

	<p style="text-align: center;">Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19th October 2006</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Policy & Regeneration</p>
Wards Affected: ALL	
Budget Panel- Summary Report	

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the membership and remit of the newly constituted Budget Panel, a sub committee within the overview and scrutiny structure.

2.0 Context

2.1 At a meeting of Full Council on May 22nd 2006 a Constitutional Working Group (CWG) was established and asked to conduct a review of the overview and scrutiny as part of it's remit. The group were asked to bring the outcome of their discussions back to full council. Prior to the review, overview and scrutiny at Brent consisted of separate overview and scrutiny committees although a single committee would be formed to consider the executives budget proposals.

2.2 Overview and scrutiny gained first sight of the budget proposals when they were brought to full council for the first reading debate. Outcomes from this debate informed the executives draft budget proposal.

2.3 The final budget proposals were considered at a meeting of Full Council taking into account comments made by the joint overview and scrutiny committee.

2.4 The CWG found that while the budget scrutiny process had provided some challenge, it had not allowed non executive councillors any input into the budget process until after the executive had developed a draft budget.

2.5 CWG recommended setting up a time limited budget panel. The panel will be politically balanced and made up of 6 members and be a permanent sub committee of the overview and scrutiny committee but will only meet during the budget setting process. The recommendations were agreed by full council on the 11th September 2006.

2.6 The new Budget panel will take an in-depth look at the budget during every stage of the process;

October - The first two meetings of the panel will take place prior to the First Reading Debate which will take place on 27th November. In these meetings the panel will receive the position statement report produced by the Director of Finance prior to it being discussed at Full Council.

They will also receive evidence from Service Directors to outline critical issues for their departments.

November – The First Reading Debate. The Executive presents a report to Full Council setting out their expenditure priorities for the coming year. In addition Full Council receives a report that sets out the financial position of the Council, and financial forecasts for the following year. A record of the debate will be sent to the Budget Panel.

In **December** following the **First Reading Debate** the Budget Panel will start a series of meetings to discuss the Executive's stated priorities and those issues raised by members at the First Reading Debate. Executive Members will be amongst those called as witnesses.

In **mid January** the Budget Panel will produce a report that will be sent to each Executive Member, and Group Leaders. The intention of this report is to inform budget proposal discussions.

Before the February Executive Meeting on 12th February 2007 the Budget Panel will receive the Leader's budget proposals. Executive members will be called as witnesses. The Budget Panel's comments will go to the Executive in conjunction with the Panel's report produced in January.

February the Executive meets to consider the report and comments from the panel, and the report from the Leader. The Executive will agree budget proposals for Full Council.

March Full Council determines budget and Council Tax.

2.7 The following 6 members have been appointed to sit on the Budget Panel;

Cllr Mark Cummins
Cllr Ann John
Cllr Alan Mendoza (C)
Cllr James Moher
Cllr Rob Pagnamenta (VC)
Cllr Vijay Shah

2.8 The remit of the Budget Panel will be to scrutinise the setting of the Council's budget within the context set out in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. It will also support longer term service planning within the council. In doing so the panel's discussions will focus on:

- The medium term financial strategy
- Principles for Budget Setting
- The robustness of the budget and the ability to deliver savings
- Key Revenue Budget outputs and decisions
- Key Capital Budget outputs and decisions

3.0 Future Meetings

3.1 The Budget Panel committee meetings will hold on the following dates;

- **26 October**
- **22 November**
- **7 December**
- **18 December**
- **10 January**
- **1 February (under review)**

Contact Officer

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