

	<p style="text-align: center;">Budget Panel 15th July 2008</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Policy & Regeneration</p>
<p>For Action</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: ALL</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Budget Panel 2008/9 – Work Programme</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a brief overview of the work of the Budget Panel in 2007/8. It also aims to assist the members with their discussions about the Budget Panel's work programme for 2008/9.

1.2

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members agree the Budget Panel's work programme for 2008/9.

3.0 Detail

Budget Panel 2007/8

- 3.1 The Budget Panel was established in September 2006 as part of the review of Brent Council's overview & scrutiny structures. 2007/8 was the second full year of operation for the Budget Panel and Panel members were keen to build on experience and knowledge and enable more members to become involved in the budget scrutiny process. The Panel's remit was to examine the budget and assess whether or not it was realistic and could deliver on the main priorities in the Corporate Strategy. The remit included:

- Examining the principles for budget setting
- The robustness of the budget and the ability to deliver savings
- The impact of 'invest to save' projects

- The impact of service transformation
- Key revenue budget outputs and decisions
- Key capital budget outputs and decisions
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy

3.2 Once the administration's draft budget was published the Budget Panel had the opportunity to question the lead member for resources on key elements of the proposals. This provided the opportunity for the Panel to make recommendations prior to the draft budget being agreed by the Executive. The Budget Panel also encourages all members to attend this meeting and time was allocated for questions from the floor.

3.3 During the budget scrutiny process the Budget Panel had three opportunities to make its views known. These were:

- **The First interim report** – prior to the draft budget being published.
- **The Second interim report** – this built on the first report and included recommendations on the draft budget prior to it being agreed by the Executive.
- **The Final report** – this report went to Full Council built on the second report and included recommendations on:
 - The Executive's final budget prior to it being debated at Full Council;
 - The budget process; and
 - The budget scrutiny process

Work Programme for 2008/9

3.4 At its final meeting in 2007/8 the Budget Panel received feedback on the Executives response to the recommendations the Panel had made to date. Up to date feedback on the recommendations has been provided by the Director of Finance elsewhere on this agenda. The Panel also recommended that the following areas be considered for the 2008/9 work programme:

- Housing & Community Care - deliverability of savings targets and progress on the transformation programme.
- Progress on delivering the Corporate Strategy – including information on implementing the LAA.
- Review other local authorities who have made reductions in Council Tax
- Review Fees and Charges
- Review the Capital Programme

Other Budget Panel recommendations have been picked up by other committees in the overview & scrutiny structure. A complete set of the Budget Panel's recommendations are attached at appendix A .

3.5 The attached work programme (appendix B) includes the items listed above and is designed to assist members in planning what they would like to cover at each meeting and deciding what evidence they would like to receive.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

Background Papers

Budget Panel Final Report 2006/7

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