

Report of the Portfolio of Resources and Personnel Policy

BUDGET TIMETABLE AND BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/251. Purpose of report

To advise on the budget consultation process for 2024/25 and to set out the proposed timetable and budget scrutiny process.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the budget setting process for 2024/25 and the Budget Consultation questionnaire be approved.

3. Detail

The proposed budget preparation timetable and budget consultation process for 2024/25 is set out in appendix 1. This will culminate in the overall budget report being recommended to Council for approval in March 2024.

Under the Constitution, it is proposed that elements of the budget are reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for detailed scrutiny. An overall budget report will then be presented to Cabinet on 6 February 2023 for recommendation to Council on 6 March 2024.

The budget consultation process proposed for 2024/25 is similar to that adopted previously, using a web-based survey that is publicised through social media. The survey is attached at appendix 2 and includes questions relating to a resident's method of access of particular Council services, the preferred means of interacting with the Council and the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Promotional activity will include social media messages, 'email-me' bulletins, press releases, website promotion and direct engagement with groups, organisations and individuals on the Council's stakeholder map. All responders will be entered into a prize draw.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The budget consultation with local residents will provide useful feedback to inform the budget setting process that will culminate in the overall budget report being recommended to Council for approval on 6 March 2024.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a duty upon local authorities to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting the budget. Whilst there is no specific statutory requirement to consult with residents, local authorities were placed under a general duty to 'inform, consult and involve' representatives of local people when exercising their functions by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. This was repealed and replaced by more prescriptive forms of involvement by the Localism Act 2011.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

There were no comments from UNISON.

8. Climate Change Implications

The proposed survey includes consideration of the Council's approach to tackling climate. The survey will be available online although anyone who is unable to complete the form online can send their comments direct to the Finance Services team at the Council Offices in Beeston.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

BUDGET TIMETABLE AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

Date/Period	Activity
9 October 2023	Online survey published on or around this date
6 November 2023	Deadline for capital and revenue submissions
26 November 2023	Online survey closes
During October and November 2023	Compilation of Business Plans and proposed annual revenue budgets and three-year capital programme (Financial Plans)
During November and December 2023	Scrutiny of Business Plans and Financial Plans by General Management Team
5 December 2023 and/or 9 January 2024	Results of budget consultation exercise and draft budget proposals to Cabinet along with the setting of the Council Tax Base
29 and 30 January 2024	Scrutiny of Business Plans and Financial Plans by Overview and Scrutiny Committee
6 February 2024	Budget proposals presented to Cabinet
6 March 2024	Budget approved by Council