

Report to Council

Subject: Proposed amendment to the Constitution: removal of the requirement to refer the Council budget to Policy Scrutiny for consideration

Date: 11 July 2012

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1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for an addition to the Constitution which would require the Leader to report the Budget to Cabinet in February, following the removal of the requirement to refer the budget to the Scrutiny Committee.

2. Background

2.1 Members will recall that at the last Council meeting, it was agreed in principle that the requirement to refer the annual budget to Policy Scrutiny Committee for consideration as part of the budget consultation process be removed from the Constitution. However, some concerns were expressed about whether this would leave a sufficient period between budget Cabinet and budget Council for some members to fully consider the implications of the budget. Council therefore requested that Officers consider a form of wording to require the Leader to present the budget to Cabinet in February.

3. Proposal

3.1 In response to this request by Council, it is proposed that paragraph 2.01(c) in the Budget and Policy Framework contained within the Constitution be deleted and replaced with the following:

- (a) Budget and performance plan:
 - i. The Executive shall prepare the Budget and Performance Plan.
 - ii. The Executive may, if it wishes, invite views

from the Policy Review Scrutiny Committee on priorities and suggestions for growth prior to preparation of the budget. The Executive may, if it wishes, invite comment from the Scrutiny Committees on the draft budget prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

- iii. Before the 21st February in each financial year the Leader shall present a draft Budget and Performance Plan to the Cabinet for approval, highlighting budget priorities, growth items and proposed cuts.
- iv. The Executive shall then consider any comments made on the draft Budget and Performance Plan and present the final drafts to Council for adoption in accordance with the statutory requirements.

4. Resource Implications

None.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- 5.1 That the amendment to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules outlined in the report is approved.
- 3.2 That the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer is authorised to make the appropriate amendment to the Constitution.