

AGENDA ITEM 5A

<u>Scrutiny Commission Referral form</u>	
Referral from: Resources Scrutiny Commission	To: Cabinet – 26 th January 2012
Date: 25 th January 2012	
Contact Officer: Steve Chapman, Scrutiny Officer (0117) 9222735	
Subject: 2012/13 Budget Scrutiny Submission	
1. Reason for referral The Resources Scrutiny Commission (RSC) is charged by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSM) with the overall responsibility for scrutiny of the Cabinet capital programme and revenue budget proposals for 2012/13. Part of this responsibility includes coordinating and consolidating the comments on the proposals for budget savings from the other Scrutiny Commissions.	
2. Action required The Cabinet is urged to take this submission into account when finalising its budget proposals for Full Council and beyond.	
3. Accompanying papers attached <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resources Scrutiny Commission Budget Submission2. Consolidation of comments from Scrutiny Commissions on individual proposals for budget savings.3. General comments and suggestions from Scrutiny Commissions on the budget and the budget process.	

Resources Scrutiny Commission Budget Submission

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Medium Term Financial Plan approved in March 2010 identified a potential budget gap of £24.8m for 2012/13, based on the fact that funding from central government has been reduced in the wake of the national budget deficit.
- 1.2. As for last year all Scrutiny Commissions were involved in the detailed budget scrutiny process. This year the process could not begin until November 24th which is when the Cabinet announced its budget proposals. This meant that individual Commissions, at very short notice, had to reschedule existing meetings or arrange extraordinary meetings to review and comment on the proposals. They were asked to focus in particular on the effects on service delivery and equalities considerations. This was made more difficult and time-consuming by the fact that, this year for the first time, there was a great deal more detail to absorb in the shape of the Equalities Impact Assessments which accompanied each proposal.
- 1.3. Given the significant financial challenges that the Council faces, the development of budget proposals are of particular significance this year. It was more important than ever that Commissions examined the effects of proposals in the round and not as isolated decisions which might have unintended consequences elsewhere.

2. Approach

- 2.1. Detailed scrutiny of the 2012/13 revenue budget by the Resources Scrutiny Commission took place over the course of three meetings in early January. Scrutiny of the Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy 2012/15 was delayed until the 24th January because of its late availability. In each case the relevant strategic director and cabinet member attended to respond to members' questions.
- 2.2. Prior to scrutinising the budget information the Chair made general comments about the budget reports, which

had been sent to Members of the Commission as an integral 'pack' encompassing all budget areas, and expressing concern about the lack of clarity in the reports and in some areas lack of detail. In particular he expressed concern about the complete absence of information in respect of the Capital Programme.

- 2.3. The Commission were informed that the Government had announced a public sector pay cap of 1% from 2013/14 however an assumption had been made that local authorities would be making provision for a 2% increase from 2013/14. This meant that further savings might need to be found.
- 2.4. It was noted that some of the savings for 2012/13 had been found from reserves and that this was not a sustainable method to achieve the budget reductions. The Strategic Director, Corporate Services representative explained that this had been done to assist with one off costs such as severance and new ways of working, similar one off costs would be met and finalised over the three year period.
- 2.5. A Member expressed concern that new ways of working and spend to save were difficult to keep track of and highlighted the Government's recent family intervention programme as an example. It was explained that this could become a financial burden as 40% of the cost would be borne by local authorities and 60% by central government however the 60% funding would only be paid once the Council had already spent the money and confirmed this to the Government.

3. Major Key Issues and Comments from Budget Scrutiny

Children, Young People and Skills

The Strategic Director Children, Young People and Skills introduced the budget report emphasising that budget reduction measures had been designed to maximise internal efficiency, whilst minimising the impact on service users, and targeting resources toward vulnerable children and families.

Members of the Commission then proceeded to scrutinise the budget report and in answer to the questions raised the following issues were clarified -

- a question about apparent anomalies in the 'safeguarding specialist services' budget would be followed up after the meeting;
- with regard to the £2.248m overspend robust procedures had been put in place to mitigate this. The Commission acknowledged that the reason for the overspend had originated from an unpredictable rise in the number of children placed into care by the courts and that this was a difficult area to control;
- measures put in place to reduce care costs included expansion of in house fostering and enhancing support to children on the edge of care. A 'health check' of commissioning arrangements was being currently undertaken regarding the placements of children in care to ensure that the measures were working efficiently;
- recruitment of foster parents was complicated and could take approximately six to eight months to reach fruition and it was expected that of the 90 applicants that had been recently received less than half would actually become foster parents;
- the reduction of supplies budget of £956,000 was an ambitious target but it was achievable and would have only a limited impact on front line service delivery;
- denominational transport spending was reducing however the rate of reduction was not even as demand for the service was influenced by differing student profiles across different cohorts;
- with regard to the commissioning of the integrated youth service (Bristol Youth Links) money to fund one off costs for severance and transitional arrangements would be found from the budget this year;
- income from the Dedicated Support Grant and Learning Skills Council was based on working assumptions however this would be closely monitored as it was acknowledged that any potential reduction of grant could have a negative impact on schools usage of Council services.

Corporate Services

In answer to the questions raised the following issues were clarified -

- it was anticipated that the delivery of legal services would be provided in a different way in the future with mechanisms put in place to significantly increase income as well as reducing expenditure;
- with regard to public forum about the proposed termination of the 'Our City' newsletter some Members of the Commission expressed serious concern that vulnerable members of the public would effectively be excluded. The Strategic Director Corporate Services said that other more efficient means of communication were in the ascendancy such as the easier to use Council web site which feedback had shown was becoming increasingly popular to use. The risk that not everyone would use electronic communication was acknowledged and the Service Director for Communication would be asked to closely monitor this as it was accepted the Council had a duty to communicate with all residents of the City. It was also noted that with significant budget reductions required, difficult choices had to be made;
- deregulated tenancies continued to be a significant risk to the budget and to mitigate this an allowance of £1.6m had been included in the base budget for 2012/13 budget. This was an area that would be closely monitored as the financial year progressed;
- increased inquiries and associated costs resulting from welfare reforms could be accommodated as the period of reform was over a number of years and not exclusively to 2012/13. Also more electronic means to deliver services in this area released resources for use elsewhere which would assist with any additional inquiry related workload;

Health & Social Care

The Strategic Director Health & Social Care introduced the budget report outlining the proposals for the service with regard to Care Management, Care Services and Strategic Planning and Commissioning. It was emphasised that many of the budget

proposals were awaiting the outcome of public consultation however it was not anticipated that there would be any significant changes to future spending assumptions.

