

**Comments made at Overview & Scrutiny Committees whilst considering the Budget 2024-25 Report – February, 2024**

<b>Education, Youth &amp; Culture OSC – 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2024</b>	
<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></b>	
(a) That the Education and Youth Portfolio’s options to reduce budgets be noted; and	
(b) That the proposals for the delegated schools’ budget be noted.	
<b>Education &amp; Youth Portfolio Budget Reductions</b>	
<b>Cllr Andrew Parkhurst</b>	<p>Believe that because of the financial difficulties the Welsh Government (WG) budget has presented Council with each Portfolio has been asked to identify 7.5% of savings in order that Members could then decide which of those potential savings could be accepted or rejected and that Members would have a choice and make an informed decision.</p> <p>There is a potential saving of £303,000 identified within the Education &amp; Youth Portfolio excluding schools, but this does not equate to a 7.5% saving. Could officers please clarify this. Also, when looking at the 8 month outturn for this financial year, there have been £367,000 of savings. How has this been identified as this is more than the savings proposed for the 2024/25 budget.</p> <p>The Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth) advised that the total efficiencies identified did not equate to 7.5% of the overall budget for the Portfolio but explained that each Portfolio was asked to find up to 7.5% of efficiencies and that this was an aspiring target. Any further efficiencies above those identified would risk delivery of statutory services and risk the Council not being able to meet its statutory functions.</p> <p>In relation to the £367,000 identified in-year efficiencies, the Chief Officer advised that this had come from a moratorium on the reduction or stopping of spend in each Portfolio. One of the reasons for this efficiency was around the provision of 3 year olds and early years education with pupil numbers not coming through as anticipated, which reflected the fall in birth rates in recent times. The Corporate Finance Manager added that the Council does look for recurring reductions in budget as a sustainable way of reducing budget requirements for next year. The moratorium and temporary underspend were not reoccurring in nature but have been put in place to assist with the in-year overspend.</p>
<b>Cllr Gladys Healey</b>	<p>Is there financial provision for any refugees that may settle within the County?</p> <p>The Chief Officer said yes to the best of her knowledge. There had been a number of families who had settled in Flintshire and education provision had been made for them. This was a challenge for all Local Authorities as it would not be made aware significantly in advance when</p>

	<p>the Home Office would direct them to receive families and children to be located in Flintshire. There was a structured process in place to manage this and the Council worked closely with schools which had been demonstrated in recent times.</p>
<b>Cllr Jason Shallcross</b>	<p>Could a further explanation be given on the budget reductions for Youth Services around the asset transfer of some buildings. Believe the Council would incur a yearly cost for renting back space to use within the buildings in future.</p> <p>The Chief Officer explained that the challenge for Youth Services is that it has, under its control, a number of buildings which were not solely used for youth clubs, but by other organisations who pay rent under the Fees and Charges Policy. This was an expensive model. We are looking at appropriate community groups/parents to take over the buildings as an asset transfer and if an affective partnership is developed, the Youth Service can rent back what it needs to create the opportunity for efficiencies which would allow for additional funding of more youth workers out in the communities working with schools and young people to support them.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised that of the 2 current asset transfers, the one at Penyffordd was quite advanced, so should happen sooner and reduce the risk to the Council in meeting the budget reduction, as shown in the report.</p>
<b>Delegated School Budgets</b>	
<b>Cllr Gladys Healey</b>	<p>A consequence of cutting schools budgets by 3% may result in redundancies. Would the Council be assisting financially with the cost of redundancies.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council advised that the cost of redundancies did not sit with the Council. The Council were there to advise and support schools who maybe in that difficult situation.</p>
<b>Cllr Dave Mackie</b>	<p>Cannot support a 3% reduction in school budgets and would suggest that a 3% reduction in the delivery of education to pupils would take the Council below an acceptable minimal level. Last year the school budgets were reduced by 3% and if the Council thought it acceptable to cut another 3% why not increase this figure last year.</p> <p>There was a lot of evidence that schools need to perform better, and they need improved budgets. If you look at the PETA results this was concerning as Wales were at the bottom across the UK and also information from WG showed that, in relation, to Mathematics, Reading and Science performance levels were below that of 2021.</p> <p>In relation to School Balances, reserves had reduced by £5m meaning that schools has spent their budget allocation and an additional £5m,</p>

