

Budget SWG

The general thrust of the approach from the Committee is:

- get involved at the start of the budget cycle and not half-way through
- understand the Council's vision and how that underpinned the budget
- look at larger areas that have come forward (eg Leisure@) rather than low-level budget papers analysis and challenge the value obtained
- see what options have been considered on these bigger pieces of work and why a selected approach has been chosen
- not necessarily an ideas generation group

My personal view is that I want the WG to understand and challenge the key financial drivers CBC are adopting, its approach for balancing the finances and how this will impact on the way we provide services - the route taken and value obtained. I do not want the WG to get bogged down in budget minutiae and usurping the detailed work that John and the Finance team will be doing. It is important that a cohesive vision i outlined for the Council so we can see that context.

Meetings have addressed several key topics:

- Presentation from the County Council on their budget scrutiny arrangements and what CBC could learn for their budget scrutiny
- Budget strategy and process for 2013-14 and how the BSWG can get involved
- New homes bonus and the impact on base budget
- Leisure and culture commissioning review
- ICT business case

Two of these items are big, chunky pieces of work that the Committee have provided challenge on.

Three scheduled meetings have been cancelled due to more work required on the ICT business case (November), number of apologies at a meeting (April) and a clash with a JCS meeting due to consultant availability (May).

Our next meetings (provisional dates June and July) will cover the Leader and Chief Exec vision for the Council and the significant areas in the budget going forward, the accommodation strategy, capital strategy, and leisure and culture.