

**BUDGET SCRUTINY TASK GROUP  
15 SEPTEMBER 2008**

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**HOW TO OVERVIEW THE BUDGET SETTING PROCESS 2009/10**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To set the scene regarding the different member level bodies involved in the budget setting process for 2009/10 (see diagram at Appendix 1).

**Action Required of the Task Group**

2. To note that formal overview and scrutiny of the budget setting process for 2009/10 will be carried out by the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Transition Board (JOSTB), and to discuss how the Budget Scrutiny Task Group could support the Board in this work.
3. To note that arrangements for a joint scrutiny meeting on the proposed 2009/10 budget will be developed over the coming months, to take the form of a special meeting of the JOSTB, with an invitation for all other members to attend.

**Budget Setting Process (2009/10) for the New Council**

4. As illustrated at Appendix 1 the County Council will be setting the 2009/10 budget for the new council.
5. The Implementation Executive (IE) takes the role of the transition cabinet in formulating the recommendation on the budget and submitting this to the County Council.
6. Members will be aware that, on the recommendation of the Leader, the Implementation Executive has set up a budget working group (IEBWG) to oversee the process and to consider and advise the IE on budget matters (see Appendix 2 for a summary of the IEBWG role and terms of reference).
7. Also, members will be aware that, the JOSTB has agreed, initially, to periodically scrutinise, at key milestones, the development of the new council's priorities and budget – with the possibility of refining this approach in the future if necessary.
8. Arguably, there is still a remit for the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to carry out an overview role of the 2009/10 budget setting process. However, rather than reporting comments and recommendations through the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, and then on to Cabinet, the task group would help to support Mr Molland, as Chairman of the JOSTB. In theory, the views of this task group would then form part of the evidence which JOSTB will use to “challenge” the budget proposals of the IE. This support could help to ensure that the Board is able to carry out its role in scrutinising the development of the new council's priorities and budget as effectively as possible. The experience that the Budget

Scrutiny Task Group has developed over the past three years in carrying out an overview of the budget setting process, puts it in a strong position to provide this support role to the board, via its Chairman.

### **Joint Scrutiny Meeting**

9. Members will recall that a joint scrutiny meeting has taken place over the past two years, as an informal gathering of the three main overview and scrutiny committees, hosting a non-executive member consultation on the Leader's budget motion to Council. The outcome of this consultation is then submitted directly to the County Council budget setting meeting.
10. The nature of this joint scrutiny meeting in hosting this member consultation on the 2009/10 proposed budget, will need to change to include opportunities for members of the four district councils to also engage. Also, the host for this meeting in 2009, will be the JOSTB. The scrutiny team will be developing the arrangements for this joint scrutiny meeting over the coming months.

### **Conclusion**

11. The task group is asked to note that formal overview and scrutiny of the budget setting process for 2009/10 will be carried out by the JOSTB, and to agree how the task group will assist the Board in this work, as described in paragraph 8.
12. The task group is also asked to note that arrangements for the next joint scrutiny meeting will be developed over the coming months in the form of a special meeting of the JOSTB.
13. Subject to the outcome of the discussion of this report, the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee will be asked to confirm the task group's role in overseeing the 2009/10 budget setting process, and JOSTB will be advised accordingly.

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