	<p>this is not all schools but it shows that schools were already operating at an unacceptable lowest level.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council said that grouping all schools the same was disingenuous and unfair on headteachers, teachers and young people who were working hard to maintain education provision for young people to have the best possible standard of education. Members were aware of the problems this year with the budget, and he was currently working on a response with the Chief Executive and other finance officers to WG which would be robust and strong. Schools needed more budget; the Council needed more budget and WG needed more budget.</p> <p>Where did Cllr Mackie propose that the funding came from? Would he recommend an additional 3% to be added to Council Tax and ringfenced for schools. Nobody wants to be in this position, but schools had the option to apply for a licenced deficit which the Council did not. The Council had to set a balanced budget.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Andrew Parkhurst</b></p>	<p>Could you explain what the funding of £1.124m entitled 'Unallocated Schools Budget' related to.</p> <p>The following response was provided to the Committee following the meeting:-</p> <p>£0.983m – employee costs – this relates to historical Added Years pension contributions for schools based staff  £0.141m - supplies and services costs which relate to all schools, for example the e-teach contract and copyright licences</p> <p>These budgets are fully committed.</p>

**Community & Housing OSC – 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2024**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Housing and Communities portfolio's options to reduce budgets be noted.

<p><b>Cllr Geoff Collett</b></p>	<p>Is it sensible to take money from reserves this year when Officers and Members know that next year's budget would be substantially worse. Are we not making things worse for the future.</p> <p>The Strategic Finance Manager said that options to address the issue of homelessness had been approved and it was being suggested that an amount of reserves be ringfenced to give time for some of those options to come to fruition and address the issue. This would be more of a concern if no solutions were in place.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Helen Brown (Chair)</b></p>	<p>How confident were you that the solutions identified to address homelessness would work.</p>

	<p>The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) said that some of the options previously considered by the Committee could be costed, for example, the refurbishment of properties for house share. Confident that options will have an impact but have to consider the increasing demand that continues.</p> <p>The Housing &amp; Prevention Service Manager advised that projections had been developed but that a lot of homeless presentations were people who were homeless on the day. All that could be done as a crisis management service was to respond to what happens day to day.</p>
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**Social & Health Care OSC – 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2024**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Social Services portfolio's options to reduce budgets be noted.

<p><b>Cllr Dave Mackie</b></p>	<p>Thank you for all the work carried out and extra work done to address budget reductions.</p> <p>As stated in the report, around all Portfolios being asked to revisit their cost base to re look at potential ways of reducing budgets or removing cost pressures to contribute more to meeting the remaining gap, was the Social Services Portfolio set a target for further reducing budget?</p> <p>In relation to the proposed charge for appointee services, how much would be cost be per individual?</p> <p>Also, in relation to the proposed Disability services charging for college placements, what would be charges be?</p> <p>The Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning explained that in relation to the proposed charge for appointee services, the Council had been looking at what other Local Authorities were doing across England and Wales and the proposal would be around £10/£20 per week. This was being investigated at the moment, and officers appreciated it was a sensitive topic so would require consultation with those affected and their families to make sure the charge was fair and equitable.</p> <p>In relation to charging for college placements, the Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning advised that, from initial early work carried out, it was anticipated that this would potentially affect less than 5 people per year and would be for those new to the process and not those with existing college placements. Any proposed charges would be shared with families as part of the decision making process.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Carol Ellis</b></p>	<p>What would be affect be of the proposed reduction in Commissioning Care Fees?</p>

	<p>Concerned that the proposed Deferral of Children’s residential budget pressures could impact the Out of County Placements budget which currently did not meet demand.</p> <p>In relation to Domiciliary care, what affect would you anticipate the reduction in budget having on hospital discharges?</p> <p>When would you expect BCUHB to confirm an increased contribution to Marleyfield Older People’s Residential Care Home.</p> <p>The Chief Officer (Social Services) said that, in relation to the Care Commissioning budget, the Council had a proud record in supporting its care sector partners, with the Council last year providing the highest increase of care rates across North Wales. There would be an increase, but it would not be in the order it was last year. Negotiations were sensitive and on-going.</p> <p>The Senior Manager: Children understood the concern around Out of County Placements but advised that the budget proposal did not mean that the Council was stopping its expansion of children’s in-house residential provision. Due to challenges around recruitment, the home planned for 2024/25 would not be operational at the start of the year and therefore there would be a budget reduction for 2024/25 but this would be required as part of the 2025/26 budget. The Council continued to invest in services which would enable children to not need out of county provision in the first place, including working on a significant grant application to expand services to ensure children were safely supported without the need for out of county placements.</p> <p>The Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults said that the Council had an excellent reputation in relation to the hospital discharge service, but demand continued to increase. It was explained that by changing ways of working, speaking to patients earlier and working differently it was possible to maintain standards and reduce the budget. Having earlier referrals enabled a thorough discharge plan to be put in place with the Reablement teams involved.</p> <p>In relation to BCUHB’s increased contribution to Marleyfield Older People’s Residential Care Home, the Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults confirmed that this was their suggestion and therefore she was confident that this funding would be provided.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Hilary McGuill</b></p>	<p>Thank officers for working on putting together budget reductions which I hope do not affect frontline services.</p> <p>In relation to proposed efficiencies to planned contracts with the third sector, when would these be carried out and which third sector organisation would be affected?</p>

	<p>Feel more assured around the proposed reduction in Commissioning Care Fees, having listened to the response from the Chief Officer that the Council would remain on par with neighbouring Local Authorities.</p> <p>In relation to the Disability Services charging for college placements, the charge would be on par with what other parents contributed when their children go away to college, but the introduction of this charge needed to be handled sensitively.</p> <p>Whilst the increased contribution from BCUHB was welcomed, this was a significantly small amount in comparison to the money the Council was savings BCUHB on an annual basis.</p> <p>MST and Mockingbird have saved the Council thousands and pleased to see that this was now beginning to have a knock on effect financially for the Council. Like reassurance on whether the Council would be able to reap back financial contributions next year?</p> <p>If the reduced budget proposals were supported, how quickly could these decisions be reversed if they had a negative effect on front line services.</p> <p>The Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning advised that as part of commissioning, the Council undertook a review of efficiencies of contracts and how well they were utilised. The efficiencies identified were small but by reengineering the way services were commissioned it enabled the ones with great value to those that access them to continue.</p> <p>In relation to the proposal to charge for college placements, the Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning that all placements would be financially assessed to ensure that the costs families faced were evenly distributed and that the costs were not detrimental to those most in need.</p> <p>The Senior Manager: Children referred to the continued impact of MST and Mockingbird and explained how the benefits were being seen in Education and Schools with an increase in children and young people presenting with complex and challenging behaviour and needs. The success of the MST service had seen 91% of children continue to remain at home. The service was seen as cost avoidance rather than a saving but was really important.</p> <p>Information was provided on the 3 Mockingbird hubs which had been inspected by CRW fostering services which had identified the positive impact that this had on children in fostering care.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Gladys Healey</b></p>	<p>Thank you to all officers for the report.</p> <p>Mental health in children is increasing, would not like to see cuts to funding for mental health services for children.</p>

	<p>Agree with increasing in-house support to children who need out of county placement. Would not like to see further budget reductions in out of county placements.</p> <p>In relation to Domiciliary Care, have you looked at pay in Wrexham which is higher than in Flintshire.</p> <p>Agree with previous comments that the Council save BCUHB a great deal of money and the Council should be looking at how much they are saving them.</p> <p>The Senior Manager: Children explained how the early intensive timely support for children and parents/families with mental health problems was very important. He spoke about the Council's continued investment in its own services in relation to reducing the budget pressure around out of county placements.</p>
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**Corporate Resources OSC – 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2024**

**Continued discussion from previous agenda item *Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 (Month 9) and Capital Programme Monitoring 2023/24 (Month 9) relating to Section 1.10 of the report – Carry Forward Requests – Governance £0.210m.***

Cllr. Richard Jones	<p>Sought clarification on values £156K and £60K.</p> <p>The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that it was to extend the posts for 2 years. Attempting to give individuals a degree of uncertainty to prevent them looking elsewhere as on temporary contracts.</p>
Cllr. Alasdair Ibbotson	<p>Whilst agreeing with comments, these are difficult financial times – every penny needed for critical services.</p> <p>The website does need improvement – but to what extent does investing this money in the website lead to increase in income? Not apparent that this would enhance income – therefore only providing a limited return.</p> <p>To what extent is this a critical service? Has to weigh up whether this is more or less important than his own priority of bus service subsidies? Believes this is not as important – Move to recommend that C/f request is rejected.</p> <p>However, did suggest that there may be a way to avoid and redundancies as a result. Reserve of '<i>Investment in Organisational Change</i>' balance at end of year is forecast to be £930,138. Unlikely that reserves not related to Digital Strategy will be spent so could some of this be moved to maintain the Digital Strategy Reserve for 1 year.</p>
Cllr. Linda Thew	<p>Agree that money needs to be spent on website. Does not agree with streamlining processes to be dealt with at Connects. They cannot cope with the current processes so to add more does not seem right.</p>

Cllr. Bill Crease	If not for financial situation, then would support investing in improvements. However, on the one hand we are proposing investing in enhancements yet at the same time proposing to cut / close Connects centres in Connah's Quay and Holywell. Seems counterproductive.
Chief Officer (Governance) in response to the above:	<p>Difficult to argue that the posts help raise income. However, there are a number of things that are dependent on them:</p> <p>1 - £25K saving suggestion to use Facebook and lose GovDelivery software. This is reliant on the 2 Digital Officer posts. Without them, this would not be achievable.</p> <p>Transformation programme is intended to generate savings. Having capacity to digitalise services is essential for its success.</p> <p>These are temporary posts. Reserve money is not base-budget so it is only a one off amount that could be used as a temporary reprieve for other things over 12 months or until monies had been spent.</p> <p>The breakdown of costs per post could be provided to Cabinet for them to determine which, if any, they want to agree to keep.</p>
Cllr. Richard Jones	<p>Sought to clarify whether it was the whole amount of Carry Forward or just for Governance.</p> <p>Cllr. Ibbotson advised that he was only referring to the amount for Governance not Planning, Environment &amp; Economy.</p> <p><i>The Committee recommends to Cabinet that the carry-forward figure for Governance is rejected and requests that Cabinet commissions a risk assessment of rejecting the Planning, Environment &amp; Economy carry forward.</i></p>
<b><u>Council Fund Budget 2024/25</u></b>	
<b><u>Report RECOMMENDATIONS</u></b>	
<p>1 Review and comment on the Corporate Services options to reduce budgets.</p> <p>2 Review and comment on the Assets Service options to reduce budgets.</p> <p>3 Review and comment on the Governance Portfolio's options to reduce budgets.</p>	
<b>Corporate Services – Budget Reductions</b>	
<b>Cllr. Richard Jones</b>	<p>How many trainees does the figure relate to?</p> <p>Only 3 or 4 – not a large amount.</p>
<b>Cllr. Andrew Parkhurst</b>	Trade union support budget – how much is the budget and what are the statutory requirements for it.

	Budget total is £130K. Will need to check whether it is a statutory requirement. However, it does help to have positive working relationships with TU's, particularly around organisational change.
<b>Cllr. Richard Jones</b>	Is the £50K Fees and Charges Review amount in addition to the £310K that have already been included?  The £310K is the full year figure from October 2023. The £50k relates to the review for 2024 and is an estimate of the part year figure from October 2024.
<b>Assets Services – Budget Reductions</b>	
<b>Cllr. Richard Jones</b>	If reductions are made for 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector funding, it could potentially put pressure back onto our own services.
<b>Governance Portfolio – Budget Reductions</b>	
<b>Cllr. Alasdair Ibbotson</b>	If c/f request removed and therefore we couldn't operate the Facebook page, and the full amount of the efficiency for GovDelivery was also accepted – what would be the service impact?  Comms would be via Twitter and website only. Significant plank of comms would be lost.

In considering the recommendations, the following were agreed:

Recommendation 2 – Cllr. Richard Jones moved. Cllr. Bill Crease seconded. Voted unanimously to accept.

Recommendation 1 & 3 – Taken together with the following agreed wording which was moved by Cllr. Alasdair Ibbotson and seconded by Cllr. Richard Jones. At the vote it was accepted unanimously.

