

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Social & Health - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<u>Social & Health Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<u>General Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will equality impact assessments be completed before any changes are made to the service e.g. review of Supported Living service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes. Equality impact assessments will be completed prior to any changes being made to services.
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What impact will Welfare Reform have on the current budget proposals, what provisions are being made, and will current charges have to increase? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There will be impacts particularly for services where charges are made. Where families are on reduced income or benefits in particular there will be an impact. Although no specific provision is being made for the direct impacts, Social & Health service managers are working closely with the corporate team looking at the impacts of Welfare reform for the whole of the Council, and a holistic approach will be taken to help families. Provision is being made for additional staff to help with preventative work liaising closely with families and the Welfare Rights team. There will also be intensive training for all staff dealing at the front line with clients affected by the impacts of welfare reform. There is also the wider perspective of the Council's work with the Welfare Reform Board involving a cross-directorate approach and also engaging with other stakeholders and representatives from other support networks. No increases will be made to charges as a consequence and there is a ceiling of £50 per week.

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A concern was raised about provision for clients with dementia conditions. The concern related to possible future impacts on Flintshire of decisions made by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) resulting in additional burdens being placed on the Council for clients with dementia care needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This was acknowledged to be a major risk area. Urgent review will be a key priority, including a meeting with representatives from BCUHB. It is a national issue and there are UK studies on sustainability. It is also intended to hold a forum of representatives from Flintshire and neighbouring Authorities to discuss the risks as the extent of impacts is unclear. There was expected to be an additional demand on services. Acknowledgement was made of the level of support within Flintshire for dementia related services including extra care facilities and Living Well. Retaining people within local communities is considered to be the best solution.
1.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarification was sought on the quoted figure of £1.9m for investment in protection of key front-line Social Care services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The figure reflects the value of new pressures and efficiencies in 2013/14, impacts of previous years budget decisions, provision for possible pay awards and non pay inflation.
1.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A concern was raised about future increases in population putting pressure on Council services recognising that there are major new housing developments currently under way within Flintshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation was given that population growth has been factored in for future years.
1.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New charges for Mental Health service users - who will this impact upon? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically mental health service users have not been charged. This brings mental health service users in line with other service users but will not affect individuals supported under Section 117.

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p>	<p><u>Pressures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An explanation was requested regarding the increase in the pressure amount from £0.138m in 2013/14 to £1.506m in 2015/16 for Transition to Adulthood. ▪ Disabled Facility Grants - the pressure amount of £0.046m rising to £0.062m in 2014/15 and 2015/16 seems a small amount considering the increasing number of referrals month by month. ▪ Mental Health (Additional Social Work support) £0.032m as a result of policy / legislative changes made by Welsh Government - has any additional funding been made available to support this pressure ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The budget process is a three year cycle. The figures don't reflect investment already approved in previous years, but the additional growth requirement in 2013/14 as a result of new factors and influences on service demand which couldn't have been foreseen previously. ▪ The pressure bid will provide additional Disability Support Officer provision for ½ post per locality area which should release capacity in the case load for the occupational therapists. Work is also progressing to encourage clients to be signposted to support their own low level adaptation needs. ▪ No additional funding has been allocated from Welsh Government. There is an overall accumulation of additional costs to the Council as a result of the introduction of Welsh Government measures.
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Efficiencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of the Supported Living Service (£0.350m) - This is a very large efficiency - how will this be achieved ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes proposed include reviewing the management structure, applying organisational design principles to the in-house supported living service, reviewing care packages to ensure consistency with other services and further use of telecare as appropriate.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Corporate Services - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
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PART ONE - Corporate Services		
1.0	<u>Corporate Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the reduction in the budget gap from £11m in July to £1.5m at 18th December be explained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The £11m budget gap as at July was the starting point prior to a rigorous examination of pressures. This include a lengthy review and challenge process leading to identification of efficiencies totalling £5m and a reduction of £4.5m in the value of pressures.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the recent Welsh Government announcement on Welfare Reform relating to the removal of the need for some people who previously received 100% Council Tax benefit to pay 10% in the future changed the Council tax base for those Town and Community Councils which had made provision for bad debt? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the Council Tax base cannot be changed, there will be a beneficial impact for Flintshire in terms of bad debt. We had made provision for collecting 97.5 % of Council Tax as opposed to our customary 99 %, so it is possible that there will now be a surplus achieved on Council Tax collection in 2013/14.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please clarify the difference between this being a “stepping stone” budget between the previous and the new Council as stated in the report to Cabinet on 18th December. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At a time of volatility we are aware of potential pitfalls and we need to ensure that we prepare properly for the future. Flintshire Futures is a key part of our strategy to protect front line services. The status quo is not an option and we will need to become more radical in aligning finances with the new challenges.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the assumption of a 3% increase in a Band D property a new proposal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is consistent with the approach which has been adopted in previous years and the Council’s Medium

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is there an assumption that we will budget at £1.738m below Standard Spending Assessment (SSA)? 	<p>Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is because if we were to spend up to our standard spending assessment, we would actually need to increase Council Tax by 6% rather than 3% to achieve it because of the amount of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) we receive from Welsh Government.
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a 1% pay award realistic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. However, the amount of budget provision doesn't necessarily influence the amount of any pay award. The amount of any pay award will be determined by national negotiations.
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we use our office space as efficiently as possible? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have done some rationalisation but we have to recognise that our buildings are old and reworking them for modern use is costly. We are bringing more people into County Hall to free up other buildings.
1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much does the Council contribute to Clwyd Theatr Cymru (CTC)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council currently contributes £1.034m to CTC which is around 40% of their running costs. The remaining 60% comes from the Arts Council. CTC is the only local authority producing house in Wales and one of only two in the UK.
1.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are we making provision for the former Municipal Mutual Insurance company (MMI)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMI faced bankruptcy in 1992. The run-off arrangements which were put in place at the time were intended to ensure that the company would still be able to meet its

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we have previously received a specific (hypothecated) grant, which is subsequently subsumed into the non-hypothecated settlement, do we honour the notional amount? 	<p>historic obligations. However, the extent of recent claims has shown that this is no longer possible. Those Authorities which were covered by MMI (most in the UK including Flintshire's constituent Authorities) are effectively being asked for a retrospective premium payment to enable the insurer to meet the needs of former insurance holders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes we do. The transfer of the finance which was previously a specific grant into the settlement means that its use now becomes an issue of local choice as to how that money is spent. One of the principles contained within our Medium Term Financial Strategy is that we "passport" and thus protect formerly hypothecated sums.
2.0 2.1 2.1.1	<p><u>Corporate Services Comments / Issues</u> <u>Human Resources and Organisational Development</u></p> <p><u>Pressures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are we showing a budget pressure of £0.070m for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and also an efficiency of £0.035m? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could have been netted off as a pressure of £0.035m but was shown as it has been for the sake of transparency.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Environment - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<u>Corporate Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are teachers and non-teachers receiving a pay rise? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay rises are subject to national negotiations and the 1% included in the budget proposals is a provision only.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps are we taking to inform communities about Welfare Reform? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welfare Reform Board meets regularly and includes local partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Job Centre Plus. Around 1,100 Council Tenants have been contacted about the 'bedroom tax'
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we track and monitor achievement of savings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2011/12, monitoring of efficiencies was reflected in budget monitoring reports throughout the year. At final outturn 89 % of the efficiencies reflected in the budget had been realised. There is now a wider ownership of Flintshire Futures efficiencies due to revised governance arrangements and Members are now represented on the Flintshire Futures Board.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will we get more detail on fees and charges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All proposals are included within the budget report and will be discussed at each Scrutiny committee meeting.
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the criteria for the North Wales element of the Regional Collaboration Fund? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It needs to be for new and significant changes involving a number of public bodies - 3 priority bids are currently being worked on.

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How confident are we around inflation predictions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget provision for non standard inflation is held corporately and is only released to Directorates as and when required. Historically predictions have been reasonably accurate.
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships - Not all schools link into colleges / local businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree pathways with Lifelong Learning and Stakeholders. Keep focussed on apprenticeship opportunities across Flintshire.
2.0	<u>Environment Comments / Issues</u>	
2.1	<u>General Comments/Issues</u>	
2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance was sought that a detailed plan would be put in place for closing the public conveniences - Members did not want to see buildings left empty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers will investigate alternative uses and if none are found then the buildings will be demolished.
2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which are the 4 public conveniences that will close? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cilcain, Caerwys, Central Shotton and Holywell (Tower Gardens).
2.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is re-organisation now complete within the Environment Directorate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Streetscene service review is now complete, but the other reviews are still ongoing, each at different stages of completion.
2.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have flood issues affecting Saltney been considered in the budget? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocations are included in the core capital programme and WG grants. The emerging Flood and Water Management Strategy is to be included in the Forward

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Transport Grant for Bus services - is this part of the discussion at the February Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee? 	<p>Work Programme for the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be considered at the February meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee. Taith are tasked with creating a Regional Bus Strategy.
3.0 3.1	<p><u>Pressures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding the pressure item of £0.144m for energy generation at landfill sites - Weren't the gas engines bought a year ago, why are they failing? How were they acquired? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gas engines were bought a number of years ago. A detailed report into the output of the engines has been carried out to inform the new pressure. The engines were part of the asset transfer resulting from the former AD Waste Ltd. being transferred into the Council.

