

**Briefing Note to Transformation and Resources
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

2 September 2013

Budget Review Group (BRG)

The BRG has met on 2 occasions recently. As previously requested by the committee, I set out for your information a summary of the items discussed:

Provisional Outturn 2012/13 – this showed a favourable of variance of £3k. The major variances – both adverse and favourable - were discussed. Full details of the outturn and the draft statement of accounts were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on 15 July. The accounts are currently being audited by Grant Thornton who will present their findings to the Audit and Risk Committee on 23 September.

Budget Monitoring 2013/14 – the latest monitoring position was discussed. Details of this are given elsewhere on your agenda in the Quarterly Performance and Finance Report. At month 3 the Council's net expenditure is in line with the budget.

Medium Term Financial Strategy – this is currently being updated. Discussions took place in respect of the latest figures. A number of consultation papers have recently been issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that gives more detail behind the financial announcements affecting local government that were made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recent budget. It has become apparent that the headline figure of 10% for further reductions in central government funding to local authorities in 2015/16 is in reality over 15%.

Budget Update 2014/15 – an update was given on the work to identify savings to meet the estimated £2.2m gap. Savings will again be focused around a number of strategic headings – procurement; income generation; staffing efficiencies; good housekeeping; better use of assets and alternative sources of finance.

Advertising Project – an update was given by the Head of Communications regarding the potential to generate additional income from advertising on various council assets.

Funding/Grants Review – an update was given by the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships in respect of the work being undertaken as part of this review.

Capital – the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) gave an update on work being undertaken in respect of future capital programmes and their funding.

I will continue to update members. Details of the above are currently being compiled as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy which both form part of the committee's future agendas.

Councillor Mike Stubbs
Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources