

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

8 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022-23 TO 2025-26 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with the findings and recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) in relation to:
- a) the report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) attached at **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**;
 - b) the comments and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committees in relation to the draft MTFS including the proposed budget pressures and budget reduction proposals, as part of the budget consultation process attached as **Appendix C**.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

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 in 2017, that a Budget Research and Evaluation Panel 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 has the overall responsibility of scrutinising budget monitoring reports 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 members from within the COSC membership.

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 of Scrutiny Committees would be presented with the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 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 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of the BREP and all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 1 February 2022 to determine whether the recommendations should be forwarded to Cabinet, as part of the budget consultation process.

4.2 For ease of reference the Recommendations are split into the following separate appendices:

Appendix A - BREP final report with findings and recommendations of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26.

Appendix B - BREP list of Recommendations from the final report.

Appendix C - Comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny

Committees on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26.

4.3 The Committee accepted the recommendations and comments from both the BREP and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and agreed to submit them to the Cabinet.

5. Effect upon 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 Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

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.
- Involvement - Publication of the report ensures that the public and stakeholders can review the work that has been undertaken by Scrutiny members.

8. Financial implications

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

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the Recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in response to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and the Draft Budget Consultation Process.

2 February 2022

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