

Cabinet – 17 December 2008

Draft Budget 2009/10: Recommendations of Scrutiny and Performance Panels following Budget Consultation

Portfolio: Councillor Griffiths – Finance & Personnel

Service Area: All services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan: No

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the 5 scrutiny panels and their recommendations as part of the budget process, prior to panels receiving cabinet's draft budget proposals (**Appendices 1-5**). The panels have reviewed resource planning documents at meetings in September and October 2008. Through further meetings in November and December panels have made recommendations in the attached reports.
- 1.2 The resource planning documents have given scrutiny more detailed information to comment on than in previous years. This has allowed more chance to comment on the shape of the proposals that may affect services within the remit of each panel.
- 1.3 **Appendix 5** (the findings and recommendations of the corporate scrutiny panel held on 11 and 12 December) will be despatched late due to the panels taking place after the date of despatch of this report.
- 1.4 Further findings and recommendations of the corporate scrutiny panel taking place on 17 December 2008 will be presented to cabinet on 14 January 2009.

2. Recommendations

That cabinet consider the recommendations of the scrutiny panels in drafting the 2009/10 to 2011/12 budget.

3. Background Information

Scrutiny panels participate annually in the budget setting process. For 2009/10 draft budget work has been ongoing through meetings from July 2008. There are further meetings scheduled in January 2009 to scrutinise the draft budget proposals.

4. Resource and legal considerations

The consideration of the resource planning documents by the scrutiny panels is an integral part of the council's budget setting process.

5. Citizen impact

The budget is aligned with service activity within service plans across the council. Investment is planned to be targeted at service improvement, stability and user demand.

6. Community safety

None directly associated with this report.

7. Environmental impact

None.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 As part of the budget setting process, a corporate financial risk assessment is undertaken to determine key risks, and their impact on the budget.

8.2 As part of the 2009/10 to 2011/12 budget process, resource planning information has been prepared. These documents were based around financial information but also information from service plans and performance data.

9. Equality implications

Services consider equalities issues in setting budgets and delivering services. Irrespective of budgetary pressures the council must fulfil equal opportunities obligations.

10. Consultation

All scrutiny and performance panels have received budget presentations in respect of the services falling within their remit, and will receive and consider the draft corporate budget proposals during January 2009, providing an opportunity to make recommendations to cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals.

Background papers

Various financial working papers.
Approved MTFS – Cabinet 17 September 2008

Author

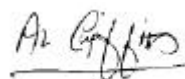
Dan Mortiboys, Corporate Finance Manager,
☎ 01922 652982,
mortiboysd@walsall.gov.uk

Signed:



James Walsh
Chief Finance Officer
8 December 2008

Signed:



Councillor Griffiths
Portfolio Holder
8 December 2008

Cabinet – 17 December 2008

Draft Budget 2009/10 – 2011/12: Recommendations of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Recommendations

That:

1. the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance support the Council wide recruitment suspension to all posts except for those which are vitally important;
2. all Council communication material such as: Walsall Pride, Team Spirit and A-Z Services, should be maintained to ensure as much information as possible is available to local people to access services;
3. realistic and achievable budgets for service areas are set;
4. a full decision conferencing style event is held for the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel with Regeneration and Finance Officers to enable a full and detailed discussion of the budget for 2010/11;

and;

5. Councillor Des Pitt to present the Panels recommendations to the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 12 December 2008.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des Pitt', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Des Pitt
Chair, Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel

8 December 2008

Cabinet – 17 December 2008

Draft Budget 2009/10 – 2011/12: Recommendations of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Recommendations

That Cabinet consider the following resolutions from Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

