

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 7 February 2012

7

Title: 2012/13 Budget – covering report

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Assistant Chief Executive - Finance**

Item for decision

Summary

1. Under a Cabinet system of governance, it is best practice for the Scrutiny Committee to review the draft budget proposals prior to consideration by the Cabinet and Full Council.
2. This is a proactive measure so that the Scrutiny Committee has an opportunity to make comments and suggestions that the Cabinet may take into account when determining its budget recommendations for Full Council.
3. The budget consists of a series of reports, all on today's agenda, as follows:

Report	Purpose
Equalities Impact Assessment (attached to this covering report)	To demonstrate consideration of the impact on minority groups
Housing Revenue Account Budget and 30 year Business Plan (subject to review by the Housing Board on 31 January)	Covers spending plans for council housing in the district from 2012/13 to 2041/42 Details how the self-financing payment of £88.7 million is to be funded The papers are subject to review by the Housing Board on 31 January.
Treasury Management Strategy	Details how cash flow will be managed, and a strategy for prudent borrowing and investment
Capital Programme	A five year plan setting out capital expenditure on the Council's assets including buildings, vehicles and ICT
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Sets out a five year plan for ensuring that the General Fund remains in a stable and sustainable position, including indicative levels of Council Tax
Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves	A statutory report which sets out the key risks in the General Fund budget, and advice about safe levels of contingency reserves
General Fund Budget and Council Tax	Detailed budget for all services except Council Housing, and proposals for the district council share of the Council Tax bill

4. The budget reports, annotated with the Scrutiny Committee's comments, will be submitted to the Cabinet on 16 February and Full Council on 23 February.
5. Aspects that the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider include
 - Understandability of the budget proposals
 - Adequacy of link between budgets and priorities (Corporate Plan summary attached)
 - Reasonableness of assumptions used
 - Budgets and planned reserves levels contain appropriate emphasis on prudence, sustainability and affordability, commensurate with medium and longer term uncertainty.

APPENDICES

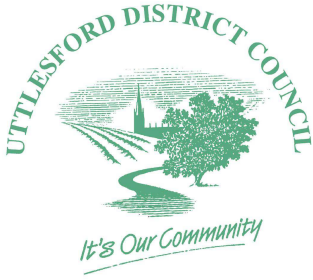
Corporate Plan summary

Equalities Impact Assessment

GETTING FOCUSED

CORPORATE PLAN 2012 - 2015

By 2015 we will have:	We will do this by:
Reduced the Council Tax burden for our residents in real terms (FINANCE)	Continually improving financial management and ensuring the Council remains financially sound, updating and implementing our MTFS and <i>Strategic Solutions</i> workstreams Delivering effective and sustainable procurement and asset management Increasing the emphasis on demonstrable value for money Keeping the Council Tax as low as possible and increasing our income whilst maintaining or improving our services
Built partnerships that make a difference with Councils, volunteers and other providers (PARTNERSHIPS)	Working closely with our partner Councils in West Essex and with local communities, councils and the voluntary sector to ensure democracy, localism and the Big Society is at the heart of everything we do Continuing to support Police Community Support Officers and effective CCTV systems to deal with anti-social behaviour Encouraging community participation through effective consultation and engagement and improving community forums to reflect closer working with all sectors of the community Improving the experience of visitors to the museum
built more affordable homes (ENVIRONMENT)	Meeting local housing needs, especially affordable housing, for local people. Having a robust and relevant Development Plan Developing sustainable communities by protecting and encouraging local facilities
Recycled more (ENVIRONMENT)	Delivering on our energy efficiency policies Installing solar panels in all suitable council houses. Keeping a weekly food waste collection Introducing garden waste collection services, kerbside collection of glass and the introduction of kitchen caddies.
Protected and enhanced our environment (ENVIRONMENT)	Working with the owners of Stansted Airport to ensure economic and social benefits that also secure an overall environmental improvement - and maintaining vigilance against a 2 nd runway Implementing the Localism Bill when enacted Improving environmental management and enforcement against environmental crime Introducing a local highways panel to deal with minor repairs, especially potholes
Improved prosperity (PEOPLE)	Enhancing economic prosperity through the West Essex Alliance of local authorities and businesses and working with local businesses to encourage future skills development and growth Promoting equitable, diverse, healthy and safe living Improving access to our services and those of our partners and introducing fast broadband services across the district Setting a high example by exemplary corporate governance and standards



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.


How do I use the tool?





This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.

The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.

If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

▪ General information		
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	2012/13 budget
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	To allocate financial resources to UDC services enabling corporate priorities, statutory requirements and policy objectives to be met
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UDC service users
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Stephen Joyce, Assistant Chief Executive – Finance on behalf of CMT
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – all departments.
Gathering performance data		
6	Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & Maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation

7	How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets <input type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction <input type="checkbox"/> Uptake <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints <input type="checkbox"/> External verification <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Budget monitoring process; internal audit, external audit <input type="checkbox"/> None 
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Analysing performance data	
8	<p>Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?</p>
	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p> <p>No specific groups are referred to in the documents and none of the information within the documents will have a differential impact on any group. There are no service cuts proposed.</p>
9	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p>
	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p> <p>No specific groups are referred to in the documents and none of the information within the documents will have a differential impact on any group. There are no service cuts proposed.</p>

Checking delivery arrangements

10

You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.


	Yes	No 	N/A
The premises for delivery are accessible to all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.



	Yes	No 	N/A
Customer contact mechanisms are accessible to all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.


Future Impact

12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.


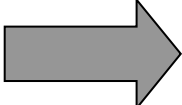

Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?

- No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

Improvement actions	
13	<p>If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable </p> <p><i>*If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:</i></p>

Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps

14	<p>Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified  No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement.  Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below). </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.  Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below). </p>
15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here. <input type="checkbox"/> None</p>

Completion	
16	<p>Name and job title (Assessment lead officer) Stephen Joyce Assistant Chief Executive - Finance</p>
	<p>Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment: CMT</p> <p>Date: 25 January 2012</p> <p>Date of next review: January 2013</p> <p><i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i></p>