

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CABINET

Date of Meeting:	1 August 2011
Report of:	Borough Treasurer & Head of Assets Head of Policy and Performance
Subject/Title:	Business Planning Process 2012/2015
Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Wesley Fitzgerald, Cabinet Member for Resources Councillor David Brown, Cabinet Member for Performance and Capacity

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Council's Business Planning Process for 2012/2013 onwards.
- 1.2 The Council has reviewed and revised the current process to integrate financial and corporate planning. This will enable a clear link to be made between what the Council wants to achieve and the allocation of limited resources.
- 1.3 The outcome of the process will be the production of a Business Plan in February 2012 to set the Council's ambitions, Budget and Council Tax.
- 1.4 A comprehensive process is required to achieve that outcome and this report sets the framework for Members and officers to follow.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 To agree the Business Planning Process to develop a Business Plan for 2012/2015.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council requires an agreed process to set a budget for 2012/2013. However, the Council needs to consider the approach to delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy and link that with resource allocation in a managed way.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 The report outlines the need to generate policy proposals which will impact on service delivery. During 2012/2013 the responsibilities and funding for Public Health will be transferred to the Council and impact on the Council's structure and policies.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 The report includes details of policy proposals which will affect service budgets from 2012/2013 onwards.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 The Council should have robust processes so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfill its fiduciary duty.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The steps outlined in this report will significantly mitigate the four main legal and financial risks to the Council's financial management:
- The Council must set a balanced Budget.
 - The Council must set a legal Council Tax for 2012/2013.
 - The Council should provide high quality evidence to support submissions for external assessment.
 - Council borrowing will comply with the Treasury Management Strategy which is underpinned by the Prudential Code.
- 9.2 A risk assessment will be carried out by the proposing directorate for all key proposals. This will be in line with the approach to Corporate Risk Management.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The 2011/2012 Budget was set in February 2011 and included a range of policy proposals to change the shape of the budget in light of reduced resources and needs of service users.
- 10.2 The same Council meeting also considered and agreed the Council's Corporate Plan which set out the overall aims for the Council.
- 10.3 The Business Plan merges these two processes into one to allow a clear link to be made between the Council's ambitions and resource allocation. Therefore, the Council will integrate the processes for 2012/2013 and mean the Council moves to the production of a single Business Plan rather than a Budget Report and Corporate Plan as separate documents.
- 10.4 This report includes details of the Business Planning Process as an Appendix. This will launch the process to set the Business Plan in February 2012. The Appendix includes details of what the Council wants to achieve, key service issues, the financial context and the timetable.

10.5 In addition to these changes, a review of the process has identified issues such as:

- Improved Member Scrutiny arrangements
- An improved consultation programme
- Improved timetabling

and these will be considered as part of the forthcoming process.

10.6 The intention is to produce a Draft Business Plan later in the year followed by a final Business Plan for Cabinet and Council in February 2012.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writers:

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