Budget

1. investigations be undertaken to identify opportunities where the numbers of volunteers and other third sector input could be employed by the Libraries and Heritage Service;
2. ensure that income generation possibilities are maximised at Darlaston Town Hall;
3. negotiations be undertaken to secure increased financial contributions from partners towards community safety priorities;
4. further opportunities for pooled budgets with partners should be sought at all levels with particular reference to community safety activity;
5. further opportunities for joint appointments with partners should be sought at all levels with particular reference to community safety activity;
6. the possibility of sponsorship for the First Stop Bus should be investigated;
7. there be no extension of current car parking charges;
8. assistance be provided to voluntary and community safety organisations with external funding bids associated with the boroughs parks;
9. investigations be undertaken to establish the possibilities of the Council's crematorium being operated by the private sector;
10. investigations be undertaken to establish potential and cheaper alternative facilities to the Bryntisilio centre;
11. consideration be given to delivering Streetpride services through the private sector;

Information

12. Tim Challans to advise the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel of the numbers of staff employed by the libraries service and their roles within the service;

13. Library usage figures be provided to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel to identify low use centres with the view to rationalising the local network to make future savings whilst still meeting national library standards;
14. Councillor Tweddle be advised of any costs incurred by the Council to fund dog training classes;
15. Tim Challans to advise the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel of the contractors cost to switch on Christmas lights in Walsall and its district centres;
16. the cost of providing marked electoral registers to Members be provided to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel;
17. investigations be undertaken to establish the cost of modifying car parks machines to include functionality to print car registration numbers on tickets;
18. Steve Pretty to write to all Members of the Council to ask them to identify problem drains in their wards which are constantly flooding;
19. the number of prosecutions made under public protection legislation be reported to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel;
20. the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel be informed of the number of deaths and cremations in the borough per year;
21. financial benchmarking data be provided to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel on costs for:
 - a. grass cutting/grounds maintenance
 - b. Street cleaning
 - c. Litter picking
22. the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel be provided with the full costs of resourcing Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and their sub-groups;

Other

23. no decision be taken by Cabinet on the establishment of Community Action Teams until the issue has been considered by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Signed:



Councillor Chris Towe
Chair, Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel

8 December 2008

Cabinet – 17 December 2008

Draft Budget 2009/10 – 2011/12: Recommendations of the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

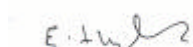
Recommendations

That cabinet consider the following resolutions from the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

That:

1. Further reductions in the number of social workers is not feasible and there is the need to protect the service area and recognise the potential requirement for an increase in expenditure within this service;
2. In light of recent events in Haringey and Kirklees, the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel strongly urge Cabinet that commitment to Child Protection and safeguarding is at the core of Council policy. The Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel acknowledge the excellent work of the social workers and recognises that there is no greater or more vital challenge than the safeguarding of children in this borough. Accordingly, it is recommended that this service must not be subject to any reduction in its budget. Furthermore, Cabinet should be mindful that further budgetary increase might be necessary;
3. The Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel recognise the importance the provision of positive activities for young people has on the social wellbeing of our communities. The Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel recommend that every effort is made to continue to provide the range of services that have historically been provided through Area Based Grants;
4. The Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel asks Cabinet that funds should be maintained and if possible increased for preventative services to ensure early intervention is achieved;
5. Councillor E Hughes will attend the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Decision Conferencing event on 17 December 2008

Signed:



Councillor Eddie Hughes
Chair Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel

8 December 2008

Cabinet – 17 December 2008

Draft Budget 2009/10 – 2011/12: Recommendations of the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Budget Consultation

Recommendations

That cabinet consider the following resolutions from the Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

That:

1. That further retendering of commissioned services is investigated with a view to making efficiencies whilst maintaining value for money;
2. That further efficiencies be identified through pooled budgets including the joint appointment to posts with other health care providers;
3. That further investment into assistive technology be sought to support discharges from hospital in conjunction with the Manor Hospital and NHS Walsall;
4. That there be continued investment in aids and adaptations to support vulnerable people in their own homes;
5. That there be further investment in the voluntary and community sector to increase its health care capacity with a view to longer term savings;
6. an early commitment be made for any cashable efficiencies realised in the social care and inclusion directorate and central support services through more efficient processes created by the implementation of the personalisation agenda be redirected into adult's social care.

Approved by Councillor Clive Ault
Chair - Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel

8 December 2008