

Budget Scrutiny 2020 – Recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny Task & Group

Chairman – Cllr John Gladwin

Response from Shadow Executive – Cllr Martin Tett, Leader

Recommendation	Shadow Executive's Response – Y/N & comments	Lead Member/Officer
<p>1. a) There should be a consistent approach to how inflation and salary increases are applied across the budget.</p> <p>b) Where budgets include monies released from a reserve, this should be clearly noted in a separate budget line.</p> <p>c) Further work should be undertaken on Years 2 & 3 of the MTFP to ensure the robustness of the budgets in light of a number of external factors which are outside of the Council's control.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>In developing the budget for Buckinghamshire Council we started with the existing budget plans of the 5 predecessor Councils. These budgets were set in different ways and in pulling them together some compromises were required. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to develop and improve the presentation of its budgets in future year to ensure transparency and robustness.</p> <p>December 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>2. The Corporate Plan for Buckinghamshire Council should include a stronger commitment to Climate Change, with the aim of the Council being net Carbon Neutral by 2035(subject to consideration of the results of the Council's Carbon Audit) and the County generally by 2050. This commitment should be explicit and transparent and will require strong political leadership to ensure delivery.</p>	<p>In part. The Corporate Plan sets out a clear ambition to address climate change. The detailed objectives will need to be developed by the leadership of the new council, once it has the chance to review the results of the carbon audit which is currently underway.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Bill Chapple, Shadow Executive Environment Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>

<p>3. The budget should include specific budget lines which demonstrate how it will deliver the Council being net Carbon Neutral by 2035.</p>	<p>Agreed. As the new council develops its detailed climate change plan, in response to the carbon audit, it will need to clearly identify the associated budget.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Bill Chapple, Shadow Executive Environment Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>4. A specific Portfolio and Portfolio Holder should be nominated to be responsible for driving the Climate Change & Carbon Neutral agenda forward across Buckinghamshire Council and to take a leading role in championing this across the County and beyond.</p>	<p>Whilst the Shadow Executive has a Portfolio Holder leading on the Environment, the organisation of future portfolios will be the responsibility of the new Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, following the elections in May</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p>
<p>5. An overall recruitment and workforce strategy for Buckinghamshire Council as a whole should be developed as a priority.</p>	<p>Agreed. A council wide strategy will be developed by October 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Katrina Wood, Shadow Executive Deputy Leader & Resources Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Murphy Brookman, Service Director for HR and OD</i></p>
<p>6. A strategy to reduce the number of agency staff should also be prioritised. The delivery & performance of this strategy should be monitored regularly.</p>	<p>Agreed. Whilst recognising that there are areas of the council's business where it is helpful to draw on agency staff and that agency staff provide organisational flexibility, there is a key priority to ensure that the use of Agency staff is appropriate and that an Agency worker's tenure is minimised through a clear exit plan. This will be one area of focus within the new recruitment and workforce strategy. In addition each service area will monitor its performance on the use of agency staff, and this will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Directorate Workforce Boards and CMT.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Katrina Wood, Shadow Executive Deputy Leader & Resources Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Murphy Brookman, Service Director for HR and OD</i></p>

<p>7. Buckinghamshire Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver existing savings plans and an ambitious capital programme, as well as managing far-reaching service transformation.</p>	<p>Agreed. As the new Council develops its transformation programme, and reviews individual service areas, a key focus will be on ensuring that the organisation has the right skills and capacity to deliver the Corporate Plan ambitions.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Rachael Shimmin, Chief Executive</i></p>
<p>8. Buckinghamshire Council should invest in Key Worker Housing as a priority, to aid recruitment, reduce staff turnover and unlock additional skills capacity in the County.</p>	<p>Agreed. Alternative options for developing Key Worker housing will be reviewed and business cases developed over the next year.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Katrina Wood, Shadow Executive Deputy Leader & Resources Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>9. A robust centralised management system is put in place to manage all Developer Contributions across the County, including CIL, S106 and S278 monies which are so integral to successful delivery of the Capital programme</p>	<p>Agreed. A harmonised approach to manage all developer contributions will be developed in the first year.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Nick Naylor, Shadow Executive Planning Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>10. Risks around funding bids from Housing Infrastructure Fund and other government bodies are acknowledged and implications on cash flow/borrowing/interest and the timing of building projects should be clearly identified.</p>	<p>Agreed. The final budget report to Shadow Executive / Shadow Authority will include a section on key risks, including those relating to cash flow and the potential need for temporary borrowing.</p> <p>February 2020.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>11. Capital programme should be divided into those schemes which are fully funded, with deliverable business cases and those that are more aspirational, in order to give members</p>	<p>Agreed. A further review of the capital programme will be undertaken post vesting day. This will include reviewing how the capital programme is presented with the aim to enhance both consistency in approach and transparency.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p>

