

Item 9

REPORT TO CABINET

20th DECEMBER 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

BUDGET FRAMEWORK – 2008/2009 TIMETABLE

1. SUMMARY

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Cabinet is required to publicise a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the adoption of the annual Budget and its arrangements for consultation.

The attached Appendix proposes a timetable for the adoption of the 2008/2009 Budget and arrangements for consultation, which will accommodate the requirements of the Constitution.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the timetable be approved, as shown on the attached Appendix.

3. DETAIL

3.1 Part 4 Section C – Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution requires Cabinet to publicise a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the adoption of a Budget and its arrangements for consultation. A proposed timetable is shown in the attached Appendix.

3.2 At the Cabinet Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10th January 2008, I intend to present a report which will set the scene for next year's Budget, including a summary of the initial Budget requirements, details of the Revenue Support Grant and Housing Subsidy Settlements and suggested spending targets for each of the Cabinet portfolio areas.

3.3 In terms of the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny of the budget process this year, I have agreed that each individual Committee will again consider their own portfolio of services and the formal consultation process will begin 3rd January and end on 30th January 2008. Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings have been agreed with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for 22nd, 23rd and 24th January 2008 for the Strategic Leadership, Healthy Borough with Strong Communities and Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committees respectively.

3.4 Cabinet, at its meeting on Thursday 14th February 2008, will be able to consider the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees,

- 3.5 After taking those views into account, Cabinet will then approve the Budget proposals and make recommendations to the Council at its meeting to be held on Friday, 29th February 2008, when the level of Council Tax will be determined, taking into account the precept requirements of the County Council, Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Service and Town and Parish Councils. The Council Meeting on the 29th February 2008 is the earliest date possible for determining the Council Tax as this date is influenced by the date on which precepts of the County Council, Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Service and Town and Parish Councils are received.
- 3.6 The statutory deadline by which the level of Council Tax must be determined is Tuesday, 11th March 2008. Part 4 Section C – Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (2e to 2h) of the Council’s Constitution provide specific procedures where Council resolves to amend the recommendations of Cabinet (an in-principle decision). The period in between the Council meeting on Friday, 29th February and the statutory deadline for determining the Council Tax on 11th March does provide sufficient time to comply with the arrangements set out in the Constitution.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As the purpose of this report is to identify the timetable for the Budget process, there are no financial implications to be considered.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Council’s three Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be consulted as part of the Budget process. If the decision to create a Single Unitary Council for County Durham with effect from 1st April 2009 proceeds as planned then this will be the final budget prepared by this Council. Preparation of the budget assumes that this will progress and the budget will not deviate significantly from the current year and the Medium Term Financial plan. Therefore it is considered that the recent practice of consulting a representative group of council tax payers regarding the Annual Budget Proposals would no longer serve any useful purpose this year.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Links to Corporate Objectives/Values

The timetable has been established to ensure that all appropriate actions are undertaken during the process of determining the 2008/09 budget in that the Council is:

- *Being responsible with and accountable for public finances.*
- *Being open, accessible, equitable, fair and responsive to the public.*

6.2 Risk Management

If this timetable is not met, the Council could suffer an adverse cash flow in not being able to collect Council Tax from Council Taxpayers from the beginning of the financial year on the 1st April 2008. This timetable has therefore been devised to ensure that the appropriate statutory deadline to determine the level of Council Tax can be achieved.

6.3 Health and Safety

No additional implications have been identified.

6.4 Equality and Diversity

No Equality and Diversity implications have been identified as the purpose of this report is to identify the timetable for the budget process.

6.5 Legal and Constitutional

The appropriate Legal and Constitutional implications have been taken into account in determining this timetable

No other 'Material Considerations' have been identified.

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Background Papers: The Constitution – Part 4 Section C – Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

Examination by Statutory Officers:

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Management Team has approved the report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET FRAMEWORK – 2008/2009 TIMETABLE**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION, PART 4 – RULES OF PROCEDURE,****C – BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES**

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Report Distributed</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>
CABINET		
• To consider Budget Framework	Wednesday 2/1/2008	Thursday 10/1/2008
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY		
• Consultation Process	Begins Thursday 3/1/2008	Ends Wednesday 30/1/2008
• Strategic Leadership	Monday 14/1/2008	Tuesday 22/1/2008
• Healthy Borough with Strong Communities	Tuesday 15/1/2008	Wednesday 23/1/2008
• Prosperous and Attractive Borough	Wednesday 16/1/2008	Thursday 24/1/2008
CABINET		
• To consider view of Overview & Scrutiny Committees))) Wednesday 6/2/2008	Thursday 14/2/2008
• To approve the Budget proposals and make recommendations to Council))	
COUNCIL		
• To consider recommendations from Cabinet)) Thursday 21/2/2008	Friday 29/2/2008
• To determine the Council Tax level))	