

# Herefordshire Council

## Budget Council procedure

### A. Introduction

A1. The council's constitution sets aside the February meeting of Council to deal with only certain specified items. These are:

- a elect a person to preside if the chairman or vice- chairman is not present;
- b approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- c receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- d consider the budget;
- e receive any questions from, and provide answers to, the public, but only on matters listed on the agenda
- f receive any questions from and provide answers to councillors, but only on matters listed on the agenda
- g deal with statutory plans or other matters within the policy framework that require Council approval: and
- h consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting

A2 As questions under items (e) and (f) above must relate to items on the agenda it is appropriate to take them before those items are considered.

A3. In relation to debate on the budget the constitution includes a number of rules to ensure that all members have an opportunity to express their views within the time available. The chairman remains responsible for the management of the meeting

A4. This guidance is intended to remind members of those rules of debate and how the chairman may use those rules to help ensure that all members who wish to do so have an opportunity to speak.

A5 Any alternative proposals to those proposed by cabinet should have been agreed with the director of resources before the day of the meeting and received his confirmation that the amended proposal would be deliverable. This is so the director of resources (in his capacity as the council's section 151 officer) can provide Council with the relevant financial advice to ensure any decisions taken are lawful.

A6. In order to ensure that all members have the opportunity to contribute to the budget debate the chairman will ask all speakers to be succinct and will use the timer to keep members within the following time limits:

- Leader of the council – up to 10 minutes proposing the budget;
- Deputy leader of the council – up to five minutes seconding;
- Other group leaders – up to five minutes each;
- Proposers of amendments – up to five minutes each;

Seconders of any amendments – up to three minutes each  
Leader of the council (or relevant cabinet lead) – up to three minutes responding to each amendment  
All other members – up to two minutes each  
Other group leaders – up to three minutes closing remarks  
Leader of the council – up to five minutes closing remarks

Where specific questions have been addressed to a cabinet member, that cabinet member may have up to two minutes to respond.

A7 Members are reminded that on 18 December 2015 Council approved the 2016-2019 capital programme

**B. Procedure**

B1. The leader will formally move the cabinet's budget recommendations, with any additional paragraphs that require approval by Council.

B2. The leader's motion is formally seconded

B3. The Leader will make his proposal speech.

B4. The deputy leader may speak in support or reserve her right to speak later.

B5. The leader of the It's Our County group may speak.

B6. The leader of the Independent group may speak.

B7. The leader of the Liberal Democrat group may speak.

B8. The leader of the Green group may speak.

B9. Proposed amendments (if any) will be taken in the following group order:

- It's Our County
- Independent
- Liberal Democrat
- Green

B10. Each amendment will be dealt with as follows and using the time limits outlined above:

- The proposer will propose and speak in support.
- The seconder will second and may speak in support (or reserve their right to speak).
- The director of resources has the opportunity to confirm whether or not each proposed amendment, if adopted, would result in the setting of a lawful and balanced budget; and gives any advice that he considers appropriate in relation to each proposed amendment.
- Members may speak (but not more than once on any one amendment).

- The seconder (if they have reserved their right to speak) may speak.
- The leader (as proposer of the original motion) may speak immediately before the vote on the amendment (but not otherwise).
- The proposer shall have no right of reply to the debate on the amendment.
- The amendment is put to the recorded vote.

B11. All other members that have not proposed an amendment can speak.

B12. The leader makes his closing remarks.

B13. The budget proposals (as amended, if applicable) are put to the recorded vote.

B14. If the budget proposals passed have been passed with any amendment, and the leader supports (or is prepared to accept) the amendment, he may request Council to suspend standing orders to avoid the need to defer approval of the budget pending a further meeting of the cabinet.

B15. If the cabinet's budget proposals (as amended, if applicable) are not approved, the chairman may adjourn the meeting and, after that adjournment, the matter may be put to the vote again after consideration of any further amendments, if appropriate. The chairman may repeat this process as often as he considers appropriate.

**Claire Ward**  
**Monitoring officer**

January 2016