

Inquiry Scope

Title	Budget Scrutiny
Signed-off by	SC Chairman
	Head of Member Services (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)
Author	(Committee Advisor Clare Gray)
Date	Scoping paper to be agreed on 29 September
Inquiry Group Membership	FPR Select Committee Members including the Chairmen of all other Select Committees
Member Services Resource	Member Services will provide the following officer support: Sara Turnbull, Head of Member Services – Policy Advice and Report Quality Assurance Clare Gray, Committee Adviser – Policy Lead & project management (specify no hours e.g. estimate of 15 hours per week over x period) Committee Assistant – Administrative support (as needed)
Lead Cabinet Member	Martin Tett and John Chilver
Lead HQ/BU Officer	Richard Ambrose/Sarah Ashmead
What is the problem that is trying to be solved?	The Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee conduct hearings in mid-January in order to develop the conclusions and recommendations of its 2016/17 budget scrutiny inquiry. As in previous years, Cabinet Members would be questioned by members of the inquiry group on their planning, assumptions and budgetary proposals for the coming financial year, with their input forming the evidence base for the recommendations that are presented to Cabinet. Voluntary sector organisations who have contributed to the process also play an invaluable role in providing an external perspective, helping the inquiry group to draw its conclusions.
Is the issue of significance to Buckinghamshire as a whole?	Yes the budget proposals for the coming financial year for the County Council will have an impact on Buckinghamshire as a whole.
Is the topic of relevance to the work of BCC?	Yes see above
Is this topic within the remit of the Select Committee?	Scrutiny of the budget is a priority within the Select Committee's remit. The subject falls within the remit of the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Resources but involves all Cabinet Members.
What work is underway already on this issue?	See key timing considerations Members need to consider what will help them in their budget scrutiny role before the January public meetings such as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What paperwork is required • Presentations to FPR on the lead up to budget scrutiny eg grants to voluntary organisations, information update on any concerns regarding the Children Services and Health and

	<p>Wellbeing budget, transformation savings, use of preventative spend, income generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier briefing from Director of Assurance on key financial issues
Are there any key changes that might impact on this issue?	New Cabinet Members to brief on the budget scrutiny process.
What are the key timing considerations?	<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal discussions Cabinet Members & One Council Board • Informal Member Session to review Strategic Plan (19th) • Guidance issued to Business Units to develop budget options <p>July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approve revised Strategic Plan • Start of Government Spending Review <p>September - Informal Member Groups to assess options and advise Cabinet Member</p> <p>October - Start of budget consultation</p> <p>December – settlement date</p> <p>January 11 – Cabinet to agree draft budget</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny – 18 to 22 January 2016</p> <p>February 15 – Cabinet recommend final budget</p> <p>February 25 – Council agree final budget</p>
Who are the key stakeholders & decision-makers?	Cabinet Members, One Council Board, voluntary organisations, public (in terms of consultation), Director of Assurance, Director of Strategy and Policy, Bucks Business First
What might the Inquiry Achieve?	To make recommendations on the budget which are agreed by Cabinet
What media/communications support do you want?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release to launch budget scrutiny week • Press release to promote the report once published

Evidence-gathering Methodology

What types of methods of evidence-gathering will you use?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided by the Director of Assurance • Business Unit Plans • Three days of meetings with Cabinet Members • Consultation feedback
How will you involve service-users and the public in this inquiry?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public will be asked to submit their own questions in advance which will then be collated to be read out by the Inquiry Group to Cabinet Members. This can be undertaken through twitter or via press release.

- Public meeting
- Information will be fed through from public re budget consultation
- Voluntary organisations will be invited to present their views on the budget
- Bucks Business First

Outline Inquiry Project Plan

Stage	Key Activity	Dates
Scoping	Inquiry Scope Agreed by Select Committee	29 Sept
Evidence-gathering	Evidence-gathering phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List key events - To include other sessions agreed by Members that would be helpful before January 	18-22 January
	Final Evidence Session	22 January
Developing Recommendations	Inquiry Group/SC meeting – Key Findings Report & Possible Areas of Recommendations considered	22 January
	Testing & developing recommendations with stakeholders	25 Jan to 2 Feb
Reporting	Final Inquiry Group report with recommendations completed (signed-off by SC Chairman) Report published for Select Committee (if ready) Report will probably need to go to follow in this week to allow stakeholder comments	25 Jan or after
	Select Committee agrees report to go forward to decision-makers (meeting or conference call)	2 Feb
	Cabinet papers published	5 Feb
	Cabinet/Partner considers recommendations Council Report	15 Feb 18 Feb