

# **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO CABINET**

**1 MARCH 2016**

### **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 to 2019-20 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present Cabinet with the findings and recommendations of the Corporate Resource's and Improvement Committee in relation to:
- a) the findings of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) attached at Appendix A;
  - b) the responses from all the 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 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 25 February 2015 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. 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 of the 2013/14 BREP recognised the need for a 'whole Council' response to be adopted in managing anticipated cuts to services against a backdrop of increasing demand, public sector reform and the challenging financial outlook.
- 3.2 The BREP recommended that a Standing BREP be established to engage Members on budget proposals and to enable them to contribute community intelligence gained from their representative role towards shaping future service provision. This recommendation was endorsed by the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee and by Cabinet as part of the 2013/14 draft budget consultation process.
- 3.3 It was agreed that each Scrutiny Committee would nominate two members to sit on the Standing BREP and for 2015-16 the Panel consisted of:

*Cllr M Reeves (Chair of BREP and Chair of Corporate Resources and Improvement)*

*Cllr J Spanswick (Chair of Community Environment and Leisure)*

*Cllr D Sage (Chair of Adult Social Care)*

*Cllr N Clarke (Chair of Partnerships and Governance)*

*Cllr P Foley (Chair of Children and Young People)*

*Cllr C Green*

*Cllr C Reeves*

*Cllr C Westwood*

*Cllr A Owen*

*Cllr M Thomas*

3.4 The primary purpose of the approach was :

- 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 pertaining to each Committee service area contributes to a corporate understanding and appreciation of the draft budget proposals.
- To assist the Council to develop a budget for 2016/17 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 and recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

### **Methodology**

3.5 The Standing BREP met on seven separate occasions and examined the Budget Strategy for the Council as a whole and individual draft budget proposals for each Directorate by means of interviews with Directors and Officers.

3.6 The Panel requested presentations and detailed information to inform discussions regarding the direction of future budget cuts across the Authority including the rationale behind the early draft proposals and how they linked to the new Corporate priorities.

3.7 The Standing BREP also met with the Chief Executive and the Leader to discuss the budget proposals in line with the points set out in 3.4.

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

4.1 The Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of the BREP on 9 February 2016 to determine whether the recommendations should be forwarded to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

4.2 At this meeting, the Committee reiterated the point made in the BREP report that year on year opportunities to identify budget reductions are becoming fewer and less sustainable be reinforced in the final report to Cabinet.

4.3 The Committee further commented that all Equality Impact Assessments should take into account the accumulative impact of budget cuts on specific services, groups and individuals.

4.4 The Committee accepted the recommendations and comments from both the BREP and the five Scrutiny Committees and agreed to submit them to Cabinet subject to a series of amendments which have been incorporated in the Appendices.

## **5. Effects on 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. Equalities Impact**

6.1 The draft budget proposals 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 the proposals contained within the appendices, 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 All the savings proposals have been reviewed independently and a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken before the final recommendations are made concerning next year's revenue budget.

## **7. Financial Implications**

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

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in response to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-17 to 2019-20 and the Draft Budget Consultation Process.

**PA Jolley**

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**21 January 2016**

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**Background Documents:**

Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution

Part II of the Local Government Act 2000: Executive Arrangements