

	<u>Budget Research & Evaluation Panel</u>	<u>Cabinet Response</u>
1	The Panel recommend that a whole Authority review be undertaken in relation to transport to ensure that we are running these services as effectively and efficiently as possible. Members requested that a Project Manager be identified from outside of the Education and Transport departments to take this forward.	A high level review was undertaken on the back of a scrutiny committee recommendation a few years ago. It revealed the complexity of integrating transport in order to create meaningful savings and efficiencies. For example many of the mini buses are in school rather than local authority ownership and even where there was seemingly capacity to utilise vehicles more regularly, for example mini buses/ buses used for social care, it would require significant changes to operating hours of services and consequent changes to staff terms and conditions to make it work. However, officers will investigate again whether there is merit in pursuing this matter further.
2	The Panel support the plan to revisit Nursery Education savings in future and expressed concerns over how the shortfall would be met as savings could not be found from Nursery Education. Members requested that this work look into the childcare aspect and the associated cost of childcare provision against Nursery Education. Furthermore, the Panel recommend that future provision be more targeted and based on need rather than a universal provision, to acknowledge and address the differing need across the County Borough.	Cabinet understand the panel's concerns and agree that further work is required in relation to this proposal. Cabinet is mindful of the need to minimise the impact that any potential change might have upon both the education outcomes and economic activity of the county borough.
3	The Panel recommend that BCBC proceed with the proposal to move pay dates for all staff to the middle of the month.	The budget saving was to be derived from moving council staff to the current schools' pay date, later in the month. This would have provided administrative efficiencies in terms of processing. Unfortunately, this proposal was not supported by Unison members so has not been progressed. Moving schools' pay date to earlier in the middle of the month would not result in an increased recurrent cost, but it would not generate any savings either, and therefore has not been implemented.
4	The Panel supports City Deal and recommends that it is explored further to identify links to local initiatives, such as transportation infrastructure and regeneration, and the	This council is pursuing the City Deal as part of the wider South Wales consortium of local authorities and welcomes BREP's support and positive suggestions in this regard.

	<p>possibility of tapping into University Sectors by utilising colleges within the Authority where people may not wish to travel to e.g. Cardiff or Swansea.</p> <p><i>ADDITIONAL COMMENT BY CRI: Furthermore that the Authority embrace the need for collaboration in City Deal particularly on the subject of Electricity Regeneration in order that Bridgend does not miss out on any potential opportunities and benefits.</i></p>	
5	<p>Members raised concerns that visible services valued by the public are at risk due to continued cuts and that the previous level of cuts is not sustainable in the future without significant impact. The Committee therefore recommend that this is seriously taken into consideration when decisions are made regarding budget cuts for the future.</p>	<p>Cabinet notes members concerns and are mindful of striking a balance when determining savings proposals. Cabinet support the methodology which has been used to allocate budget reductions between directorates, which it believes directly supports the revised corporate priorities that the authority has agreed.</p>
6	<p>The Panel recommend that in order to attract investment to the County Borough greater consideration needs to be given to the need to maintain the appearance and attractiveness of the Borough</p>	<p>Cabinet recognises the importance of the appearance and attractiveness of the Borough both to citizens as well as continued economic prosperity. As a result of a better than expected budget settlement, Cabinet reduced the cuts to these services in 2016-17 that would otherwise have been necessary.</p>
7	<p>The Panel requested that consideration be given to the provision of a full time equivalent Scrutiny Officer post to reinstate the support level at 2.6 to ensure that an effective Scrutiny function is maintained for the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Efficiencies must be found across all areas of the Council and compulsory redundancies in the face of existing vacancies must be justified. The Assistant Chief Executive has agreed to consider the budget requirements to meet the Panel's request.</p>
8	<p>The Panel recommend that the Authority seek to establish a joint regional Payroll function.</p>	<p>Establishing a regional payroll service would require the agreement of other local authorities and a considerable investment in ICT systems. The experience of the South East Wales Shared Services project demonstrated this clearly. A recent CIPFA Administration Survey demonstrated that BCBC is the most efficient payroll function amongst Trent users. As an example we have 5.5 employees to pay 7,000 employees whilst</p>

