

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
14 JUNE 2014**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

13

TITLE OF REPORT: CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING TIMETABLE 2015/16

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS: PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR POLICY, TRANSPORT & GREEN ISSUES AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE & IT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To propose the Corporate Business Planning Timetable for 2015/16 onwards.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet confirms that it approves the Corporate Business Planning Process Timetable for 2015/16 and subsequent years.

2.2 That Cabinet notes that any significant variations that may be required to the annual timetable will be reported back to Cabinet as necessary.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The proposed Corporate Business Planning Timetable ensures that a balanced budget will be set in a timely manner and incorporates sufficient consultation.

3.2 By agreeing the timetable for this year and each subsequent year this confirms the long term approach the Council has adopted for business planning.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no applicable alternatives

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

5.1 No external consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this report. Members will, however, be aware that consultation is an integral part of the corporate business planning process, and consultation on the actions to support the Priorities for the District 2015/16 will be carried out in accordance with the timetable followed by Officers. Wherever it is available, use will be made of valid opinion research data.

As in previous years, Member workshops will be held and this is in addition to seeking the views of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee, the North Herts Partnership, parish, town and community councils, panel of residents and business ratepayers views as appropriate

6 FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 25th April 2014.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 Council adopted the following high level priorities for at least the five year period ending 31 March 2019 on 5 September 2013:

- Promoting Sustainable Growth
- Working with our Communities
- Living within Our Means

7.2 The Corporate Business Planning Timetable for each financial year has previously been agreed by Cabinet in June/July of the preceding year. Although some minor details may change each year (for example due to later election dates) the key dates for Member and Committee approval have largely remained constant. It is, therefore, proposed that following agreement to the recommendation in this report there will be no further need for an annual agreement to the timetable.

7.3 Should a significant and permanent change to the annual timetable be required, an appropriate report would be brought to Cabinet for consideration at that time.

8. KEY DATES IN THE CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING TIMETABLE

8.1 The following table summarises the key dates that directly relate to Members in the Corporate Business Planning timetable for 2015/16 and for each financial year thereafter.

Table 1 – Key dates for Corporate Business Planning

Document & Process	Month	Who will consider
High level draft projects to be reviewed and agreed	June/July	Cabinet
Annual Revision of five year Medium Term Financial Strategy to reflect the Priorities for the District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political priorities • priorities for the district • identify budget gap over next 5 years • how to bridge the gap • provision for strategic priority funding • opportunities/risks for external funding • opportunities and risks for local community/voluntary groups and businesses 	July	Cabinet Council

<p>Consultation on proposed action plan projects for 2015 onwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member views on projects proposed • Opportunity to suggest new projects • High level financial positions and budgetary constraints • Identification of non-priorities • Identification of best value 'risks' arising from proposed reductions 	Sept/Oct	Member workshops Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Business Planning Budget workshop - efficiency & investment options	November	Portfolio Holders Member workshops
Consultation on efficiency and investment options meeting/reports Members information service	November to January	Area Committees (where appropriate for Area specific proposals) Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
Workshop on performance indicators	December	Portfolio Holders Member workshop on behalf of Cabinet.
Final draft of projects supporting the Priorities for the District agreed (<i>subject to funding of all projects in final budget in January</i>)	December	Policy Portfolio holder Cabinet
Draft budget with budget workshop consultation feedback	December	Senior Management Team Finance Portfolio holder Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Cabinet
Approval of Council Tax base and NNDR 1	January	Council Tax Setting Committee
Approval of Council Tax Reduction Scheme	January	Council
Final Budget and Council Tax precept	January	Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Cabinet Council
Publish Projects to deliver Priorities for the District	February	Policy Portfolio Holder Council
Agree performance indicators and targets for next financial year to be monitored by Overview & Scrutiny	March	Cabinet
Establish programme management arrangements and reporting times for new plan project leads project sponsors PRINCE II projects Sub prince or other Reporting cycle	March	Overview & Scrutiny Committee

8.2 A more detailed timetable is followed by Officers and this is regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference include the power, "to advise the Council in the formulation of those policies within the Council's terms of reference" and the power to make recommendations regarding that advice.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It is clear that the Council will continue to face difficult spending decisions in view of the current economic climate and the continuing reduction in government support in future years.
- 10.2 As the pressure on Council Finances increases, we will continue to seek innovative ways to balance the budget. As the ability to find quick savings diminishes, the need to take a longer-term approach to our financial planning increases and it is important to recognise that some savings options or income generation proposals will take longer than one annual budget cycle to come to fruition. An agreed process for financial planning for coming years remains extremely important.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 A robust Corporate Business Planning process is key to managing the Council's Top Risk of Managing the Council's Finances.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 In the process of corporate business planning, providing budget to deliver the Council's Priorities for the District, the Council are required to ensure that its targets, delivery of accessible and appropriate services to the community meet different people's needs. This also helps the Council to fulfil a number of obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty. Where individual projects exceed a value of £50k, or affects two or more wards (a 'key decision') it is a requirement that a full equality analysis is completed, again to ensure that all aspects of a project are reviewed to ensure best compliance with equalities requirements in place at that time.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12
- 13.2 Where the key projects referred to in this report relate to the award of a public service contract, 'social value' will be captured and reported in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

14 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no additional human resource implications arising from this report. The resources needed to deliver projects are considered through the Corporate Business Planning process.

15. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 15.1 Fiona Timms
Performance & Risk Manager
01462 474251
Fiona.timms@north-herts.gov.uk

Contributors

Norma Atlay, Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance Tel 474297; email norma.atlay@north-herts.gov.uk

Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services Tel, 474230, email liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 None

17 APPENDICES

- 17.1 None