

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMBER BUDGET IN DEPTH SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Scrutiny Committee – 15 July 2014

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of effective management of Council resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Ramsay

Contact Officer(s) Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153

Recommendation to Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Decide if the Committee wish to set up a Member Budget Working Group; and if they do:
- (b) Agree terms of reference, timescales, membership and appoint a Chairman of the group.

Reason for recommendation: to enable a small working group of Members to meet more frequently and report back to the Scrutiny Committee on its findings for consideration.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Members are asked to consider setting up a Budget Working Group to report back its findings to the Scrutiny Committee. Members should note that any working group will last no longer than the municipal year it is set up unless reconstituted the following year.
- 2 A Member Budget Working Group was set up at Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2013 with the following terms of reference:
 - a) The membership of the Working Group to consist of 5 Councillors who do not sit on the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee.
 - b) The Working Group to be set up for the consideration of the following only:
 - i. The draft budget presented to Cabinet on 5 December 2013.
 - c) The Working Group to regularly report back in line with the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan.

- 3 The Working Group reported back to the Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2014. Members raised concerns that the former terms of reference had been too wide. The Chairman agreed that scrutiny of the next budget would also need to begin sooner. The Committee agreed the Working Group should not duplicate the work of the Advisory Committees.
- 4 At the Scrutiny Committee on 2 April 2014, the meeting was advised that the Working Group had not met since the previous meeting of the Committee. The Vice Chairman indicated that a new Budget Working Group could be set up either to look at the budget itself or to consider the process by which it was made, comparing the process with that of other local authorities. Members felt a Working Group could be useful but it would require tight terms of reference from the Committee to clarify the matter they felt should be scrutinised. It was agreed that no working group would be constituted but this could be reconsidered once the new Scrutiny Committee had met in the new municipal year.
- 5 If it is decided for the Member Working Group to look at the budget process, they would need to report back to the next Scrutiny Committee on 2 October 2014 as the process is expected to start in September.
- 6 The table below shows a summary of the 2014/15 Budget Setting Timetable. The timetable for 2015/16 has not yet been finalised.

Stage	Report	Month	Committee
1	Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy	Sept	FRAC, Cabinet
2	Review of Service Plans and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)	Oct - Nov	Advisory Committees
3	Budget Update	Dec	Cabinet
4	Budget Update	Jan	Cabinet
5	Budget Update and further review of SCIAs (if required)	Jan	Advisory Committees
6	Budget Setting Meeting	Feb	Cabinet
7	Budget Setting Meeting (incl. Council Tax setting)	Feb	Council

Key Implications

Financial

Financial implications are covered in the 2014/15 budget reports.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Not at this stage	Individual equalities assessments will be completed for all of the Service Change Impact assessments (SCIAs) to ensure the decision making process is fair and transparent.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

[2014/15 Budget reports to Council, Cabinet and the Advisory Committees](#)

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer