

COUNCIL – 16 FEBRUARY 2016

CORPORATE PLAN AND SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2016/17 – 2019/20

Report by the Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. This report is the culmination of the service & resource planning process for 2016/17 to 2019/20. It sets out the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2016/17, medium term financial plan and capital programme, together with a number of statements/policies that the Council is required to approve for the 2016/17 financial year. The report also includes the Corporate Plan to 2020.
2. The report is divided into four main sections which are outlined below:
 - Section 1 – Leader of the Council's overview
 - Section 2 – Corporate Plan
 - Section 3 – Chief Finance Officer's statutory report
 - Section 4 – Budget Strategy and Capital Programme

Section 1 – Leader of the Council's overview

3. Section 1 will set out the Leader's speech on the proposed budget and will be published on 16 February 2016. This section will also include the response to the Council Tax survey that closed on 8 February 2016.

Section 2 – Corporate Plan

4. As part of a range of documents which set out objectives and activities ahead, the Council produces a Corporate Plan that is refreshed on an annual basis. The update for 2016/17 has a fundamental review of priorities, with the intention that it should be a significantly shorter strategic-level document. The three key areas of focus in the Council's strategy are:
 - A thriving economy
 - Efficient services
 - Protecting vulnerable people
5. The plan also sets out how the Council is run, the values according to which it operates, the key thematic partnerships in which the Council is involved, some recent successes, and how the Council involves the public in planning for the future.

Section 3 – Chief Finance Officer’s statutory report

6. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made in determining the council tax requirement and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This assessment is set out in section 3 of the report. Council is required to have regard to this report in making their decisions on the budget.

Section 4 – Budget Strategy and Capital Programme

7. This section sets out the detailed 2016/17 budget and the 2016/17 – 2019/20 medium term financial plan and capital programme, together with the strategies which underpin these such as the treasury management strategy. It includes those matters that the Council must approve as part of the budget setting process, including the council tax requirement and council tax amount for a band D property.
8. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement is not expected until the week commencing 8 February 2016. Therefore, with important information still outstanding, the proposed budget approved by Cabinet on 26 January 2016 for recommendation to Council remains unchanged. The papers can be found on the Council’s website using the following link:
<http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=14128#mgDocuments>
9. In January, Cabinet agreed to delegate to the Leader of the Council, following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to make appropriate changes to the proposed budget.
10. Once the final information is available, all of the papers listed in Annex 1 will be published alongside a report setting out the changes from the 26 January position and, if necessary, a further report from the Chief Finance Officer.

Financial and Legal Implications

11. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

12. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that when making decisions of a strategic nature, decision makers must exercise ‘due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.’
13. The overarching service and community impact assessment (SCIA) setting out a general assessment of the broad impact of the budget proposals was included in section 4.12 of the report presented to Cabinet in January 2016. This is supported by initial service-level assessments for the new proposals published on the Council’s website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. **The Council is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) approve the Corporate Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 as set out in section 2.0;**
 - (b) have regard to the Chief Finance Officer’s report (at Section 3) in approving recommendations c to f below;**
 - (c) (in respect of revenue) approve:**
 - (1) the council tax and precept calculations for 2016/17 set out in section 4.3 and in particular:**
 - (i) a precept of £305,896,875;**
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,281.64;**
 - (2) a budget for 2016/17 as set out in section 4.4;**
 - (3) a medium term plan for 2016/17 to 2019/20 as set out in section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial plan as set out in section 4.2);**
 - (4) the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (provisional allocation) for 2016/17 as set out in section 4.7;**
 - (5) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget for 2016/17 as set out in section 4.8;**
 - (d) (in respect of treasury management) approve:**
 - (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2016/17 as set out in section 4.5;**
 - (2) the continued delegation of authority to withdraw or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers to the Treasury Management Strategy Team;**
 - (3) that any further changes required to the 2016/17 strategy be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;**
 - (4) the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix A of section 4.5**
 - (5) the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Appendix B of section 4.5;**
 - (6) the Specified Investment and Non Specified Investment Instruments as set out in Appendix C and D of section 4.5;**
 - (7) the Treasury Management Policy Statement as set out at Appendix E of section 4.5;**
 - (e) (in respect of balances and reserves) approve:**
 - (1) the Chief Finance Officer’s recommended level of balances for 2016/17 as set out in section 4.6.1**
 - (2) the planned level of reserves for 2016/17 to 2019/20 as set out in section 4.6.2;**
 - (f) (in respect of capital) approve:**
 - (1) a Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20 as set out in section 4.9 including the Highways Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17 and 2017/18 in section 4.9.1;**

LORNA BAXTER

Chief Finance Officer

Background papers: Nil

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