

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2011

DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2011/12 – ADDENDUM REPORT

Report from: Mick Hayward, Chief Finance Officer

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Summary

This addendum report provides the committee with an update on the discussions made at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2011 in relation to the draft capital and revenue budget 2011/12.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 20 January 2011 and discussed the draft capital and revenue budget for 2011/12 for areas that fell within the remit of that committee.
- 1.2 The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and explained to the committee that the final proposed budget would be published within the Cabinet agenda for its 15 February meeting. The draft budget within the report at the committee had been updated to reflect details of the settlement announcement, which had been received in December 2010. He added further that the Cabinet had published a report the previous day, which proposed some staff changes to further close the gap of £23.5 million.
- 1.3 The Chief Finance Officer also referred to a report that the committee had considered earlier in its meeting with regard to special educational need (SEN) provision. The committee recommended the following to the Cabinet: -
 - (a) to acknowledge the urgent and dire need to invest in Medway's special schools, which require improvements to their accommodation, as identified in Medway's SEN Policy and Strategy and that where funding can be secured, this be used to improve the facilities for children with the highest needs of special education;
 - (b) to delegate the Director of Children and Adults to review the findings against the outcomes of the forthcoming Green Paper on SEN.

- 1.4 In reference to these recommendations he explained that officers did consider plans, which required investment but would realise savings in the future, however he warned that this was increasingly difficult due to limiting funding streams.
- 1.5 The Chief Finance Officer and the Director of Children and Adult Services also updated the committee on a Schools' Forum meeting, which had been held since the publishing of the report. They reported that the forum appreciated the challenges faced by the local authority and were supportive. Officers had also given schools the tools to calculate an indicative budget to help with their planning processes.
- 1.6 Members then debated the draft budget and made the following comments to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-
- The recommendations made in relation to SEN provision (outlined at paragraph 2.3 above) should be highlighted in the budget report to Cabinet;
 - The message be sent to Cabinet that when decisions are made with regard to cuts, the long term effect and cost to Medway also be analysed;
 - The Cabinet be made aware of the implications for sixth form education in schools and of both the impact of the likely reduced funding from the Young People's Learning Agency and the removal of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA);
 - The Cabinet be informed of the concern that all Members of the Council do not have an opportunity to consider possible options for a draft budget.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee recommend the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee to forward its comments on to the Cabinet when it will consider the draft capital and revenue budget 2011/12 on 15 February 2011.

Lead officer contact

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Background papers

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee papers – 20 January 2011.