

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1st September 2015

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – BUDGET SCRUTINY 2015/16

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No |
| Relevant Director | Jayne Pickering, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources |
| Ward(s) Affected | No specific ward relevance. |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report is designed to enable Members to discuss a preferred approach to budget scrutiny for 2015/16.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) to identify and agree a preferred approach to budget scrutiny in 2015/16;**
- 2) that the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 Every year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee contributes to the Council's budget setting process. This process generally starts in the autumn and provides Members with an opportunity to make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding budget savings and the Council's future budget.
- 3.2 In 2014/15 a new approach was adopted to presenting budgetary information for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. For the first time information was presented in relation to the Council's strategic purposes. Additional information was also requested by Members to enable the Committee to compare budget information for different years.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18, containing the Executive Committee's proposals for the Council's budget over the following three year period, in February 2015. During this meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed some disappointment in the manner in which budgetary information had been presented for their consideration that year.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1st September 2015

- 3.4 On this basis Members concurred it would be useful for the Committee to agree a preferred approach to budget scrutiny in early autumn 2015 prior to the start of the next budget scrutiny process. This report provides Members with an opportunity to discuss this matter further.
- 3.5 In August 2015 the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Potter, met with the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to discuss a possible approach to budget scrutiny for the year. Suggestions raised during this meeting have informed the design of a template for budget scrutiny which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.6 Members are asked to note that as Appendix 1 is a draft template, which is designed to facilitate discussions about a preferred presentation style, no figures have been provided in this report.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in the Council's budget setting process. Scrutiny Members can make informed recommendations to the Executive Committee about the Council's budget based on evidence gathered during discussions. The Committee can also hold the Executive Committee to account for expenditure during the year and review any savings which have been achieved.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no specific legal implications to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 It is possible that when reviewing budget scrutiny reports during the year Members may have concerns about particular service areas. It would be appropriate in these circumstances for the Committee to ask to consider more detailed budgetary information in relation to these services as part of the budget scrutiny process.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 The Committee may wish to consider the impact of any proposed budgetary changes on customers and any equalities and diversity implications as part of the budget scrutiny process.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider whether the proposed style of presentation will enhance Members' ability to identify any potential risks arising from the proposed budget.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1st September 2015

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Template budget scrutiny spreadsheet.

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