

Finance Key Questions

- How will the budget reflect investments that are aimed at achieving longer-term savings – ‘invest to save’?
- What consideration has been given to maximising income (e.g. income from sales, fees and charges etc.)?
- What is the anticipated impact of efficiency targets on the budget and how is the council planning ahead to deal with the cumulative effects of efficiency targets?
- What is the anticipated impact of budget pressures on:
 - services
 - performance
 - clients/service users
 - partnerships and joint working
 - staffing levels
- What choices and options did you have when setting your budget targets?
- How were decisions arrived at in order to decide between options?
- How do your budget targets contribute to the achievement of corporate priorities?
- Is this external funding time-limited – if yes, have we got an exit strategy?
- Are we making full use of prudential borrowing and trading and charging powers?
- How can our income be increased in a sustainable way?
- How much of our budget is fixed – what do we have discretion over?
- Can you clarify how setting the budget is linked to medium term financial planning?
- How do we use the medium term financial strategy to decide on resource allocation to corporate and service priorities?
- Are the level of reserves appropriate and what is the logic behind that level?
- How reliable are these forecasts?
- What assumptions are these based on?
- What factors could have an adverse impact on these assumptions?

- What the reasons are for underspend?
- Why is a service overspending but not delivering on key indicators – is it due to high demand and or unforeseen costs?
- What actions are being taken to remedy the position and how robust are they?
- Are there emerging trends that we need to be concerned about?
- What can we learn from other authorities?