

Cheltenham Borough Council
Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20th October 2008

Budget 2009/10

Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Culture

1. Executive Summary and recommendation

1.1 The issue

1.1.1 The Council is facing a budget gap of £2.6m over the next 5 years and has an estimated budget gap for 2009/10 of £777,000. As part of the strategy for bridging the gap, the Cabinet are keen to seek views from all overview and scrutiny committees on where it should look to find savings in services and consider funding growth.

1.1.2 **I therefore request that members of overview and scrutiny committee identify lower priority areas, potential areas for savings and growth items for the services under the remit of the committee.**

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 2008.

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1.2.2 Legal The Council is obliged to provide a number of statutory services.

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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 gain council wide support.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 The Council is facing a budget gap of £2.6m over the next 5 years and has an estimated budget gap for 2009/10 of £777,000. As part of the strategy for bridging the gap, the Cabinet are keen to seek views from all overview and scrutiny committees on where it should look to find savings in services and consider funding growth.

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 or fund growth which is more likely to result in a budget which has wider political support.

4. Identification of lower priorities.

4.1 The committee is asked to identify lower priority areas where savings should be directed.

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 2009/10.

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| Background Papers | Cabinet 23 rd September 2008 - Budget Strategy and Process 2009/10 |
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| Scrutiny Function | Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee |