

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Resources Policy Development & Scrutiny
MEETING DATE:	10 February 2014
TITLE:	Council Budget 2014/15 & Medium Term Plans
WARD:	ALL

AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

List of attachments to this report:

1. **Council Budget Report** – a copy of the draft budget report together with all associated appendices for the Cabinet meeting on the 12th February will be sent separately as soon as it is available for publication (which is expected to be Tuesday 4th February).
2. **Summary of PDS Comments on medium term plans** – summary based on the minutes from each of the PDS meetings in November attached (including a presentation to the Early Years Panel).

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The panel is invited to comment on the draft budget report that will be submitted to Cabinet on the 12th February.
- 1.2 The Comments of the panel will be communicated to the Cabinet in advance of their meeting so that they can be taken into account as the Cabinet finalises its recommendations to Council on the budget and the medium term plans.
- 1.3 Summaries of the autumn Budget Fair discussions have previously been circulated, and are available. These helped inform subsequent PDS discussions in November.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The panel is asked to comment on the draft budget report and:

- 2.1 Highlight any issues that require further consideration by Cabinet, and
- 2.2 If any changes are suggested clarify the reason for the proposed changes together with how they should be financed.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The draft budget sets out the financial matters for consideration together with the policy context and relevant Government announcements.
- 3.2 Early identification of any potential and changes or issues enables the Cabinet to consider at its 12th February meeting, in advance of the 18th February Full Council

meeting, and to obtain Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer advice. This PDS meeting is an ideal opportunity to highlight any such issues. This will help avoid delays, the possibility of the need for a second Council meeting to agree the budget, and expensive delays to the Council Tax billing process.

4 THE REPORT

4.1 The attachments to this report are self-explanatory and are available for comment.

4.2 This is the second year in what is effectively a 3-year budget, so the emphasis is on a few necessary variations to reflect recent Government announcements and updates to plans. Generally the 3-year budget is on track as explained in the report.

4.3 A presentation that went to the February Early Years PDS is also attached for information as it contains key information about a savings target that has attracted significant political discussion.

4.4 Other issues not answered within the minutes summary are:

- Resources – request for further consideration of LEP decisions and finance. The budget report refers and there are no new commitments arising from LEP decisions and discussions. City Deal has previously been presented to the panel, but a further report to the panel can be scheduled about this and the additional funding it provides, together with explanations about governance as required. LEP decisions cannot commit individual local authority resources, and projects have to be underwritten by the sponsoring local authority.
- Housing & Major Projects – no new issues. Report noted.
- Planning & Transport – no new issues. Report noted.
- Wellbeing PDS - some concern about cuts to budgets affecting services in the purview of this panel and those affecting the vulnerable. The minutes explain how resources are targeted to avoid impacts on the most vulnerable and the draft budget report refers to a Better Care plan to be completed by the end of March and considered by the Health & Wellbeing Board. Some additional Government funding is expected to become available as a result of this initiative by integrating some health and social care budgets (at a national and local level) in future years.
- Early years – some concern about a range of small budget cuts and the impacts were explained. Main concern is the provision for Early Years and Children’s centres. The attached presentation explains the proposed plans. An additional annual £500K has been added back by the Cabinet (in the draft budget report) to reduce the level of savings required. It should be noted most of the savings don’t commence until 2015/16 albeit new arrangements need to be implemented in advance.
- Economic Development – no new issues. Report noted.

- **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- The budget report includes an assessment of the risks including the impact of savings on services, the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves.

- **EQUALITIES**

- Equalities issues have already been addressed through the medium term planning process.

- **CONSULTATION**

- PDS panels were consulted on the medium term plans. Budget fairs were run with the main stakeholders.

- **ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

- *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations – are all relevant.*

- **ADVICE SOUGHT**

- All Council statutory officers have been directly involved in the production of the budget report, especially the S151 officer who is the lead officer for the report.

Contact person	<i>Andrew Pate – Strategic Director – Resources – tel 01225 477300</i>
Background papers	<i>Medium Term Plans as considered by PDS panels in November and published on the democratic services part of the web site</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	