that, as appropriate, other fees and charges would be levied, for example for road closures and venue hire.

Members asked how the need for post pandemic city centre recovery is addressed by the Corporate Plan and note the response that Step 5.04 deals with this, alongside the Council's previously published Recovery Strategy and City Centre Recovery Action Plan. Members noted the Council holds regular meetings with the City Centre Business Improvement District, For Cardiff, as well as landowners and that footfall numbers are healthier in Cardiff than elsewhere.

Members are pleased to hear Cllr Thomas emphasising that the 15-minute toolkit is as much an Economic tool as an Environmental tool, hence its inclusion in WBO5, and note that this approach is being embedded in Neighbourhood Regeneration and Shared Prosperity Fund projects.

Regarding the Indoor Arena, Members note it will have a 15,000 capacity, a Multi-Storey Car Park with slightly fewer spaces than currently provided by existing surface car parks at County Hall and the Red Dragon Centre, will generate footfall to support public transport, with Levelling Up funding to be used to assist in planned work to extend the Metro, provide a tram link from Cardiff Central as well as to improve walk and cycle routes via Lloyd George Avenue.

Councillor Burke's portfolio

Members received a petition from Jane Henderson, lead petitioner for Cardiff Civic Society, and note her thanks to Cabinet for listening and not taking forward the proposal regarding the Museum of Cardiff. Members were interested to hear the points made by Jane and were pleased to hear Cllr Burke emphasise her intention to work with trustees and other stakeholders to develop proposals for a sustainable future for the museum. During our way forward discussions, Members decided to add the Museum of Cardiff to our work programme, and we will be in touch with officers and stakeholders to scope a constructive scrutiny in future months.

Members sought confirmation that the Cabinet is progressing plans regarding St David's Hall, as outlined to our committee in December 2022, and note that work is ongoing to go through the VEAT process, with a report on this coming back to scrutiny prior to the Cabinet making a decision. Members note this work is driven by the need to address the condition of St David's Hall. During our scrutiny in December 2022, Members requested that budget consultation materials were placed in St David's Hall and this request was accepted; however, Members can see no

reference to this in the Consultation Report. Therefore, **Members request** clarification on whether or not budget consultation materials were placed in St David's Hall and that the answer on this be included in your response to this letter.

Members note the officer's assurance that there is no linkage between the Indoor Arena and St David's Hall projects.

Regarding Pentwyn Leisure Centre, Members note the advice from officers that they are still working to a £5M budget, as previously advised. In your response to this letter, **Members request** clarification on where this is reflected in the capital programme. Also, **Members request** clarification on whether the proposed way forward will include a pool and café, as previously discussed.

Regarding the filming charges for Cardiff Castle hire, Members note there is a range of charges depending on whether hire is for the whole of the Castle, specific rooms, or more general usage. Members also note the level of charge reflects advice received from the Council's film unit on how to raise revenue and stay competitive.

Thank you once again for your attendance at Committee. I would be grateful if you would consider the above and work with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders to provide a response to this letter.

Finally, Members would like to pass on their sincere thanks to all officers for their work in developing the Corporate Plan and Budgetary Proposals and for ensuring these arrived in time for publication of this committee's papers.

This letter requires a response please, to the following requests:

Request

1. **Members request** that the next Corporate Plan considers how arts and culture can help and be used across the city to achieve a Stronger, Fairer and Greener Cardiff and meet our Future Generations ambition, and that this is reflected in wider incorporation of arts and culture across the Well Being Objectives
2. **Members request** clarification on whether or not budget consultation materials were placed in St David's Hall and that the answer on this be included in your response to this letter.

3. **Members request** clarification on where the £5M budget for Pentwyn Leisure Centre, where this is reflected in the capital programme.
4. **Members request** clarification on whether the proposed way forward for Pentwyn Leisure Centre will include a pool and café, as previously discussed.

