



**Resources and Public Realm  
Scrutiny Committee**  
15 January 2019

**Report from the Director of  
Performance, Policy and  
Partnerships**

**Budget Scrutiny Panel**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix A – Report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel</li> <li>• Appendix B1 – Covering Report for Cabinet Report</li> <li>• Appendix B2 – Cabinet Report – Draft Budget Proposals.</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, <a href="mailto:pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk">pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk</a> 020 8937 1045

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report set out the findings and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

**2.0 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee review the Budget Scrutiny Panel report and agree its recommendations.

2.2 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee note the membership for the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

**3.0 Detail**

3.1 The Budget Scrutiny Panel has been chaired by Councillor Matt Kelcher, chair of the Brent's Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The Panel was

convened after the Cabinet published and discussed its draft Budget proposals for 2019/20 and 2020/2021 at a Cabinet meeting on 15 October 2018.

- 3.2 This was a joint Panel made up of members from the council's three Scrutiny Committees. The members were Councillor Ketan Sheth, Councillor Afzal, Councillor Colwill (Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee); Councillor Long, Councillor Johnson, Councillor Stephens, (Housing Scrutiny Committee); Councillor Nerva, Councillor Kelcher, Councillor Kansagra (Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee). The chair of the Resources and Public Realm Committee has chaired the Panel to reflect the committee's remit to scrutinise resources and the Budget.
- 3.3 The Cabinet's Budget proposals 2019/20 and 2020/2021 included appendices which had Budget templates as well as Budget proposals which were organised into four categories: recommended, difficult, very difficult and most difficult. The Panel decided that to focus its work it would concentrate on these Budget proposals. The Cabinet's Budget proposals also included proposals for the estimated Collection Fund balance for Council Tax, and consultation on Council Tax increases of 4.99% in 2019/20, subject to legislative uncertainty set out in the report, and 3.99% in 2020/21. The Cabinet report also noted that there would be consultation on the Budget until 31 January 2019.
- 3.4 To scrutinise the Budget, the Panel met with Cabinet members, the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer as well as Strategic Directors, and Operational Directors from the council's five departments: Chief Executive's; Resources; Regeneration, Growth and Environmental Services; Community Wellbeing, and Children and Young People. The explored key lines of enquiries with Cabinet members and officers around the Budget proposals. The purpose of the panel has been to scrutinise the Cabinet's plans and offer suggestions and amendments to improve the proposals where appropriate. In particular, the Panel has focused on the Budget proposals in appendices to the Cabinet report of 15 October 2019.
- 3.5 After the meetings and discussions the task group has made a number of recommendations. These are set out in the task group's report.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The report does not have direct financial consequences because decisions on the Budget will be taken by Council. However, if any recommendation to adjust the budget by amending savings proposals were to be accepted then the financial consequences of this would have to be matched in finalising the Budget and the final Budget report when it is presented to Council in February 2019.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 An overview and scrutiny committee has power to make recommendations to a local authority's executive and Council on policy areas with its remit which it has reviewed and discussed. However, there is no obligation on an executive,

or Council, to accept and implement a recommendation. Under the Council's Constitution, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is entitled, as part of the process for developing proposals for the Budget, to produce a report setting out its view of the budget priorities and any other issues it considers relevant.

- 5.2 Prior to final budget proposals being agreed by Cabinet, the committee has an opportunity to consider the proposals and to submit a note of its deliberation and comments on the proposals to Cabinet. This year this will take place at the Committee's meeting on 7 February 2019. Cabinet must take this note into account when finalising its budget proposals.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits victimisation and harassment and discrimination which is direct, indirect, by association, by perception, or discrimination arising from disability. Under section 149 of the Act, public bodies such as councils must in the exercise of their functions have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not; foster good relation between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.2 Effective equality analysis supports the council to understand how its activities and decisions could impact on local communities and to identify and mitigate against any potential for discrimination. As part of the Budget proposals, equality analysis screenings have been completed for all Budget proposals in accordance with the council's guidance and that where some potential adverse impact has been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups a full equality analysis has been carried out.

## **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 Ward members who are members of the Budget Panel or on Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will be involved in scrutinising this report.

### ***REPORT SIGN-OFF***

***Peter Gadsdon***

Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships