



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Report

## Cabinet

**AGENDA ITEM**  
[05/00]

<b>Date</b>	18 December 2000
<b>Title</b>	Service and Budget Planning
<b>Author</b>	Cabinet Leader
<b>Electoral Divisions Affected</b>	All
<b>Summary</b>	This report updates Members on the progress so far on Service and Budget Planning for the year 2001/02 and outlines the next steps.
<b>Recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) That Cabinet Members and Policy Advisory Groups finalise their Strategic Aims, Policy Directions and Budget proposals for consideration by the Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2001.</li><li>ii) That the Corporate Performance Select Committee be asked to consider and comment on the developing proposals, again for consideration by the Cabinet on 5 February.</li><li>iii) That a consultation programme, as described in section 3 below, be agreed.</li><li>iv) That Cabinet Members and General Managers be asked to begin to develop portfolio work programmes for implementing the Policy Directions.</li></ul>

Since July of this year a great deal of work has already been undertaken to prepare our new Council Plan and the associated budget for 2001/02, as well as an indicative budget for the following two years. At the Policy and Resources Committee in September, I set out a number of Policy Steers to guide this process, and the former committees and their PFPs undertook substantial preparatory work which was brought together via the Strategy Panel for consideration by the Council at its November meeting.

At that meeting, the Policy Steers were reaffirmed and the new Cabinet Members were asked to continue to develop the budgetary preparations, and in addition to develop some draft strategic aims and associated medium term policy directions for their portfolio areas, for initial consideration by the Cabinet at this meeting.

In the meantime, we have received news of the Government's main grant allocation to the Council, and the impact of this needs to be taken into account as the work moves forward.

### **1. Draft Strategic Aims and Policy Directions**

Attached as Appendix 1 is the first draft of the Strategic Aims and Policy Directions being prepared by Cabinet members, and a further draft will be tabled at the meeting. This is work that is still at a formative stage, but I believe it can only gain from being shared more widely, and I hope that both the Policy Advisory Groups and, if they are able to do so, the Select Committee for Corporate Performance will be able to help Cabinet Members to finalise these for the Cabinet meeting on 5 February. I will return below to some ideas I have for seeking a wider view on our developing proposals.

### **2. Revenue and Capital Budgets**

Attached as Appendix 2 is a note which sets out the current position regarding the draft revenue budget for 2001/02, including is a summary of the main points of the Government's Revenue Support Grant settlement.

I shall be asking individual Cabinet Members to finalise and agree individual service plans within their portfolio areas, once the final budget recommendations have been made by the Cabinet on 5 February.

I would also ask Cabinet Members and General Managers to begin to develop portfolio work programmes, to ensure the implementation of the policy directions at portfolio level.

### **3. Consultation**

Our Strategic Aims, Policy Directions and associated budget proposals will be brought together in the form of a new Council Plan, the first year of which will be the Best Value Performance Plan for 2001/02. It is therefore particularly important that we make real efforts to consult interested parties about our developing proposals. Much consultation has already been undertaken, as part of the normal professional dialogue with our partners undertaken by our service managers and the relevant PFPs. However, I think we can go further than this, and I have 3 specific proposals to make.

- i) I would like the Cabinet personally to be able to hear some of the views of our key stakeholders on our developing strategic aims, so I am proposing that in early January the Cabinet organises four area-based meetings to which a cross-section of stakeholders from all service areas are invited. At these meetings stakeholders will be able to hear directly from Cabinet Members about their proposals, and feedback their views directly.
- ii) To supplement this, and to enable those who cannot attend these meetings to respond, I propose to develop a simple leaflet, again setting out our developing thoughts and seeking stakeholder views.
- iii) However, I also think it is important to receive an analysis which is based on a wider, and statistically sound, cross-section of our population. I am therefore commissioning a small public attitude survey, to test views on our aims, and on key aspects of our budget proposals. I anticipate this will cost in the order of £7000 - £8000, which will be met from existing budget provision for service and budget consultation.

I hope that the results of all these consultations, together with feedback from the user satisfaction survey undertaken jointly with the District Councils under the statutory provisions for Best Value Performance Indicators, will be available for consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 5 February, when it will be finalising its proposals for the Council.

### **Background Papers**

Service and Budget Planning papers from Policy Performance and Finance Panels reported to Strategy Panel on 15 November 2000 and Policy and Resources Committee on 2 November 2000.

### **Representations**

Any representations regarding this report should be made to Head of Cabinet Support by 9.00 am on Monday 18 December 2000. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382966), Fax (to 01296 383441), or e-mail to [cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk)

For further information please contact: Nick Fane on 01296 383103