

# **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 JANUARY 2019**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

#### **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019-20 to 2022-23 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Committee with:

- a) the final report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) attached at Appendix A;
- b) the responses from all the Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committees in relation to Cabinet's draft budget proposals, attached at Appendix B.

#### **2. Connection to the Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2018–2022 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 22 February 2018 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2018 and 2022. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

#### **3. Background**

3.1 In considering the challenges associated with continued budget reductions, Members recognised the need for a 'whole Council' response to be adopted in managing anticipated cuts to services against a backdrop of increasing demand and the challenging financial outlook.

3.2 It was therefore recommended that a Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) be established to engage Members on budget proposals as well as to enable members to feed in community intelligence gained from their representative role and to engage in shaping future service provision.

3.3 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) has the overall responsibility for budget monitoring throughout the year. As such it was agreed at a meeting of Council in September 2017 that it would continue this role and appoint BREP from within its Members of the COSC.

3.4 The purpose of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel was subsequently agreed as the following:

- To achieve consensus on the direction of the budget over the life of the medium term financial strategy.
- To achieve a detailed overview and assessment of the budget proposals where the expertise and knowledge of each Committee contributes to a Corporate understanding and appreciation of the draft budget proposals;
- To assist the Council to develop a budget for the forthcoming year that aims to meet the needs of the communities of Bridgend County Borough;
- To facilitate firmer understanding of the budget setting process and the draft proposals in order to assist the Committees in making informed comments, constructive challenge or recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

3.5 Members would be presented with the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2022-23 and asked to consider the information contained in the report and determine whether they wish to make comments or recommendations for consolidation and inclusion in the report to Cabinet on the draft budget proposals as part of the budget consultation process.

#### **4. Current Situation/Proposal**

- 4.1 The BREP has met on seven separate occasions and examined by means of semi-structured interviews with Directors and Officers the Budget Strategy for the Council as a whole.
- 4.2 Detailed information was requested from Officers to inform discussions regarding the rationale behind the early draft proposals, their impact and how they linked to the Corporate priorities.
- 4.3 The BREP also invited the Cabinet Member – Resources/Deputy Leader and Gill Lewis the Interim Head of Finance and S151 officer to attend each meeting to be part of the BREP process.
- 4.4 The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the findings of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel attached at **Appendix A** and determine whether the recommendations should be forwarded to Cabinet along with the consolidated responses from all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees at **Appendix B** as part of the budget consultation process.

#### **5. Effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 This item relates to the role of Overview & Scrutiny Committees as consultees in respect of the budget setting process.

#### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 The report received by Cabinet on 20 November 2018 on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2022-23 states that the proposals contained within the report cover a wide range of services and it is inevitable that the necessary budget reductions will impact on the local population in different ways. In developing

these proposals, consideration has been given to their potential impact on protected groups within the community and on how to avoid a disproportionate impact on people within these groups.

6.2 The Cabinet report further stated that an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out and included within the Final MTFS in February 2019.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment**

7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the budget setting process for both the short-term and in the long-term.
- Prevention - The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the budget setting process by approving and shaping preventative measures provided by Directorates to generate savings.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration – The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the budget setting process by approving and shaping collaboration and integrated working to generate savings.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 The report relates to the budget setting process and the financial implications associated with that.

## **9. Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to determine whether it wishes to submit the recommendations outlined at Appendix A and B to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process, subject to any modifications and amendments that the Committee decides are appropriate.

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## **Background Documents:**

Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution  
Part II of the Local Government Act 2000: Executive Arrangements