

Budget Consultation Member Feedback

E mail sent to all Members with deadline of 16th March. Reminder sent on 5th March.

The following bullets were in the original report for C&DSC on 31st January.

- feeding back from an Overview & Scrutiny committee to Cabinet;
- feedback directly from an O&S committee to Council;
- ensuring that all Members receive all of the information which they need to make decisions in a timely fashion;
- ensuring that Members are given opportunities to ask for further information;
- how everything should be brought together at the end of the process in reporting to Council to set the overall budget;
- whether the use of call-in should be limited to non-budget items, especially where a consultation item has already been to an Overview & Scrutiny committee.

	Name	Date of response	Response Details
1	Cllr Cindy Hinds	21/02/18 05/03/18	<p>If everything has been through Scrutiny, Cabinet and all Members have had the chance to give all their comments before we have our meeting of the County Council (which a time limit should be set after the budget has gone out for consultation to all members for their comments and as long as they have been given enough time) then nothing should be debated at full Council. There should only be a presentation from Chief Exec and Gary on their points, all Scrutiny committees and councillors views collated together, and then every Councillor should be in agreement like yesterday. It has gone through the correct procedure, no councillor just thinks of something in the middle of a Council meeting, they have thought of it before that has got to be stopped to cut down the time limit of a meeting. I don't care which political group it is, that is my point of view. We have to be seen as transparent in everything and the budget itemised fully so everyone can see where the funding goes to. I am not a budget expert, the simpler the better.</p> <p>I agree with the points you have given.</p> <p>Another suggestion if it is right that members can look at every Committee papers and if there is anything on those papers they disagree with then they should put it to that Committee and whatever the Committee's decision is then that goes to County Council so nobody can go against anything that all the members of those Committees agree to. We should not have to waste debating it at Council, it is going over the same things again and I feel the person who is going against all the members of any Committee is belittling all those members of the different committees.</p>

			Sorry Robert this is how I feel, it is such a waste of time and this way it shortens County Council as I have said before.
2	Cllr Carolyn Thomas	22/02/18	Thank you for the email, the feedback to the latest Cabinet meeting from scrutiny was in a good format, very clear and welcome. I attended the Corporate resources committee and there was good continuity of points raised.
3	Cllr Richard Jones	24/02/18	<p>Call-ins should not be limited to non budget items, if the appropriate number of members support the call-in, then that should satisfy the democratic requirement, i can't see why it should make a difference whether the item has been to OSC or not. Additionally, what item is not covered in the budget, all subjects are up for discussion. To remove this right would seem to me to be a clear stifling of debate and would be a retrograde step in the use of OSC. I can imagine why it would be welcomed by some, as it would remove the rights of the opposition. This right should be left alone/unchanged from its present condition.</p> <p>I also believe that every CROSC should be webcast, for the avoidance of doubt in relation to what was said and by whom, especially for CROSC as the outcomes can have direct financial implications.</p> <p>Feedback from OSC should be fed back to Full Council and not limited to the Cabinet.</p> <p>I will consider the bulletin points below further and respond later</p>
4	Cllr David Mackie	26/02/18	<p>Thank you for your email, I am sorry if some of my comments stray outside the bounds of this consultation.</p> <p>First I must say that the process we follow now is better than the system when I was first elected. I feel that members must have the opportunity to make decisions early in the process. Perhaps areas should be ranked according to whether members feel they should be protected or not, then the decision would be on the amount of cuts areas should be subjected to.</p> <p>Comments I heard at the public meetings were that the County explained the problems it was facing but did not mention any specific cuts. Perhaps if the public were asked to rank possible cuts there might be a gain in public engagement.</p>
5	Cllr Ian Smith	28/0218	One comment I do have, is having workshops/budget meetings in the day time, which means, that members like myself, who work full time are unable to attend. Holding a consultation event, is to my mind no consultation at all, if it is held at a time working members cannot attend.

6	Cllr Mike Peers	05/03/18	The response date deadline of 16 th March is in my diary from the original email. For discussion at our groups next meeting
7	Cllr Tudor Jones	05/03/18	I can make very little comment on this process as having arrived when the process for this cycle was already underway and with so much being new and unknown I'm left with much to learn and have no historical examples to call on to are comparisons. I'm aware that having access to the figures at an early stage is advantageous but again having a grasp on the process is necessary. I believe that growing experience with familiarity with the process will give a clearer understanding of what I need to help my understanding. Sorry I can't contribute more
8	Cllr Carol Ellis	05/03/18	It is my belief that the Call In should be available to all items regardless of the item going to Scrutiny . When issues are complex and controversial Members should have the right to Call In.
9	Cllr Dave Hughes	06/03/18	That looks fine to me I have nothing else to add
10	Cllr Ian Dunbar	06/03/18	Feeding back to Cabinet from an O&S Committee is the correct procedure We seem to have most information at the time of Meetings certain items do get asked and either answered there and then or it gets reported back in time. Opportunities for further questions on information is given. We do need to have all information formulated at the end of the process to come together to present to Cabinet to ensure we set a balanced Budget. If the Committee has asked questions and been given the answer at the O&S the only items to be enabled to be taken to Call In should be limited. Best wishes
11	Cllr Dave Healey	7/03/18	I know that this Consultation is related to a recommendation made at Corporate Resources OSC when there was a discussion of issues which included the proposed cash flat settlement for schools. My concern at the time was that this issue seemed to be being discussed without reference to the Education and Youth OSC. It would then go straight to the next meeting of Council without any input from E & Y. This also applied to the issue of car park charges and the Environment OSC. In practice the issues were taken out of the proposals to be put to relevant scrutiny committees.

			<p>I am aware of the consequences of referring the issue to the E&Y OSC and the degree of lobbying from schools which was unleashed.</p> <p>However it is important, where there is a Cabinet system in place, that we're do not become a facade democracy. It is important that Scrutiny has a robust role to play.</p> <p>From time to time Councillors need to see that they can make a difference and that involvement in Scrutiny Committees is meaningful.</p> <p>I would therefore suggest that if a budget issue, is important enough to go to Corporate Resources, and relates to the work of another Scrutiny Committee, that Scrutiny Committee should be involved in the process.</p> <p>On the issue of call-ins on budget matters I feel that they can be counter-productive. They may encourage dramatic publicity stunts which only serve to damage the reputation of the Council.</p> <p>If a budget matter has been considered by all relevant scrutiny committees then that should be it.</p> <p>At the end of the day the Council has a legal responsibility to balance the budget. The current arrangement allows for councillors to object to every difficult budget decision without consideration of the overall responsibility.</p>
12	Cllr Carver	16/3/18	<p>Both as Chair of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee and as Conservative Group leader, I welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.</p> <p>The approach which we have used for the 2018/19 budget has been robust, and has provided plenty of opportunity for Members, whether as members of one of the O&S committees, through the 'All member' CRO&SC and as individuals, to contribute and to ask questions. The attendance at the 6th December meeting was a little disappointing though, especially given the time and effort which had been put into it.</p> <p>We all know that it has been a difficult process, but throughout the emphasis has been on transparency, which is to be applauded. I appreciate that the 'All Member budget workshops' are held as private sessions, not in the public eye, but we do need to have the opportunity to ask the 'daft' questions out of the public gaze.</p> <p>My recommendation for improving the process is to start it earlier, so that the stage approach could get the 'easier' part done earlier in the autumn. Stage one approval by Council in early November would be ideal.</p> <p>However, I know that we are in the hands of the Welsh Government. Their late decision making is placing undue pressure on everyone in local government, whether they be Members or officers</p>

13	Cllr Mike Peers	16/3/18	<p>Please find attached my comments and suggestions on the Budget consultation.</p> <p>I have kept it simple rather than a wordy report. I think it explains it ok in a visual form. Hopefully the reporting to members on the Budget can be simplified and clearer in due course.</p> <p>The other thing in budget reporting is the terminology used, issues over clarity, and the <u>reports should be easier to follow.</u></p> <p>I enclose table 5 (P21) from the February 20th 2018 meeting <u>as an example</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding information starts with “Aggregate External Funding (AEF) / RSG NNDR”. Can we simplify the wording and make it clear the source of this particular funding? • Then it shows SSA/ Budget requirement of £259.279M. Include with the figure a cross reference to the breakdown of the £259.279M • Cross reference Specific grants (£31.326) Source and value (£). • “Prior year budget decisions recurring” (Explanation?) <p>Just one example of the many pages in the report.</p> <p>I hope what I have included you find of interest.</p>
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