

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 22 February 2017
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Finance and the Chief Finance Officer

Report Title

Executive's Response to Scrutiny Committee's Recommendations to the Budget Proposals for 2017/18

Summary

At the Executive meeting on the 23rd January 2017 a report was presented by the Scrutiny Committee chair, setting out their comments and findings from the review of the Executive's draft budget proposals for 2017/18.

The Executive values the contribution that the Scrutiny Committee makes to the budget process and is committed to working with Scrutiny Committee during the forthcoming year as part of their planned work programme.

Recommendation(s)

That the Executives response to Scrutiny be approved.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Nikki Bishop
Extension: 4238

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Scrutiny review of the budget is a requirement of the budget policy framework. It is relevant to all corporate priorities.
Financial	There are none arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	The Scrutiny review of the budget is a requirement of the Council's constitution.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None arising from this report
Sustainability Implications	None arising from this report
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	None arising from this report
Risk Management Implications	None arising from this report
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None arising from this report
Health and Safety Implications	None arising from this report

Background

1. The Executive published its draft budget proposals for 2017/18 on 15th November 2016. In accordance with the Council's constitution the Scrutiny Committee reviewed the proposals in December and produced a report on its findings in January 2017. This was formally reported to the Executive on 23rd January.
2. The Executive acknowledges the areas raised in the Scrutiny Committee report and welcomes the opportunity of working with the Scrutiny Committee on its planned work programme during the coming financial year.
3. Initial comments and observations of the Executive in response to some of the matters raised by Scrutiny are included in the attached annex.

Other Options

Not applicable

Consultation

The report is in response to the consultation carried out by the Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

The report is in response to the consultation carried out by the Scrutiny Committee.

Key Decision: No

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials) NB.....

Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials) JLF.....



CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

BUDGET SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

Issue	Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response
<p>Budget Scrutiny Process – Scrutiny Members felt that they were too limited in their ability to ask questions around Children, Families and Wellbeing issues and that the draft budget proposals did not contain enough detail about the whole budget.</p>	<p>Scrutiny will be reviewing the Budget Scrutiny process ahead of next year and will provide the Executive with their recommendations once the review has been undertaken.</p>	<p>The Executive note this position.</p>
<p>£2m budget gap - Members are concerned at the perceived lack of plans in place to address the £2m budget gap.</p>	<p>Scrutiny would like more detailed information on how the Executive intends to address the £2m budget gap.</p>	<p>Details on how the remaining budget gap has been addressed have been included in the report on the Executive’s Revenue Budget Proposals.</p>
<p>Risk assessments - Members felt that the risk assessments presented at the working group sessions lacked detail and did not fill them with confidence.</p>	<p>Members would like more information about the methodology used to complete these risk assessments and are eager to see clearer and more thorough risk assessments (including mitigation strategies) when they become available.</p>	<p>A risk assessment on the deliverability of each saving proposal has been issued to Scrutiny at the time of their meeting. As projects progress a more detailed review on the risks associated with the specific delivery of each project will be undertaken.</p>
<p>Ensure that forward projections for demand led services are robust - Scrutiny feels there is little scope to absorb overspends given the position on reserves, and are particularly concerned with the position the Council finds itself on an annual basis with an overspend in Children’s Services.</p>	<p>Scrutiny would like assurances that the upward trajectory in the demand for child placements (as well as other services) is factored in to any future budget projections made for demand led services.</p>	<p>A full review of the demand pressures particularly in social care have been undertaken between the draft and final budget stages and the results of this review have been taken into account in the latest budget proposals. The Executives Revenue Budget Proposals now incorporate an additional £4.6m for adults and children’s social care budgets.</p> <p>In addition, a review of reserves has been</p>

		undertaken with a new reserve established to provide an element of resilience in later years.
Parking Fees - Members are concerned about how the significant percentage rise in parking fees might impact town centre footfall.	Scrutiny would like further information on the methodology used to arrive at these projections, and recommend that the 30 minute parking fee be reduced from 70p to 50p.	<p>The financial modelling for this proposal takes into account locations, existing demand and the potential impact of the change in prices. This produces various options and car parking projections for the Executive to consider.</p> <p>The proposed charging structure as presented takes account of projected take up, turnover of parking spaces and income and therefore the proposal is to retain the existing proposal.</p>
School Crossing Patrols - Members remain concerned about risk associated with the proposals on School Crossing Patrols.	Scrutiny would like to be kept apprised of any progress made in the search for new funding streams to cover school crossing patrols. Scrutiny also recommends that the Executive recognise the reputational risk associated with this proposal.	<p>A second phase of consultation will be undertaken prior to the implementation of any change to current arrangements. Scrutiny will be advised on the outcome of the further round of consultation.</p> <p>Whilst the savings for this proposal remain in the budget proposal for 2017/18, in the event that they cannot be delivered following the second round of budget consultation then the impact will need to be met from the Council Wide Contingency Budget as an interim solution.</p>
Waste Management - Members felt that there was more work to be done around the changes to green waste collection.	Scrutiny recommends that a management plan be developed before the proposal is implemented.	An Implementation plan including the operational details has been developed and will be in place before the proposal is implemented.

<p>Grounds Maintenance (Bowling Greens) - Scrutiny feels that they need more clarity on these proposals.</p>	<p>Scrutiny has requested that further information on the bowling green fees, and recommends that other sports are considered as part of the review. Scrutiny would also like for the community asset framework review conducted in 2013 be revisited.</p>	<p>This proposal has been deferred in its current form. The bowling clubs will be reviewed alongside other sports as part of the wider playing pitch strategy and leisure review that is currently on-going.</p>
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