

Herefordshire Council

Budget Council meeting 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 As a matter of good practice, any amendments to the proposals made by cabinet should have been agreed with the interim director of resources before the day of the meeting and received his confirmation that the amended proposal would deliver a lawful budget. Any such amendment should also be discussed with the relevant service director to ensure the proposal is deliverable. Separate guidance on this process has been issued to all members by the interim director of resources. Proposed amendments, having been agreed with the director of resources and discussed with the relevant service director, will be passed by the interim director of resources to the monitoring officer by 5.00pm on the day before the council meeting to enable publication. This does not prevent amendments being proposed from the floor in accordance with the constitution; however any amendments proposed in such a way may result in an adjournment of the meeting to enable consideration of the amendment by the interim director of resources and relevant service director before advice may be given to Council.

- 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;
Secunder – up to five minutes seconding the proposed budget;
Other group leaders – up to five minutes each;
Proposers of amendments if any – up to five minutes each;
Seconders of any amendments – up to three minutes each

All other members speaking in debate – up to two minutes each

Leader of the council – up to five minutes responding to the debate (either on an amendment or, if there are none, on the original motion)

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 16 December 2016 Council approved the 2017-2018 capital programme

B. Procedure

- B1. The leader will formally move the cabinet's budget recommendations
- B2. The leader's motion is formally seconded.
- B3. The leader will make his proposal speech.
- B4. The seconder may speak in support or reserve their 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 order in which they have been received.
- 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 interim 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.
 - All other 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 of the amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on the amendment.
 - The amendment is put to the recorded vote.
- B11. If an amendment has been passed and there are further amendments, the procedure at B10 will be repeated until there are no further amendments. The amended budget is then put to the recorded vote without further debate and any member who has reserved their right to speak loses the opportunity to do so unless the chairman exercises discretion otherwise.
- B12. If there are no amendments passed, after the leader has responded to the debate, the budget proposals will be put to the recorded vote.
- B13. If the budget proposals 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.
- B14. 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 2017