

Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

1 February 2024

Subject:	Draft Budget 2024/25 - Recommendations to the Cabinet
Director:	Assistant Chief Executive, James McLaughlin
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1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board is broadly assured that there is a clear plan, underpinned by data, for the Council's Budget 2024/25.
- 1.2 That the Cabinet and the Executive team review the proposals for Borough Economy again to ensure the assumptions upon which they are based are robust and take account of the missed income targets from 2023/24.
- 1.3 That the Cabinet and Executive team review:-
 - (a) Council, the Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme, Public Health and Sandwell Children's Trust contracts and agreements to ensure they are fit for purpose, take a whole-council approach to meeting the Council's strategic objectives and represent value for money;



(b) contract monitoring management processes to ensure they are robust and ensure value for money.

1.4 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board consider reports within the next three months on detailed proposals to achieve savings in:-

- (a) Children’s External Educational and Care Placements; and
- (b) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport.

1.5 That the following topics be included on the work programme of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board:-




- (a) the customer journey;
- (b) the effect on performance and sickness levels of reduced budgets;
- (c) funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board considered the draft Budget 2024-25 proposals at its meeting on 15 January 2024. Cabinet Members, Directors and Assistant Directors attended to present the proposals to the Board and to answer questions from members.

2.2 The Board subsequently held a workshop to discuss potential recommendations to the Cabinet on the draft Budget 2024-25 proposals, these are set out in this report and need to be approved for submission to the Cabinet.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Effective scrutiny of the Council’s budget supports all objectives of the Corporate Plan.
	
	



4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Based on the information presented to it, and the arising discussion and questions, the Scrutiny Management Board identified a number of recommendations and actions which are set out in section 1 of this report. If agreed, the relevant recommendations will be submitted to the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 February 2024.

5 Implications

Resources:	The Scrutiny Management Board considered the Council's Draft Budget 2024/25 which covers all anticipated income and expenditure for the period.
Legal and Governance:	The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to set a budget and Council Tax precept by 11 March each year. Scrutiny involvement in the processes strengthens decision making and ensures transparency.
Risk:	The Council must set a risk-assessed, balanced budget each year and maintain a prudent level of reserves to mitigate the financial risks that it faces. Information on this was presented to the Scrutiny Management Board on 15 January 2024.
Equality:	No specific implications
Health and Wellbeing:	No specific implications
Social Value:	No specific implications
Climate Change:	No specific implications
Corporate Parenting:	No specific implications



6 Appendices

None.

7. Background Papers

[Report and appendices submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board meeting held on 15 January 2024](#)

