

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE

### INTRODUCTION

Policy Committee agreed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1999 that the existing Budget Committee continues in existence to the end of the Municipal year. It further agreed that a review be carried out of future arrangements given the new constitution of the Council which seeks to separate the executive from the scrutiny function.

Historically, the Budget Committee has considered both executive and scrutiny roles, making recommendation to the joint meeting of Policy and Corporate Services Committee on the Budget resolutions and evaluating the viability of proposals from directorates. The Cabinet is now responsible for making recommendations to Council on the Budget resolutions, i.e., the executive function.

The scrutiny function could be performed by one or all of the new scrutiny committees but it is considered that their role and workload is so intense that, given the importance of the Budget, a Budget Committee should be retained. This report seeks to examine (a) how the scrutiny function may be enhanced and (b) make recommendations on the membership and terms of reference of the Budget Committee.

### SCRUTINY FUNCTION

Under the ad hoc arrangements, the Budget Committee was responsible for considering the viability of savings proposals. It is proposed that this aspect of scrutiny be enhanced to include (a) monitoring of the Budget and particularly the implementation of savings and (b) responding formally to Budget consultations.

The Cabinet is taking seriously the role of rigorous monitoring of the Budget but there is a need for the Cabinet to be held accountable in a transparent way, hence the proposal for the Budget Committee monitoring the Budget. It has been recognised that it is impractical and unnecessary to expect the Budget Committee to evaluate the Budget proposals without commenting on their desirability. It is therefore proposed to formalise this by seeking a formal response to the Budget Consultation exercise.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

It is proposed that the Budget Committee:

- (a) monitors the implementation of budget proposals and makes recommendations to the Cabinet on the need to address variations from the Budget;
- (b) considers budget proposals from the directorates and makes recommendations to Cabinet as to their viability;
- (c) responds to the Budget consultation exercise.

## MEMBERSHIP

Meetings of the Committee are open to all Cabinet Members and its papers are circulated to all Members of the Council. The membership of the Committee should consist of Cabinet Members, Non-Cabinet Members and other stakeholders. One option could be:

Leader  
Deputy Leader  
Lead Member Corporate Services  
Deputy Lead Member Corporate Services  
3 x Labour  
1 x Conservative  
1 x Liberal Democrat  
1 x trades union representative  
1 x business community representative  
1 x voluntary sector representative

} non-cabinet members