

Report to Cabinet

5 February 2025

Subject:	Recommendations from Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Councillor Moore
Director:	Assistant Director Legal and Assurance Mike Jones
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic and Members Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

Following careful consideration, it is recommended that:

- 1.1 the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board is assured that there is a clear plan, underpinned by data, for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26;
- 1.2 the Director of Children's Services be requested to ensure members, young people and other stakeholder engagement is undertaken as part of the youth service provision review;
- 1.3 the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025-26 be endorsed as a robust framework that will form part of the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Capital Programme & Council Tax proposals for 2025/26.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board considered the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 at its meetings held on 22 January and 23 January 2025. The Leader, Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and Assistant Directors attended the meetings to present the proposals to the Board and to answer questions from members.
- 2.2 Whilst the Board stated that it was assured that there was a clear plan for the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26, it requested further updates to scrutiny as follows:
- (1) that the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board consider including the following reports onto the work programme:-
 - (a) Sandwell Valley Masterplan – reviewing the commercial performance and ensure assumptions are still valid;
 - (b) A marketing and promotion strategy for events within the Borough to ensure targeted awareness is undertaken;
 - (c) demand and provision of athletic track facilities in Sandwell;
 - (2) that the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board consider including a report on the overview of the funding structure and costing proposals of day care services;
 - (3) that the following topics be included on the work programme of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board:-
 - (a) asset rationalisation strategy;
 - (b) Sandwell Leisure Trust contract;
 - (c) debt collection of council tax and business rates within the borough;
 - (4) that the Director of Children’s Services be requested to ensure members, young people and other stakeholder engagement is undertaken as part of the youth service provision review.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

3.1 Effective scrutiny of the Council's budget supports all strategic aims within the Council Plan.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board's involvement in the budget setting process strengthens decision making and increases transparency.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Engaging scrutiny ensures that there is a robust budget process, there are therefore no alternative options.

6 Implications

Resources:	In considering and approving the proposals, Cabinet would need to consider the impacts of re-reviewing any particular aspect of the proposals against the requirement to set a budget by 11 March.
Legal and Governance:	It is a legal requirement that local authorities must establish a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This requirement supports the medium-term policy and financial planning process at the heart of setting revenue and capital budgets for the Council. The approval and processes associated with the adoption by Full Council of an MTFS include consultation and engagement with members through the scrutiny process. The feedback and recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board to Cabinet on their assessment of the MTFS are a key component of this process.
Risk:	There are no risk implications associated with this report.
Equality:	An Equality Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.
Social Value	There are no social value implications are raised in this report.
Climate Change	There are no implications for climate change arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting	There are no corporate parenting implications associated with this report.

7. Appendices

None.

8. Background Papers

None.