*The Committee expresses provisional reservations and reluctance in accepting the proposed reduction of £138K in the Flintshire Trainee and additional £40K Connects – reduction in budget, but expresses a provisional willingness to accept the removal of Granicus GovDelivery Software even if the carry forward figure of £210K for 'Digital Strategy Reserve' from the previous item is not approved, pending the consideration of the effects and risks for each.*

#### **FEEDBACK FROM ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY**

#### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING 6 February 2024**

(Part 2 item)

<b>Questions &amp; Comments</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Planning, Environment & Economy – Budget reductions	
Cllr Richard Lloyd asked regarding the current level of fees for planning applications.	The Chief Officer advised that the fees are currently applied on a sliding scale based on the size and type of the application.

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr Mike Peers referred to the report presented to the Committee in October and suggested that another column should be put in future reports showing the October and February figures with a running total.</p> <p>Cllr Mike Peers asked if any vacancies had been removed within the portfolio.</p>	<p>The Finance Manager welcomed this positive suggestion.</p> <p>The Chief Officer referred to the additional capacity report that went to Cabinet in Sept 21 and agreed to circulate the link. (Completed 7/2/24).</p>
<p>Cllr Alan Marshall asked if there was potential for officers to suggest a positive outcome during a planning advice request so that fees could be collected.</p>	<p>The Chief Officer gave an assurance that officers approached pre-planning applications in a professional way and that this would not happen.</p>
<p>Cllr Alan Marshall noted that if planning applications are not approved within 6 months the fees are refunded to the applicants. He asked if there were enough staff to process applications.</p>	<p>The Chief Officer advised that he was confident there are enough staff within the team to ensure this would not happen and that extensions of time to determine applications would be agreed with the applicants whenever possible.</p>
<b>Streetscene &amp; Transportation – Proposals for budget reductions</b>	
<p>Cllr Chris Dolphin expressed concern at the proposal to close all remaining public conveniences. He referred to Mold Market; the stall holders and visitors and asked where they would be accommodated. He also referred to Holywell market and the vision to increase footfall. In relation to Talacre he felt it was vital that public conveniences were provided in the summer holidays at the very least due to the influx of visitors to this premier tourist destination in Flintshire.</p>	<p>The Highway Network Manager referred to the problems with vandalism and repair costs and advised there was no statutory duty to provide public conveniences. He added that Community Asset Transfers have been offered to the communities affected.</p>
<p>Cllr Mike Peers referred to the cost pressure in the October report of 2.79 million. He referred to car parking charges, bus subsidy and the Flexi bus which appeared to be parked up in Buckley at times. He asked if the bus subsidy supported any main bus routes in Flintshire. He acknowledged vandalism of public toilets was also a problem for Town Councils citing Buckley as an example.</p>	<p>The Regulatory Services Manager advised that a review of footfall at car parks was currently underway. The aim was to keep charges in line with inflation as far as possible. The Transport Manager agreed to look at the data for the Buckley Flexi Bus. He added that potentially Arriva Wales Services would be impacted by the withdrawal of bus subsidies.</p>

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr Dan Rose asked if Community Asset Transfer for public toilets would continue to be an option once facilities had been closed. He added it would have been useful to see the list of subsidised routes prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Regarding the flexi bus would welcome seeing the flexi bus data. He asked if flexi buses could be used on more rural routes.</p> <p>He asked how many car parks would be affected by the proposals and if there were any opportunities to benefit from paid adverts on the parking app.</p>	<p>The Highways Manager confirmed that CAT's would continue to be an option.</p> <p>The Transport Manager confirmed the data would be shared and that in principle flexi bus services could be used more on rural routes.</p> <p>The Regulatory Services Manager said that as many as 30 car parks could be affected. She would look into the possibility of paid adverts on the parking app.</p>
<p>Cllr Allan Marshall asked for clarification regarding Eligible and Non-Eligible pupils in relation to free school transport. He also referred to the impact on pupils going to schools that were not their nearest one. The potential effect on school transport budget was also an area of concern.</p>	<p>The Transport Manager provided a brief overview of eligible and non-eligible pupils in relation to the school transport policy, however, he agreed to speak to Cllr Marshall outside the meeting if further clarification was required.</p> <p>The Transport Manager explained that any eligible pupils affected by the reduction in local bus services would still need to be transported by the Council which would have an impact on the school transport budget, however, the extent of which would only be known once the procurement exercise and identification of services that are to remain has been concluded. He went on to explain that any non-eligible pupils that were affected by the changes would also require transport for a period of 12 months as required by the school transport policy.</p> <p>Figures in relation to current eligible and non-eligible school pupils could be provided, however, as explained, it would be impossible to determine how many pupils (either eligible or non-eligible) would be impacted, until such time as both the procurement exercise and determination of services going forward is concluded.</p>

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr David Coggins-Cogan asked what did the 20p increase achieve. He also felt that more promotion should be given to increase the uptake of parking permits. He added that all car parks should be chargeable.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that all car parks should be treated equally.</p>	<p>The Regulatory Manager agreed to provide the breakdown following the meeting. She referred to a review of the permit scheme and agreed that further promotion of the permit scheme was required.</p>
<p>Cllr Coggins-Cogan felt there should be no cuts to bus subsidies as this could have devastating effects on communities. He added that public transport provided vital social network opportunities for residents and prevents isolation.</p> <p>He added that closing toilets was a public health and human dignity issue for many people suffering from health conditions.</p> <p>Cllr Coggins-Cogan felt that the Council needed to be honest with Flintshire residents with regard to the cuts.</p>	<p>The Transport Manager acknowledged Cllr Coggins-Cogans' concerns and understood the importance of local services to the residents of Flintshire.</p> <p>The Highways Manager referred to the outcome of the consultation of the outcome of the adoption of the Local Toilet Strategy which would be considered at the March meeting.</p>
<p>Cllr Dave Healey referred to the Ring &amp; Ride scheme and was concerned that this could be in jeopardy. He added that it is a valued service that enables people to attend medical appointments.</p> <p>He added that whilst none of the cuts were palatable, the Council have got to take action in order to set a balanced budget. The alternative would be that Commissioners would come in to run the Council in the event of not being able to balance the budget.</p>	<p>The Transport Manager confirmed that the Ring &amp; Ride service falls within the local bus budget and therefore, should the budget be reduced, then this would have a detrimental affect on the ability to run all services funded via this budget. The Transport Manager reiterated the requirement to prioritise services in accordance with available budget once known, for which the requirement for medical appointments would be given due consideration.</p>
<p>Cllr Ian Hodge asked if consideration had been given to geographical location in additional to available data.</p> <p>He asked whether it was the intention to designate one HRC site for trade waste.</p>	<p>The Streetscene Service Manager advised that no decision had been made and this would be a date driven exercise to identify changes, with consideration given to geographical and impact on domestic waste and potentially infraction charges.</p>

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr Dan Rose referred to providing services in-house rather than contracting them out and welcomed the proposal.</p>	<p>The Streetscene Service Manager advised that there is a small team in house and that some equipment has been provided as a result of a biodiversity grant from Welsh Government. The team were in a position to take on this area of work.</p>
<p>Cllr Chris Dolphin referred to the Greenfield HRC site which he considered to be one of the premier sites in Wales. He hoped it would stay open. He added that Okenholt would be a suitable site for trade waste or closure, as he felt it was in the wrong place.</p>	
<p>Cllr Vicky Perfect replied that the site at Oakenholt was well used and must not close.</p>	
<p>Cllr Mike Peers felt it was inappropriate for the Committee to be identifying any HRC's for closure. This would need to be discussed properly with the appropriate within a report. He suggested that perhaps Tuesday/ Weds and Thurs would be the best for consideration and that staffing levels should also be considered going forward to maximise efficiency.</p> <p>He agreed with reducing essential services on bank holidays but queried why pot hole work may be required.</p>	<p>The Streetscene Service Manager advised that pot holes are RAG rated and on occasions need to be dealt with on the day. He added that a review of the HRC strategy had resulted in changes to the rota of staff and a reduction in agency staff and overtime.</p>
<p>Cllr Hodge emphasised the need for HRC sites to be reviewed on both a geographical and data driven basis. He added that fly tipping could increase.</p>	
<p>Cllr Mike Peers asked regarding school crossing patrols and the safety implications of the proposed cuts.</p>	<p>The Transport Manager advised that the 15 historical School Crossing Patrol vacancies had been vacant for a significant period of time ( averaging between 1 and 5 years). He added that work was ongoing with the delivery of a permanent crossing facility infrastructure</p>

