

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in question were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Budget Scrutiny

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

Date response requested: 17 January 2025

Response to report:

Recommendations from Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2025

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the increases for school meals are stepped over a longer period	Rejected	Whilst it is recognised that the proposed increase in the price of a meal charged to schools is higher than the current rate of

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		inflation, previous increases have not kept pace with inflation. For example, food price increases hit a peak of 19.2% in March 2023. The charge of £2.90 also reflects the funding received by schools for the price of a meal. It is for the schools to determine how much they charge for the meal.
That the Council budget report provides members with i) the impacts of school meal price rises for parents with two children getting school meals every day over a year (assuming that the full increase in costs are passed on by schools), and ii) and the anticipated savings to the Council made by increasing school meal prices	Partially Accepted	i. A parent paying for two school meals every day would need to pay an additional £66.50, per child, per year, for the full academic year, so a total of £133. The cost rising from £484.50 per year @ £2.55 per meal to £551.00 @ £2.90 per meal, for each child. ii. Increasing the school meal price is estimated to increase income by £0.120m in 2025/26. The additional income will offset costs being incurred by the service.
That the Council budget report includes a benchmark figure for the cost-avoidance accruing from the Council's proposed flood-prevention investment	Accepted	The Environment Agency has stated that every £1 spent improving protection from flooding, we avoid around £5 of property damages. While for more local community benefits this it is difficult to bench mark indirect and intangible costs but these would include: • Reduction in costs associated with temporary accommodation – as recovery is quicker and repair is reduced • Less highway and local flooding where measures remove flooding getting onto a highway • Less insurance claims from small scale flooding and reduction in damage to property

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		Reduction in enquiries to the County and others where communities are more resilient and can 'self-help'
That the Council budget report provides members with the financial impact to the Council of increasing DIY waste charges by 4.2%	Partially Accepted	The financial impact of increasing the DIY charges by 4.2% is £4-5k pa depending upon the number of customers. The increase of 4.2% was reached through contractual mechanisms and then rounded for simple mental calculations whilst on the Household Waste Recycling Centres. Charges have been in place at the HWRCs for almost 20 years and it is not anticipated that this would lead to an increase in fly tipping as customers can take some waste without any charge and because the majority of residents are law abiding citizens who would not fly tip. It is also worth noting that it is a lower cost than our neighbouring authorities.
That the Council makes clear the framework through which projects will be prioritised for active travel spending, including consideration of the impact on numbers of people walking and cycling as well as the additional benefits of schemes being complementary as part of a network.	Partially Accepted	The Council is committed to prioritising Active Travel. Funding is a key consideration, and as much of the funding available to the Council is location specific, eg from S106 sources, that can determine what is spent and where. It is important to balance a number of key elements, namely encouraging numbers of users, eliminating particular blackspots, building a coherent network and ensuring that all parts of the county benefit from investment. There has been huge progress in ensuring that as many places as possible have a current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and that there is an outline map of connections between city, towns and villages (the Strategic Active

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		travel Network) so that when funding becomes available it can be used productively.
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