

## **Divisions Affected - All**

# **PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**17 JANUARY 2022**

## **BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT**

**Report by Corporate Director**

**Commercial Development, Assets, and Investment**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
  - (a) Consider the DRAFT Budget Scrutiny Report for submission to Council attached at Appendix A
  - (b) Agree a Budget Scrutiny Report for submission to Council at its budget setting meeting

### **Executive Summary**

2. The purpose of this report is to provide the Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with its DRAFT Budget Scrutiny Report following the consideration of the Cabinet Budget Proposals on the 10 December 2021.
3. The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree a version for submission to Full Council for consideration on 8 February 2022 when it considers the budget.
4. The DRAFT Budget Scrutiny Report attached at Appendix A will be submitted to Cabinet to inform their budget considerations on the 18 January 2022 with any agreed amendments or additions reported verbally to the Cabinet meeting itself.

### **Budget Scrutiny Report**

5. The Committee met on the 10 December 2021 to consider and comment on:
  - The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities
  - The engagement feedback on the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities

- The revenue savings, pressures and investment proposals for 2022/23 to 2025/26 and
6. The Committee considered a report that set out budget proposals for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26, which are included in the 2022/23 budget consultation, allowing the Committee to comment on these, alongside the financial context, and on the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities in which these proposals are made.
  7. Alongside the report the Committee also considered the following annexes:
    - Annex 1a – The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities.
    - Annex 1b – Engagement feedback on the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities
    - Annex 2a – Existing Planned Budget Pressures and Savings
    - Annex 2b – New Proposals for Investments, Pressures and Savings
    - Annex 2c – COVID-19 Pressures
    - Annex 3a – Overarching Equality Impact Assessment
  8. The Leader of Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and other Cabinet Members, supported by Council Officers, presented the budget to the Committee on 10 December 2021 and responded to questions from the Committee regarding its content.
  9. The DRAFT Budget Scrutiny Report was drafted following the meeting of 10 December 2021 in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. It was sent out to all Committee members for comment prior to inclusion in the agenda pack, no comments on its content were received.

## **Supporting the Budget Setting Process**

10. The Budget Scrutiny report, setting out key observations and recommendations, is intended to assist the budget setting process. The process seeks to hold the Cabinet to account for its budget proposal and how they will deliver its priorities, the content of the report is put forward with the intention of adding to the budget setting debate at Cabinet and subsequently at Full Council.
11. The Local Government Act 2000 states that it is the responsibility of the Full Council, on the recommendation of the executive, to approve the budget and related council tax demand. The Act makes it clear that the role of scrutiny in the financial process is to hold the executive to account and to ensure that its decisions are in the best interests of the community. Some scrutiny of budget setting and other financial planning processes is therefore essential.
12. This report is the outcome of the current budget scrutiny process within the Council. It is submitted to Cabinet to help inform their debate and then Full Council to inform the setting of the budget.
13. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considering how best to deliver the budget scrutiny function moving forward as part of the Council's programme to improve the Overview and Scrutiny function.

## **Financial Implications**

This report does not raise any direct financial implications. Changes made in response to feedback from Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be incorporated into the proposed budget to council on 8 February 2022.

Lorna Baxter  
Director of Finance

## **Legal Implications**

This report does not raise any legal implications.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Report by

Steve Jorden  
Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets, and Investment

Annex: Appendix A – DRAFT Budget Scrutiny Report

Background papers: Report to Council 13 July 2021 – Review of Scrutiny Arrangements

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