Yours sincerely,

P Wong

**COUNCILLOR PETER WONG
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
Zack Hellard – Youth Council representative
Group Leaders - Cllr Robson, Cllr Berman
David Hugh Thomas – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee
Cllr Merry Cllr Thorne Cllr Thomas Cllr Bradbury Cllr Goodway Cllr Burke
Chris Lee Ian Allwood Gill Brown
Neil Hanratty Donna Jones Jon Day Jon Maidment
Helen Evans Rebecca Hooper
Rita Rohman Christine Brain Clair James
Cabinet Support Office
Chris Pyke Tim Gordon Jeremy Rhys

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Cyf/My Ref: CM49269

Eich Cyf/Your Ref: SharePoint/E&C Library/Correspondence/February 2023

Dyddiad/Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Peter Wong
Chairperson Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Peter

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee : 28 February 2023

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.

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

Corporate Plan – Arts and Culture

The Corporate Plan recognises the importance of art and culture to the City, with the Council committed to developing Cardiff as a centre of creativity and culture. Steps such as developing a new Culture Strategy for the City will play an important role in asserting Cardiff's position as a leading destination for art, music and culture. As part of reviewing the Corporate Plan, the Council would also welcome the opportunity to consider how arts and culture can be further promoted across the City, and used to help achieve a Stronger, Fairer and Greener Cardiff and we look forward to working with the Committee on this ambition.

Budget Consultation at St David's Hall

The Budget Consultation was available online and widely distributed in community venues across Cardiff with around 6,000 responses received in total. Hard copies of the survey were made available in St. David's Hall and the Museum of Cardiff. The hard copies also contained the QR code providing access to the online survey so that digital access could be promoted in community venues. An advert was placed on loop on the TV monitors in the foyer areas of St David's Hall to encourage participation.

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.

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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.



Pentwyn Leisure Centre – Capital Programme

The original budget for Pentwyn Leisure Centre consisted of £4 million of 'Invest to Save' capital and £1 million to £1.5 million from a planned capital receipt relating to the Llanrumney Regeneration Scheme.

The £4 million 'Invest to Save' capital is contained within the Capital Programme. The figure has reduced to £3.694 million to reflect the money already spent on developing the project to date. Inflationary pressures have impacted on both the proposed Pentwyn Scheme and the Llanrumney Regeneration Scheme with the result that the capital receipt is no longer available.

It is anticipated that the additional funding required to make up any shortfall will be funded by extending the 'Invest to Save' capital once income sources are properly identified and presented to Cabinet for approval as part of a final business case.

Clarification on way forward for Pentwyn Leisure Centre

The proposal for the Leisure Centre currently includes a swimming pool and café as well as new external facilities including a full size 3G pitch. As mentioned above in the letter, the cost of delivering the current scheme goes significantly beyond the approved financial envelope and the Council is currently reviewing the proposal to bring it back within approved budgets and will report back to Cabinet with a plan for approval in May.

Yours sincerely



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

cc

Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee

Zack Hellard – Youth Council Representative

Cllr Adrian Robson - Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson - Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman - Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

David Hugh Thomas – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee

Cllr Thomas - Leader

Cllr Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People

Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member for Investment and Development

Cllr Sarah Merry - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education

Cllr Burke – Cabinet Member for Culture, Parks, Events and Venues

Cllr Thorne – Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

Chris Lee - Corporate Director Resources

Ian Allwood - Head of Finance

Gill Brown – OM, Accountancy

Neil Hanratty – Director, Economic Development

Donna Jones – Assistant Director, County Estates, Economic Development
Jon Day – Economic Policy Manager, Economic Development
Jon Maidment - OM, Parks and Cardiff Harbour Authority
Helen Evans – Assistant Director, Housing and Communities
Rebecca Hooper – OM, Housing and Communities
Chris Pyke – OM, Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications and External Relations

Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member. Finance, Modernisation & Performance
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Dear Chris,

PRAP Scrutiny Committee 1 March 2023: Draft Budget Proposals 2023/24

As Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 1 March 2023 to present the budget proposals for 2023/24. Please also pass on our appreciation to the Corporate Director Resources, Chris Lee, Corporate Director People & Communities, Sarah McGill, Head of Finance, Ian Allwood, and Capital Account Manager, Anil Hirani, for attending in person to answer Members questions. The Committee acknowledges the value of bringing budget proposals forward simultaneously with the refreshed Corporate Plan. I therefore pass on Member's comments and observations following our discussion at the Way Forward.

