

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"> A corporate approach is adopted by the authority in considering applying minimum standards to those statutory services where possible, to ensure transparency and fairness, with a view on improving service provision in future years as budgets allow. 	<p>Various discretionary elements of some budgets have been reviewed in 2014-15. Given the diverse nature of services it is agreed that this be considered in the context of “public value” when reviewing services.</p>
BREP2	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the BREP continues to meet to consider future policy changes as part of the Bridgend Change Programme to meet the MTFS as well as its ongoing role in considering proposals in relation to the annual budget setting process. 	<p>Agreed that there is a continued role for BREP, which will be subject to review of the Terms of Reference and the general remit of Scrutiny committees.</p>
BREP3	<p>The BREP acknowledge their role in monitoring the achievability of the £13m savings proposals identified for 2014/15 and recommend that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BREP will regularly monitor the budget savings proposals of £13m for £2014/15 in a timely manner. Members and Officers should consider a methodology to review this in a proportionate way to ensure that savings are being met, slippages are identified and that Members remain fully engaged in the process of achieving the MTFS. 	<p>Not Agreed that these will be monitored separately, This is the role of management and the Executive and any slippages in agreed savings proposals will be reported on an exception basis through the established reporting mechanisms i.e. Quarterly monitoring reports.</p>
BREP4	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base budget information is provided alongside each budget reduction proposal. Impact statements are sufficiently detailed in order to assist Members arrive at informed assessments regarding likely achievability and impact. 	<p>Agreed, Impact statements will be modified where it is feasible to do so.</p>

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BREP5	<p>The BREP recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Cabinet and Scrutiny work together to identify the key risks and challenges facing the authority, review the current scrutiny arrangements on how best to engage members on proposed significant policy changes and that Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes are aligned accordingly. 	<p>Further discussion required on whether a review of Scrutiny is required.</p>
	<p>Individual Scrutiny Committee Comments and Recommendations</p> <p>The Committee recognise the significant challenges faced by the Directorate in achieving future budget reductions and would like to make the following comments and recommendations to Cabinet in relation to budget proposals for 14/15.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COM1 – The Committee note the amber status of this budget reduction. 2. COM8 – The Committee are concerned as to whether the income stream for bulky waste is achievable and the impact that this may have in not only a possible increase in fly tipping, but also in additional costs to the authority by having to deal with the costs as a result. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. COM1/8 - Recommendation of the Committee is that due to the above concerns that the Waste Agenda and its wider impact on the community is included as part of the Committee's FWP. 3. COM9 – Following discussion, the Committee accept the budget reduction proposal and wish to include it as part of the Committee's FWP to monitor the outcomes of the remodelled cleaning service. 4. COM1 (budget pressure) COM7 (savings proposal) - The Committee recognise that the Regeneration Service represents significant value for money and that there is a multiplier effect in the low level of investment, to produce beneficial outcomes and although reassured 	<p>Comments Noted</p> <p>Upon review the status of the budget reduction has been amended to red.</p> <p>Noted, but all capital allocations have to be prioritised and considered corporately.</p>

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	<p>by Officers that any changes to the Regeneration Service would try to be minimised, the long term benefits of an effective regeneration service were significant and should be recognised. The Committee wished to be reassured that any future regeneration projects through SRF, although considered against the Councils corporate priorities will continue to be led through the Communities Directorate, rather than the Corporate Centre.</p> <p>5. The Committee note that the financial forecast is predicated on a number of spending assumptions in relation to Inescapable Budget Pressures and income and would like consideration to be given to the economic outlook as being a factor for inclusion, as the state of the economy directly impacts on the level of fee income which is likely to be achieved through Development Control, which is an unknown variable influenced by economic factors.</p> <p>6. The Committee consider there to be a lack of detail around the proposed budget reduction proposals to understand the full implications of the budget reduction proposals and associated impact on the local community and that this needs to be reviewed. The Committee also believe that consideration needs to be given as to how all members can better engage in discussions on large scale changes in policy and proposed budget reductions, which are not within the remit of each Committee.</p> <p>Additional Information</p> <p>7. COM3 – The Committee have requested that more detailed information is provided on which areas this will impact.</p>	<p>All pressures are prioritised and considered during the budget process. The priority in 2014-15 was to allocate £130,000 to support regeneration activities.</p> <p>Information provided on 22 January 2014</p>
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<p>Children and Young People’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>1. CH5/CH8/CH11 – Committee noted the developments as outlined in the Cabinet report of 10 December and following discussion, the Committee wish to reiterate the comments and recommendations as made by the Committee when it considered the</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Committee were supportive of Proposal (a) in relation to Rationalisation of SEN Transport and commented that strong management in terms of implementation and monitoring would be key. b. Further to this, Members requested that as part of the rationalisation of SEN Transport, Officers explore whether the Authority is double funding for SEN pupils who receive a Disability Living Allowance at the highest rate for mobility, as this includes an allowance/(car) for transport for their child. c. The Committee commented on the lack of clear definitive guidelines from Welsh Government for Learner Transport provision for Welsh Medium and Voluntary Aided Schools. The ambiguity of the statutory guidelines had led to various interpretations and understanding between both Officers and Members, which was unhelpful. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Committee recommend that Home to School Transport provision for Voluntary Aided Schools remain in line with the proposals for Welsh Medium Schools whereby transport is provided irrespective of whether there are alternative non-faith or non-welsh schools being closer. ii. The Committee recommend that should any reductions be made to Home to College Transport, they would strongly support mitigation measure 3 in the report, which is to ‘provide free transport for those students in receipt of an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and who live outside the qualifying distance criterion of 3 miles.’ iii. The Committee expressed concerns that the proposal for charging for 	<p>All comments noted</p> <p>The Council will no longer be seeking to take the proposals forward in their current form. Officers will be reviewing the proposals in light of views expressed through the consultation process. Consultees have asked for further analysis of the risks of implementing some of these proposals, and therefore we have advised officers that further detailed work needs to be undertaken to analyse the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential impact of ending free transport for post 16 learners on schools and the college, and the impact of this on post 16 learners; • The potential impact in terms of the choice of schools by parents and therefore the potential effect on pupil numbers at individual schools; • The potential impact on highway safety outside schools and college sites, on local communities and carbon footprint as a result of changes to the way that learners travel to schools and the college; • Further work to be undertaken following the consultation on dangerous routes to
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	<p>post-16 transport did not treat all learners equally as it proposes partially subsidising transport for school learners, with no similar proposals for college learners. The Committee therefore recommend that if this proposal is taken forward, in order to treat all learners equally, a similar provision should be made such as a comparable contribution towards bus passes for post-16 college learners.</p> <p>iv. The Committee recommend that any proposals for changes to school transport need to consider a phased in approach whereby they are introduced incrementally. The Committee recommend that a phased approach is particularly important in relation to proposal (c); to remove all provision for Home to College transport; as well as proposal (e); to remove provision for Voluntary Aided schools where the school is not the nearest available school and beyond the statutory distance.</p> <p>v. The Committee recommend that termly payments for 'paying places' (as opposed to annual payments) be more widely promoted to parents in order to assist and encourage parents to take up these places.</p> <p>vi. The Committee recommend that further discussions are held with FE providers to determine whether they can assist in contributions towards transport for their learners.</p> <p>The Committee further highlighted the following as areas that still need to be considered for any proposed changes to Learner Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety Issues; • All routes need to be risk assessed; • Impact of increases in cars outside schools as a result of proposed changes to Learner Transport; • Impact on attendance as a result of proposed changes to Learner Transport; • Potential risks to children as there is no legal requirement for parents to accompany children to school, which could lead to an increase in children 	<p>school and taking expert road safety advice.</p> <p>In addition, Welsh Government has begun consultation on the Learner Travel Operational Guidance, which is not due to close until April 2014. One of the stated aims of this consultation is increased clarity around issues such as the nearest suitable school and transport to Welsh medium, English medium and denominational schools, so it would be beneficial if revised proposals were able to take account of any changes in Welsh Government guidance.</p>
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	<p>of a young age walking to school unaccompanied;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of proposed changes on the Authority’s NEETs figures; • Impact on the 14-19 Collaboration Agenda – Members highlighted this as a risk given the uncertainty of future grant funding for pupils’ transport under this project. If grant funding were to be removed, these pupils would fall under the same transport policy as other learners and could therefore be greatly affected by the proposed changes to Learner Transport. <p>The Committee concluded by requesting that they receive the Learner Transport Policy as a pre decision scrutiny item, following consultation, prior to any final decision being made by Cabinet.</p> <p>2. CH13 – The Committee are concerned at the proposal to cease the complex needs play scheme and whether an Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken. The Committee would like these proposals reconsidered due to the impact this may have on a vulnerable section of society and the Committee would welcomes that different avenues are explored to ensure that the complex needs play scheme continues.</p> <p>3. CH12/15 – The Committee note the budget savings proposals and the intention to bring them in line both within Western Bay and WG guidelines and though reassured that these proposals had been shared with Foster Carers, the Committee would like to monitor this proposal and have regular updates on adverse impacts.</p> <p>4. CH19 – The Committee expressed its concern over the impact this proposal would have on those families who may struggle to fully meet the costs. The Committee recommend that consideration and protection is given to those pupils entitled to FSM to ensure that these groups can continue to benefit</p>	<p>Following views expressed in the budget consultation process Cabinet has decided to withdraw this proposal.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
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	<p>from having music lessons.</p> <p>5.The Committee note that the authority may not be recouping payments from other local authorities in respect of the educational provision the authority provides to out of county children within the special needs unit at the Princess of Wales Hospital and recommend that this is followed up on and that the Committee are provided with a progress report.</p>	Noted
	<p>Community Safety and Governance Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The Committee commended the ACE-LAR for his management of the Legal & Regulatory Services budget</p> <p>The committee considered that the appointment of a Scrutiny Committee representative to BREP provided a significant development opportunity to that individual. This should form part of the consideration of all scrutiny committees during the appointment process of their representatives to the BREP</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>See response to BREP 5</p>
	<p>Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>1. ASC 13 – The Committee accept the budget reduction proposal, however are concerned at not only the achievability of this proposal, but also the financial cost to the authority of c£1m in relation to sickness absence and wish to be provided with an update on this saving proposal of £50k after Q1. If the Committee still remain concerned, the Committee will wish to consider setting up an REP to explore this further.</p> <p>2. ASC19 – The Committee consider this budget reduction proposal, to reduce</p>	<p>Agreed and the update will include the actions that are being taken to monitor and reduce the levels.</p> <p>It is not agreed that this will prevent the</p>

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	<p>the overall unit cost by attracting more individuals to the Council’s residential homes not only contrary to the vision of keeping people independent for longer and providing support within their home and their local community, but also contrary to the recommendation the Committee made to Cabinet when considering Residential remodelling in that “Should Cabinet decide to progress with working with a partner organisation to manage and transform the Council’s existing residential care homes that extensive consultation and communication is undertaken with residents and carers / relatives, to manage anxieties and a clear and transparent process is developed to mitigate any risks in the transfer of residents to the new extra care facilities in the medium / long term. “</p> <p>3. ASC21 – The Committee would like to express their concern at the impact this will have on the most vulnerable older people who not only rely on this service, but the increase in cost to £5.11. Committee are also concerned at the low response to the consultation, where there were only 10 respondents and although the Committee were informed that not all were unhappy at paying extra for meals at home, whether due to the low response rate, this was a truly representative view of the users of this service.</p> <p>4. The Committee consider there to be a lack of detail around the proposed budget reduction proposals to understand the full implications of the budget reduction proposals. The Committee expressed that in future budget reduction proposals should be linked to the Corporate Plan and that base budgets be included, so that members of the Committee can take a view on the percentage reductions against base budget.</p>	<p>service from realising the vision. Firstly this approach is about good practice and effective management and secondly it is a short term measure during the period leading up to the change. The situation will be reviewed in line with the timescales for transfer.</p> <p>This proposal has been deferred by Cabinet. All those who are in receipt of a meal at home are now having a re-assessment of their needs to ensure that only those who are in need of the service are receiving the service. Further more detailed information will be presented to the H&SC OvC Committee at a future date.</p> <p>Noted</p>
	<p>Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The Committee have no concerns in relation to the savings proposals for</p>	<p>Noted</p>

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	<p>2014/15, however, do have concerns about the achievability of savings for 2015 – 2017, as those proposals are indicative, yet the RAG status is shown as green throughout and question whether the impact on level of service provision and posts is fully known at this stage.</p>	
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