		Newport have 11 employees to pay 7,000 employees. The average cost of producing a payslip in Wales is £6.16, whilst the cost in BCBC is £4.07. In view of this and the prospect of LGR, pursuing this proposal is not a priority.
9	The Panel recommend the Authority pursue attainment of General Power of Competence to enable the Authority to sell skills/ and services to generate income.	The general power of competence is a proposed provision within the Local Government Wales Draft Bill. The Authority has provided its response to the Draft Bill seeking a wide interpretation of the power.
10	The Panel recommend adjusting the proposed increase in Council Tax to bring it more into line with recent changes to savings requirement throughout services.	The level of council tax proposed is lower than previous planning assumptions (4.5%). Cabinet has recommended a proposed increase in council tax of 3.9% taking account of the budget requirement and the level of proposed cuts while balancing the needs of the council to deliver its functions and the inevitable strain any increase puts on household budgets.
11	The Panel recommend that a full options appraisal for future service delivery be carried out in order to identify and consider all available options, including the Teckal approach.	Consideration of new service delivery models involves a wide range of options. The Teckal approach is not a model in itself but part of a wider consideration of controlled companies within a local government setting. The most important consideration is the best service for the least cost with an appropriate governance arrangement.
12	The Panel recommend that the work of the Cultural Trust be monitored closely by the relevant Scrutiny Committee, paying particular attention to activities linked to B Leaf and Wood B.	Arrangements are in place to monitor the activity of the Awen Trust and the council has the right to request additional assurances under the terms of the partnership agreement.
13	The Panel recommend that support should be given to identifying and developing innovative ways of working to help to address the amount of savings required for the future.	Cabinet agree that innovative ways of working should and will continue to be explored. The proposals included within the MTFS already include many of these, as evidenced by 66% of savings categorised as “Smarter Use of Resources” and a further 11% from “Collaboration and Service Transformation”
14	The Panel recommend that ICT within the Authority needs a change of pace and an openness to embrace it, whilst also recognising that in some instances such as the development of online services, an alternative provision still needs to be	ICT is currently supporting the delivery of al Wales Community Care Information System (Bridgend as lead authority in Wales) as well as preparing to deploy agile working capabilities across corporate staff, contingent on securing a tenant for Raven’s

	maintained for those who cannot access them.	Court. ICT has also delivered significant innovation, with the deployment of the Digital Office and iMail being the most advanced across Welsh and possibly UK Local Authorities.
15	The Panel expressed support for the 1% saving proposal in relation to school budgets and recommend that savings are phased in starting immediately.	This is not possible due to Welsh Governments decision to maintain ongoing protection to schools' budgets.
16	The Panel recommend that teaching trade unions are involved in the work of the Strategic Review of schools at the earliest possible stage and are particularly engaged in any proposed changes to Post-16 education in order to make the process as harmonious as possible.	Any consultations conducted as part of the schools strategic review will include consultation with relevant unions. The Director of Education meets regularly with branch secretaries of all education unions and keeps them up to date with plans and proposals.
17	The Panel further recommend that all staff are engaged throughout the change process to Post-16 Education to ensure they are involved and encouraged to take ownership of the changes.	The schools strategic review project board will have a wide strategic membership to ensure the project has representation from across the sector. The Childrens Change Board has representatives from all parts of the Education and Transformation Directorate and from Safeguarding.
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel recommend that Cabinet Members are involved in future budget consultation events. • The Panel recommend that suggestions and proposals provided by the Panel to help to improve the consultation and engagement regarding the budget be taken forward to inform the exercise in future years. • future consultation needs to work closely with the Youth Council and Schools to improve upon the limited view from young people • Members recommend that an interview with BridgeFM is arranged to communicate the outcome of the consultation and raise more awareness of the savings going forward. 	<p>Current arrangements are adequate.</p> <p>Members' suggestions regarding increased engagement will continue to be taken forward where possible.</p> <p>Cabinet values the views of young people and agrees with the recommendation to improve this in future</p> <p>Response to the consultation will be through email and publication on the website as these were the most favoured communication methods by consultation respondents</p>
19	The Panel recommend that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear information to be provided where any changes or 	The recommendations are noted. With the process effectively compressed for all councils as a result of the Westminster

	<p>omissions are made to proposals during the BREP process, this to include rationale for changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover reports to be provided by Officers specific to individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees when they consider budget proposals at meetings during the consultation process • All information to be provided to the Panel in an accessible format. • Information is provided to the Panel in timely manner to enable them to have time to read and consider the reports, to identify areas for discussion and to formulate questions. This will make the best use of Member and Officer time and ensure that meetings are effective. 	Comprehensive Spending Review, the timing between different meetings has often been shorter than normal and has meant very quick turnaround time required by officers.
	<u>Communities Environment and Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Committee</u>	
20	The Committee recommend that a review of weed spraying be undertaken to ensure that this is carried out in a timely manner for maximum effect.	This matter will be reviewed to ensure that the timing of weed spraying is carried out in the most effective way.
	<u>Corporate Resources and Improvement</u>	
	No recommendations (amendments/additions made to other recommendations included elsewhere)	
	<u>Partnerships and Governance Overview & Scrutiny Committee</u>	
21	The Committee recommend that information on all BCBC services, projects and activities which involve partnership working is collated and provided to the Committee to enable them to identify areas which fall under the remit of Partnerships and Governance. This will help to inform the Forward Work Programme, increase the effectiveness and impact of the Committee and identify areas which may be suitable for partnership working in future.	The Committee can be provided this report within its forwards work programme.
22	The Committee are concerned that the scrutiny function of the	See response to recommendation 7

	authority is at risk of being jeopardised due to current staffing levels and would strongly recommend that the staffing levels are maintained at 2.6 to ensure that the Authority is supported by an effective scrutiny function.	
	<u>Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee</u>	
23	The Committee expressed concerns over the implementation of the budget cuts for Learner Transport. Members reiterated prior concerns over the apparent lack of co-ordination and co-operation between the Education Directorate who hold the budget for this service and the Transport Department, who are responsible for the direct provision. The Committee supported the notion of the need for proper project management of Learner Transport and recommend that this comes from outside of the two responsible areas in order to provide an objective oversight.	<p>The Education and Transformation Director and the Communities Director do not recognise this analysis and are satisfied that there is no need to change the arrangements between the two teams responsible for learner transport.</p> <p>The budget cuts have been implemented for learner travel, but it will not be clear until the Autumn term 2016 how many parents will want to buy a paying place or how many will want their children to walk to school.</p>
24	Members expressed concern over the suggestion that there was a significant reduction in the amount of pupils utilising the school transport service at the beginning of the school year and those remaining half way through and at the end of the school year. The Committee recommend that Learner Transport contracts be continually reassessed throughout the year in order that should there be any significant decrease in the numbers utilising this service, any unviable buses can be combined.	The reduction is due to the changes in the policy that Cabinet agreed. Contracts cannot be adjusted mid-year however all contracts are tendered in line with procurement rules.
25	The Committee questioned the use of the Authorities own minibuses and the fact that they sit idle at various times throughout the day. The Committee recommend that Transport for the Authority be reviewed to consider whether changing the times of various services such as day centres, marginally, would assist in being able to utilise the Authority's own minibuses in a more effective and efficient way and achieve	See the response to recommendation 1 above.

	<p>further savings. Furthermore Members added that the Authority needs to look at what technology can be introduced and used to monitor where the buses are throughout the day, what they are doing and who they are picking up in order to run the service more efficiently.</p>	
26	<p>The Committee raised concerns over Nursery Education provision in that funding is being used from the schools budget for provision that exceeds the statutory requirement and encompasses children as young as 3 years of age. Members recalled the reduction proposal to go to the statutory requirement indicated in the previous MTFS, which amounted to a saving of £1.5m. The Committee questioned where this budget reduction would come from in the future if not through Nursery Education and expressed concerns over the fact that this could further impact on schools if their budget is not protected. The Committee recommend that this subject area be revisited both by the Directorate and the Scrutiny Committee to examine the options for future Nursery Education provision and its associated implications for schools.</p>	See response to recommendation 2
27	<p>The Committee referred to SCH1 - Agreement in principle: Cabinet have agreed that schools should be expected to find 1% efficiency savings'. Given the fact that some schools are already experiencing a deficit and issues regarding classroom sizes, the Committee recommend that the proposal be reworded to state that schools 'could', not 'should', be expected.</p>	Noted, however this proposal has been removed in line with protection afforded by Welsh Government.
	Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
	No Recommendations	