<p>and residents a clearer understanding of the programme. This detail should be included in the final budget.</p>	<p>September 2020.</p>	<p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>12. A detailed breakdown of the funding for each Community Board should be included in the final budget.</p>	<p>Agreed. A detailed breakdown of funding has been presented to the Shadow Executive. A review of the presentation of the budget will be undertaken for future budget setting with the aim of enhancing transparency.</p> <p>December 2020.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>13. Responsibility for Community Boards and the associated budgets should sit with the Communities Portfolio to drive Localism forward and have visibility of community grants and support in one place.</p>	<p>The organisation of future portfolios will be the responsibility of the new Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, following the elections in May</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p>
<p>14. Increased funding for feasibility work in years 2 & 3 should be investigated to reflect the quantum of Capital projects (£493m over 3 years)</p>	<p>Agreed. This will be considered as part of the next budget round.</p> <p>December 2020.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>15. The balance of the Unitary Implementation transition fund should be added to the £14m transformation pot.</p>	<p>Agreed. This will be amended as part of the final budget.</p> <p>February 2020.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>16. Further assessment should be made during 2020-21 as to whether the £14m Transformation Pot will be sufficient to enable the required</p>	<p>Agreed. The process around how the transformation pot will be allocated out is to be agreed and any future investment requirements will be considered as part of the next budget round.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p>

<p>service transformation over the 3 year period of the MTFP.</p>	<p>December 2020.</p>	<p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>17. As soon as plans are finalised for the priority order of service transformation, these should be shared with all staff to enable them to understand the implications for them as individuals over the next 3 years.</p>	<p>Agreed. The senior leadership team is currently developing a programme of service reviews, in order to be able to provide all employees with clarity about the implications for their own individual roles. March 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i> <i>Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive</i></p>
<p>18. A robust and clearly understood approach to risk management be adopted by Buckinghamshire Council as a priority.</p>	<p>Agreed. Risk Management is a key element of assessment of both individual proposals and the overall budget proposal, and this needs to be clearly evidenced in budget proposals. December 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Katrina Wood, Deputy Leader & Resources Portfolio Holder</i> <i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>
<p>19. The option of the Home to School Transport team being integrated in the Education service and the Client Transport team being integrated in Adult Social Care, to realise savings and improve outcomes for residents should be explored.</p>	<p>In part. Further alignment with the teams will be considered as part of a wider review and improvement plan of the client transport service. September 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Mark Shaw, Shadow Executive Transport Portfolio Holder</i> <i>Richard Barker, Corporate Director, Communities</i></p>
<p>20. A management reporting system should be established which enables a true comparison of costs and key performance indicators, in particular the quality of service, between in-house and contracted services on a like-for-like basis to support Buckinghamshire Council's future decision-making.</p>	<p>Agreed. The finance, procurement and business intelligence teams will develop a methodology which will support service areas in evaluating options for future models of service delivery as part of the transformation programme.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i> <i>Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive</i></p>

<p>21. Priority should be given to the recruitment of experienced staff to support the Planning service in dealing with increased demand and Members would recommend that a ‘Grow your Own’ programme such as those in Social Care should be investigated.</p>	<p>Agreed. The recruitment of experienced planning staff is a priority, and this will need to be reflected in the wider recruitment and workforce strategy mentioned in item 5 above. As part of this work, consideration will be given to whether a grow your own programme would be the right solution</p>	<p><i>Cllr Nick Naylor, Shadow Executive Planning Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>22. Additional funding should be set aside for the Local Plan reserve as £3m over the next three years is likely to be inadequate.</p>	<p>As work commences on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan we will develop a project plan including estimated costs for supporting evidence and the eventual Examination in Public. We will review the figure in the reserve on the basis of this work in the next 12 months.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Nick Naylor, Shadow Executive Planning Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>23. When the Planning Service is reviewed, adequate resources should be allocated to enable an effective and timely response to planning enforcement issues.</p>	<p>Agreed. We are preparing a paper on the harmonised enforcement service looking at working practices and resources and will report back on the findings this year.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Nick Naylor, Shadow Executive Planning Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth and Sustainability</i></p>
<p>24. Development of a parking strategy, including how to increase capacity, should be a matter of priority for Buckinghamshire Council after the elections in May 2020.</p>	<p>Agreed. This work will be progressed during 2020/21.</p> <p>March 2021</p>	<p><i>Cllr Mark Shaw, Shadow Executive Transport Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Richard Barker, Corporate Director, Communities</i></p>
<p>25. A review should be undertaken ahead of the parking enforcement procurement, to investigate how the Council’s on street and off street parking enforcement can be integrated to deliver an improved service and to review future requirements in light of the new parking</p>	<p>Agreed - this work is already being progressed through the programme workstream and will be presented for decision by the new Council in 2020/21.</p> <p>October 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Mark Shaw, Shadow Executive Transport Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Richard Barker, Corporate Director, Communities</i></p>

<p>strategy, to ensure quality service delivery and value for money.</p>		
<p>26. During 2020-21, as Community Access Points are reviewed, consideration should be given to their future funding.</p>	<p>Agreed. As the plans for moving from Council Access to Community Access Points are developed, business cases will be developed which assess the financial implications of individual proposals. The Council will then be able to consider the need for any funding provision.</p> <p>December 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive</i></p>
<p>27. There should be continued investment in the Social Work Academy, which utilises the apprenticeship levy and will provide more stability in the Adult Social Care workforce and positive outcomes for clients.</p>	<p>Agreed. The first cohort of students are due to be recruited in April and then a further cohort in September. Their progress will be closely monitored to ensure that the programme delivers the right outcomes and that a case can be demonstrated for ongoing investment.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Angela Macpherson, Shadow Executive Adult Social Care Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Gillian Quinton, Corporate Director Adults, Health & Housing</i></p>
<p>28. There should be further investment in the ASYE Academy to enable Children's Services to recruit and retain more qualified staff, which will stabilise the workforce and lead to improved outcomes for children and families. In turn, this should also support the pace of change required for Ofsted Improvement.</p>	<p>Agreed. We will increase the ASYE academy by another two cohorts of up to 20 each between now and 2021. The Executive has proposed an additional £2.2m as part of the draft budget in order to deliver this commitment, which will enable us to reduce agency staffing in future years</p>	<p><i>Cllr Warren Whyte, Shadow Executive Children's Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Tolis Vouyioukas, Corporate Director Children's Services</i></p>
<p>29. A specific line should be included in the budget for Special Expenses.</p>	<p>Agreed. Special Expenses income will be specifically identified on the face of the budget and an appendix presented with the final budget papers showing the budgets for Special Expense areas.</p> <p>February 2020.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Martin Tett, Shadow Executive Leader</i></p> <p><i>Richard Ambrose, Service Director for Corporate Finance</i></p>

<p>30. Voluntary sector organisations which provide vital community services at minimal cost should be nurtured and a full review carried out to establish how they have been funded to date and how grants and other funding from Buckinghamshire Council should be offered going forward to deliver improved outcomes for residents.</p>	<p>Agreed. A review of the council's relationship with the voluntary, community and charity sector will be undertaken during 2020/21, with a view to developing new funding arrangements for 2021/22.</p> <p>October 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Isobel Darby, Shadow Executive Communities Portfolio Holder</i> <i>Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive</i></p>
<p>31. A strategy for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping should be developed as a priority for Buckinghamshire Council.</p>	<p>Agreed – the strategy will be developed in the first year of operation of the new Council, using a collaborative approach with key partners.</p>	<p><i>Cllr Isobel Darby, Shadow Executive Communities Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Gillian Quinton, Corporate Director Adults, Health & Housing</i></p>
<p>32. A consistent approach to licensing for HMOs and Taxis should be applied across the County as soon as practicable after 1st April 2020.</p>	<p>Agreed - a country wide taxi licencing policy will be progressed during 2020/21.</p> <p>February 2021</p>	<p><i>Cllr Isobel Darby, Shadow Executive Communities Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Richard Barker, Corporate Director, Communities</i></p>
<p>33. The evaluation of the Wycombe Street Warden scheme, should be reported to the new Cabinet as part of a wider review of Community Safety/Anti-Social Behaviour.</p>	<p>Agreed. The evaluation will be included as part of a wider review of enforcement activity across the new Council</p> <p>December 2020</p>	<p><i>Cllr Isobel Darby, Shadow Executive Communities Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Richard Barker, Corporate Director, Communities</i></p>