

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee -**  
**15th October 2007**

**2008/09 Budget Prioritisation**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance**

**1. Executive Summary and recommendation**

**1.1 The issue**

**1.1.1** The Council is facing a budget gap of between £0.8m and £1m for 2008/09 and between £2.7m and £5m over the next 5 years. As part of the strategy for bridging the gap, the Cabinet are keen to seek views from all overview and scrutiny committee on where it should look to find savings in services.

**1.1.2** **I therefore recommend that members of overview and scrutiny committees undertake an exercise to identify the service areas within the remit of the committee which are both of highest and lowest priority and make recommendations to Cabinet that savings should be directed to lower priority areas.**

**1.2 Summary of implications**

**1.2.1** Financial Savings directed towards lower priority areas identified, if accepted by Cabinet, may form part of the interim budget proposals for consultation in December 2007.

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**1.2.2** Legal The Council is obliged to provide a number of statutory services which are highlighted in the appendix to this report.

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**1.2.3** Human Resources No implications arising from this report although staffing implications may result from the areas identified for savings which will be addressed as part of the budget process.

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### **1.3 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities**

**1.3.1** The identification of savings may impact on the delivery of the corporate and community plan.

### **1.4 Statement on Risk**

**1.4.1** A failure to direct the Cabinet in looking for areas for savings may result in a budget which does not have wide support.

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## **2. Introduction**

**2.1** The Council is facing a budget gap of between £0.8m and £1m for 2008/09 and between £2.7m and £5m over the next 5 years. As part of the strategy for bridging the gap, the Cabinet are keen to seek views from all overview and scrutiny committee on where it should look to find savings in services.

## **3. Background**

**3.1** There is currently no overall political control in the council. The involvement of the overview and scrutiny committees at this stage in the development of the budget proposals is an opportunity to influence the Cabinet over where to make cuts and is more likely to result in a budget which has wider political support.

## **4. Identification of higher / lower priorities.**

**4.1** The committee is asked to undertake an exercise to identify higher priority areas where savings should not be directed and lower priority areas where savings should be directed, to be communicated back to the Cabinet via the Chief Finance Officer. Appendix 1 contains a list of services funded from within the budget of the committee with an indication of whether there is a statutory responsibility to provide them.

## **5. Growth**

**5.1** In view of the financial position, the Cabinet is of the view that there should be no growth unless there is a statutory need or a compelling business case.

## **6. Consultation**

**6.1** This exercise forms part of a wide consultation exercise forming part of the initial stages of determining the budget for 2008/09.

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<b>Background Papers</b>	Cabinet 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2007 - Budget Strategy and Process 2008/09.
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<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee