

Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture)

17 December 2013

Initial budget proposals for 2014/15

Comments

Request to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

The Board requests that the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board explores the implications of the Living Wage in its own consideration of the initial budget proposals.

Comments

The Scrutiny Board noted the main features of the executive's initial budget proposals in relation to areas within its remit, and made the following comments on specific elements of the proposals:

- The Board acknowledged the role of City Development in supporting and stimulating future growth in the city, and endorsed the approach being adopted of taking measured risks to invest in the city, for an expected future return.
- In particular the Board welcomed proposals for the development of quality manufacturing premises suitable for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) on Council owned land at Thornes Farm in the Aire Valley Enterprise Zone, as key to unlocking development potential and attracting and retaining manufacturing businesses.
- Members noted the potential impact of regional funding through the Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Board will be considering the Leeds input to the Plan in February.
- The Board discussed the challenges faced in the area of income, particularly in relation to leisure centres, including competition from the private sector and the nature of the council's role as a provider, ensuring access to sport for all residents. It was felt that there was a need for further investment in the condition of the council's leisure centres for their future sustainability. The Board recommends that further consideration be given to ways in which this could be achieved, through some limited capital investment in improvements in the short term and/or through revisiting other options such as the creation of an arms length trust in the longer term. The Scrutiny Board would be keen to contribute to any work to explore longer term options.
- The Scrutiny Board would be keen to contribute to the proposed work on sustainability of events at the appropriate time.