

TITLE: BUDGET 2025/26 – PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

Meeting:	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee
Date:	17 th January 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Councillor Carole Pattison
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No No – pre-decision scrutiny
Purpose of Report The Committee is invited to consider the Council’s draft budget proposals for 2025/26, as agreed by Cabinet on 10 th December 2024, so that the comments made can be included within the consultation response and reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 11 th February 2025 and Council at its meeting on 5 th March 2025.	
Recommendations The Committee is asked for its response to the draft budget proposals for 2025/26 in the context of the four areas of focus set out at paragraph 1.2 of this report. Reasons for Recommendations The Committee’s response will be reported to Cabinet and Council when these bodies consider setting the budget for 2025/26.	
Resource Implications: Not applicable	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate 19-12-24
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Samantha Lawton 7-1-25

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: public

Has GDPR been considered? No personal data is included in this report.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is invited to consider the draft budget proposals for 2025/26, as agreed by Cabinet on 10th December 2024, so that its response can be reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 11th February 2025 and Council at its meeting on 5th March 2025.

1.2 To help ensure that scrutiny is undertaken at a strategic level and adds value to the budget setting process, it is suggested that the Committee focus on the four lines of enquiry set out below:

- (i) To what extent are the budget proposals in line with Central Government policy, pressures and directives.
- (ii) To what extent will the budget proposals ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes detailed within the Council Plan bearing in mind the identified constraints.
- (iii) To what extent do the budget proposals demonstrate that the results of any engagement, research or other evidence have been taken into account.
- (iv) To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed.

1.3 The Committee's response will be reported to Cabinet and Council when these bodies consider the final budget for 2025/26.

1.4 An indicative order of business/timetable is set out below:

10:30 High level introduction to Council Plan and Budget by the Leader and the Chief Executive,
followed by presentation by Service Director, Finance and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Regeneration

The relevant Portfolio Holder and Executive Director will provide an overview of the key pressures and savings for their directorate, including capital expenditure, followed by the opportunity for the Committee to ask questions:

11:00 Adults & Health Directorate
11:25 Children & Families Directorate
11:50 Place Directorate
including the Housing Revenue Account
12:15 Corporate Directorate

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 The draft budget proposals for 2025/26 are set out in the report to Cabinet on 10th December 2025 which can be accessed using the following link:
[Cabinet Report - Budget Proposals 2025/26 \(10-12-24\)](#)

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The Committee is asked to give consideration to the impact of the budget proposals on the priorities and outcomes within the Council Plan so that its comments can be reported to Cabinet and Council.

3.2 Financial Implications

Not applicable to this report.

3.3 Legal Implications

Not applicable to this report.

3.8 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

Not applicable to this report.

4. Consultation

Not applicable to this report but consultation on the draft budget proposals is ongoing and the results will be reported to the Cabinet and Council when the final budget for 2025/26 is considered.

5. Engagement

5.1 Cross-party budget meetings have brought all the group leaders together to receive regular updates on the development and delivery of the Council's budget. The forum provides group leaders with an opportunity to ask questions, and to provide feedback as part of this process. It is attended by the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and also includes the Service Director for Finance. The first meeting took place on the 29th August 2024 and it continues to meet on a two-weekly basis.

5.2 Engagement with each political group will be undertaken between 13th and 21st January 2025

5.3 The public consultation to support the 2025/26 annual budget was launched on 11th December 2024 and will run up until 15 January 2025.
The consultation was made available online and was supported by information providing an overview of what the Council does and the funding challenges the Council was currently facing. The supporting information also provided a summary of the proposed areas for savings which are included in the budget documentation.
The consultation asked the public for their opinions on the draft budget, and whether they would be impacted by any of the savings proposals.
The consultation was promoted to citizens, communities, businesses and partners. Feedback from the consultation will be collated, analysed and used to help inform final decision making related to the budget. A summary of the consultation results will be provided alongside the budget at Cabinet on the 11 February, and at Council on the 5 March 2025

6. Options

Not applicable

7. Next steps and timelines

The Committee's response will be reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 11th February 2025 and Council at its meeting on 5th March 2025.

8. Contact officer

Leigh Webb – Head of Governance.

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Report to Cabinet 10-12-24 – Budget Proposals 2025/26.

10. Appendices

None

11. Service Director responsible

Samantha Lawton, Service Director Legal, Governance and Commissioning