

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

BUDGET – CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT BUDGET

PURPOSE

1. To comment on the draft budget for the three years 2003-06, as tabled by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities and debated in Plenary on 15 October 2002.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Committee comments on the Considerations paper at **Annex 1** and the draft budget tables for Local Government, Housing and Communities at **Annex 2**.

BACKGROUND

3. This Budget Planning Round affects the financial year 2003-04 and the two years beyond. In some cases, additional resources have been secured for 2003-04 only, and provision for future years will be sought in future Budget Planning Rounds as appropriate.

4. This budget will have an important bearing on progress towards meeting the 2010 benchmarks set out in Better Wales for the programme areas covered by the Local Government, Housing and Communities portfolio, which is the remit of this Committee. These are the totality of service delivery by local government, and the funding issues that arise from that service delivery, as well as housing, urban regeneration and crime reduction.

5. I presented to the Committee a commissioning paper on 21 May, and an issues paper on 26 June the Committee set out its priorities in a letter from the Chair dated 11 July.

6. I set out the Assembly's draft budget on 15 October, and, having taken account of the comments from subject committees will move the final budget early in November.

COMPLIANCE

7. This paper has been prepared in compliance with Assembly Standing Order 19 which states that "as soon as practicable after the Assembly has taken note of the draft budget, each Assembly Secretary who is a member of a subject committee shall seek its views on the draft budget and convey them to the Assembly Secretary for Finance".

POLICY CONTACT

8. Mike Chown, Head of Local Government Finance Division.