

REPORT TITLE: Budget Consultation 2025/26

To:

Cllr Simon Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources

The Executive, 22 October 2024

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Executive approve the public consultation on the council's 2025/26 budget, as set out at Appendix 1, to run from 23 October to 4 December 2024.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

- 2.1 On 10 October 2024, the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Full Council. This sets out the strategic outline approach to setting the council's 2025/26 budget, including the need for the council to reduce its annual net expenditure in the General Fund by £6 million per year by 1 April 2026.
- 2.2 A separate report to the Strategy & Resources Committee on 30 September 2024 provided more detail on the council's approach to delivering the required savings over the next two financial years. At this meeting, the Leader recommended to the Executive the inclusion of proposals that will impact service delivery into the public budget consultation.
- 2.3 The Executive is now being asked to approve the format of the public consultation on the council's 2025/26 budget.

3. Background information

- 3.1 It is proposed that the consultation be carried out using the council's online consultation and engagement platform, from 23 October to 4 December 2024.
- 3.2 The consultation will be publicised throughout the duration of the consultation in a number of ways, such as:
- Press release to engage local media
 - Updates on the council website
 - Updates on the council's social media channels
 - Targeted (paid) social media
 - Posters displayed at locations across the city
 - Emails to subscribers
 - At some council-run events
- 3.3 The consultation has also been publicised in the autumn 2024 issue of Cambridge Matters, the council's quarterly magazine which is delivered to all Cambridge residents. Information about how to access the survey in a different format or language will be made available when the consultation launches.

4. Corporate plan

- 4.1 The council's budget will underpin all of its corporate plan priorities for the next financial year.

[Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council](#)

5. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

- 5.1 The benefit of this decision will be that the views of local residents, businesses and other public respondents can be fully taken into account when setting the council's budget priorities over the next financial year, in line with best practice.

6. Implications

6.1 Relevant risks

No significant risks identified from undertaking consultation.

Financial Implications

6.2 The cost of advertising and promoting to consultation in order to generate a wide range of responses is likely to be less than £1,000 and will be covered from existing service budgets. The financial implications of specific budget proposals to be put forward for implementation, after full consideration of consultation responses, will be set out and scrutinised as part of the council's usual budget setting process.

Legal Implications

6.3 The proposed consultation will satisfy the statutory requirement on the council to consult the local business community on its proposed budget. Where there are significant changes to services proposed, further public consultation is planned as set out within Appendix 1.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

6.4 The consultation will be hosted on the council's online consultation and engagement platform, and carried out in accordance with the council's Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement. This will ensure the consultation is carried out in an accessible and inclusive manner.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

6.5 No net zero carbon, climate change or environmental implications identified from undertaking consultation. The implications of specific budget proposals to be put forward for implementation, after full consideration of consultation responses, will be set out and

scrutinised as part of the council's usual budget setting process.

Procurement Implications

6.6 No procurement implications identified.

Community Safety Implications

6.7 No community safety implications identified.

7. Appendices

7.1 Budget Consultation 2025/26

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jody Etherington, Chief Finance Officer, tel: 01223 458130, email: jody.etherington@cambridge.gov.uk