

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

Ref	Budget Research and Valuation Panel (BREP) Recommendations	Response
BREP1	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An investigation into the Council's core business activities, in terms of statutory, mandatory, discretionary implications, but in particular those where there is a discretionary element above statutory provision</i> • <i>Assess the risk and impact of certain services being reduced</i> • <i>To review the publicly funded transport infrastructure across the authority with a view to a provision of more integrated services.</i> 	<p>This will be considered in the development of the MTFs 2013-14 to 2016-17</p> <p>This will be integral to the assessment of budget proposals in the period 2014-15 to 2016-17.</p> <p>An integrated transport review will take place to inform MTFs budget reduction proposals.</p>
BREP2	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>That the Cabinet ensures current or planned collaborative activity is synced with the proposed MTFs, is aligned with the Corporate Plan currently being developed, and in particular focuses on those projects that will achieve the greatest benefits.</i> • <i>Members are kept informed on the scale of collaborative activity that the Council is involved with, with an emphasis through Member briefings and on-going scrutiny of collaborative activity to ensure they are better equipped to determine whether measurable outcomes are being achieved</i> 	<p>Agreed - where practicable</p> <p>Agreed</p>

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

	<i>and that accountability arrangements are fit for purpose in providing oversight of new models of service delivery.</i>	
BREP3	<p>The BREP recommend that in future budget consultation processes,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Base budget information is provided alongside each budget reduction proposals and impact statements updated in order to assist Members arrive at informed assessments regarding likely achievability and impact.</i> • <i>That budget pressures are identified and mitigated against at the earliest opportunities or alternative budget reductions found.</i> 	<p>Agreed in principle</p> <p>Agreed – where practicable</p>
BREP4	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The establishment of a standing BREP to help provide oversight of the developing strategic change management programme, and to monitor implementation, to assist in the delivery of the future savings required to be made by the local authority.</i> • <i>It is recommended that Cabinet and Scrutiny work to identify the key risks and challenges facing the authority and that Scrutiny Forward Work Programme planning for 2013/14 onwards is more closely aligned to priority topics for Member challenge and review.</i> 	<p>Agreed that a standing BREP should be established but the FWP will be linked to the Strategic Change Management programme and BREP could also act as a “critical friend”.</p>

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

-	<p>Individual Scrutiny Committee Comments and Recommendations <u>Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</u></p> <p>1. The Committee acknowledge that services need to be reviewed within HWB, but ASC in particular, to meet growing demand, alleviate budget pressures and achieve budgetary savings in the longer term. Committee would welcome that as services are reviewed and transformation of provision is undertaken that each service is further analysed under what the local authority has a statutory duty to provide and the discretionary element that the local authority allows for and that these discretionary elements be reviewed.</p> <p>2. The Committee are concerned about the ability of the Learning Disability Service to meet further budget reductions for 2013/14 in light of the pressures within the current year and the impact that this may have on carers. The Committee welcome the initiative to a regionalised approach to this service with the Western Bay Consortium in order to achieve the required budget reductions, but remain concerned on its achievability.</p> <p>3. The Committee acknowledge the pressures in relation to Direct Payments and have some concerns on the growing spend within this area, but would like to have assurances that effective and robust monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that direct payments are managed effectively and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to minimise any risks in relation to payments to vulnerable adults.</p> <p>4. Committee note the need to retain some monies following the closure of the Berwyn Centre, to cover arts development etc. The Committee</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p> <p>Will be monitored as proposals progress.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p>
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BUDGET CONSULTATION

