

2016/17 Budget Consultation

**Corporate Resources Overview &Scrutiny Committee – Friday 18th December, 2015
(pm)
(All Member session)**

Member Comment/Question	Response
On the budget settlement: why is Flintshire County Council 19 th out of 22 Local Authorities?	The per capita payment is based on factors such as deprivation, which is why the Valleys authorities are the highest. As one of the more affluent counties, FCC has always been towards the bottom. This has been reflected in the council's recent lobbying. Despite our funding allocation being low, we are a high performing authority.
What is the impact of the 6.4% reduction in the new single Environment Grant?	A reduction was expected and the Cabinet member and the Chief officer are looking at ways to address the loss of grant: it will mean a need to review ways of working. The majority of the Single Environment Grant is waste related. We also need to be aware that Natural Resources Wales may be seeking to passport work to local authorities to deal with their own funding reduction.
Is there still a rural deprivation grant?	There isn't a specific rural deprivation grant. Some rural authorities tend to get more grant because of their deprivation level.
The slide on the use of consultants provides details but no figures. Could these be provided?	A report will be made to the Audit Committee. The Chief Executive explained that the max. spend on consultants as a result of the Change programme had been £150k (one consultant on £30K, one on £20k and 2 on £50k in Streetscene & Transportation and Social Services. Whilst 'risk and reward' is preferred to fee payment, the limited scale meant that the better risk and reward consultees, who seek high benefits contracts tend not to be available to us.
Will the information provided in the fact sheets confirm that decisions made this year will have no effect on future years?	Agreed.
Will 'question and answer' sheets be provided after the budget meetings, as previously?	Yes.

<p>Further details about the cost savings for Connah's Quay Swimming Pool – could we have details in writing?</p>	<p>A combination of reduced costs for lifeguard cover (the clubs will provide their own) reduced buildings costs- charities can make a claim for reduced NDR and increased usage. An analysis can be provided.</p>
<p>How much of the £574K shown for Organisational Change is included within the budget plan for 2016/17. There is concern that some of the projects shown won't be ready in the next financial year.</p>	<p>We have only provided figures for those projects where there is a clear process and a degree of certainty. Other CATs are ongoing but have not been afforded the same degree of prioritisation. It is essential that we deliver on the core projects. Others will offer an additional efficiency.</p>
<p>There is concern that the approach being taken towards the budget is optimistic. Local communities may not want to pursue community asset transfers</p>	<p>The budget has been approached assuming a certain level of savings. If some savings are not achieved, other savings will need to be made to reduce overall costs. If we do not remain positive about CAT, then our communities won't be.</p>
<p>Given that the settlement is better than we expected, do we still need to take this approach to the budget?</p>	<p>Yes. We should not become complacent that the settlement is better than we had feared.</p>
<p>We need to simplify the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process.</p>	<p>Acknowledged.</p>
<p>Could the reduction in managers within ICT be replicated across the authority?</p>	<p>We are moving to a structure based on managers having larger management portfolios. The ICT structure had been predicated on a significant degree of collaboration and shared service provision. As this has not happened, a different structure became necessary.</p>
<p>Is the staffing level in Children's services sufficient to meet statutory provision?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>On CAT, FLVC are not acknowledging or responding to correspondence.</p>	<p>FLVC are acting as our agents for CAT. If they are not responding, we need to know so that we can pursue this.</p>
<p>Will the calculations behind the final proposals be made available?</p>	<p>They will be provided in the fact sheets for the next budget round in January.</p>