Members of the Commission then proceeded to scrutinise the budget report and in answer to the questions raised the following issues were clarified -

- as services moved toward personalised care there was clear evidence that associated costs would fall when compared with residential care;
- less residential care would ultimately lead to closure of one or possibly more care homes however which one's and when had yet to be decided;
- it was anticipated that residential care costs would continue to fall as the move toward personalised care progressed. National trends supported this contention;
- apparent large savings with regard to Re-commissioning of Supporting People Services was a result of shared budget arrangements with the Neighbourhoods Directorate;
- service delivery model for community meals referred to investment to enable people to remain in their own homes for longer;
- streamlining of care management proposals was a process to ensure that staff resources were deployed in the most appropriate way and to minimise redundancy costs;
- review of high cost care packages had made, and would continue to make, significant savings particularly by targeting the highest cost elements where a larger proportion of savings could be made;
- it was confirmed that the proposed budget reductions would not affect eligibility criteria regarding access to services;
- large under spends in some salary budget headings related to a change of functions as service provision continued to evolve;
- increased community based living opportunities would reduce costs and could work for other client groups;
- day care centres were being reviewed in a similar way to residential care centres having regard to increasing trends toward personalised care. It was recognised that this could potentially lead to closures of day care centres. This issue would be considered by Cabinet in March 2012;

- concern was expressed that a relatively small reduction in the demand for day care centres might affect the financial viability of the overall service for the majority who still wanted to attend a day care centre. It was suggested that in this instance day care centres could be operated in different ways to reduce costs such as opening less often or merging centres;
- it was considered very important that day care centres should be pro-actively marketed to ensure that personalised care users were aware of the facilities that were available to them.

Neighbourhoods & City Development

The Strategic Director Neighbourhoods & City Development confirmed that this year's budget was on target and that there had been heavy scrutiny of next year's budget in order to achieve the required savings. The only exception was with regard to the development control function which had already undergone significant budget reductions following the economic downturn and the corresponding receipt of fewer planning applications.

Members of the Commission then proceeded to scrutinise the budget report and in answer to the questions raised the following issues were clarified –

- In examining the base budget for 2012/13 there was an apparent increase in budget, this was due to money from Health & Social Care being transferred to the Neighbourhoods & City Development directorate. Other budget heads relating to central charges, such as ICT, human resources and finance support, were now also shown under Neighbourhoods & City Development budget headings;
- there had been some increases in expenditure and these related to the 'Jubilee Pool' and 'Healthplex' projects;
- diversion of staff resources from 'low level complaints' referred to what were effectively inquiries for more information. It was anticipated that recent improvements to the Council's web site and other electronic forms of access would reduce this;

- a car park charge for Ashton Court to raise more income would not result in increased spending;
- a cut to public toilets spending would not result in any closures as the savings would be made by more efficient use of staff resources;
- budget reductions for the food safety advice business were proposed as it had been found that the private sector could provide this more cost effectively without increasing the risk to the public;
- reductions in the pest control service were proposed because it could be provided more cost effectively by the private sector. Larger issues such a rat and sea gull infestation would continue to be provided by the Council;
- reserves had been used to fund family intervention services because it was anticipated that funding from central government would be received in the near future and it was decided not to stop spending in this area pending receipt of that funding;
- the proposed increase in licensing fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation was aimed at improving housing conditions in this sector and had been agreed with landlords in advance. It was not anticipated that this would have an impact on the availability of HMO's;
- income shortfall from an aborted catering contract for museums and galleries would be resolved when the existing contract expired in approximately six months time.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The HRA Finance Business Partner introduced the report and advised the Commission of impending changes to the arrangements relating to the Housing Revenue Account. This essentially meant that the arrangements for the current subsidy system for council housing was ending and in its place was a self financing system based on a 'buy out' price for each council's housing business. The self financing transaction date would take effect on 28 March 2012.

This would have potential implications for the Council as it would mean taking on an additional £48m of debt against the Council's

housing valuation of £259m. However the proposal offered a viable long term future for council housing in Bristol and the potential for additional investment and spending in subsequent years would help improve council housing provision and contribute toward the Council's housing strategy and wider corporate objectives.

With regard to the HRA Capital Programme an additional £1.3m had been included for spend on developing a new build programme which would enable twelve units of new build social housing to be provided.

The HRA budget had been set in the context of significant savings in procurement contracts and a rent increase of 8.4%.

Members of the Commission then proceeded to scrutinise the budget report and in answer to the questions raised the following issues were clarified -

- the 8.4% rent increase had been set in line with the Government's Rent Setting rules based on inflation (Retail Price Index) of 5.6% as at September 2011;
- rents were set nationally according to guidelines that sought to ensure that rents converge toward a target rent over a period which was 2015/16 however for Bristol this was anticipated to be 2017 as the Government had over stated the Council's rental income. Following recent changes to the arrangements relating to the Housing Revenue Account future rent increases would be decided by the appropriate Executive Member with effect from 2012/13 financial year;
- it was envisaged that the the net surplus in the budget of £2.5m would be spent on improvements to properties, repairs and maintenance, improved customer service, improved quality of first let provision, better enforcement of breaches of tenancy agreements and better business processes;
- the spending of the net surplus on new council houses was not deemed the best use of the money at the current time because a new build of twelve units was already in place, the improvements proposed were of a high priority and government restrictions on borrowing were not allowed as it was seen by the Government as an addition to the PSBR (public sector borrowing requirement);

- bad debts had increased in 2011/12 due to the current economic situation, the impact of welfare benefit reductions and an increase in bankruptcy cases with regard to future council housing sales it was anticipated that loss of housing stock relating to the 'right to buy' scheme could not be prevented however it was noted that the rate of sales had flattened out as most of the quality housing stock had already been sold. The remaining tenant base was largely made up of people on benefits who were therefore not in a position to buy;
- right to buy policies were currently being reviewed and consultation was ongoing. It was anticipated that government guidelines would be seeking to balance sales with replacement build, however it was thought that this would not be as simple as it appeared so it was not likely that revised policy would reach fruition in the near future;
- the £10m underspend in the capital budget was largely because of delays in contract letting, mainly due to two major contractors going into receivership;
- caretaking income had reduced from expected levels due to a reduction in charges arising from pre-agreed changes;
- recent gas price reductions would not have a significant effect on energy costs as the Council purchased gas at commercial rates on an annual basis;
- the £0.9m saving arising from a review of the land swap project with the General Fund was still to be finalised.

Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy 2012/15

- Transport Bids – these amounted to a total of £196M with BCC's contribution being some £42M. There was concern that BCC along with its partners (the neighbouring authorities) would bear the risk of any overspend for their proportion of the cost of these projects. Rigorous project control procedures were essential to ensure that the projects were delivered on time and within budget. It was noted that the estimates already included a 15% contingency and that the overall Project Management Board would be chaired by the Service Director of Finance.
- All individual items on the capital programme would require authorisation by Cabinet and there would be opportunities to

review them in detail at that time. The proposed capital expenditure on the Bristol East swimming pool and the Hartcliffe recycling centre had significant revenue implications which had to be factored in to the decision making process.

- Some members expressed concern that BCC's indebtedness had increased year on year and now equated to roughly 1.5m times its annual income. The Executive Member explained that this was regarded as being within acceptable limits and that some other authorities borrowing exceeds their annual income by up to 3 times.
- Members were concerned that any upward movement in interest rates could adversely affect the cost of borrowing with a consequent impact on the capital programme. The Council policy was to borrow now at fixed term rates for a long term period. This would have the benefit of significantly reducing the effect of any interest rate rises.
- Members questioned the reasons for proceeding with the Lockleaze regeneration scheme in particular as opposed to other schemes which could be considered to have equal merit. They were advised that the decision was based on the fact that it represented value for money and was underpinned by an existing community plan.
- Members agreed that borrowing with the Housing Revenue Account was financially prudent because the interest rates were very low and fixed over the investment period of 30 years. The costs of this could be met by the revenue generated. It was explained that the overall borrowing amounted to approximately £9000 per property. Members welcomed the investment in improving the existing housing stock.
- Members noted that the Health & Social Care were working with private partners to deliver their objectives of reducing institutional care.
- There was currently a shortfall of over £100M in the Schools Organisation Plan capital programme. However, the government was due to announce further funding of £600m nationally and it was hoped that a proportion of this would come to Bristol.

Budget Proposals 2012/13
Comments from Scrutiny Commissions

APPENDIX 2

Directorate	Budgeted Savings 2011/12 £000	Savings Proposal 2012/13 £000
Corporate Services		8,029
Neighbourhoods & City Development		6,527
Heath & Social Care		5,144
Children & Young People's Services		5,188
Additional council tax income from review of single person and student discounts		2,200
Savings total	28,000	27,088
Accumulated savings		55,088
One off costs		(9,523)
Savings after one off costs		45,565
Savings target		49,000
Requirement from Reserves		3,435

Scrutiny Commission Indicators

Resources

Quality of Life

Sustainable Development & Transport

Community Cohesion & Safety

Health & Adult Social Care

Children's Services

	Budget Proposals 2012/13					
	Name of directorate:	Corporate Services				
	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
	Finance, Audit and Property					
1	Finance - Review of Finance function linked to the introduction of a new Financial Management System (FMS) - new ways of working, manager self service and a modern system.	Efficiency savings	CS1a CS1b	9,015	591	
2	Property - Staffing reductions - delivered from a more cohesive Corporate Property function	Efficiencies only.	CS1a CS1b	2,471	150	
3	Audit - Staffing reductions in audit and HB fraud teams - Prioritisation of resources to key risk areas.	Only minimal additional risk, through effectively setting priorities	CS1a CS1b	1,659	100	
4	Performance Team - Staffing reductions	No impact on the service as admin functions will be absorbed within the team.	CS1a CS1b	315	34	
	Strategic Commissioning & Procurement					
5	Commissioning and Procurement - Complete restructuring of service. More strategic focus on high-spend opportunities. Some operational support no longer available. Increasing collaborative work.	New, more efficient ways of working - no reduction in quality of commissioning and procurement outcomes.	CS1a CS1b	1,427	140	
6	Commissioning and Procurement - More favourable rates negotiated with suppliers of agency staff.	None	No Equalities Impact		200	
	ICT and Centre of Excellence					
7	ICT - Additional benefits from the ICT change programme (Fit for the Future) completed in October 2011. (Note - the ICT change programme has already delivered savings of £1.9m including £1m to the 2010/11 MTFP)	No service implications - these are the cost savings flowing from efficiency improvements taken in previous years.	CS7	17,317	225	
8	ICT - Phase 2 of ICT reductions, including further post reductions, exploit the benefits of our investment in new technology to reduce the cost of replacing PC's/ IT equipment, and adjust some internal service support levels	Potential reduction in service desk opening hours. No other impacts anticipated	CS1a CS1b		290	
9	Centre of Excellence (CoE) - Reductions in staffing levels in the Centre of Excellence for programme and project management as capability to manage programme and projects increases in business teams (note - elements of CoE are funded from reserves, not general fund)	Will require services to grow stronger project management and business change capability, as there will be less support available from the CoE	CS1a CS1b	654	160	