	acknowledge that officers are proactively trying to engage with the local community to work on proposals for a replacement facility and also welcome that officers are to engage with the Community Council.	
	Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee	
	<p>1. Whilst welcoming the proposal to align the base budget for LAC, Members commented on the high number of LAC in Bridgend, particularly in comparison to other Local Authorities in Wales. Whilst acknowledging the directorate's early intervention and preventative strategies, Members still expressed concerns over the sustainability of the proposed budget given the continuous increase in LAC. Members asked to receive evidence of how these preventative strategies have so far been successful in reducing the number of LAC and how they will continue to do so in the future.</p> <p>2. Members expressed concerns over collaborative working in general, given that responses from Officers indicate that savings in numerous collaborative projects simply equate to Officer time and not necessarily cashable savings on the ground. The Committee question how the target set by Welsh Government for millions of pounds worth of savings through collaboration will actually be achieved.</p> <p>3. Members expressed concern over the £120,000 one-off funding requirement for the old Ogmore Comprehensive site given that this was the first knowledge many Members had had of the delay with the move of pupils from Ysgol Bryn Castell and the associated cost. Members stated that this should have been made clearer at an earlier stage.</p> <p>4. Members expressed concern over further proposed reductions to the Educational Psychology Service in that they may be counterproductive to the National Strategy for more school based counselling and also detrimental to</p>	<p>Noted – will be referred to the Corporate Parenting Committee</p> <p>See response to BREP 2</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

	<p>those most vulnerable and at risk such as LAC and those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.</p> <p>5. The Committee expressed concern over the ‘ad hoc’ solutions reported, in response to the growing educational need of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Members highlighted this as a significant risk to the Authority which needed immediate attention to develop a long term solution.</p> <p>6. a)Protection be provided for post-16 learners, as any removal of provision would counteract the national aim for pupils to remain in education as long as possible, and also many have significant distances to travel, particularly for those attending Bridgend College;</p> <p>b)Processes are maintained to not discriminate against pupils who wish to attend their nearest welsh or faith schools irrespective of alternative non-faith and non-welsh schools being closer.</p> <p>c)Transport for those with ALN is rationalised as far as possible, with particular focus on eligibility criteria with the view of inclusivity where possible in support of the Inclusion agenda.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>See response to BREP 1 bullet point 3.</p>
	<p>Community Safety and Governance Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The only recommendation Members would wish to forward to Cabinet as part of the consultation process relates to the continued exploration of opportunities to join enforcement functions across the Council where appropriate and safe to do so and where it is likely to result in an improved public service. The Committee suggests that a collaborative approach to this project be adopted with other local authorities.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

Community Renewal and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
1. Members of the Committee were broadly supportive of the draft budget pressure and the budget reductions but did highlight that the proportion of proposed reductions relative to the Directorate's total budget was unsustainable over the medium term.	Noted
2. Budget Pressure COM3. Members communicated their support the £100k for a programme of improvements to Street Scene but did identify the need for greater clarity in the presentation of draft budgets to Members taking into account the proposed £110k budget reductions in COMN4 relating to a review of Street Scene structure. The Committee identified that this appears contradictory in the absence of an explanation describing how the two proposals relate to one another.	COM3 is not directly related to COMN4.
3. Budget Reduction COMN7. Members identified the potential risks associated with the proposed £50k reduction taking into account the likely impact of Welfare Reform which may see a rise in demand for B&B accommodation.	Noted
4. Budget Reduction COMN 9. The Committee consider that the proposed £250k reduction needs additional investigation before agreement to achieve a fuller understanding of how the proposed cut relates to proposals for prudential borrowing for street lighting and street furniture improvements.	The proposal to reduce the highway maintenance revenue budget by £250K is counteracted by the proposal to prudentially borrow up to £2M to be spent over the next 3 years for street lighting and street furniture for which a budget uplift of £100K has been identified for 13/14. In relation

RESPONSE TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET CONSULTATION

		to the overall LGBI programme, there is therefore no reduction to overall spend on highway maintenance , or risk to the LGBI programme next year.
	<p>Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The only recommendation Members would wish to forward to Cabinet as part of the consultation process relates to that made last year by the Committee, in that it would welcome income generating reports be provided as part of the budgetary process.</p>	Noted- Income Generation review planned for 2013-14.