



# Doncaster Council

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2018

To the Chair and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION OF THE MAYOR'S BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018– 2020/21

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
The Mayor	All	None

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to give further consideration to the Mayor's draft Budget proposals 2018/19 – 2020/21 and develop a formal response. The Committee's response will enable the Mayor to take account of these when presenting her proposals to Council on 5th March, 2018.

### EXEMPT REPORT

2. The report is not exempt.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 That OSMC consider and agree a response to the Mayor's draft budget proposals.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER

4. Consideration of the budget proposals enables elected Members to hold the Executive to account in relation to the impact on the quality of services that can be delivered, and through consideration provides openness and transparency. Elected Members are able to reflect the concerns of the citizens and communities they represent throughout the consultation process.

### BACKGROUND

5. The Mayor's budget proposals 2018/19 to 2020/21 were formally launched at Council on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017 and prior to this date on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 Overview and Scrutiny had the opportunity to give initial consideration to the proposals. The budget proposal papers were circulated for the Council agenda for 21<sup>st</sup> December, see the following link:

<http://doncaster.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14034/Budget%20Report.pdf>

6. In accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, Overview and Scrutiny is required to provide a response to the proposals that can be considered by the Mayor before she presents her proposals to Full Council for approval. At the Scrutiny meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December Members requested that further discussions be held relating to:
  - i. Adult Social Care – Commissioning;
  - ii. Regeneration and Environment – general overspend; and
  - iii. Finance and Performance – any clawback risks.
7. Members are reminded that to ensure OSMC can add value to the Council's budget setting process and take a holistic view of the proposals as in previous years it has been agreed that the Committee will focus on the following four issues:
  - i. To what extent are the Mayor's proposals in line with central government policy, pressures and directives?
  - ii. To what extent will the Mayor's proposal ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes detailed within Doncaster Growing Together bearing in mind the constraints detailed at i. above and Medium Term Financial Forecast?
  - iii. To what extent do the Mayor's proposals demonstrate that the results of any consultation, research or other evidence have been taken into account?
  - iv. To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed?
8. Beneath each of these broad themes there are a number of important issues that Members may wish to consider such as how the proposed changes to services will be delivered in practice and where are the key risks and challenges in delivering these savings?
9. It is recommended that, as at the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December, the Committee continues to follow these four lines of enquiry.

### **Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Members**

10. Detailed below is some guidance that may assist Members in undertaking Overview and Scrutiny of the budget setting process.
  - a. Adding Value to the Budget Setting Process**
11. The Centre for Public Scrutiny highlights *“four key roles and areas where scrutiny can add value to the Council's management of its finances”*.
  - i. Scrutiny can challenge whether the processes are effective and accessible** - is there a level of integration between corporate and service planning and performance and financial management?
  - ii. Overview and Scrutiny can test out and make explicit whether the**

**Council is directing its resources effectively to meet its priorities and demonstrate whether it is achieving value for money.** The Committee may want to satisfy itself that any proposals are aligned to corporate priorities and seek to deliver value for money services.

**iii. Scrutiny can challenge how resources are allocated, monitor how they are used, and examine their impact.** Overview and Scrutiny may wish to challenge the assumptions behind the budget strategy and the key strategic considerations that have gone in to building up the budget e.g. what issues (such as consultation) informed decisions around the budget? How will service changes be delivered and how will they be monitored?

**iv. Overview and Scrutiny provides an additional and transparent challenge to the Executive's management of the Council's finances.** Overview and scrutiny is a key mechanism enabling Councillors to represent the views of their constituents and other organisations to the Executive and the wider Council to ensure that these views are taken into account in policy development and expressed where possible through the budget. Councillors are then able to feed back to the public where choices can/have been made and the reasons for doing this.

## **b. Avoiding Common Pitfalls**

12. To respond effectively to the Mayor's proposals and avoid some common pitfalls OSMC may wish to take account of the following issues that have been identified through best practice Scrutiny research:

**i. Understanding the purpose of Overview and Scrutiny.** Scrutiny's role is not a political process or a means of putting forward an alternative budget. Instead OSMC may wish to explore the extent to which the proposals; align with the key priorities of the Borough, are based on sound reasoning, take account of the views of the public and will deliver effective value for money services particularly during a time of reduced resources.

**ii. Remain Strategic** – Overview and Scrutiny should focus on the strategic budget assumptions and impact they will have on services. Detailed line by line analysis will obscure the scrutiny process and make it difficult to see the full picture and focus on the wider outcomes. Overview and Scrutiny may wish to make recommendations for changes (but not alternative proposals) or for the inclusion of additional considerations within the budget.

**iii. Link to Stated Priorities** – Overview and Scrutiny should examine how the proposals align with those priorities already agreed within Doncaster Working Together.

## **Next Steps**

13. OSMC is asked to develop its response to the Mayor's draft proposals for presentation to the Mayor prior to the proposals being presented to Full Council.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

14. No other options have been considered.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

15. The process identified for reviewing the budget will ensure there is a clear understanding of Overview and Scrutiny's role and how the review will be undertaken.

## **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES**

16. The Council's budget will ultimately support and impact on all of the priority outcomes. In terms of its role in reviewing the budget proposals this will support the outcome of "Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance".

## **RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS**

17. There is a risk that responding to the Mayor's draft budget proposals may be driven by party politics or result in the development of alternative budget proposals both of which are incompatible with the role of Overview and Scrutiny. The development of specific questions based around reviewing how the Mayor's proposals take account of national policy context, are evidence based and link to wider priorities will seek to ensure the process remains focused and appropriate.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. The role of Overview and Scrutiny in the Council's budget setting process is detailed within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules. The Executive will draw up proposals in relation to the budget, and the plans and strategies listed in Part 4.
  - (b) The proposals will include:
    - (i) A timetable for development and adoption of the proposal.
    - (ii) Details of any consultation, research or other investigation already undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Executive.
  - (c) The proposal will be given to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel or Management Committee which will be given at least 4 weeks to respond to the proposals from the date the proposal is notified.
  - (d) Not less than 4 weeks after the initial proposal, the Executive will report the proposal to the Full Council showing how any response from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the outcome of consultation, research or investigations were taken into account.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

19. There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. The financial implications are contained within the draft budget proposals attached at the hyperlink.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE**

20. There are no specific Human Resource Implications associated with this report. Any relevant Human Resource Implications associated with the proposals are contained within the hyperlink.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

21. There are no specific Technology Implications associated with this report. Any relevant Technology Implications associated with the proposals are contained within the hyperlink.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

22. There are no significant equality implications associated with this report. Throughout the course of its review the Committee may wish to seek further information on the extent to which the proposals will have an impact on individual's and other groups who share protected characteristics.

## **CONSULTATION**

23. The Mayor's budget proposals were made available for the Overview and Scrutiny Management committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December and Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2107.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

24. The Centre for Public Scrutiny/Local Government Information Unit/the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy Guidance, "On the Money"

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