	Budget Proposals 2012/13					
	Name of directorate:	Corporate Services				
	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
10	Centre of Excellence - Integration of the CoE for Programme and Project Management (PPM) and the ICT services, economies of scale	Improved change support to internal services as resources will be better aligned, planned and coordinated with business change plans.	CS1a CS1b		80	
	Integrated Customer Services (ICS)					
11	ICS - Modernisation of Customer Services programme (via increase in channel shift - so access to services via self serve 24/7 for suitable transactions / customers. Involves reconfiguration of Customer Service Points, business process re-engineering.)	Improved customer service	CS11	7,570	485	
12	ICS - Business process reengineering in Revenues and Benefits - Speed up processing times, improve accuracy, reduce risk of reduced subsidy from government.	Improved customer satisfaction. Potential dip in service levels whilst work is done.	CS1a CS1b	8,705	50	
13	ICS - Combine back office functions across ICS. Benefits and Local tax already merged, and can now review their back offices together with Customer Service; IT, business support and Training.	Likely no impact on customers.	CS1a CS1b		50	
14	ICS - Service manager post deleted.	No impact on customers.	CS1a CS1b		55	
15	ICS -Merge Court and debt management.	No impact likely to be noticed by customers. Reduces capacity and therefore potential collection / cash flow issues - especially with introduction of localised Council tax Benefit, and other Welfare Reforms.	CS1a CS1b		80	
16	ICS - Merge business rates and valuation teams.	No impact on customers.	CS1a CS1b		40	
17	ICS - Service director budget - remove budget for temporary project staff	No noticeable customer impact. No scope for agency / fixed term project and ad hoc support.	CS1a CS1b	179	17	
	Legal Services					
18	Legal Services - Comprehensive service review - increased efficiency enabling increased income and decreased spend on external legal support	No likely impact on outcomes through less costly new ways of working.	CS1a CS1b	6,347	536	
	Shared Transactional Services (STS)					

	Budget Proposals 2012/13					
	Name of directorate:	Corporate Services				
	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
19	STS - Full year effect of the establishment of STS phase 1	None	No Equalities Impact	8,007	464	
20	STS - Improving electronic invoicing take up from 20% to 50%	Payments will be made more promptly	No Equalities Impact		91	
21	Learning and Development - Reduction in commissioned training spend	Minimal risk to the skills needed across the organisation to focus on priority challenges through tighter focusing of available funding onto priorities.	CS24	2,856	170	
	STS: Facilities Management:		CS1a CS1b			
22	STS FM - Cleaning - reduce number of vans and increase external income	None	CS1a CS1b	2,915	13	
23	STS FM -Centralise pool cars, reduce external hire	None	CS1a CS1b	6,784	222	
24	STS FM - reduce mail volumes, reduce one co-ordinator, lower cost large mail runs	channel shift dependant on behavioural change	CS1a CS1b	1,656	121	
25	STS FM - Security reductions, restructure day security, increase external income	Change in service delivery mechanism	CS1a CS1b	2,647	139	
26	STS FM - Increase external lettings, reduce one FTE, centralise management of venues	None	CS1a CS1b	235	105	
	Statutory Services					
27	Elections-Change in scanning centre arrangements for postal vote returns	Efficiency through new, smarter working arrangements.	No Equalities Impact	1,056	70	
28	Elections-Use BCC staff for key posts as part of their total employment requirements	none	CS27		25	
29	Elections-Reduction in usage of temporary staff to support elections and canvass	Service delivery - internal. A core team of 7.5 FTE will assist in reduction of use of temporary staff by 1.5 FTE.	CS1a CS1b		25	
30	Lord Mayor Support –Implement a lean support package for Lord Mayor's diary, functions and transport. Reduce hospitality budget, not fund civic services.	Modernised support arrangements, but some reduction in hospitality and religious services provided	CS1a CS1b	351	40	
31	Chapel – Open Chapel part time for tourists and Sunday service, but removal of paid Chaplain post (Bristol believed to be the only local authority in the country employing a priest and serving a regular small congregation)	Reduced public access, and potential loss of Sunday Service to existing parishioners and occasional visitors.	CS1a CS1b	45	25	There was general consensus fom members of RSC and QOLSC that the Chapel had significant heritage value and that this relatively small saving, should therefore, be reconsidered.

	Budget Proposals 2012/13					
	Name of directorate:	Corporate Services				
	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
32	Coroner –Reduction in Assistant Deputy Support. NB 40% savings in Coroner and Mortuary to BCC - this is an Avon wide service (60% to other 3 local authorities).	none - efficiency only	CS1a CS1b	524	10	
33	Mortuary – Reduction in employee costs in specialist mortuary team (40% to BCC a further 60% to three other partner authorities)	none - efficiency only	CS1a CS1b	204	20	
34	Mortuary - income optimisation (40% to BCC a further 60% to three other partner authorities) by seeing more specialist/out of area work within existing capacity	None	CS35		10	
35	Coroner –All Post Mortem examinations at Flax Bourton (40% to BCC a further 60% to other local authorities) - Bath hospital deaths transferred	Some bereaved families may have further to travel (as consistent arrangements are introduced across the greater Bristol area)	CS36		15	
36	Registrars –NCS (Nationality Checking Service) implementation - Additional net income. Bristol will fill a current vacant post to deliver this service on behalf of the city	More efficient service, charged at standard national rate	CS38	583	20	
	Communication, Marketing, Festivals and Events					
37	Comms, Marketing, Festivals and Events - Stop producing Our City magazine as a paper	reduction in capacity to promote services/council campaigns in support of business/20:20 objectives	CS41	96	86	The QOLSC were concerned about the potential for residents without the internet to access essential information about Bristol City Council's services. However, they noted that other forms of communication, including the Housing News publication (which went to every BCC tenant) or personal letters would be utilised where appropriate.
	publication, distributed door to door (i.e. move to online only)					
38	Comms, Marketing, Festivals and Events - Reduced contribution to Destination Bristol	Efficiency only	CS48		17	
39	Comms, Marketing, Festivals and Events - Increased income from outside space licensing	Better sweating of our assets	No Equalities Impact		50	
40	Comms, Marketing, Festivals and Events - Centralisation of Design and Print budgets	Structural change to get to grips with reducing avoidable spend on design and print	CS50	1,638	300	
41	Comms, Marketing, Festivals and Events - Arts, festivals and events - full year effect of 2011/12 changes	No further change - just realising full year effect of changes mid-year	No Equalities Impact	757	85	

