

Cabinet – 14 December 2011

Budget Consultation Feedback 2012/13

Portfolio: Councillor Towe – Finance and Personnel

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 The council's corporate plan sets out intentions to build upon successes and meet the existing and emerging challenges being faced. It focuses on three priority areas - neighbourhoods and communities, the economy, and health and well-being.
- 1.2 With a shrinking economy, rising costs and unavoidable cuts in public spending, listening to the views and opinions of local people and working to meet these needs is vital to the council's purpose; to maintain and improve the physical and economic environment for the health and well-being of all our residents within financial constraints. We aim to operate efficiently and collaboratively within a one council model and with partners to ensure value for money for tax payers and other funders.
- 1.3 Part of our commitment to listen to local people is to consult people on what they think about council services and spending priorities and how this should be reflected in the annual budget.
- 1.4 Through the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods the views of more than 250 residents have been gathered. Through the use of various approaches people were able to have their say on what they think should be the council's spending priorities for the coming financial year and what matters to them most. This report contains an update to the Budget Simulator - an interactive online tool which allows people to set their own budget against 16 council spending areas. The budget simulator was used to collect data in two waves. Wave one ran from 10 August to 16 October and wave two 31 October to 14 November 2011. Results from wave one were reported to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. The additional 2 week extension was agreed in order to give as many people as possible the chance to have their say, and this report summarises the key results from this second wave.

- 1.5 This report to Cabinet summarises the findings from budget consultation to support decision making regarding the council's draft budget proposals for 2012/13. **Appendix 1** reports residents findings from the second wave of the budget similar, and **Appendix 2** reports the recommendations from each scrutiny panel on the revised budget proposals and budget consultation reports presented to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. The final budget, including any changes arising from consultation arrangements and final allocation of formula grant, will be presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2012 for recommendation to Council, and will be considered by full Council on 23 February 2012. **Feedback from Corporate, Health and Children's scrutiny panels will be tabled at Cabinet due to meetings occurring after despatch of this report.**

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the findings from the budget consultation, set out in this report, be used and evidenced alongside other feedback and available data by Cabinet as it develops the council's 2012/13 draft corporate revenue and capital budget.
- 2.2 That the Borough Leadership Team and Corporate Management Team use these findings to inform priorities and service delivery for 2012/13 onwards.
- 2.3 Cabinet approve this report and its appendices to be published on the council's public website along with feedback of outcomes.
- 2.4 Cabinet refer this report to all scrutiny and performance panels for consultation, to enable their comments to be considered by Cabinet on 8 February 2011.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 Each year the council consults residents and stakeholders as part of its budget process. This year consultation has gathered the views of local residents, the community and voluntary sector, children and young people, older people, representatives from the business community and others. This report presents findings from the second wave of the budget similar, an on line tool to gather residents views on council spending priorities for 2012/13. The results of this extended consultation period are shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The second draft budget proposals, and results of stakeholder consultation, as reported to Cabinet on 9 November, have been noted by all scrutiny and performance panels. The responses from each panel are shown in **Appendix 2**. **Feedback from Corporate, Health and Children's scrutiny panels will be tabled at Cabinet due to meetings occurring after despatch of this report.**

4. Council priorities

- 4.1 The budget process follows council priorities, including the agreement to use a value for money strategy to drive through savings proposals linked to working smarter and service redesign. Consultation is key to this, by ensuring the priorities of the council meet the needs of our customers.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Actively listening and acting on the feedback from local people, including feedback gathered through budget consultation is critical to the effective decision making of the council. The council must make it clear how the views of local people have been used to influence decisions.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Consultation undertaken was funded from existing revenue budgets.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and to consult with Non Domestic Rate Payers (NNDR). Business representatives were consulted at a meeting on 20 October 2011, with responses back to Cabinet on 9 November 2011.

8. Property implications

- 8.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

9. Staffing implications

- 9.1 There will be some staffing implications arising from the budget proposals, and consultation with employees and unions will be undertaken in accordance with required procedures.

10. Equality implications

- 10.1 None directly associated with this report. An equality impact assessment is undertaken on all policy items and on the overall budget.

11. Consultation

- 11.1 The consultation process is an example of how the council is continuing to consult with stakeholders on key issues as part of a council wide strategy for consultation and engagement. Budget consultation has included residents, business representatives and the voluntary and community sectors. Employee consultation is being held via the trade unions.

11.2 Scrutiny and performance panels will receive and consider any revisions to the draft budget proposal, including the draft capital programme, during January 2012.

Background papers

Results of the on line budget simulator.

Reports to Cabinet on 9 November on second draft revenue and capital budget proposals 2012/13 and stakeholder consultation.

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James Walsh
Assistant Director – Finance (CFO)
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06 December 2011



Councillor Towe
Portfolio holder – Finance &
06 December 2011

Appendices: -

- 1 Budget Consultation – Budget simulator results (wave 2)
- 2A Environment Scrutiny panel recommendations
- 2B Social Care Scrutiny panel recommendations
- 2C Community Services Scrutiny panel recommendations
- 2D Regeneration Scrutiny panel recommendations
- 2E Corporate Scrutiny panel recommendations **(to be tabled)**
- 2F Health Scrutiny panel recommendations **(to be tabled)**
- 2G Children’s Scrutiny panel recommendations **(to be tabled)**

Appendix 1

Budget Consultation – Budget Simulator results – wave 2

The simulator is a high-level approach to consultation on the budget and is informative and engaging for people, helping respondents understand the context within which the budget is set.

Two waves of data were collected via the council's Budget Simulator, an online tool which allows people to find out about the services the council provides and how much they cost each year. Respondents decide how to allocate the budget across different services, learning about the possible impact as they go. The budget simulator was tailored to reflect the council's 2011/12 budget and included 16 spending areas capturing the bulk of council services and spend.



The budget simulator collected data in two waves. 147 people took part in wave one; between 10 August until 16 October 2011. The second wave of data collection took place between 31 October to 14 November 2011, to which 27 people responded.

These results should be used alongside the detailed budget consultation findings reported to Cabinet on 9 November 2011.

The budget used in the second wave of the simulator totalled £190,966,000, rounded to the nearest '000. The spending areas were;

- Libraries, Arts and Heritage
- Revenues
- Community Safety
- Children's Services
- Supporting Education & Attainment (excluding schools)
- Adult Social Care
- Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance and Greenspaces
- Young Peoples' Services

- Waste Services
- Roads and Maintenance
- Planning and Building Control
- Housing
- Leisure, Sport and Recreation
- Economic Regeneration
- Public Safety

Following wave one of the budget simulator, it was decided that the benefits spending area should be removed following uncertainty by residents around how this service is funded. For this reason results have not been combined.

When interpreting these figures the number of respondents and the way in which people could respond should be borne in mind.

Fig 1 : Budget Simulator allocation - average % change from current year budget (wave one and two)	Wave 1 2012-13 % change (147)	Wave 2 2012-13 % change (27)
Benefits	-7.1	NA
Housing	-5.1	-4.1
Planning and Building Control	-4.7	-3.0
Libraries, Arts and Heritage	-4.4	-3.1
Revenues	-3	-1.7
Supporting Education & Attainment (excluding schools)	-2.4	-1.9
Waste Services	-2.2	1.3
Economic Regeneration	-1.9	0.4
Grounds Maintenance and Greenspaces	-1.9	-0.4
Street Cleansing	-1.5	2.4
Adult Social Care	-0.6	-2.0
Young People's Services	-0.3	0.2
Children's Services	-0.2	-0.2
Community Safety	-0.2	0.4
Public Safety	0.7	4.6
Roads and Maintenance	0.7	4.8
Leisure, Sport and Recreation	0.9	-0.6

All respondents (wave 1 = 147 wave 2 = 27)

Although based on the responses of just 27 people, the results from wave two do broadly reflect those gathered in wave one with some deviations.

- Roads and maintenance and public safety were the spending areas where the average % change was positive in both waves, indicating that these spending areas are most important to respondents.
- In both waves the average reduction in % spend was greatest for housing, planning and building control and libraries, arts and heritage, indicating that these spending areas are less important.
- In wave one, the average % change in spend for street cleansing was -1.5%, where as in the second wave this rose to 2.4%. The % average decrease was also greater for adult social care in wave two.
- For waste services the average % spend was -2.2% in wave one compared to 1.3% in wave two.

Main sources of comments received, linked to the council's working smarter themes :-

Link to over-riding working smarter principles

- General cutting out of waste
- Removal of duplication in work / roles
- Review of management costs
- Do not spend money on unnecessary items eg. New art pieces

Help me live the way I want

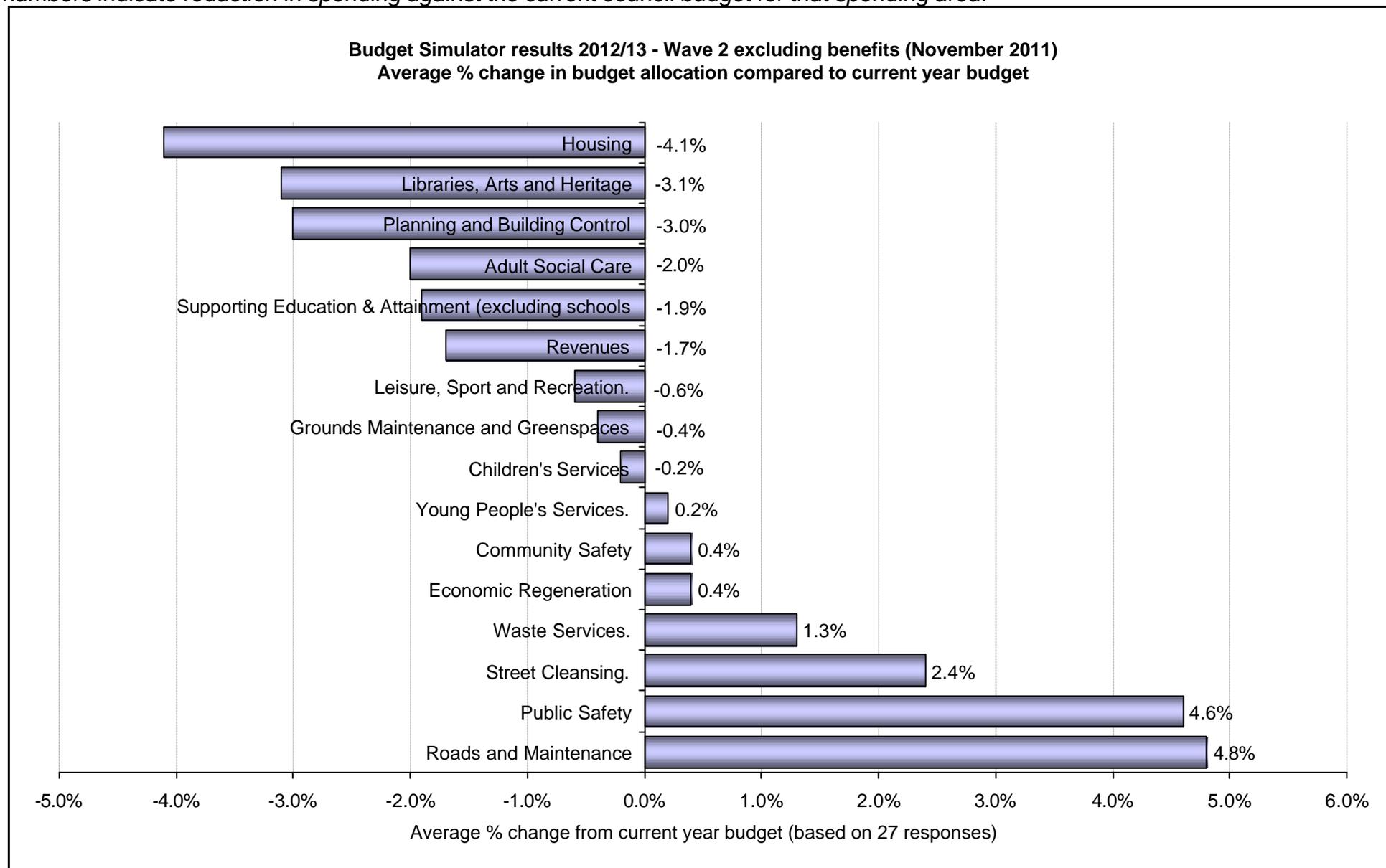
- Pensioners feel hard hit
- Reduction in housing services due to residents not understanding why the Council still spends money in this area

Help me improve the way I live

- Better roads
- Increased need to repair potholes
- Roads with no white lining need addressing
- Damage to cars parked on footpaths, due to house modifications resulting in limited parking
- Improved community safety

Fig.2 Budget Simulator Results 2012/13 – Allocation of spending across council services (wave two)

Results from the council's budget simulator help indicate where people's spending priorities lie. Based on the responses of 27 people. Where minus numbers indicate reduction in spending against the current council budget for that spending area.



Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on 28 November, 2011, following consideration of the second draft budget proposals 2012/13 and stakeholder consultation reports as presented to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

The scrutiny panel resolved:

- 1) **That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;**
- 2) **That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/12, be noted.**

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Signed:



Jamie Morris
Executive Director

Signed:



Councillor R. Carpenter
Chair, Environment Scrutiny and
Performance Panel

29 November 2011

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel following consideration of the draft budget proposals 2012/13 at the panel's meeting on 28 November 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider the revised draft budget proposals during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet be advised of the Panel's concern regarding the potential impact on service users as a consequence of the reduction in budgets;
2. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;
3. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/13, be noted.

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Signed:



Paul Davies
Executive Director

29 November 2011

Signed:



Councillor Tim Oliver
Chair, Social Care & Inclusion Scrutiny and
Performance Panel

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on 29 November 2011, following consideration of the second draft budget proposals 2012/13 and stakeholder consultation reports as presented to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

Resolved:

That:

1. the budget consultation feedback be noted;

and;

2. the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2012/13 be noted.

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Councillor Louise Harrison
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Performance Panel

1 December 2011

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on 5 December 2011, following consideration of the second draft budget proposals 2012/13 and stakeholder consultation reports as presented to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

At the meeting on 5 December the Panel questioned the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration on a number of proposals featured in the report.

With regard to the '*Housing Services – Service Redesign*' the Panel questioned whether or not the creation of generic advice teams would reduce the specialist knowledge and advice available to local residents in the most need. Following this question it was explained that the changes were designed to improve the customer experience by targeting resources at those customers in the most need and by providing self help tools for those customers who wished to 'self-serve'.

The Portfolio Holder also responded to questions from the Panel regarding the performance of markets in the borough. It was explained that Walsall market was at capacity, Bloxwich market was returning a small surplus and Willenhall market was recording a small loss but the Wednesday market had a waiting list for stalls. Overall the Markets Service was £65,000 over its income generation targets.

Resolved:

That:

1. the budget consultation feedback be noted;

and;

2. the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2012/13 be noted.

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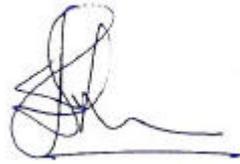
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Councillor Ian Shires
Chair, Regeneration Scrutiny and
Performance Panel

6 December 2011

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on 9 December 2011, following consideration of the second draft budget proposals 2012/13 and stakeholder consultation reports as presented to Cabinet on 9 November 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

The scrutiny panel resolved:

1. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;
2. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/13, be noted.

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Rory Borealis
Executive Director (Resources)

14 December 2011

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Councillor S. Coughlan
Chair, Corporate Scrutiny and
Performance Panel

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel following consideration of the draft budget proposals 2012/13 at the panel's meeting on 12 December 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals.

Resolved:

1. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;
2. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/13, be noted.

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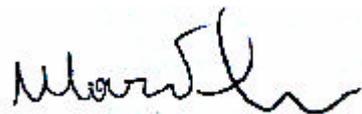
Signed:



Paul Davies
Executive Director

13 December 2011

Signed:



Councillor Marco Longhi
Chair, Health Scrutiny and
Performance Panel

Draft Budget 2012/13: Recommendations of the Children's & Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Summary of report

This report presents the comments and recommendations from the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel following consideration of the draft budget proposals 2012/13 at the panel's meeting on 13 December 2011. This will enable consideration by Cabinet on 14 December 2011.

All scrutiny and performance panels have received draft budget proposals in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider any changes to the revised draft budget proposals or consultation feedback during January 2012, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals.

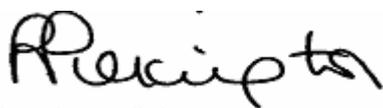
Resolved:

1. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;
2. That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/13, be noted.

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14 December 2011

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Chair, Children's and Young People
Scrutiny and Performance Panel