

Budget Consultation Response from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting on 4 January 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals for 2023/24 and the MTFP to 2026/27.

The Committee:

- (a) expressed its disappointment at the slippage in the commencement of the consultation and subsequent shortening of the public consultation period, and requested that this be improved in future years;
- (b) sought assurance on the robustness and validity of the consultation process given the time constraints;
- (c) sought assurance on the rationale for consulting on some proposals and not others and how the public is consulted on the totality of the budget and MTFP and not just on those aspects that require public consultation. The Committee commented that the period for analysing the consultation responses also needs to be extended in future years;
- (d) expressed the need for rebasing to continue, and that inflationary pressures continue to be accounted for;
- (e) requested that the possibility of transferring Shop Mobility at the Victoria Centre to a voluntary organisation or charity be investigated;
- (f) expressed concern that public consultation on new proposals developed to close the gap was not programmed in to the budget timeline;
- (g) expressed concern on the reduction on resourcing within the finance division, and requested that this be addressed;
- (h) expressed the view that reviews of fees and charges should take place throughout the year as appropriate, rather than be confined to the budget process;
- (i) expressed the view that the pace of work with the transformation programme needs to continue to ensure that savings targets are reached in the predicted periods.