	Budget Proposals 2012/13					
	Name of directorate:	Corporate Services				
	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
	Bristol Futures					
42	Bristol Futures - Restructure of teams within the Bristol Futures Division and refocusing of external commissioning. Refocus of the deliverables of the Bristol Futures Division to help meet the Council's objectives	reduction in capacity only in lower priority and lower impact work areas (to be identified)	CS1a CS1b	3,569	228	Graham Sims agreed to come back outside of the SDTSC meeting with a full explanation of this proposal.
	Miscellaneous					
43	Corporate - Senior Management Restructuring	None, changes already occurred	No Equalities Impact		400	This had been largely achieved by the reduction in the Senior Leadership Team. A further breakdown of the savings for this and future years was requested.,
44	Corporate - Revenue Income project	None - all through increasing income for using spare capacity and assets	CS54		495	This is a welcome initiative. There is potential to generate income from advertising on the website, council vehicles and street furniture
45	Corporate - Treasury Management - changes in debt management between the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account	none	No Equalities Impact		1,000	This a genuine cash saving as a result of the move in March 2012 to the self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account.
46	Corporate - Terms and Conditions. A comprehensive review of terms and conditions of employment will take place over two years with the objective of modernising our employee reward package and increasing productivity. The proposals will focus on delivering savings through streamlining and discontinuing non contractual allowances, reducing expenditure on voluntary overtime and introducing a holiday purchase salary sacrifice scheme	Although some staff may lose income, this would be through consistently paying a fair, agreed rate for the job. Other staff would benefit from the flexibility for trading off holidays against pay	CS56(1) CS56(2) CS56(3)		500	
	Services not included in budget proposals			21,832		
	Recharges to other Departments			(92,101)		
	DIRECTORATE TOTAL			19,312	8,029	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
1	Market tested efficiency savings to Building Practice and Docks	Improvement Plan - year 2 actions	No Equalities Impact	1,080	50	No Comment
2	Increase land income generated by increasing charges for Landlords Expo, furnished tenancies (service changes covered by), increased rents in council hostels (covered by Housing Benefit) and charges for training.	A sliding scale of charges for training will be used that reflect organisational circumstances	NHDS03a NHDS03c	NA	62	Members of the QOLSC noted the referral(see appendix 3) from the Community and Safety Scrutiny Commission (CCSC) regarding the concern that disadvantaged groups could be affected by the proposal, but were satisfied that there would be no adverse impact.
3	Process reviews and efficiencies within Strategic Housing	Savings from process redesign and commissioning	NHDS04	1,342	84	QOLSC received reassurances that the savings would not mean any reductions to the Aids & Adaptations service. CCSC expressed concern about the cumulative impact of these and other budget proposals on disadvantaged groups, in particular vulnerable women. Their detailed comments are shown in appendix 3.
4	Licensing fees increases e.g. houses in multiple occupation (HMO)	Improvement in housing conditions in this sector. This change was agreed last year and represents the last stage of making HMO licensing self-financing. It has been agreed up-front with landlords and is not expected to have much impact on the availability of HMO's.	NHDS06	NA	75	No Comment
5	Reduce discretionary housing activity. Divert staff from discretionary activity like low-level complaints into additional licensing (non-statutory) of HMO's, funded through fees. The project is subject to specific consultation.	Improvement in housing conditions in this sector as it shifts resources to worst condition/worst managed stock.	NHDS09	NA	20	The reduction in this activity needed to be carefully publicised and managed to avoid the risk of storing up problems for this area in the future.
6	Legacy Commission (LC) - withdraw funding - end of transitional year funding; agreed with Commission.	Potential reputational impact of ending support for this work within Black and Minority Ethnic communities. However, significant piece of consultation currently underway to identify a suitable route forward for the core work from the LC and joining it up with wider black voice and influence work	NHDS11	139	139	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	
						Scrutiny Comments
7	Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Invest option 1 - reduction in investment. 2nd phase of agreed reduction (previous MTFP) to VCS investment fund. Delivered through new agreed strategy from 1st April 2012. Already consulted with sector.	There will be some groups currently funded which will not be via the new strategy, which may have a wider impact. This will not be known until after the funding allocations in December 2011.	NHDS12	1,152	75	The savings were small compared to the overall budget but QOLSC have seen that in the voluntary sector even small amounts of money went a long way in sustaining local services. The Commission would be examining the final allocations in detail and making representations to the Cabinet if necessary.
8	Grounds maintenance: Reduce spending on Parks fleet.	None	No Equalities Impact	4,515	100	The fleet savings must not result in a service which does not meet the needs. Parks vehicles are also deployed to support our emergency response to inclement weather and this important contingency must not be compromised. The proposals need to be more specific in this area.
9	New Waste Contract procurement, delivering savings	New contract has service improvements	NHDS18	15,400	1,900	The savings are considerable but must not be made at the expense of a poorer quality service. QOLSC will continue to monitor this service and raise any issues with the Executive.
10	Parking charges: introduce £1 charge per visit at Ashton Court	None	NHDS19	0	210	The Chair asked for the logic behind this proposal as it attracted 1.6m visitors per year. Graham Sims pointed out that this was the Executive Member for Targeted Improvement's portfolio. He felt that this proposal could be argued either way as raising income meant less cuts to budgets were made. Councillor Tim Kent, the Executive Member for Transport added that many visitors used the bus to visit and therefore it was a sustainable policy to charge for car parking;
11	Reduce commercial consumer advice	Reduce commercial consumer advice where it duplicates an alternative free service from another provider. One post to be funded through the Recovered Assets Fund to provide a level of Tier 2 intervention.	NHDS21	100	80	
12	Licensing to become cost neutral	None	NHDS22	132	132	
13	Regulatory compliance unit	Cost reduction	No Equalities Impact	110	35	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	
						Scrutiny Comments
14	Reduce scope of food safety business advice service to focus on statutory functions	Food Safety: training could be provided by the private sector who would charge for the service.	NHDS25	1,122	116	It was accepted that the private sector could provide training and that we would continue to provide advice alongside our enforcement role. It was important that new businesses received the necessary advice and were signposted to training providers.
15	Pest service - reduce/outsource/introduce cost recovery for some non-statutory services	Service will now focus on treatments for Rats, Gulls, Operation Stream clean and Sewer baiting. Customers will be charged £25 per treatment for rats, and a free service for those on Benefits.	NHDS26	349	160	Proportionally this is the largest cut at almost 50% of the current net budget. This is a service that generates income and QOLSC felt that the department should investigate ways of doing this rather than cut the service. The Commission welcomed the assurance from the strategic director that public safety remained our paramount concern and that we would continue to provide core services to meet our obligations.
16	Reduce cost of toilets	No public toilets will close	NHDS27	791	120	QOLSC welcomed the fact that no public toilets were being closed. The proposed saving are substantial but must not lead to a reduction in the number of opening hours for existing toilets. Replacing full-time attendants with a mobile service increased the risk of vandalism, unacceptable behaviour and could lead to the creation of a general intimidating atmosphere. This would discourage in particular the elderly and families who need these facilities. Bristol is a major tourist destination and visitors expect these facilities.
17	Reduce staff in Museums and Archives	Increased pressure on what is already a lean staff structure	No Equalities Impact	2,513	25	No Comment
18	Market testing Parking enforcement/ Engineering consultancy. Year 2 of implementing a Service Improvement Plan as a result of a Soft Market Testing Exercise	None	No Equalities Impact		50	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	
						Scrutiny Comments
19	Blue badges - introduce charge as permitted by national legislation towards cost of badge issue.	Better enforcement of the scheme and improved security which should in time create a better situation for Blue Badge holders to park.	NHDS34		40	Councillor Holland felt that communicating the enforcement work to deter abuse and justify the new change would be important. It was noted this proposal would come into force from January 2012 and would be for renewals and new badges from that date. The government permitted up to £10 to be charged for a badge and this proposal would require the user to contribute £5. Peter Mann reported that the processing of a Blue Badge application involved rigorous eligibility checks and enforcement remained a challenge. The representative from the Older People's Forum did not object to the levying of a charge, noting that some GP's charged for a letter in support of a badge;
20	Drainage works - reduced budget	No implications for drainage works due to equivalent increase in capital funding. Reduction in capital available for other highway maintenance works but this will be more closely guided by the Transport Asset Management Plan.	NHDS39	141	41	
21	Street lighting energy savings through improvements and investment	None	NHDS42	2,616	285	
22	Lighting maintenance - savings to be found through reduced maintenance requirements of new technologies such as Light-emitting diode (LED) and reduced need to change lamps due to white light.	None	NHDS50	859	50	
23	On street parking - additional income from pay & display spaces in new schemes and conversion of limited waiting bays to pay & display and further enforcement of bus lanes	None	NHDS44	(11,537)	500	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
24	Rationalise non-statutory public transport contracts & negotiate improved deals	Reduced level of supported bus services - agreed at Cabinet on 9 June 2011	NHDS45	12,386	400	The Chair noted that bus operators were inclined to respond that certain routes were not financially viable and subsequently win a tender at a higher price. He asked whether there was confidence that the costs were now capped. The Executive Member replied that this last pressure was in relation to Bank Holiday services and not specific routes for which contracts had already been let; It was noted that The savings of £200,000 from the renegotiation of the Severn Beach line contract had not been ringfenced for rail and had been used for supported bus services;
25	Traffic and Highways - rationalised staffing structure - Savings incorporated into service review and restructure.	None	No Equalities Impact	12,766	75	
26	Review of parking strategy, introduction of new charges using new technology	None	NHDS44	NA	300	Peter Mann confirmed that this referred to the Ringo pilot scheme which was cost efficient to the Council;
27	Signals maintenance - budget reduction	Chargeable maintenance to be reduced which will reduce improvement of ageing infrastructure but only by a small amount.	NHDS49	474	50	
28	Performance and Programme Management - Establishment reduced by 2 posts.	Work will be covered by realigning this team onto core duties	No Equalities Impact	596	100	
29	Jubilee Pool - additional budget		No Equalities Impact	155	(21)	No Comment
30	Re-commissioning a range of housing support services.	Impact of reductions mitigated through larger contracts with lower overheads, faster throughput, and reduced numbers of repeat users	NHDS55a NHDS55b NHDS55c NHDS55d NHDS55e NHDS55f NHDS 55g	13,059	1,200	The QOLSC noted that the saving of £1.2M was a very considerable sum. Members were assured that new service providers would be bound by contractual arrangements to ensure that the City Council's expectations were met. CCSC expressed concern about the cumulative impact of these and other budget proposals on disadvantaged groups, in particular vulnerable women. Their detailed comments are shown in appendix 3.

