

BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

1. THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

1.1 The Council is responsible for the adoption of a Budget and Policy Framework. This is set out in Standing Order 4.1 as follows:

- Children and Young People's Plan.
- Council's Corporate Plan including the Best Value Performance Plan.
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.
- Cultural Strategy.
- Economic Development Strategy.
- Herefordshire Plan (Sustainable Community Strategy incorporating the Local Agenda 21 Strategy).
- Local Transport Plan.
- Unitary Development Plan / Local Development Framework.
- Youth Justice Plan.
- Medium-Term Financial Strategy including:
 - Annual capital and revenue budget;
 - Proposed contingencies, general reserves and specific reserves;
 - Statutory Council Tax calculations;
 - Treasury management policy and annual borrowing limits;
 - The Chief Finance Officer's statutory declarations on budget setting;
 - Virement limits; and
 - Scale of fees and charges.

1.2 Council cannot delegate responsibility for determining the Budget and Policy Framework.

1.3 Once a Budget and Policy Framework is in place, it is Cabinet's responsibility to implement it. The Cabinet can only determine matters affecting the Budget and Policy Framework where special urgency applies under rule 19 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules (Appendix 1 of the Constitution refers).

2. PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Cabinet will publicise by including in the Forward Plan, by publishing at the Council's offices and other methods (e.g. on its website and in the local press), a timetable for making

proposals to the Council for the adoption of any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework, and its arrangements for consultation after publication of those initial proposals. The Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee and Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees will also be notified.

- 2.2 Budget consultees will include Town and Parish Councils, the Local Strategic Partnership, the Schools Forum, Business Ratepayers, Council Taxpayers, the Trade Unions, Political Groups, Strategic Monitoring Committee, Scrutiny Committees and such other organisations and persons as are deemed appropriate.
- 2.3 Having consulted on their initial proposals for any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework, the Cabinet will draw up firm proposals taking into account the responses to the consultation. If the Strategic Monitoring Committee or relevant Scrutiny Committee wishes to respond to the Cabinet in that consultation process, then it may do so. As the Strategic Monitoring Committee and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for setting their own work programmes, it is open to them to investigate, research or report in detail with policy recommendations before the end of the consultation period. The Cabinet will take any response from the Strategic Monitoring Committee or Scrutiny Committees into account in drawing up firm proposals for submission to the Council, and its report to Council will reflect the comments made by consultees and the Cabinet's response.
- 2.4 Once the Cabinet has approved the firm proposals, the relevant officer will refer them to the Council for decision.
- 2.5 The Council may not consider a proposal on a matter that forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework if the Cabinet has not considered it unless the Leader indicates that the Cabinet is in agreement with the proposal.
- 2.6 If Council decides to reject or amend the Cabinet's firm proposals, the Cabinet will delay implementation of the proposals pending a further report to Council requesting the matter be reconsidered.
- 2.7 If Council decides to reject or amend a proposal from Cabinet, immediately prior to the close of the meeting, the Chairman of the Council will adjourn the meeting until a date agreed by Council on the recommendation of the Leader of the Council. This shall be the date that Cabinet will report further to Council on the matter and Council must specify a period of at least five working days within which the Leader may:
 - a) Submit a revision of the draft budget, plan or strategy with the Cabinet's reasons for any amendments for the Council to consider;

Or

 - b) Inform the Council of any disagreement that the Cabinet has with any of the Council's objections and the Cabinet's reasons for any such objections.
- 2.8 If the Chairman of the Council considers it is unlikely that the Council may agree the date for the Council meeting recommended by the Leader, he / she may agree an alternative date providing at least 10 working days elapse starting from the following day.
- 2.9 The Council must take into account Cabinet's reasons for revising any budget, plan or strategy or reasons for disagreeing with the Council's objections to its proposals before it amends or approves the Cabinet's revised draft budget, plan or strategy .

- 2.10 If a strategy, plan or budget allows for a policy intention to be developed and the financial implications reflected in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Management Strategy are in excess of £500,000, the relevant Director must report back to Cabinet for approval to detailed plans for implementing the policy and committing the financial resources.
- 2.11 The Cabinet has responsibility for managing the Council's financial affairs within the framework of the agreed Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. Advice and guidance is provided by the Statutory Officers.
- 2.12 Cabinet is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and formulating the Council's budget with advice and guidance provided by the Director of Resources.
- 2.13 Each Cabinet Member shall be responsible for making sure that the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules are observed for those functions within their terms of reference.

3. DECISIONS OUTSIDE THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 If the Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees, officers and joint arrangements discharging executive functions on behalf of the Council want to take a decision outside of the Budget and Policy Framework or think a decision they want to make might be outside it, they must refer to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, and also the Chief Finance Officer if it relates to the budget, for advice.
- 3.2 If the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, and Chief Finance Officer if it is a budget matter, determine that the decision would be outside the Budget and Policy Framework, then the proposal must form a recommendation to Council, unless the decision is a matter of urgency in which case the provisions of section 4 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules apply.

4. URGENT DECISIONS OUTSIDE THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Cabinet, Committees, Sub Committees, officers or joint arrangements discharging executive functions of the Council may take a decision that is contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedures if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, such a decision may only be taken if:
 - a) It is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Council; and
 - b) The Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee or relevant Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.
- 4.2 The reason why it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Council and the agreement of the Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee or relevant Scrutiny Committee to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency should be noted on the record of the decision. In the absence of the Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee or relevant Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman of the Council or, in his / her absence, the Vice Chairman of the Council will be sufficient.
- 4.3 Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to a subsequent Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

5. VIREMENT

- 5.1 Arrangements for budget virement will be in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

6. IN-YEAR CHANGE TO BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 Any decisions that involve an in-year change to the Budget or Policy Framework must be approved or adopted by the full Council unless:

- a) It is an urgent decision in which case it will be dealt with as set out in section 4 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules;

Or

- b) Council has previously defined the scope for in-year decisions that can be made by Cabinet.

7. CALL-IN OF DECISIONS OUTSIDE THE BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 7.1 Where the Strategic Monitoring Committee or a Scrutiny Committee is of the opinion that a Cabinet decision is contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework and that it therefore should be a recommendation to Council, then it shall seek advice from the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

- 7.2 For executive functions that are a Cabinet responsibility, the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer will either:

- a) Prepare a report for the Cabinet if they determine that the decision the Cabinet has taken is outside the Budget and Policy Framework; in these circumstances, the Cabinet must make a report to Council; or
- b) Prepare a report for the Strategic Monitoring Committee or Scrutiny Committee if they determine that the Cabinet's decision was not contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework.

- 7.3 If the decision referred to in 7.2 (a) has yet to be made then that decision will become a recommendation to Council.