Revenue Budget

The Committee made a number of observations. The following responses were noted:

- **Fees & Charges** - that increases in Fees and Charges for Council Services are very much led by service areas themselves.
- **Energy Prices** – the proposed budget aims to offset the volatility faced in respect of energy pricing. Finance officers have made well informed best projections, and the Council is purchasing energy in advance where possible.
- **Inflation** - the Council's regular budget monitoring reports throughout the year will ensure inflation is factored into its financial resilience. However, continuing increases in inflation will impact on the budget.
- **Grant Funding** – all Directorates remain acutely aware of their grant funding positions and the Council takes advantage of grant funding wherever possible.
- **The Covid Contingency Fund** (£10m) has been realigned.

Financial modelling

Members sought assurance that the financial modelling used to determine the budget allocated to Directorates is effective, particularly in respect of demand led services. We note the Finance service works closely with all Directorates, modelling different scenarios and ensuring that contingencies are put in place, particularly for the Adult and Children's Services Directorates.

Council Tax

Members were unanimous in their support for containing the increase in Council Tax below the rate of inflation. We note the difficult balance to be struck and that the level of increase is dependent on the budget gap. In respect of Council Tax Collection rates, Members note that more streamlined processes are now in place that are resulting in an increased collection rate.

Employee Implications

Members highlighted that most of the Council's budget savings are made through the loss of staff. We note the headcount reduction in this budget is larger than in previous years, however you consider some vacant posts simply must be filled. Members expressed concern for staff welfare and consider that a level of experience amongst staff across Directorates must be maintained. We note that all four Scrutiny Committees have examined this issue in considering the budget proposals and that Cabinet is confident that the right level of experience has been retained. Going forward we note your suggestion of a deeper dive monitoring exercise into how staff numbers have fallen by service area over a number of years. We will factor this into our work programme.

General & Earmarked reserves

The Committee sought reassurance that the level of reserves held by the Council are appropriate. Whilst we note that Audit Wales do not issue a recommended figure they consider appropriate for reserves, we are pleased to hear the level of earmarked reserves has increased over recent years and the section 151 officer is comfortable with the current level of reserves. The Committee unanimously agreed that the whole picture presented by Appendix 6 to its papers – the Financial Resilience Snapshot – is an excellent reference point for Members to quickly digest the financial trends.

Budget Consultation

The Committee notes that Cabinet's response when the public respond negatively to a budget consultation proposal is based on its stated priorities. We note that for the examples you gave – shorter library opening times, and residential parking second permit prices – public opinion was divided, the former being rejected whilst the latter was accepted.

Members clarified that the Indoor Arena was not a part of the budget consultation as it is not a new proposal. We were keen to establish that this development project would be cost neutral to the Council. We note that an initial capital allocation of £27m funded by earmarked capital receipts will enable the project's commencement, and thereafter the venue will become self-funding via an operator agreement and is an invest to save project.

Capital Budget

The Committee was reminded that borrowing to fund Capital commitments is a general Council commitment rather than by individual project. Members were reassured that the Council seeks external advice to ensure its capital repayment strategy to cover £870million of commitments over the next 3-4 years. We note the impact of this on the Revenue budget is approximately £34million per annum. We are reassured that the presentation of business cases is the base for decision-making, and indeed that there are formal governance arrangements in place via the Treasury Management Strategy, overseen by the Governance & Audit Committee.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you once again for facilitating scrutiny of budget proposals for 2023/24. With your support, I look forward to continuing the valuable internal challenge established between this Committee and the Cabinet.

As there are no formal recommendations or requests following this scrutiny, I will not require a response. Once again, a sincere thank you for your time and the support you have offered in providing clear papers to facilitate scrutiny of the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Leaders of Opposition Parties – Adrian Robson, Rodney Berman &
Andrea Gibson
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance
Anil Hirani, Operational Manager, Capital, Corporate & Treasury
Gareth Newell, Partnership & Community Engagement Manager
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager
Andrea Redmond, Committees Support Officer.

