

Future Budget Planning Recommendations from BREP

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommend that Corporate Leadership is enhanced to bring Directorates together and ensure collaboration within and across all Directorates. Members further proposed that future quarterly reviews through Corporate Performance Assessments look to incorporate Scrutiny representation.

Recommendation 2

The Panel recommend the need for the Authority to adopt a Corporate approach in relation to Home to School Transport maximising the LA's minibuses such as those used for day centres. It is proposed that this be supported by slightly amending the opening and closing times of day centres so that the buses can be available for school transport. Other aspects that could be considered include the exploration of whether school staff could transport children and young people instead of hiring independent drivers.

Recommendation 3

The Panel recommend that there needs to be a cultural shift in the way the LA works with TCC with clear strategic leadership backed by Cabinet Support. As part of achieving the Corporate Priority 'Supporting a Successful Economy', there needs to be emphasis on maintaining neighbourhood services to help ensure attractiveness for future investment.

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommend that to ensure effective collaborative working between the LA and TCCs there needs to be a dedicated officer to drive it from the LA, similar to the role that is in place for CATs. The Panel propose also introducing Service Level Agreements between both parties to ensure the required support is in place.

Recommendation 6

The Panel recommend that a scoping exercise be undertaken to explore the possibility of TCCs buying in various services from the LA. This exercise needs to take into account the cost of TCCs buying directly from the LA compared with TCCs employing their own staff which would incorporate on-costs including training and health and safety.

Recommendation 7

The Panel recommend that TCCs be provided with an accurate, up to date detailed list of available assets before their precepts are set in November/December and ensure the list is maintained regularly to illustrate when assets are no longer available.

Recommendation 8

Members recommend that a definitive deadline be provided in relation to the Community Asset Transfer process outlining when the Council would no longer support the Asset or service.

Recommendation 9

The Panel recommend a review be undertaken to consider how other LAs within Wales work with the police in relation to community policing. Members propose that the LA look to adopt similar processes as the likes of Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot in relation to the roles and responsibilities between the Authority and the Police and also how they respond to instances such as lane clearance in un-adopted areas.

Recommendation 11

The Panel recommend that schools are encouraged to look at all aspects for savings and income generation such as halls and sports facilities etc, with detail of this included in their school plans. This will not only assist local communities but will also help minimise the impact of potential future budget savings possibly being introduced for schools in forthcoming years.

Recommendation 12

With reference to income generation from schools facilities, Members recommend that a standardised fee programme is introduced and provided to head teachers as a guideline to proposed fees. This needs to take into account the charges of other local facilities within the County Borough to ensure they are competitive.

Recommendation to Schools

It is recommended that schools take account of the ongoing maintenance costs of their facilities when considering income generation and that the two are linked in school maintenance plans. This will ensure schools are taking into account long term planning for future replacement of such things as pitch surfaces.

Recommendation 13

Following discussion over the Schools Music Service and with reference to possible future budget pressures within schools, the Panel recommend that as the Music Service is a select service, that its allocated funding be removed in favour of retaining key school staff. The Panel further proposed that the funding be subsidised by the child's parents, by way of means testing.

The Panel further recommend that when the above proposal is considered the following points are taken into account:

- What level of music service provision is mandatory;
- What service provision is each school providing;
- How many pupils are currently paying for music provision
- Equality Impact Assessment.

Recommendation 17

The Panel recognise that it is sometimes more straight forward to introduce change in some Directorates than others, however recommend that there needs to be more Transformational Leadership and culture change across the LA, thus ensuring that long term, realistic planning and change is clearly

conveyed and understood by staff at all levels and that future needs, both budgetary and service, can be met.

Presentation of Budget to the public and Budget Consultation Process

Recommendation 18

The Panel recommend that a review be undertaken of how the budget is presented to ensure that Members and the public are able to fully understand the implications of the proposals being put forward. The Panel further propose that this review include the input of Members and consider how the budget is presented in other LAs.