

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	O&S Budget Working Groups – findings and recommendations
Meeting date	18 November 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	In September 2024, all O&S Committees established budget working groups to contribute to the development of the 2025/26 Council budget. This report contains the findings of the working groups.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Board:</p> <p>Considers the findings and recommendations of the O&S budget working groups at Appendices A-D.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>All O&S budget working groups agreed to provide their findings to a dedicated feedback session to the O&S Board. The purpose of this report is to communicate these findings and for the O&S Board to formally adopt the recommendations made by the working groups.</p> <p>Scrutiny of budget proposals is consistent with Procedure Rule 4 'The Formulation of Budget Proposals' within the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Cllr David Brown, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education & Skills</p> <p>Cllr Mike Cox, Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Finance</p> <p>Cllr Millie Earl, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment & Energy</p> <p>Cllr Richard Herrett, Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations</p> <p>Cllr Kieron Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Regulatory Services</p>
Corporate Director(s):	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive

	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children's Services Jillian Kay, Corporate Director for Wellbeing Adam Richens, Director of Finance
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview & Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. In Autumn 2024, all Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committees were invited to establish a working group to contribute to the development of the 2025/26 council budget. One working group was established per O&S committee. Through their work, each group contributed to a focussed period of scrutiny on the developing 2025/26 council budget during October 2024. A total of eight working group meetings were held supported by officers from across the council.
2. The working groups form part of a wider programme of budget scrutiny (see background papers to this report) developed in consultation with O&S lead members and executive councillors and officers. The programme timeline provides a series of opportunities for all councillors to be involved in the development of the 25/26 budget, with public scrutiny and all member sessions built into the process.
3. The aim is to develop a council budget that is robust, tested and inclusive of wider councillor views. Channelling work through the O&S committees also provides opportunity for public test and challenge as the budget develops.
4. The findings appended to this report conclude the in-depth scrutiny during the development stage of the budget. In keeping with the aims of the programme of budget scrutiny, all councillors are invited to attend this meeting of the O&S Board for this item.

Key Lines of Enquiry, Findings and Recommendations

5. Through the budget working groups, each O&S committee explored key lines of enquiry relating to budget matters within their areas of responsibility. These were selected by the full O&S committee. Committees were asked to focus their enquiries on what they perceived to be the most critical areas and those areas where they felt they may have impact.
6. The resulting key lines of enquiry were agreed by O&S committees as outlined below. Working group members then requested additional specific information and data requests to maximise their enquiries. These are set out in the Key Lines of Enquiry documents referenced in background papers to this report.

Key Lines of Enquiry and membership of O&S Budget Working Groups:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

Councillors Aitkenhead (lead), Beesley, K Salmon, Trent.

- Resident's Card
- Car Parking

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillors J Martin (lead), Northover, Rice.

- Bed & Breakfast and temporary accommodation costs
- Climate & ecological emergency budget

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Carr-Brown (lead), Cooper, Hitchcock, D Martin.

- School transport costs
- Care growth forecast

Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Canavan (lead), Moriarty, J Salmon.

- Demand management across Adult Social Care services

7. The findings of each working group are set out at Appendices A-D. Representatives of each working group will be present at the O&S Board meeting to outline their findings.
8. The O&S Board is asked to consider the findings and adopt, amend or reject the recommendations of the O&S Budget Working Groups.

Measures of Effectiveness

9. The O&S Board and Committees agreed the following measures of effectiveness to assess the benefit of this scrutiny work:
 - A robust and balanced Council budget for 2025/26 is developed, which has been tested and challenged by non-executive members working in their capacity as a critical friend.
 - Opportunity for wider public engagement in the budget is provided through the overview and scrutiny process, under the public engagement provisions within the council's constitution.

Options Appraisal

10. The Board is asked to consider findings and approve, amend or reject the recommendations of the O&S Budget Working Groups. There are no alternative options proposed.

Summary of financial implications

11. There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation of this report for the O&S Board to consider working group findings. Financial

implications relating to any recommendations made by the working groups, if supported by the O&S Board, will be explored by decision makers in receipt of the recommendations.

Summary of legal implications

12. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Summary of human resources implications

13. There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

14. There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

Summary of public health implications

15. There are no public health implications associated with this report.

Summary of equality implications

16. There are no equality implications associated with this report.

Summary of risk assessment

17. There are no direct risks associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – O&S Board Budget Working Group findings and recommendations
Appendix B – Environment & Place O&S Working Group findings and recommendations
Appendix C – Children's Services O&S Working Group findings and recommendations
Appendix D – Health & Adult Social Care O&S Working Groups findings and recommendations

Background papers

Published works:

[O&S Budget Working Groups scoping report](#)

[Programme of Budget Scrutiny for 2025/26 Council Budget.](#)

O&S Budget Working Groups Key Lines of Enquiry documents available on request:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board
- Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee