

Budget Review 2017-18 – draft project scope

Review Topic	Budget Review 2017-18
Lead Member Review Group	Councillor Craig Simmons
Other Review Group Members	Councillors Jean Fooks, James Fry & Sian Taylor Housing Panel members may be invited to join the Review Group for one meeting.
Officer Support and allocate hours	Scrutiny Officer support – approx. 3 days per week from mid-December 2016 to mid-February 2017. Additional support from the Head of Financial Services and other Senior Officers who attend Budget Review meetings.
Background	<p>The Finance Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee) is responsible for scrutinising finance and budgetary issues and decisions, including the Budget 2017/18 decision.</p> <p>The Budget 2017/18 paperwork will be published for consultation in December 2016, ahead of a decision in February 2017. In recent years the Panel has formed a Budget Review Group to scrutinise the budget proposals in detail before reporting to the City Executive Board in February.</p> <p>Last year Housing Panel members joined the Review Group for scrutiny of housing budget proposals.</p>
Rationale	To scrutinise the Council's draft budget for 2017-18 and medium term financial plan for the following three years.
Key lines of inquiry	<p>Areas of focus for the Budget Review Group this year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current spend against budgets; • Assumptions about expected cost pressures and projected income from different streams (grants, trading, business rates, fees and charges etc.); • The robustness of planned savings and efficiencies; • The outcomes of comprehensive service budget reviews; • The allocation of contingencies and earmarked reserves; • Capital programme spending and priorities; • The robustness of the HRA Business Plan, including the expected impacts of government policy changes on the HRA and any implications for the General Fund; • How the Council-owned Housing Company will be funded; <p>The Finance Panel on 1 February 2017 will pre-scrutinise decisions on the Council's Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18.</p>

Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust independent scrutiny of budget proposals; • Detailed consideration of key lines of inquiry; • High quality engagement with Senior Officers; • The production of a report with recommendations; • Broad agreement on conclusions and recommendations amongst Review Group members; • The majority of recommendations are agreed by the City Executive Board. 		
Methodology/ Approach	<p>Evidence gathering to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget briefing by the Head of Financial Services, • Reviewing all Budget 2017/18 paperwork; • Submitting written questions to Directors and reviewing their responses; • Meetings with all Executive Directors and other Senior Officers. 		
Specify Witnesses/ Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive; • Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services; • Executive Director for Community Services; • Executive Director for Housing and Regeneration; • Head of Financial Services; • Head of Housing and Property; • Head of Direct Services; • Assistant Chief Executive; • Head of Planning and Regulatory Services; • Head of Community Services; • Head of Business Improvement; • Management Accountancy Manager. <p>Board Members will also be invited to attend relevant sessions.</p>		
Projected start date	12 December 2016	Draft Report Deadline	24 January 2017 for Finance Panel
Meeting Frequency	4 meetings in January 2017	Projected completion date	9 February 2017 CEB

Draft outline of meetings

Meeting one – Thursday 5 January 2017, 5.30pm-7.30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget briefing by Head of Financial Services• Community Services directorate budget proposals
Meeting two – Monday 9 January 2017, 5.30pm-7.30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Executive's overview of the Council's financial position• OD & CS directorate budget proposals• Assistant Chief Executive service area budget proposals
Meeting three – Tuesday 10 January 2017, 5.30pm-8.00pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing & Regeneration directorate budget proposals• Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
Meeting four – Monday 16 January 2017, 5.30pm-7.30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcomes of comprehensive service reviews• Agreement of Budget Review recommendations

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