

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET 2021/22 – CONSULTATION PROCESS

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance and Performance
11th November 2020

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the proposed consultation process for the Corporate Plan and Budget 2021/22.

Recommendation

2. **The Committee is requested to agree the proposed approach.**
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Background

3. In accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, this Committee has an important role in the service planning and budget making process. The Committee has the opportunity to consider the service and budget proposals and to make any recommendations to Cabinet prior to the proposals being finalised for submission to Council. Cabinet is required to have regard to the recommendations when finalising their proposals.
4. The process of consultation for the draft Corporate Plan and Budget for 2021/22 will follow a similar time-line to last year. Further details are set out below.

Process of Consultation for Corporate Plan and Budget 2020/21

5. As is usual, it is proposed that there will be a six-week consultation period, commencing on 18th December 2020 when the Cabinet has agreed to submit the draft Corporate Plan and Budget for consideration by Members. At the start of the consultation process the draft report is planned to be circulated to Scrutiny Committee Members.
6. It should be noted that Cabinet will not, at this stage, have adopted the draft in formal session, and the Committee will have a period of six weeks from the commencement of the consultation period to submit comments to Cabinet. This period of consultation is planned to conclude on 29th January 2021.
7. A special meeting of this Committee on 13th January 2021 is planned to discuss the draft proposals. The Committee's comments, suggestions and recommendations are proposed to be reported to Cabinet on 8th February 2021. The draft Corporate Plan and Budget would then be presented for recommendation to Council on 3rd March 2021.

8. The service and budget proposals will have been drafted by the Business Unit Leaders and the appropriate Heads of Service and Cabinet members. The entire Management Team will be present to deal with the overall budget and strategic issues.

Context for the 2021/22 Plan

9. The proposals have been put together in line with the Council's robust approach to service and financial planning and will as far as is possible in these challenging times, follow the model adopted in previous years. The draft Corporate Plan will not contain the detailed Service Plans for each Business Unit, but these can be provided to Members electronically or in hard copy, on request.
10. Members should be aware that in light of the forthcoming second national lockdown there will be a need for services to be agile and adapt, often at pace, to changes in government guidance and potential new responsibilities as directed by national government. This will likely require some flexibility in priorities and deadlines in the coming months. As members will appreciate, the ability to forward plan beyond the short term with any degree of certainty is extremely difficult at this time.
11. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council adopted a revised Corporate Plan 2020/21 at the meeting on 30th September. This included revisions to the financial strategy and a recovery plan under each of the Council's corporate priorities with proposed actions in the short, medium and longer term. Service Plans will set out how, as far as is possible at this time, these recovery plans are proposed to be delivered in 2021/22.
12. In considering the Corporate Plan and Budget proposals, the Committee will need to be mindful of the Council's financial strategy and address the effects of any recommended proposals. If, for example, the Committee proposes that increased spending in a certain area should be made, the Committee should have regard to how the resultant shortfall in the overall budget will be addressed. The Council can only agree a balanced budget. For the coming year, in light of the Covid19 pandemic and it's impacts this will be more challenging than usual.

Financial Implications

13. This report does not have any financial effects.

Risk Management Implications

14. It is not considered that this report carries any particular risks to be reported.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

15. There are none associated with this report.

Other Material Implications

16. There are no legal implications as a direct consequence of this report.

Background Papers

Revised Corporate Plan 2020/21 report to Council 30th September 2020.