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr Richard Lloyd also questioned the safety and the need for permanent crossing infrastructure in some locations.</p> <p>Cllr Coggins Cogan asked regarding how long vacancies had remained unfilled in the 'remove officer vacancies category'. He felt this category should be a red RAG status rather than amber.</p>	<p>programme where required following the undertaking of an independent review.</p> <p>The Regulatory Services Manager advised that Streetscene had introduced a new role of Environmental Improvement Coordinator two years ago which focused on the prevention of environmental crime. She added that the purpose of this was to educate Flintshire communities on the correct way to dispose of their waste thus reducing environmental crimes and therefore the demand of the enforcement team. She referred to the enforcement officer posts and advised that there would undoubtedly be an impact on service delivery.</p> <p>The Transport Manager advised that recruitment was continuing for permanent replacements for both the positions of Integrated Transport Manager and Transport Strategy Manager vacancies.</p>
<p>Cllr Mike Peers referred the 20 mile/hour speed restrictions which must have helped and questioned the need for school crossing patrols.</p>	<p>The Transport Manager agreed that whilst the reduction of speed limits on restricted roads has reduced average speeds, recent surveys highlight that recorded speeds are still well in excess of the new 20mph speed limit and hence, there remained a high level of non-compliance. The transport Manager went on to explain that whilst speed data is indeed important, there are a number of other factors taken into consideration when deciding upon whether a crossing facility is warranted.</p>
<p>Cllr Ian Hodge referred to the Safe Access to Schools work that had been undertaken which should be taken into consideration.</p>	
<p>The Chair commented on the reviews being undertaken by neighbouring authorities regarding replacement of black bins. He asked</p>	

Questions & Comments	Responses
how many bins had been replaced over the last 12 months.	The Regulatory Manager advised that almost 2,000 black bins had been replaced over the last 12 months.
The Chair asked regarding data relating to bulky waste collections.	The Regulatory Manager agreed to provide the data required.
The Chair referred to Monthly bin collections and communal collection points, flats, terraced houses etc and the challenges of 4 weekly collections.	
<p>Cllr Lloyd agreed regarding communal collection points.</p> <p>He added that bins are sometimes damaged when going into the vehicle. He welcomed the trade waste suggestion, but wondered how trade waste and DIY waste could be differentiated.</p>	<p>The Streetscene Service Manager suggested Trade Waste &amp; DIY Waste may be at a specific site. This would free up space at other sites, and there would be no need to differentiate between trade &amp; DIY waste.</p>
<p>Cllr Coggins-Cogan felt that modernisation of systems regarding bookings needed to be considered and referred to Conwy CC &amp; Denbighshire CC who both operate booking systems. He asked regarding the cost of a black bin to the authority.</p>	<p>The Regulatory Manager advised that the cost of a black bin was £20.</p>
<p>Cllr Peers referred to black bins being swallowed by the lorries and also how wear and tear was taken into account. Regarding small amounts of DIY he asked how the Council would quantify the charge.</p> <p>Cllr Peers emphasised the need for appropriate scrutiny to take place in relation to restriction of residual waste collections to monthly due to the significant impact on residents and the lack of consultation. He urged the Officers to bring back a report to a future scrutiny committee and proposed that Number 9 should be removed from the list of budget savings. He also suggested that a pilot should have been undertaken to see if it worked.</p>	<p>Cllr Johnson referred to the 4 week bin collection proposal and the budget workshops, with no comments being made at the workshops in relation to the 4 weekly bin collection. He added that the shortfall of 274k would have to be found from somewhere.</p>
Cllr Dan Rose asked regarding the warranty period on bins.	The Regulatory Manager agreed to provide the information.

Questions & Comments	Responses
<p>Cllr Chris Dolphin referred to kerb side collections that were introduced in 2003 and that introducing 180l bins rather than 220l was a big mistake. He added that decision making is about due process; the committee had started looking at budget proposals at the October meeting; it wasn't discussed during November, December or January and appeared on the agenda for the first time within the papers for the meeting. Cllr Dolphin felt the proposal needed to be properly scrutinised with facts, detail and figures as it was a big and emotive subject.</p>	
<p>Cllr Peers proposed that Efficiency Proposal No 9 (Restrict Waste Collections) be removed.</p> <p>Cllr Roy Wakelam seconded the proposal which, when put to the vote, was carried.</p>	