

Action Plan following Interim Report of March 2009

	Recommendation	Actions	Status
1.	That the corporate cycle illustrated at Appendix B of the interim report be endorsed by the Cabinet and used to inform future budget-, consultation-, service- and scrutiny-planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed by Cabinet 12 March 09 Head of Accountancy and Corporate Manager, Customer and Community Services are using this 	√
2.	That a closer working relationship is established between the accountancy team and cost centre managers to improve ongoing financial control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate managers now invite accountancy colleagues to team meetings/service planning as appropriate Reporting through integrated business monitoring process has improved Executive Director Corporate Services regularly meets all corporate managers 	√
3.	That a procedure be adopted for budget variances of more than +/- 5% and more than +/- £2,500 (both conditions to apply) within individual service levels whereby the relevant cost centre manager must justify the variance to the Chief Finance Officer and the Finance Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure is now part of integrated business monitoring process Executive Director Corporate Services is fostering a 'no surprises' approach to financial management; so budget variances are spotted ahead of time and planned for. 	√
4.	That a budget roll-over from the previous year be permitted only where the budget-holder can show that the current year's budget has been fully committed and that there were no other sources of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to constitution agreed by Council 23 April 2009. Minute 102 (c) refers. 	√
5.	That it be ensured that all cost centre managers receive at least one core skills training session to understand the procedures and processes relevant to their financial management role and that this be a feature of performance appraisals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New management competency framework has 'financial awareness' as one of the 14 competencies so relevant managers get appropriate finance training 	√
6.	That officers examine whether budget proposals could be accompanied by more performance information showing comparative data and the potential impact that budget proposals could have on performance. This would ensure a more accurate way of analysing spending and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance portfolio holder is satisfied that integrated business monitoring reports are meeting this objective. Also, Corvu gives ready access to performance data. 2010/11 service plans are beginning to deliver this objective; will develop in future years 	☺

	Recommendation	Actions	Status
7.	That the Council presents its financial information more clearly and concisely electronically so that it could be more easily understood by residents providing this could be accommodated within existing budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in community engagement strategy published July 2009 • Web site is clearer and simpler now • On-line (and paper) council tax leaflet simplified for March 2010 issue • Plans for a simpler summary of accounts with highlights and headlines 	☺
8.	That the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder discuss the level of detail presented in reports to Council bodies, other than full Council (which must receive comprehensive information as part of its budget-setting process) to enable members' discussions to focus on strategic consideration linked to the Council's priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the task and finish group, Cllr Hockney confirms a noticeable improvement. • Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Edwards is pleased that portfolio holders' meetings are receiving the detail so Cabinet remains strategic 	√
9.	That the Council present financial and performance information for residents in such a way that value for money can be more readily understood, with promotion of the low council tax level and high value for money provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in community engagement strategy published July 2009 • Council tax leaflet for March 2010 begins to address this • Communications team's 2010/11 work plan includes commitment to better promote vfm 	☺
10.	That the Council's community engagement strategy include cross-cutting public involvement in the budget process, which should aim to include all sections of the community, business, parish council and voluntary sector partners and at times when it can genuinely have an influence, likely at an early stage in the budget-setting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in Appendix A of community engagement strategy July 09 • Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Edwards confirms more robust and interactive budget consultation via December 2009 magazine and business conference • CPALC Parish Forum consulted November 2009 • Cambridge Chamber of Commerce consulted by Executive Director Corporate Services in person Feb 2010 	√
11.	That the annual training programme for Members include at least one refresher session for all Members regarding their role in understanding and influencing the Council's budget and financial processes and that an annual refresher session be offered for scrutiny monitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny monitors' refresher held June 2009 • Members' budget training session held 4 February 2010 • Executive Director Corporate Services plans annual workshop from December 2010 	☺

√ = complete ☺ = on target ☹ = some slippage ☹ = failed to achieve