

Title of report: 2024-25 Proposed Budget Consultation Approach

Meeting: Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting date: Tuesday 7 November 2023

Report by: Head of Strategic Finance

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

The purpose of Appendix 1 of this report is to provide the committee with a timeline and details of proposed community-based budget consultation and engagement activity for 2024/25.

The purpose of Appendix 2 of this report is to provide the committee with an overview of community engagement within a public sector context, including setting out the statutory duties of a local authority to consult and to clarify the difference between engagement and consultation. The paper sets out the proposed approach for the budget consultation 2024/25. The paper also includes information on the role of scrutiny in the consultation process and different types of engagement activity and when they should be used.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The Scrutiny Management Board, having regard to the information presented in Appendix 1 and 2, notes the report and,**
- b) Determines any recommendations it wishes to make to inform the budget consultation approach for the 2024/25 budget.**

Alternative options

1. None identified, this report provides an update to the Scrutiny Management Board.

Key considerations

2. This Board's programme of work seeks to maximise its beneficial impact on communities by scrutinising the proposed consultation approach for the 2024-5 budget.

3. The reports, included at Appendix 1 and 2, set out the proposed approach for the budget consultation 2024/25 and include information on the role of scrutiny in the consultation process and different types of engagement activity and when they should be used. This report has been prepared by the council's external provider commissioned for the delivery of consultation.

Community impact

4. This report seeks to maximise its beneficial impact on communities by scrutinising the proposed consultation approach for the 2024/25 budget and determining any engagement with communities in carrying out this work.

Environmental Impact

5. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
6. Whilst this overarching budget consultation proposal will not detail specific environmental impacts, consideration is always made to minimising waste and resource use in line with the council's environmental policy.

Equality duty

7. The proposed consultation for the 2024/25 budget will consider how the consultation process engages with hard to reach groups. The committee should also consider the impact of budget decision and financial strategy prioritisation on disadvantaged groups.
8. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Resource implications

9. There are no new resource implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

10. The Scrutiny Management Board should undertake the scrutiny role in relation to areas which are cross cutting in nature eg. Corporate Strategy and Finance (Budget), People and Performance and Corporate Support.

- 11. Where a matter falls within the remit of one or more Scrutiny Committees, the Scrutiny Management Board will decide which Committee will consider it and whether a spotlight, task and finish or standing panel review is appropriate
- 12. Budget, Treasury Management, Approve an annual work programme for itself and the other scrutiny committees.
- 13. Oversee communications to members and public in relation to scrutiny matters.

Risk management

- 14. There are no new risk implications arising from this report.

Consultees

- 15. None

Appendices

- 16. Appendix 1 - 2024-25 Proposed Budget Consultation Impact Consultancy
Appendix 2 – Community engagement paper for SMB 07.11.23

Background papers

- 17. None.

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

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Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.