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Neighbourhoods and City Development

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	
						Scrutiny Comments
31	Further reduction of temporary funding in former Neighbourhood Renewal areas	This is a tailing off of transitional funding, whilst still developing the Neighbourhood Partnership work	NHDS56	498	74	
	Services not included in budget proposals			62,843		
	DIRECTORATE TOTAL			123,600	6,527	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate: **Health and Social Care**

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
	Savings Proposals					
1	To streamline care management processes to deliver an improved and high performing care management function.	Realignment of the workforce to deliver a simplified and standardised customer pathway to make it easier for people to access self directed support.	HSC1	11,641	590	
2	To review the shape and delivery of day opportunities for all service user groups which supports the delivery of self directed support.	An increased use of personal budgets across user groups leading to a more creative and flexible model of delivery.	HSC2	18,101	233	Personal budgets are supported but it is important that the right support mechanisms and advocacy arrangements are in place
3	To revisit the Residential Futures programme and finalise a 3-year plan for the delivery of residential care in March 2012 .	Potential impact on current residents, subject to the contents of the plan.	HSC3	14,531	1,448	The budget assumes a closure of one residential home given the downward trend of usage. We are however in the process of consultation and any proposals will be considered by Cabinet in March 2012.
4	To work with care providers to review high cost packages, to ensure value for money.	Service users to continue to receive good quality packages but at a reduced cost.	HSC4	5,077	245	This is about working with providers to truly understand the costs of care provided and ensure placements are providing value for money. This is an extension of the work currently underway in this financial year to deliver MTFP savings.
5	Improved commissioning of independent sector homecare through the introduction of a framework contract, exploring working with neighbouring local authorities.	Good quality packages for service users with greater coverage and better value for money.	HSC5	10,023	75	
6	Review of community equipment service through joint commissioning with Health to ensure value for money. Reduction in care costs through increased use of Assistive Technology.	Improved choice to support independence.	HSC6	3,750	32	Improving the use of assistive technology is welcomed and can for instance taken the form of alarm sensors fitted on doors to alert when a person with dementia starts to wander: however it may not be suitable in all cases and there must be a back up if it fails. The commission were keen to emphasise that the needs of the individual should be taken into account and technology should not replace regular human contact
7	Ensure usage of standardised commissioning processes across all Health & Social Care commissioning activity.	Improved value for money across all commissioning activity.	HSC7	11,433	500	
8	Creating alternatives to residential/nursing care by expanding community supported living and shared lives.	Increased community based living opportunities.	HSC8	6,056	586	It may be appropriate for people with learning difficulties to live in small groups rather than in larger residential units, delivering better outcomes for the individual and reducing the costs of care

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate: **Health and Social Care**

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
	Savings Proposals					
9	Re-commissioning of Supporting People services	Commission only cost effective interventions and retender to ensure best value.	HSC10	12,958	1,360	Concern was expressed about the proposed reduction in what was the Supporting People budget (now un-ringfenced) both in H&SC and Neighbourhoods. Again the focus is on improving our commissioning to ensure cost effective interventions. There are service user specific commissioning groups leading this work.
10	Streamlining and sharing of business support functions with Children and Young Peoples Services (Enabling Hub).	Reduction in staffing numbers as functions are brought together.	CYPS14	1,949	100	It was confirmed that this project would result in a reduction in staff numbers. A consultation process with staff is about to commence and all HR procedures will be followed
11	Developing the service delivery model for community meals	Delivering improved choice at lower costs	No Equalities Impact	223	(25)	
	Services not included in budget proposals			36,201		
	DIRECTORATE TOTAL			131,943	5,144	

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate:

Children & Young People's Services

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact assessment reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
1	Redesigned core engagement model for screening and assessment as part of Pathways Project.	Budget reduction secured without implications for current service delivery; savings achieved by reviewing planned in-year allocation and continuing with expenditure at current budgetary levels (rather than at an increased level, as previously considered). Forms part of Pathways project to maintain commitment to early intervention/ help with improvements in multi-agency working and removal of duplication.	No Equalities Impact	3,186	600	The CSSC noted that the savings would partly be made by cancelling new projects. Members were concerned about the absence of an EQIA relating to this proposal because there could potentially be an impact on people who would have benefitted from the cancelled projects.
2	Your Life, Your Future - Reviewing assessment & service delivery for disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) to deliver integrated assessments and increased personalisation in line with Government Green Paper and Complex Needs Strategy.	Increased effectiveness in early intervention (School Action Plus Enhanced system within schools) and integrated assessments reduces need for, and increase effectiveness of, statutory SEN assessment process. Does not affect level of funding delegated to schools for SEN.	CYPS4	4,018	150	Members supported the option to fasttrack assessments. They were assured that funding for special schools wouldn't be affected by the planned savings. Members were concerned, however, that the increasing population could have an impact on demand.
3	Strategic Safeguarding Capacity - Review with partners of business model supporting the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board.	Efficiency in organisational arrangements of strategic body - no reduction in operational safeguarding capacity.	CYPS6	370	50	The CSSC supported the reductions to the strategic safeguarding capacity but stressed the importance of maintaining the operational safeguarding capacity.
4	Reduced legal and expert costs associated with child care proceedings.	Transfer of some responsibilities back to central government, in line with policy. Increased internal capacity to provide expert assessment in court proceedings, reducing requirements for external purchasing.	CYPS7	1,660	300	Members noted that it could be potentially a challenge to achieve these savings due to possible increase in demand.
5	Increase elements of trading with schools, e.g. offer services to academies and new services in light of national policy: Recover costs of Risk, Resilience & Wellbeing Team	Continue to provide statutory core service, improve cost recovery in relation to bespoke additional services.	CYPS8	146	50	The CSSC supported the initiative to sell high quality services to schools, but noted that the planned savings were reliant on schools choosing to participate in the scheme and the capacity to deliver these services.

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate: **Children & Young People's Services**

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact assessment reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
6	Increase elements of trading with schools, e.g. offer services to academies and new services in light of national policy: education support services	Offer of enhanced services to schools and academies additional to core and statutory offer.	CYPS9	1,461	75	See above.
7	Bristol Youth Links - radical approach to commissioning integrated teams to deliver Bristol Youth Links services for 8-19 year olds and provide opportunities for local providers.	Shift of service delivery to targeted offer on vulnerable young people and delivery by external service providers.	CYPS11	7,411	1,000	No comments (due to scrutiny of the proposals earlier in the municipal year).
8	Reconfiguration of central early years team to reflect changes to local authority roles in delivery of national policy statutory responsibilities	No direct impact on frontline provision.	CYPS12	1,863	297	8,9,12 and 14 were considered together.
9	Changes to early years provision to reflect government policy	Statutory, universal offer will be maintained in early years provision. Eligibility criteria for allocation of targeted resources for enhanced and subsidised provision to be reviewed to target most vulnerable families. Provision to be reconfigured in line with University of Bristol recommendations on providing effective family support.	CYPS13	8,698	250	Members noted that the policy review in relation to subsidised child care should look carefully at thresholds and eligibility criteria and the potential impact of reduced subsidies in relation to employment. Members requested that a further report providing full details of the proposals and their implications be brought back to the Commission prior to implementation.
10	Streamlining strategic and planning services for CYPS and H&SC	No direct impact on front-line service delivery; Enabling Hub (i.e. combined, smaller internal team) will improve consistency and use of resources in strategic planning, commissioning and other 'enabling' functions.	CYPS14	2,500	450	The Commission universally supported this proposal. However, they requested that information regarding the scale and source of redundancy payments be provided since that hadn't been included in the budget.
11	Efficiencies in workforce development spend through improved targeting and increased integration of learning and development resources: social care workforce	Improved commissioning of training and development for social care workforce.	CYPS15	247	50	No comment.

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate: **Children & Young People's Services**

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact assessment reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
12	Efficiencies in workforce development spend through improved targeting and increased integration of learning and development resources: early years and play workforce.	High levels of early years qualifications achieved in recent years, proposals will embed further development within early years settings and the new early years teaching centre with resources targeting specific areas of need e.g. diversity of workforce.	CYPS16	851	230	Members noted the importance of training and development in relation to morale, staff retention etc but that the proposals would not impact negatively on workforce development.
13	Reduction in overall supplies budget, e.g. printing, computing costs, equipment to reflect leaner organisation and improved procurement practices.	Limited direct impact on frontline service delivery.	CYPS17	3,824	956	Members were supportive of the planned savings providing that essential communications were not impeded.
14	Reduced costs through improved Early Years and Childcare commissioning arrangements and reconfiguration of service delivery	No significant reduction in quality of outcomes achieved for children and young people through efficiency measures.	CYPS18	1,115	270	No comment.
15	Development & implementation of revised specialist placement commissioning strategy for children in care - improvements to Edge of Care services.	Improvements to Edge of Care services delivers a reduction of estimated 5/6 placements for children in care annually.	CYPS19	13,026	200	Members requested an Action Plan be brought to the Commission in relation to the revised strategy and were given re-assurances that the proposals would not impact on post adoption support.
16	Development & implementation of revised specialist placement commissioning strategy for children in care - improvements to adoption services	Speedier adoption process reduces placement costs for children in care and increases stability for children.	CYPS20		150	No comment.
17	Denominational transport policy	Savings accrued from previous policy change in relation to denominational transport; no further change to policy or any further tightening of transport support criteria.	CYPS24	400	10	No comment.
18	Reduced costs arising from identifying efficiencies and premises changes as a result of other projects	Limited direct impact on front-line service delivery.	CYPS25	1,400	100	No comment.

Budget Proposals 2012/13

Name of directorate: Children & Young People's Services

	Proposed Change	Impact	Equalities impact assessment reference	Net Budget 2011/12 £000	Budget Proposals 2012/13 £000	Scrutiny Comments
	Services not included in budget proposals			19,673		
	DIRECTORATE TOTAL			71,849	5,188	

Scrutiny of the 2012/13 Budget Proposals

General Comments and Suggestions

Children's Services

It was not clear whether the cost of any redundancies had been factored into savings.

Quality of Life

Some members felt that the late announcement of the proposals did not allow sufficient time for proper scrutiny. This was made worse by the fact that this year there was a great deal more detail to absorb in the shape of the Equalities Impact Assessments. In contrast and in some cases the summaries of the effects of the proposed changes were not in sufficient detail to assess their impact. However, officers had been in attendance at the meeting to fully explain the proposed changes and answer members questions.

Sustainable Development & Transport

Graham Sims, the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and City Development stated that this Directorate would provide a £6.5m saving to the overall budget. The proposals did not include areas that could cause damage to growth. He pointed out that Planning and Sustainable Development had been excluded from the budget proposals as they could make no further reductions within those areas.

Community Cohesion & Safety

CC&SC have concerns about the cumulative impact of several of the Neighbourhood & City Development budget proposals on disadvantaged groups, in particular vulnerable women. These are detailed on the referral form overleaf.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRAL FORM	
Referral from: Community Cohesion and Safety Scrutiny Commission	To : Quality of Life Scrutiny Commission 8 th Dec / Resources Scrutiny Commission 16 th Dec
Date: 2 nd December 2011	
Contact Officer: Jude Williams, Scrutiny Officer, ext. 22206	
Subject: Budget Scrutiny: Neighbourhoods and City Development budget proposals <u>Ref No./Proposed Change</u> <u>2:</u> Increase land income generated by increasing charges for Landlords Expo, furnished tenancies (service changes covered by), increased rents in council hostels (covered by Housing Benefit) and charges for training <u>3:</u> Re-commissioning a range of housing support services <u>30:</u> Process reviews and efficiencies within Strategic Housing	
1. Reason for referral: Concern about the impact of the above budget proposals on disadvantaged groups, in particular vulnerable women.	
2. Action required: That Quality of Life Scrutiny Commission and Resources Scrutiny Commission should request and scrutinise the Equalities impact assessments for the above budget items. Community Cohesion and Safety Scrutiny Commission has concerns about the proposals / EqlAs as follows:: Proposal 3. Re-commissioning a range of housing support services (Quality of Life): EqlA NHDS55d: <i>Incorporate offender accommodation into the wider generic service and do not commission specific accommodation for this group. i.e. No support contract commissioned at Lazarus House – specific accommodation for male offenders</i> Scrutiny Commission comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments referred to the closure of Lazarus House, which offered accommodation to men leaving prison. It would be unrealistic for staff 	

at other accommodation facilities to provide the same level of specialist support currently provided at Lazarus House. This would be particularly worrying in the context of the reduction of support facilities for vulnerable women.

EqlA NHDS55f: *Homelessness prevention high support services for women: One contract for the provision of women's services – with remodelling of night provision. (Currently three separate contracts) and to decommission the smallest (5 unit scheme) and look to meet demand within the two remaining schemes*

Scrutiny Commission comments

- The Commission is concerned that the re-commissioning of a range of housing support services would have a direct impact on extremely vulnerable women and those escaping domestic violence and abuse (there is specific reference to the de-commissioning of the smallest scheme which is for the most vulnerable women).
- There is also a concern that the addresses of hostels had been included in the information available to the public (NHDS55f).
- Members requested clarity about how the planned consultation would fit with the proposed changes.
- The current economic climate is set to increase women's poverty and may also be a factor in predicted increases of domestic violence, both of which predict a rise in women's homelessness.
- Domestic violence and abuse are factors in women's homelessness and any change to levels of protection for women living in high support accommodation may impact on their safety.

Proposal 2 : Increase land income generated by increasing charges for Landlords Expo, furnished tenancies (service changes covered by), increased rents in council hostels (covered by Housing Benefit) and changes for training

EqlA NHDS03a. *Specifically the proposal to increase the furniture charge by £4.00 per week across both Starter Packs and Full Furniture packs*

Scrutiny Commission comments

- The Commission has concerns about the cumulative impact of extra charges for housing packs for people who would be receiving a reduced level of LHA and other benefits.

Accompanying papers: None