

BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL; DRAFT WORK PLAN

Panel Aims

- To provide cross-party challenge to the budget proposals brought forward by the administration.
- To understand the cumulative affect of budget cuts across the council, city, for service users and providers.
- To begin looking at public service budgets across the piece – fire, police, health
- To make recommendations to Cabinet as to how to improve the budget

Budget Process Timetable

Table 4 – Proposed 2012/13 Budget Timetable		
Date	Meeting	Papers / Activities
22 nd September	Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Plan & Medium Term Financial Strategy ○ Month 4 Forecasts of 2011/12 budget position ○ Public Consultation begins
October / November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Star Chamber process
End November / beginning December		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provisional 2012/13 Local Government Finance Settlement
8 th December	Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget update and savings package
19 th Jan 2012	Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tax base report
9 th Feb 2012	Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Month 9 Forecasts of 2011/12 budget position ○ General Fund Revenue 2012/13 Budget ○ Housing Revenue Account Budget ○ Capital Programme
27 th Feb 2012	Budget Council	

Suggested Scrutiny Panel Timetable & Witnesses

7th November 2011, Private Scoping Meeting, Committee Room 1 HTH – 2-3pm

- Election of Chair
- Timetable of meetings
- Ways of working
- Witnesses

2nd December 2011, Committee Room 3, HTH – 3-5pm

- Budget Process/Overall Financial Context/General Budget Proposals
 - Cllr Jason Kitcat, Cabinet Member for Finance & Central Services
 - Director of Finance, Catherine Vaughan
- Draft Budget Proposals Place
 - Cllr Pete West, Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability
 - Strategic Director Place, Geoff Raw
- NB – meeting is booked to start at 2pm but witnesses are arriving at 3pm. This allows an hour to go through some lines of questioning and any outstanding issues from the scoping meeting.

5th December 2011, Committee Room 1, HTH – 2-5pm

- Draft Budget Proposals Place
 - Cllr Amy Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Planning, Employment, Economy and Regeneration
 - Strategic Director Place, Geoff Raw

9th December 2011 – Committee Room 1, HTH – 2-5pm

- Draft Budget Proposals People
 - Cllr Jarrett – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
 - Cllr Shanks – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People
 - Strategic Director People, Terry Parkin
 - Director of Adult Social Care, Denise D'Souza

6th January 2012 – Committee Room 3, HTH – 2-5pm

- Draft Budget Proposals Resources
 - Cllr Jason Kitcat
 - Strategic Director Resources, Charlie Stewart
- Draft Budget Proposals Place
 - Cllr Davey, Cabinet Member for Transport & the Public Realm
 - Strategic Director Place, Geoff Raw

9th January 2012 – Committee Room 1, HTH – 2-5pm

- Draft Budget Proposals Communities
 - Cllr Geoffrey Bowden, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism
 - Cllr Ben Duncan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety
 - Strategic Director Communities, David Murray

20th January 2012, Council Chamber, HTH – 2-5pm

- Panel meeting to agree final report and recommendations

31 January – Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- Panel reports back to OSC with recommendations

Possible Issues to Consider

1. What are long term financial risks to the authority and what action is being taken to mitigate them?
2. How has the Intelligent Commissioning process influenced the budget proposals?
3. Can you explain the process through which levels of savings have been allocated to each service?
4. What processes exist for identifying the cumulative affects of budget cuts on specific groups/sectors?
5. Is there evidence of funding being directed towards the authority's/LSPs priorities? How do your budget priorities reflect those set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy?
6. What are the principle risks for specific services area budgets for 2012/13? What action is planned to mitigate these risks?
7. Were all the savings targets released for 2011/12? If not which weren't and why? How will this impact on future saving targets?
8. What are the most significant pressures affecting specific budgets? Are these fully accounted for in proposals?
9. What are the major areas for service improvements? How are you reprioritising funds?
10. How are savings targets going to be delivered? How have they been delivered during 2011/12?
11. Can you summarise the staffing proposals including vacancy management? What are the potential service implications? Indicating the anticipated reductions in terms of full time equivalentents (FTEs)?
12. What other options were considered including efficiency or service reductions and why were they rejected?
13. How does the local authority's budget allocation to specific service areas compare with similar Authorities?
14. Is the authority providing services above the statutory minimum standard that were not local priorities?
15. Have any alternative forms of service delivery been considered such as partnership working in order to reduce costs?

16. Are financial/service plans aligned with the human resources/ICT/accommodation policies plans and strategies?
17. Are the local authority's financial reserves sufficient to guard against medium-long term financial risks?
18. Who was consulted in the development of the current budget programme and how robust was this consultation?
19. How does the selection of capital projects link to the council's corporate priorities?
20. In what ways has good practice been sought and implemented in the management of the capital programme?
21. How have you sought to maximise sources of income?
22. Is there evidence that the Council has moved away from a salami-slicing process to deliver cuts?

Recommendations from the In-Year Budget Reductions Scrutiny Panel 2010/11

1. The Panel recommends that where service changes are proposed early and clear consultation with service users, employees and partners is ensured.
2. The Panel recommends that where not already in existence a clear understanding of priorities for and outcomes of, funding are available for all services. These should be reviewed regularly.
3. The Panel welcomes the strong partnership evident across the city and beyond and recommends that creative ways of strengthening sustainable partnership working on changing budgets be developed.
4. The Panel recommends that Equality Impact Assessments be undertaken for all major budgetary decisions and published as a matter of routine with budget papers. Risk and opportunity management consultation should also be reported.
5. The Panel recommends that the ongoing and longer term impacts of budget reductions should be monitored. The Council and partners need to agree a way to ensure that the impacts of changing budgets are understood.
6. The Panel recommends closer working with the CVSF to help improve dialogue between organisations linked to delivering the SCS priorities.

Cross-cutting issues to be aware of:

- Equality Impact Appraisals
- Cumulative Affect
- Partnership Working
- Impact of intelligent commissioning

