

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Resources
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	22 August 2013
<b>Subject:</b>	Budget Consultation Process
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of CCDS
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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### **1. Purpose of report:**

A motion to Full Council on 19 March 2013 stated: "The council asks the officers to investigate what means there are to increase public involvement in the budget process and to report to cabinet with all the associated costs involved, including that of officer time."

This report is in response to that notice of motion and sets out a recommended approach on how best to increase public involvement in the budget process for 2014/15 .

### **2. Recommendations**

That

2.1 A consultation should be held to invite all residents of Portsmouth and council staff to give their views on how the council could become more efficient, the services they are prepared to see reduced, those they are prepared to pay for and which are valued most and would like protected.

2.2 There should also be the opportunity for residents to give some general feedback on the budget setting process.

2.3 The consultation findings will be used to inform the council's budget setting process for 2014/15.

2.4 Feedback should be invited on four specific questions:

- (i) How do you think the council could become more efficient?
- (ii) Which council services are you prepared to see reduced?
- (iii) Which council services are you prepared to pay for?
- (iv) Which council services do you value most and would like protected?

2.5 Views and suggestions should be invited via an online feedback form, writing and e-mail.

2.6 Public meetings may be held to discuss the budget setting process.

2.7 Neighbourhood forum meetings held throughout this period should also have the opportunity to discuss the budget setting process and invite feedback.

2.8 The September edition of Flagship magazine should be used as the main tool to inform residents about the budget setting process. This should also be used to promote the consultation and encourage as much feedback as possible from residents.

### **3. Reasons for recommendations**

The motion agreed by council looks to increase public involvement in the budget.

Moreover, over the next three years, the council will need to save at least another £30 million. In some areas such as care for older people, demand for our services will continue to increase.

It is therefore vital that we receive as many views as possible from residents and staff on where we should continue to make efficiencies and where residents think we could reduce council services and save money.

We reviewed other potential budget consultation methods for 2014/15 but due to lead in times and cost these are not considered appropriate at this time but may be considered in future

This proposed consultation will provide staff and residents the opportunity to 'have their say' and give their feedback before the crucial budget setting process takes place.

The use of Flagship magazine will ensure all 90,000 households in the city are fully informed of the budget setting process but also costs are kept to the minimum.

Using an online form and paper questionnaire will help ensure the public are able to feed back to a number of specific questions. This will mean the results can be collated and analysed to provide useful data to inform council budget decisions.

### **4. Costs including officer time**

- Writing, design and copy for Flagship and webpages - £2,597
- Inputting, coding and analysing per 1000 responses - £2,800
- Organising and attendance at public meetings - £6548

Of the above costs £3,700 are estimated 'additional costs' - the remainder are based on officer time.

**5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

A preliminary EIA has been completed.

**6. Legal Implications**

In following the proposed approach the Cabinet is complying with the wishes of Council as expressed by the Council on 19 March 2013.

**7. Finance Comments**

The total cost of the consultation is estimated at £11,945. Of this sum, £8,245 will utilise existing officer time and resources. However, there will be additional costs associated with the input and analysis of data and with hiring premises for public meetings. As there is no specific budget provision for this activity, the additional cost of £3,700 arising from the recommendations in the report will be met from elsewhere within the Resources portfolio.

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Signed by:

**Appendices: Nil**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

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Signed by: