



BUDGET STRATEGY 2012-15

Report by Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

PURPOSE OF REPORT To provide an update and make recommendations on the implementation of the Comhairle's Budget Strategy.

COMPETENCE

- 1.1 The Comhairle is under a legal duty to set a balanced budget. In doing so the Comhairle must observe proper accounting practices and make arrangements which secure best value. A local authority must maintain an appropriate balance among the quality of the performance of its functions; the cost to the authority of that performance; and the cost to persons of any service provided by it for them on a wholly or partly rechargeable basis. In maintaining that balance a local authority shall have regard to efficiency; effectiveness; economy and the need to meet the equal opportunity requirements.

SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following the Local Government financial settlement announced on 8 December 2011 this Report brings together the strands of work that formed the Comhairle's agreed approach to the 2012/13 budget and recommends that the Comhairle:
- indicates to the Scottish Government that it intends to accept the full terms of the funding package agreed with COSLA;
 - sets aside funding for the Older People and Early Years Change Funds and maintains its ongoing commitment to allocating additional resources to care for the elderly; and
 - agrees that following the appropriate equality and risk assessments the proposals set out in Section 4 of this Report form the basis for further consultation.
- 2.2 The package offered by the Scottish Government is based on a freeze in local Government Funding over the next three years. However, the needs based distribution of funding between authorities means that the change for individual authorities varies. The most important aspect for the Comhairle is the floor which for 2012/13 has been set at minus 1.2%. This compares with 4.5% in 2011/12 and represents a fair outcome for this settlement. The floor falls slightly to minus 1.4% in both 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- 2.3 For the Comhairle the settlement means a reduction in funding of £1.6m in 2012/13 and £1.1m in each of the next two years. Within this the Comhairle will have to make provision for its contribution to the Older People and Early Years Change Funds. It is estimated the Comhairle's share for these will be £0.3m in 2012/13. In addition, for this settlement no additional funding is being provided for the Council Tax Freeze which in previous years has been £0.3m for the Comhairle. The effective change in funding for 2012/13 is around £2.2m.
- 2.4 The settlement also provides indicative figures of the funding the Scottish Government will hold back if councils do not sign up to the full package, which amounts to a further 5.2%.
- 2.5 Appendix A provides a summary of the current financial estimates for the next three years for the Comhairle and shows how savings of £2.1m are needed to balance the budget. Section 4 of this Report sets out outline proposals for achieving these based on the views expressed by Members and through the consultation meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
- indicate to the Scottish Government that it intends to accept the terms of the 2012-15 funding package;**
 - agree as part of the budget strategy to allocate funding to the Early Years change fund (£134k), the Older People Change Fund (£152k) and for Elderly Care (£200k); and**
 - agree that the proposals set out in this Report be subject to equality and risk assessments and form the basis for further consultation on the 2012/13 budget.**

Contact Officers: Robert Emmott
Appendix A Budget Strategy 2011-15
Appendix B Minutes of Consultation Meetings
Appendix C Summary of Consultation Responses from Public and Members

BUDGET PROPOSALS

- 4.1 As for the 2011/12 budget the Comhairle sought the views of Members on areas where savings should be sought for 2012/13. The Comhairle also undertook six consultation meetings in November 2011 to help gauge community views on summary budget areas.
- 4.2 The minutes of the consultation meetings can be found at Appendix B. At each meeting survey sheets were circulated that allowed those attending to express views on budget areas. The overall results of these are set out at Appendix C along with the views of Members on the same basis.
- 4.3 The Comhairle's Corporate Management Team (CMT) considered these responses against the following principles:
 - That proposals should take advantage of any budgets which could be reduced with a minimal impact on services;
 - That proposals should make a material contribution to the saving required; and
 - That proposals should, as far as possible, avoid compulsory redundancies.
- 4.4 Consequently the following areas were identified at CMT to be considered together with any areas which Members put forward through the seminar and Committee process.:
 - savings from within Housing, where there is evidence the new regulations mean that PSHG is not being fully utilised;
 - savings from within Education, where deliverable savings are low risk;
 - savings from within Technical Services split between Waste Services; Property Costs and Roads;
 - savings from within Social and Community Services; and
 - savings from Member expenses and the Ward Priority Fund.
- 4.5 Detailed proposals in relation to these are being drawn up and will be presented to the Member Seminar on 13 December 2011 before being considered by Service Committees and the Comhairle.
- 4.6 Following risk and equality assessments these will form the basis of further consultation in January 2012 before being formally considered as part of the 2012/13 budget in February 2012.

APPENDIX A

Budget Summary

	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000
Forecast deficit after inflation	2,531	2,197	2,105
Provision for: Local Elections	30		
DWP Grant Reduction	45		
Demographic Change	200	200	200
Change			
Fund: Health & Social Care	152	0	70
Early Years	134	105	30
Pay inflation (1% assumption)		550	550
Efficiency Savings	(1,000)		
Savings to find	2,092	3,052	2,955
Proposals: Housing			
Education			
Technical Services			
Social & Community Services			
Members & Ward Priority			
Fund			
(Surplus) / Deficit			



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

BUDGET CONSULTATION MEETING

Minute of Meeting held in the Barvas Hall, Isle of Lewis on Tuesday 1 November 2011 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell
Mr Robert Emmott
Cllr Charlie Nicolson
Cllr Kenny Murray
Cllr John MacKay
Cllr Murdo MacLeod
Cllr Iain Morrison
10 Members of the Public

INTRODUCTION

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the discussion. He outlined the context of the setting of the Comhairle's budget for 2012/13 and the key factors that would influence this including the Floor Mechanism, Change Funds, the overall level of the Scottish Settlement and the efficiencies the Comhairle had achieved and would be expected to achieve in the next year. He also outlined the range of impacts that this could have on the Comhairle finances.

The Leader went on to introduce the Budget Consultation Summary Sheet to the meeting which was discussed line by line. The following observations were made.

Pre-School Education

Clarification was sought in relation to which parts of Pre-School Education were statutory and where After School Clubs were located within the budget lines.

It was highlighted that there was potentially an opportunity for Gaelic funding from Bord na Gaidhlig to be sought for 0-3 childcare provision.

Councillors

Clarification was sought as to why we still had thirty one Councillors and whether there was an opportunity to reduce this. The Leader explained that this is something which had been a common theme in the last set of Budget Consultations and the Comhairle have formally recommended to the Boundary Commission that this be reduced. However, this was unlikely to be effected before the elections in 2012.

Efficiency Savings

The point was raised as to what level of efficiency really could be achieved on an ongoing basis year on year and whether these could be cuts by stealth just badged as efficiencies.

Council Tax

It was proposed that the Comhairle could consider raising Council Tax in the forthcoming year. The Leader explained how the nature of the Settlement meant that should the Council chose to raise Council Tax its overall revenue funding would be reduced and therefore this was not an option which was worth being pursued.

Waste Services

It was queried as to whether we should be spending more on educating people in relation to the disposal of waste and recycling. It was suggested that focus should be on educating the young as there was clear evidence that within schools young people were quick to adopt recycling and were able to pass the message out within the community. It was also suggested that Home Carers could potentially have an input into the recycling of waste in the houses of people they visit in the course of their work for the Comhairle. Finally, it was also suggested that there might be the scope to provide input from the Waste Aware Team to older people's groups within the communities to help to encourage them to recycle more.

Air Services

The question was asked as to whether the NHS would contribute towards the continuation of the air service between Stornoway, Benbecula and Barra. It was clarified that this point had been raised as part of the 2011/12 budget but that the Health Board had not been able to support the service in this way at that time.

Inter-Island Ferry Services

Clarification was sought on the nature of concessionary travel between islands and the mainland and this was provided.



**NOTE OF MEETING: BUDGET CONSULTATION
CASTLEBAY SCHOOL, 2 NOVEMBER 2011, AT 7.30 PM**

Present: 10 members of the public
Councillor Angus Campbell, Leader
Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced himself and the Chief Executive. He then explained the process of public consultation, and thanked members of the public for their contribution to the budget consultation process for this year's budget, which had been unanimously approved by the Comhairle. He further explained the basis of Scottish Government's budget, and gave an update on the implementation of Scottish Government's budget proposals for 2012-15, and the particular consequences for the Comhairle, including the floor mechanism. He emphasised that, at a minimum, the Comhairle would have to reduce its budgets by £2m, £1m of which would be found from efficiencies.

BUDGET CHOICES CONSULTATION SHEET

Discussion then took place on each item on the budget choices consultation sheet, and comments were received on particular items, as follows:

- Home Care There was support for greater partnership working with the Third Sector, in all areas of social care, recognising that overall costs needed to fall;
- Waste There was frustration expressed at the apparent delay in implementation of the waste strategy at Garrygall Depot, which was considered to represent an easy saving for the Comhairle;
- Bus & Ferry Fares etc Questions were asked about the Rural Transport Grant, both regarding the amount, and the purposes for which it was received and applied; there was also support for reduction in the amount of concessionary fares offered by the Comhairle, eg, for ferries;
- Property & Related Costs It remained the view that the Comhairle was slow to move on redundant properties, and number of specific properties were mentioned, specifically the former Co-op building in Castlebay, Craigston School and the former Castlebay School;
- Street Lights There was unanimous support for the reductions in street light provision;
- Economic Development There was strong support for integration of the economic

development services throughout the Western Isles, and for amalgamating HIE's local operations with the Comhairle's, to avoid duplication;

- Members The increased use of video conferencing was noted with approval;
- Libraries No specific comment for this year's budget, but it was recognised that library provision would continue to decline, and the Comhairle should address this for the future;
- Air Service It was felt that, if required, the air service could be reduced to a number of days per week service, and that the Health Board should contribute to the costs.

There then followed a general discussion on the single public authority/integration of services, with strong support for integration of services, particularly those of the Health Board and HIE;

- Voluntary Sector There was a discussion on the Interface/Co-Cheangal, and how much the work of TSH was known in, and affecting, Barra (MB undertook to provide further information to Marion Macneil, Community Co-ordinator).

Again, there was strong support for purposive working with the Third Sector, to ensure best use of resources, and to assist in giving the Third Sector sustainable funding for more than one year;

- Ward Priority Funds While there was appreciation for the good work of Ward Priority Funding, particularly in filling funding gaps, there was a concern about potential discrimination within electoral wards;
- Apprenticeships/
Supported Employment MB was asked to provide a breakdown of the location of Modern Apprenticeships, among Lewis/Harris/Uist/Barra.

The provision was strongly supported;
- Study & Parent Support MB undertook to advise of exactly what this budget comprised; it was noted that it appeared to be excessive;
- Biodiversity &
Countryside Access This budget was considered suitable for reduction.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 pm.

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive

7 November 2011

MB/AR/L44146



**NOTE OF MEETING: BUDGET CONSULTATION
DALIBURGH SCHOOL, SOUTH UIST, 3 NOVEMBER 2011, AT 5.30 PM**

Present: 10 members of the public
Councillor Angus Campbell, Leader
Councillor David Blaney
Councillor Peter Carlin
Councillor Gerry Macleod
Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced himself and the Chief Executive. He then explained the process of public consultation, and thanked members of the public for their contribution to the budget consultation process for this year's budget, which had been unanimously approved by the Comhairle. He further explained the basis of Scottish Government's budget, and gave an update on the implementation of Scottish Government's budget proposals for 2012-15, and the particular consequences for the Comhairle, including the floor mechanism. He emphasised that, at a minimum, the Comhairle would have to reduce its budgets by £2m, £1m of which would be found from efficiencies.

BUDGET CHOICES CONSULTATION SHEET

Discussion then took place on each item on the budget choices consultation sheet, and comments were received on particular items, as follows:

- **Waste** Frustration was expressed, particularly by representatives of Sustainable Uist, regarding apparent difficulties in contacting Waste Management staff to take forward ideas; the Leader and MB reassured representatives of the Comhairle's wish to work in partnership with the Third Sector, and community organisations, with a view to reducing the costs of the service; there was strong support expressed for the provision of community skips, although it was acknowledged that these needed to be better managed, probably by communities themselves;
- **Bus Services** It was agreed that a reduction in bus services should be considered, based on evidence of use. A number of operational comments were made regarding bus timetables, which will be followed up by the Chief Executive;
- **Pre-School Education** Representatives of Cothrom expressed interest in providing an enhanced service to the community; again Comhairle representatives expressed their willingness to work in partnership with other bodies, with a view to reducing costs;

- Housing It was felt that the Comhairle could do more, through the Housing section, to assist individuals, and organisations representing them, to obtain funding for further energy efficiency measures in homes, at no costs to the Comhairle;
- Economic Development There was strong support for the economic development service, but it was agreed that there was duplication with other providers, which should be reduced;
- School Meals It was felt that food could be provided at the mid-morning break, on a profit making basis;
- Public Conveniences There was much support for retention of this service, using community facilities, assisted by a small grant, wherever possible;

The meeting concluded at 7 pm.

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive

7 November 2011

MB/AR/L44148



**NOTE OF MEETING: BUDGET CONSULTATION
CARINISH HALL, NORTH UIST, 3 NOVEMBER 2011, AT 8 PM**

Present: 14 members of the public
Councillor Angus Campbell, Leader
Councillor Archie K Campbell
Councillor Uisdean Robertson
Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced himself and the Chief Executive. He then explained the process of public consultation, and thanked members of the public for their contribution to the budget consultation process for this year's budget, which had been unanimously approved by the Comhairle. He further explained the basis of Scottish Government's budget, and gave an update on the implementation of Scottish Government's budget proposals for 2012-15, and the particular consequences for the Comhairle, including the floor mechanism. He emphasised that, at a minimum, the Comhairle would have to reduce its budgets by £2m, £1m of which would be found from efficiencies.

BUDGET CHOICES CONSULTATION SHEET

Discussion then took place on each item on the budget choices consultation sheet, and comments were received on particular items, as follows:

- Specialist Care Agreement was expressed with the proposals;
- Education etc There was general support for the reduction of management costs;
- Waste Services There was support for greater community-based involvement in recycling initiatives, which was felt to be likely to reduce costs; in general, the view was expressed that it was only through community groups that the recycling service could be further extended;
- Bus Services There was general agreement with the proposals to reduce bus services where the evidence showed lack of use;
- Schools Catering There was a general feeling against a price rise, owing to potential loss of custom; the Comhairle was urged to use more local produce, on a contracted basis, in its school meals;
- Community Education It was noted that this service had already been reduced, for financial reasons, in this financial year;

- Air Services It was the unanimous view that the Health Board should be required to make a contribution to the continuation of these services;
- Joint Services There was agreement with the proposals to reduce employee costs;
- WI Citizens Advice Centre The Comhairle was urged not to reduce its support for this service;
- Employment Support etc This provision was strongly supported, with the hope that additional funding could be found from other bodies, such as Skills Development Scotland;
- Study and Parent Support There was agreement with the proposal to reduce management/employee costs.
- Public Conveniences There was a unanimous view that this provision is essential and should not be reduced;
- Archaeology Surprise was expressed that this item was included on the agenda, it being a very small budget; strong support was expressed for its retention in full.

The meeting concluded at 9.40 pm.

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive

7 November 2011

MB/AR/L44149



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

BUDGET CONSULTATION MEETING

Minute of Meeting held in the Harris Hotel, Tarbert, Isle of Harris on Monday 7 November 2011 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell
Mr Robert Emmott
Mrs Morag Munro
Mr Philip R McLean
Catherine MacDonald
10 Members of the Public

Mr Campbell introduced the Meeting by indicating that the Comhairle would not have a clear idea of the budget available to it until 8 December 2011 when the floor calculation would be made by Scottish Government. He explained that the purpose of the floor was for 2012/13 to ensure that all Councils had a minimum level of funding. The floor worked against Councils when funding was reducing rather than increasing. He provided the example of the 2011/12 budget setting process where the operation of the floor had meant that the Comhairle experienced a 4.5% cut in funding rather than the Scottish average of 2.6%. He indicated that the Comhairle's base budget was £118 million. The settlement (prior to the application of the floor) on offer from Scottish Government was a flat cash settlement. Within this settlement local authorities were required to find the funding for inflation, the freezing of council tax and the three change funds announced by Government. For some years Councils had been finding 2% per annum in efficiencies but this was becoming more difficult. The Comhairle was aiming to achieve £1 million of efficiencies. Therefore depending on the impact of the floor a further £1-6 million required to be identified from within the Comhairle's budgets. The Government had also looked at capital. Scottish Government was limited by its own powers and in order to enable it to deliver national infrastructure projects such as the new Forth Road crossing capital money had been removed from Councils in the next two years with a view to it being returned in years 3 and 4. The Comhairle had anticipated that this would happen. However, the impact was £800,000 worse than had been anticipated. He referred to social care as being a great budgetary pressure given the demographics in the Western Isles. Difficulties were experienced in obtaining a sufficient pool of home carers and those who were employed required to travel distances which may be a potential efficiency. Finally he referred to the cost of collecting waste and that this would only increase due to increases in landfill tax. Mr Campbell provided further information to the service choices as detailed on the sheet which had been circulated to all present.

In response to a question he confirmed that the figures were not broken down geographically throughout the Western Isles and that people should indicate where on the line between retain and remove or somewhere in between they felt this service choice ranked. He indicated that following the announcement of the budget and further consideration by Members in December 2011 more sophisticated information would be taken to public meetings in January 2011 which would have been or be in the process of being equality impact assessed.

It was agreed that Mr Emmott would provide information in relation to where service cuts had been achieved in setting the 2011/12 budget.

Mrs Morag Munro indicated that she and her fellow Councillors would also be interested to know which areas the community particularly valued and felt should not be affected as a service choice.

There was some discussion in relation to the air service and whether the withdrawal of this service would be a real saving to the Comhairle. It was indicated that the air service was one of four areas which were taken into account in the calculation of the GAE. However, the total amount of funding available to the Comhairle would not change due to the operation of the floor.

It was clarified that in relation to the bus station what was being proposed was an unmanned service but that the station would still remain open for the purposes of shelter provided an unacceptable level of vandalism did not occur. It was confirmed that the left luggage facility would no longer be available were this choice to be approved.

It was clarified that in relation to Western Isles Citizens Advice Service that this budget was already reducing by 2% a year on the basis of the tender which had been accepted. Voluntary sector budgets were also being reduced by 3% year on year.

A member of the public referred to the difficulties caused by the Council Tax freeze and indicated that most people would be happy to pay more. There was some discussion as to the impact this would have locally which would not be as great as for some other authorities due to the relatively low proportion of the total income available to the Comhairle which came from Council Tax. It was, however, noted that, as this source of income nationally was not available, the Scottish Government could not assume that it would be available to local authorities and therefore in previous years had money which could have been used for other things available towards that end. It was confirmed that this was the one household bill in respect of which the Scottish Government had control. In previous years the Scottish Government had absorbed the cost of the Council Tax freeze but this was the first year in which local authorities were being required to fund this from within the allocated resources.

It was also highlighted that inflation costs including fuel would require to be identified by the Comhairle.

Mr Campbell indicated that the Comhairle would be prepared to look at any innovative options in relation to service choices or raising money. He confirmed that unlike Orkney and Shetland the Comhairle did not carry large financial resources.

There was some discussion about the pressures on the gritting budget and also problems with surface water in certain areas were highlighted.

It was indicated that there had been an excess of street lighting which was not actually good for road safety. It was confirmed that following consultation with community councils that the level of the hours of operation of street lighting had been produced and that the replacement programme had been dramatically scaled back.

The general conclusion of the meeting was that areas of service choices which impacted on young people were the least acceptable.



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

BUDGET CONSULTATION MEETING

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Stornoway, on 8 November 2011 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell
Mr Robert Emmott
Mr Roddie Mackay
Mr Catriona Stewart
Mr Angus MacCormack
Mr Iain Mackenzie
Mr Charlie Nicolson
Mr Murdo Macleod
Mr Philip R Maclean
Mr Donald I Nicolson
30 Members of the Public

Mr Campbell introduced the Meeting by indicating that the Comhairle would not have a clear idea of the budget available to it until 8 December 2011 when the floor calculation would be made by Scottish Government. He explained that the purpose of the floor was for 2012/13 to ensure that all Councils had a minimum level of funding. The floor worked against Councils when funding was reducing rather than increasing. He provided the example of the 2011/12 budget setting process where the operation of the floor had meant that the Comhairle experienced a 4.5% cut in funding rather than the Scottish average of 2.6%. He indicated that the Comhairle's base budget was £118 million. The settlement (prior to the application of the floor) on offer from Scottish Government was a flat cash settlement. Within this settlement local authorities were required to find the funding for inflation, the freezing of council tax and the three change funds announced by Government. For some years Councils had been finding 2% per annum in efficiencies but this was becoming more difficult. The Comhairle was aiming to achieve £1 million of efficiencies. Therefore depending on the impact of the floor a further £1-6 million required to be identified from within the Comhairle's budgets. The Government had also looked at capital. Scottish Government was limited by its own powers and in order to enable it to deliver national infrastructure projects such as the new Forth Road crossing capital money had been removed from Councils in the next two years with a view to it being returned in years 3 and 4. The Comhairle had anticipated that this would happen. However, the impact was £800,000 worse than had been anticipated. He referred to social care as being a great budgetary pressure given the demographics in the Western Isles. Difficulties were experienced in obtaining a sufficient pool of home carers and those who were employed required to travel distances which may be a potential efficiency. Finally he referred to the cost of collecting waste and that this would only increase due to increases in landfill tax. Mr Campbell provided further information to the service choices as detailed on the sheet which had been circulated to all present.

CAPITAL

In relation to Capital Mr Emmott clarified that the cost of borrowing £1 million pounds was approximately £70K in revenue per annum. Therefore foregoing £5m of Capital spend would save approximately £350K from revenue budgets. The point was made that Capital which provided job opportunities may be more worthwhile than elements of the Capital programme which did not. The example was given of tarring roads which spent a lot of money but did not produce many jobs.

WASTE

The possibility of penalising consumers who placed waste in the "wrong" bin was mentioned as was the possibility of incentivising consumers. It was considered that there may be some legal impediment to imposing fines.

BUSES

It was noted that use would be made of the ticketing machine data when reviewing routes to see which routes were required. The importance of looking at preventative spend in this regard was emphasised as it was possible there could be unintended consequences based on ticketing data alone.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

The suggestion was made that an ESCO should be explored with a view to engaging such a company to reduce energy costs. This would take the form of an outside company, externally facilitating the process. This was considered to be a longer term aim.

ROADS

In response to a query as to the possible extension of cycle tracks in the islands, it was noted that the "Safer Routes to School" funding has previously allowed for some cycle tracks to be provided but this funding stream was no longer available. Where possible when carrying out road improvement works carriageways were made slightly wider to facilitate cyclists. The response of the meeting to the reduced operating hours for streetlighting was positive.

PRE-SCHOOL

The point was made that the 0-3 service was very important for working parents. The withdrawal of this service would possibly force parents out of work and potentially of island.

SPORTS

The question was raised as to whether there was any contribution from NHS Western Isles in this regard. It was clarified that the Health Board tended to support one off projects. Perhaps this was something that could be addressed by the Early Intervention Change Fund. The suggestion was also made of considering sports and leisure trusts.

MEMBERS

The Chairman provided background information in relation to the 2011/12 Budget Consultation where elected Members in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar had unanimously agreed that the Comhairle could work effectively with two thirds of the relative members. The single transferable vote system meant that this would give rise to geographically large wards, as wards required to have a minimum of three members. The general consensus of the meeting was that one member, one ward had worked better.

LIBRARIES

The suggestion was made that charges should be imposed for more services in libraries.

THIRD SECTOR

The importance of the services provided by the Sector were highlighted. Any reduction in funding would handicap the Third Sector's capacity to develop preventative measures. Information was provided in relation to the operation of Community Councils.

It was suggested that documents should be made widely available in Council locations etc. The importance of working with the Health Board was emphasised.

It was highlighted that opportunities for accessing external funding were becoming more difficult. The recent growth fund was put forward as an example where there had been £50 million of applications for £4 million of funding.

Appendix C

Budget Choices Summary Outcomes

Budget Area	Members in Support	Average Savings £k	Consultation Score*
Comhairle Members	24	19	1.9
Property and related costs	16	219	2.5
Arts	12	28	2.8
Bio Diversity & Countryside Access	14	11	2.8
Study & Parent Support	13	56	2.8
Air Services	13	252	2.9
Joint Services	11	59	2.9
Ward Priority Fund	19	90	3.0
Gaelic	13	65	3.0
Specialist Care	18	360	3.2
Bus Services	14	308	3.2
Economic Development	9	226	3.3
Education	16	192	3.3
Community Safety	19	13	3.4
Archaeology	9	10	3.4
Trading Standards	14	4	3.4
Community Planning	17	10	3.4
Housing	12	257	3.5
Voluntary Sector	12	120	3.6
Capital	16	105	3.7
Community Education	12	89	3.7
Pre-School Education	15	61	3.7
Libraries	9	86	3.8
Sport	8	153	3.8
Waste Services	12	440	3.8
Public Conveniences	7	16	3.9
Roads and related services	14	189	4.0
School Catering	21	83	4.1
WICAS	21	15	4.3
Employment Support	7	38	4.5
Home Care	13	150	4.5

* A score of 1 represents a strong view to reduce the service and a score of 5 a strong view to retain the service. Only scores below 3 therefore represent an overall preference for any reduction.