

# **Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

**7 February 2024**

## **Scrutiny of the Budget**

### **Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To scrutinise the service impacts of the specific proposals that fall within the remit of this Committee.
- 1.2 To note that the overall financial impact of the budget, and the service impact of proposals that fall outside of the remit of this Committee will be scrutinised by the other Scrutiny Committees at their meetings in January / February as these matters fall outside the terms of reference for this committee.

#### **2 Action required**

- 2.1 To discuss the service impact of individual proposals put forward from the Communities, Environment and Resident Services Directorate with the officers and Executive Councillors present, gather information and draw conclusions.
- 2.3 To provide feedback to the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

#### **3 Background information**

##### **3.1 The Role of Overview and Scrutiny**

All Council's operating Executive Governance arrangements are required to establish Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These Committees act as a check and balance to the power of the Executive, holding decision makers to account for their decisions, reviewing proposals and supporting the development of policy. When operating effectively Overview and Scrutiny supports effective decision making and good governance through processes of supportive but robust challenge and transparent public accountability.

- 3.2 As part of its governance improvement work, Nottingham City Council has recently reviewed the structure, operation and support for Overview and Scrutiny to ensure it can deliver the above aims as effectively as possible, thereby supporting the Council's overall improvement journey. A new structure for Overview and Scrutiny, with dedicated officer support, was established in May 2023 with five committees, each linked to one of the Council's Directorates, with separate Committees for Children's Services and Health and Adult Social Care. Each of these

Committees has a role to play in the scrutiny of the budget and these roles are outlined in this report.

### **3.3 Scrutiny of the Budget – 2024/25**

All Councils are legally required to agree a balanced budget, outlining how resources will be allocated to enable them to deliver their statutory responsibilities within their financial means. Drawing up proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25 has been exceedingly challenging due to reductions in funding for local authorities, increases in demand for services where statutory duties exist, particularly Children's and Adult's social care and homelessness, and inflationary and other pressures. This has resulted in the need to put forward proposals to stop or reduce some services in order to seek to balance the budget.

3.4 In Nottingham, proposals have been drawn up by the Council's Executive Councillors and Senior Officers. At its meeting on 19 December 2023, Executive Board agreed to put these proposals to the public with a formal consultation process for those proposals requiring it. Proposals not requiring formal consultation were shared in the interests of transparency. Extracts from the appendices to the Executive Board report containing the proposals that fall within this Committee's remit are attached to this report.

### **3.5 Scrutiny of the Impact of Individual Proposals**

This Committee is responsible for scrutinising the service impact of individual proposals put forward from the Communities, Environment and Resident Services Directorate. This falls outside of the formal consultation process but it is important that the service impacts are scrutinised by the relevant committee. Matters to consider could include:

- a) What impact the proposals will have on service users/ citizens and how these impacts might be mitigated
- b) How effectively equalities have been considered as part of the proposals
- c) The impact proposals may have on each other

Any comments or recommendations should be fed back to the Portfolio Holder responsible.

3.6 The service impact of the individual proposals put forward from the Council's other directorates will be scrutinised by the four other Overview and Scrutiny Committees at their meetings in January/ February with comments fed back to the relevant Portfolio Holders. In addition, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, as the Scrutiny Committee responsible for finance, will provide feedback to the Executive on the overall budget as part of the formal consultation process. These matters fall outside of the Terms of Reference for this Committee and should not form part of the considerations at this meeting.

#### **4 List of attached information**

4.1 Appendix One: Public Consultation savings proposals

4.2 Appendix Two: Non Public Consultation savings proposals

#### **5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

5.1 None

#### **6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

6.1 Report to, and Minutes of, the Executive Board meeting held on [19 December 2023](#) (Budget Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28)

6.2 [2024/25 Budget Savings Proposals Consultation](#)

#### **7 Wards affected**

7.1 All.

#### **8 Contact information**

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