

Report to Cabinet

17 March 2021

Subject:	Recommendations from Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in response to pressures within the Medium Term Financial Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Resources and Core Services – Cllr Ali
Director:	Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Surjit Tour
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra, Democratic Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet consider the benefits of capital borrowing to enable repairs and maintenance works to be undertaken and to consider alternative green solutions for the Council's property portfolio.
- 1.2 That Cabinet consider raising awareness of the cost to the taxpayer to respond to Freedom of Information requests received.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board had considered the reasons for ongoing pressure on the Medium Term Financial Strategy in relation to:-
 - Property Maintenance Account;
 - Printing Devices;









- Legal Services.

2.2 The recommendations set out in paragraph 1 of this report were made by the Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting held on 24 February 2021.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

3.1 The Property Maintenance Account and Legal Services all support the Council's activities towards the delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives:

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has been considering the reasons for a range of key budget pressures that impact upon the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2 Arising from the discussions at these meetings, the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board felt that the Cabinet should:-



- consider the use of capital borrowing in order to fund both planned and unplanned maintenance works to Council buildings and to enable a more energy efficient solution to be implemented to make the improvements more sustainable in the future;
- highlight the cost to the Council taxpayer of the numerous Freedom of Information queries it received.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Cabinet is requested to respond to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board within two months, setting out any approved recommendations, and how they will be implemented.

6 Implications

Resources:	Cabinet would need to consider whether capital borrowing options to make improvements to the Council's property portfolio would provide value for money. There is a currently a significant cost associated with Council staff responding to Freedom of Information requests received.
Legal and Governance:	In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Cabinet is requested to respond to the recommendations of the scrutiny board within two months, setting out any approved recommendations, and how they will be implemented.
Risk:	There are no risk implications associated with this report.
Equality:	No Equality Impact Assessment is required in relation to this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	The Council, in considering more energy efficient solutions for its property portfolio, could contribute to improving energy efficiency and climate change impact.
Social Value	There are no social value implications associated with this report.



7. Appendices

None.

8. Background Papers

None.

