

Report to Cabinet

7 February 2024

Subject:	Recommendations from Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board on the Budget 2024/25
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Councillor Piper
Director:	Assistant Chief Executive James McLaughlin
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic and Members' Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board is 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.
- 1.6 That, in connection with 1.2 and 1.3 above, a further report be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, within 2 months' time, on the decision of Cabinet.







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 proposals, which are to be considered and finalised at the Board's meeting on 1 February 2024. Should there be any update to report from that meeting, it shall be done verbally at the meeting of Cabinet on 7 February 2024.
- 2.3 The Board stated that it was assured that there was a clear plan, underpinned by data, for the Council's Budget 2024/25.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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

	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’s involvement in the budget setting process strengthens decision making and increases transparency.

4.2 In addition to the recommendations to Cabinet, the Board also identified areas that it wished to include in its work programme. These were:-

- Detailed proposals to achieve savings in:-
 - Children’s External Educational and Care Placements;
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport.
- the customer journey;
- the effect on performance and sickness levels of reduced budgets;
- funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector.



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:	In considering and approving the proposals, Cabinet would need to consider the impacts of re-reviewing any particular aspect of the proposals against the requirement to set a budget by 11 March.
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:	No health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.
Social Value	No social value implications are raised in this report.
Climate Change	There are no implications for climate change arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting	No corporate parenting implications associated with this report.

7. Appendices

None.

8. Background Papers

None.