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
4.0	<u>Efficiencies</u>	
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business plan was requested to back up the notion that switching lights off is cheaper than dimming them and that local members and the public would be consulted on all proposals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The matter will be looked at again as part of the emerging Street Lighting Policy. Savings comparisons will be included in the Street Lighting report to Cabinet in March 2013.
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Parking management efficiency of £0.085m - Is this based on the proposals which were considered at Cabinet, or do they include revisions following consideration at the Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised Appendix D is being worked on following the comments made at the Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Housing Council Fund - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<u>Corporate Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall picture given is too optimistic. Why does it appear to be so healthy in a time of reduced grant funding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is encountering reduced grant levels in some areas which are being dealt with, but grant applications have been maximised in order to protect the Council's position as much as possible.
2.0	<u>Housing Council Fund Comments / Issues</u>	
2.1	<u>General Comments/Issues</u>	
2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we budgeted sufficiently for our Homelessness responsibilities, and is there also a potential for problems with private sector rents due to the impact of benefit reductions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate provision has been made for potential increased demand on the Homelessness service as we recognise that this is an emerging pressure as a consequence of Welfare Reforms. There is a potential for problems with private sector rents and the Council will need to be flexible in dealing with both the public and private sector.
2.2	<u>Efficiencies</u>	
2.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information was sought on the efficiency of £0.018m arising from the Service Review on the Resident Wardens service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal to delete one of the current vacant posts will leave sufficient resources for ongoing service delivery.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Lifelong Learning - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<u>Corporate Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will fees and charges be increased by 3 % across the board with consequent implications for users of the Council's youth centres? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a general 3 % increase on fees and charges but also targeted increases resulting from specific proposals. The Youth Service is currently subsidising other users of its premises from within its own budget.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Leisure Services budget have to cover the loan repayments for the new developments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. The loan repayments are paid for out of the Leisure Services budget on the basis that these additional costs to the service will be covered by the increase in facilities charges.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A query was raised regarding the effects of inflation on schools energy budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is included within the delegation to schools, however, we are aiming to target energy inflation at those schools with higher inflationary pressures on energy we are also working with colleagues in Energy Services with a view to encouraging alternative forms of energy to replace oil, e.g. woodchips.
2.0	<u>Lifelong Learning Comments / Issues</u>	
2.1	<u>General Comments/Issues</u>	
2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the budget for schools ever top-sliced within a financial year? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. The Council doesn't top-slice the schools budget in-year.
2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback was given on the Play schemes Task and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be considered alongside other bids within the

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No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
	<p>Finish group, with a request that £11,700 be added as a budget pressure to facilitate match funding to increase the new base provision of 3 weeks and 2 sites.</p>	<p>budget process.</p>
2.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will faster broadband be delivered to schools as promised by Welsh Government? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New grant funding of £39m across all Wales for 3 years has been approved by Welsh Government. This funding is to improve the broadband connections in schools and for the schools to purchase additional hardware.
2.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will increasing the fees and charges in Leisure Centres only lead to less people attending? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful benchmarking has been undertaken. Fees were increased in January and there was no drop-off in income.
2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding Play Areas - can we look at meeting the higher number of requests from Town and Community Councils? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This request will be looked at.
2.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it cost the Council extra money when a teacher retires? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can depend on the individual circumstances of individual cases. Where this occurs for a school with a delegated budget the school would be able to capitalise the cost whereas the Council would be unable to.
2.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a lack of marketing for new developments at Deeside Leisure Centre? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and Officers are conscious of the need for marketing and are currently using a targeted approach including development of a strategy with Alliance Leisure.
2.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification was sought on the delegation of Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An amount is included in the Council's budget to stabilise

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Lifelong Learning - Initial Budget Proposals 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
2.1.9	<p>maternity pay costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently problems with parking at Buckley Leisure Centre which could perhaps be overcome by using additional parking at Ysgol Elfed subject to the need for CCTV. Is CCTV included within the budget? 	<p>the funding. The Directorate is currently working with schools to come up with an agreed scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A capital bid is being prepared relating to a number of issues at the Buckley Leisure Centre site.
2.1.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A query was raised regarding schools paying for the costs of swimming lessons for pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have an entitlement to swimming lessons under the Curriculum Entitlement (Wales) Regulations.
2.2		
2.2.1	<p><u>Pressures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are we giving Special Schools extra funding for the extra work that they are doing, which is proving invaluable in reducing the number and costs of our Out of County placements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pressure amount of £0.250m has been included in the budget proposals to help improve staffing levels. The special schools are proving to be a real success story for Flintshire.