Date: 2 March 2023

Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader
Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Performance,
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
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CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Huw & Chris,

PRAP Scrutiny Committee: 1 March 2023: Corporate Plan 2023-26

The Committee has asked that as Chair I pass on its observations following consideration of the draft Corporate Plan 2023-26 yesterday. Thank you both for attending in person, we also wish to place on record our appreciation of senior officers continued support for in-person scrutiny. On this occasion, please pass on our sincere thanks to Paul Orders, Chris Lee, Sarah McGill, Gareth Newell and Dylan Owen.

The Committee welcomed a robust and ambitious Corporate Plan that has been the subject of a comprehensive refresh. This is clearly an important document and your confidence that Cabinet and organisational structures are appropriate is reassuring. We note with interest your interaction with Audit Wales during the document's planning stages, as they undertake a review of how Councils are translating political policy into performance delivery plans. Members made observations as follows:

Presentation of information in the Corporate Plan

The Committee is of the view that there are small additions to the Corporate Plan that would improve its presentation as a public document. We **recommend** the addition of a column in the KPI section indicating the position at the previous year end, which would enable comparison with future targets and performance progress. Whilst Members have access to the Corporate Performance Dashboard, and you will be running training sessions for Members on this, the public do not have such access. We note your response that you will review this but are keen to strike a balance between clarity and detail.

Cross Directorate Work

Members heralded the Corporate Plan as a good piece of work. However, we urge you to avoid the build-up of silos. For example, we consider the issue of drug taking and dealing is as much a matter for WBO 1 (*Cardiff is a great place to grow up*) as for WBO 4 (*Safe, confident and empowered communities*); Arts and Culture can contribute to WBO4 (*Safe, confident and empowered communities*) as well as to WBO 5 (*A capital city that works for Wales*). We are pleased to hear that Corporate Plan challenge sessions include multiple Directors and Cabinet Members. We agree it is important to retain accountability for priorities, steps and performance, however we **recommend** you reflect how greater cross Directorate work might lead to an improved Plan. We also recognise that not all priorities are totally within the Council's control.

Advice Services

The Committee drew attention to the need for good quality citywide advice services, given the current cost of living climate. It is our understanding that many advice centres have closed. We note the Council has experienced a significant increase in demand for its *into work* and *money advice* services in the past year, as more people become eligible for support. We were also pleased to hear there has been work with our partners to streamline the gateway to advice services. We note that the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee has highlighted similar concerns as the provision of services through third sector organisations has decreased over recent years. We therefore accept your offer to return with a fuller picture gathered from your work to better understand the demand for, and provision of, advice services available across the city.

Workforce Resilience

Members asked how confident you are that staff are coping with the demands where there are reductions in staffing levels. We were pleased to hear that the formalisation of volunteering as a workplace opportunity has been a great success in areas such as libraries, and through activities such as litter picking as the Council steps up in its role as a facilitator of better communities.

The Committee heard that the FTE headcount reduction proposals in the budget are consistent with Corporate Plan deliverability, and that business cases for all voluntary severance proposals are a matter of course.

The Council’s workforce was central to Committee’s concerns throughout our scrutiny of both the Corporate Plan and the Budget. We recognise that an over stretched workforce is a threat to the Council’s resilience and we are keen to ensure appropriate well-being measures are in place to mitigate unnecessary workplace stress. We note you acknowledge the importance of recognising staff given their critical role in delivering successful services, and that the budget factors in the local government pay settlement. We also note the Chief Executive considers there is appropriate care and discussion on how savings are constructed. We look forward to scrutiny of the forthcoming workforce strategy at an appropriate time to allow Members full engagement with policies that support the well-being of staff.

Requests following this scrutiny:

- That you return with a fuller picture gathered from your work to better understand demand for advice services across the city.

Recommendations following this scrutiny:

To summarise, the Committee makes 2 formal recommendations which are set out below. As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could, for each recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
We recommend the addition of a column in the KPI section indicating the position at the previous year end, which would enable comparison with future targets and performance progress.				

We recommend you reflect on how greater cross Directorate work might deliver further improvements to the Plan.				
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Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you for your co-operation on this important document, and for your ongoing collaboration and policy engagement with Scrutiny. I look forward to your response which should address the requests and recommendations listed.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

CC Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Leaders of Opposition Parties – Adrian Robson, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities
Gareth Newell, Partnership & Community Engagement Manager
Dylan Owen, Policy & Improvement Manager
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Debi Said, Cabinet Support Officer
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager
Andrea Redmond, Committees Support Officer

SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Cyf/My Ref: CM49629

Eich Cyf/Your Ref:

Dyddiad/Date: 2 March 2023

Cllr Joel Williams
Chairperson, Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Joel

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee 1st March 2023

Thank you for your letters dated 2 March 2023 and the useful comments raised in relation to the 2023/24 Budget and Corporate Plan. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to our meeting on 2 March 2023.

Responses to recommendations in respect of the Corporate Plan are included below:

We recommend the addition of a column in the KPI section indicating the position at the previous year end, which would enable comparison with future targets and performance progress

Partially accepted. The Corporate Plan will be reviewed to ensure it strikes the right balance between clarity of presentation and providing sufficient contextual performance information. This will include a consideration of the most appropriate way of providing Councillors and members of the public with timely, informative and well-presented performance information. An immediate first step will involve arranging elected member training sessions to ensure they are familiar with the Corporate Plan dashboard which already includes performance information, provided over time and against target. This is updated on a quarterly basis following a quality assurance process and will be shared with scrutiny committees.

We recommend you reflect on how greater cross Directorate work might deliver further improvements to the Plan.

Accepted: The process for developing the Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on cross portfolio and cross directorate working, and the approach to developing the Well-being objectives and associated steps and KPIs is robust. We do, however, welcome

GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

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WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

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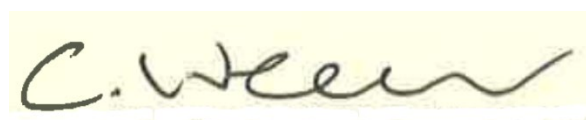
every opportunity to consider options to strengthen integration and joined up working as part of developing and delivering the Plan.

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

Yours sincerely



Y Cyng | Cllr Huw Thomas
Arweinydd Cyngor Caerdydd | Leader, Cardiff Council



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

cc

Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Chris Lee, Corporate Director, Resources

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities

Ian Allwood, Head of Finance

Anil Hirani, Operational Manager, Capital, Corporate & Treasury

Gareth Newell, Partnership & Community Engagement Manager

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Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager

Andrea Redmond, Committees Support Officer.

Councillor Chris Weaver
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

24th February, 2023

Dear Councillor Weaver,

On behalf of the Cardiff School Budget Forum, I'd like to thank yourself, Cllr Huw Thomas and Cllr Sarah Merry for your School Budget Update letter dated 22nd December 2022 and all the work that you and Education Directorate Officers do to give our learners the best education possible.

We commend the clear intention to shield Cardiff schools from the imminent efficiency savings and welcome the £2.5 million contribution in this current financial year towards the additional costs arising from staff pay awards. We do note however, that this will still leave a pay award shortfall which could increase should the final teachers pay award be higher than the current 5% offer.

Looking toward the 2023/24 financial year, we welcome the 9.3% increase in schools overall delegated budgets, but note however, that this needs to cover any additional shortfall in the teachers' pay award which is still unquantified, next years pay awards, the energy price rises and other inflationary pressures.

In principle, we support the upfront delegation of budgets in full to schools at the start of the financial year but given the current levels of uncertainty regarding additional teachers pay award and energy cost increases, wonder whether it would be more prudent to withhold a contingency in 2023/24.

We would urge Cardiff to lobby Welsh Government on behalf of schools in terms of earlier grant allocations and longer spending windows to facilitate more accurate financial modelling and securing best value for money.

We would welcome clarification on the additional funding ringfenced for the surge in demand for mental and emotional health and wellbeing provision for Cardiff schools as part of the pandemic recovery. We understand there is a slight increase in EIG and MEAG for 2023/2024 but await the delegation to Local Authorities to assess the impact for Cardiff's schools.

School Budget Forum members would welcome confirmation of ways in which the Local Authority can assist with offsetting the increasing costs of supply staff cover and the tightening Terms and Conditions from supply agencies.

In addition to the budget pressures outlined above, we would ask you to consider:

- The demand for specialist provision is increasing rapidly against a backdrop of more complex needs. We support the introduction of ALNET and would welcome assurance from the Local Authority that the needs of our learners will be able to be fully met and that ALNCO's are supported fully to ensure a smooth and timely transition to IDPs.
- What support is available across the City for raising school attendance to pre-pandemic levels?
- Recruitment and retention of skilled, passionate staff at all levels.

We are mindful of the backdrop of reducing budget settlements and again, thank you for your diligence in protecting Education as a priority area in Cardiff. We ask you to continue to offer reassurance that Cardiff will have a just and equitable share given our unique context and needs as a capital city.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Dell'Armi

Karen Dell'Armi

Chair, Cardiff School Budget Forum

Cc: Cllr Sarah Merry; Cllr Huw Thomas; Melanie Godfrey; Mike Tate; Ian Allwood; Neil Hardee

All School Budget Forum members

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM49269

Dyddiad / Date: 2 March 2023

Karen Dell'Armi
Chair, Cardiff Schools Budget Forum

Annwyl / Dear Karen

Draft Budget Proposals 2023/24

I write in response to your recent letter, sent on behalf of the Cardiff School Budget Forum, regarding the proposals for the 2023/24 budget.

As in previous years, I would like to thank the School Budget Forum for the work it undertakes and for its effectiveness in bringing matters of financial concern to the Cabinet's attention. I can confirm that both myself and Councillor Merry, as regular attendees, as well as the wider Cabinet, place great value upon having direct input from school leaders and governors.

Thank you for recognising the Cabinet's continued protection of schools delegated budgets from general efficiency savings and our proposal to provide a 9.3% uplift to school delegated budgets for the 2023/24 financial year. This being achieved against a backdrop of significant increasing financial pressures across Council services which include a range of efficiency and service changes having to be made across those services including the central Education Directorate.

In relation to the ongoing national discussions regarding the teachers pay award, I can confirm that the additional contribution of £2.5m we provided to schools in this financial year had to be found from Council resources. For the coming financial year and in line with the revenue budget settlement we have received from Welsh Government the 9.3% proposed uplift for school delegated budgets includes all the available funding up front for all staff pay awards. Consistent with the approach set out for 2022/23 in the Leader's letter to Schools in December 2022, where any pay and general inflationary costs incurred in year differ from the allowances made, these must be absorbed within the 9.3% increase and will be considered for adjustment as part of the delegated school budget build for the 2024/25 financial year. We will not be holding any funding back as a contingency for schools for the 2023/24 financial year.

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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.



I can also assure you that Elected Members and officers will continue to lobby Welsh Government on behalf of schools for additional funding should national pay negotiations result in additional in year costs.

In relation to specific education related grants, we are awaiting final confirmation of amounts set aside for Cardiff and our schools for the forthcoming year and as soon information is received, we will inform schools. Again, I can assure you that officers continue to press WG for more timely notification of grant awards and continue to lobby on your behalf in respect of the increasing costs pressures in schools.

In response to your specific questions in your letter;

- Welsh Government Wellbeing Grant - in the 2022/23 financial year, Cardiff was allocated a sum of £511,000 from the £4.15m available across Wales. This is being used to fund additional Counselling, wellbeing intervention provision, training for schools' staff and additional PRU provision.
- Increasing supply costs – officers are currently working with colleagues in Welsh Government exploring a national portal for supply cover similar to that used in Northern Ireland.
- Demand for specialist provision – the budget proposals for schools include the establishment of 136 additional specialist places from September 2023 across Special Schools and SRB's plus the expansion of the City wide PRU provision.
- School Attendance – with the use of WG grant, officers are working with schools in rolling out a refreshed publicity campaign regarding the importance of regular school attendance and enhancing the direct work with families.
- Recruitment and retention of staff – officers continue to work with WG and our Central South Consortium colleagues to explore ways in which to attract high calibre staff to the city, continuing to provide professional development and training opportunities which we hope will retain staff in the profession and in Cardiff schools.

I hope that this letter captures all the points raised in your letter. I want to thank you once again for your support in the budget process and look forward to future discussion and debate with the School Budget Forum.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Chris Weaver
Aelod Cabinet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance