

Appendix 1

THE BUDGET DECISION MEETING OF COUNCIL

The recommendations of the Policy & Resources Committee will be proposed in respect of the agreement of the annual Budget, setting of the council tax requirement and related matters to the Council, which if seconded, will be debated by Full Council, in accordance with the provisions below and voted upon by a simple majority.

Any elected Member may put forward to the Council any amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee's budget proposal. Members should not put forward any proposal, however, that would mean setting an unlawful budget and they must take advice from officers to ensure their proposals are in order. To this end any amendments put forward must be evaluated by the Chief Finance Officer (s.151) and Monitoring Officer, or officers appointed by them for the purpose, to determine the service, financial and legal implications of implementing those proposals. The Chief Finance Officer will seek to give to the elected Member putting forward the amendment, and discuss with them where appropriate, the affect that those proposals will have on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (The Chief Finance Officer's duty to report to Council under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003).

The intended amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee's budget proposals are required to be submitted to the Chief Finance Officer by no later than **9 am five (5) calendar days before the Council Budget Setting Meeting**.

The amended proposals, once received by the Chief Finance Officer, will be held confidentially by officers and not shared with other political parties, with the exception that any amendments received for an elected Member who is part of a Group will be shared with the relevant Group Leader. All amended proposals will be considered by finance services officers by no later than **12 noon three (3) calendar days before the day of the Council meeting**, excluding the day of the meeting itself. The Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer will confirm the legality and impact of all proposed amendments. Any that in the Monitoring Officer's opinion are unlawful shall be rejected.

All proposed amendments validated by the Chief Finance Officer will be shared with all elected Members, by email, by the Chief Finance Officer by **5pm three (3) calendar days before the Council meeting**, excluding the day of the meeting itself. Any amendments not validated by the Chief Finance Officer to be reported back to the political groups by the Chief Finance Officer.

Following a period for negotiation by political groups, any alterations to proposed amendments, will be allowed up to **9am on the day of the meeting**, provided they do not have substantial impact and are agreed with the Chief Finance Officer. By noon on the day of the Council meeting Democratic Services Officers will circulate copies of all remaining proposed amendments to all Members of the Council, by email, in case any have been withdrawn. At the Council meeting, the Mayor will refuse to accept any proposals for amendment that have not been through the above process and signed off as being a lawful proposal. Further, at the Council meeting, the Mayor will refuse to accept any additional amendments or alterations unless it is with the consent of the Council and it can be ascertained from the relevant officers that they can be made subject to above procedure within a sufficiently short time.

Council Meeting

Budget Council is an extraordinary meeting of Council and, under Standing Order 3.2, the business to be conducted shall be restricted to the Budget matters contained in the summons.

The Mayor or Council is asked to agree that the Budget related motions or amendments are dealt with in one debate (under SO15.15 Joint Debates) to facilitate the setting of a lawful budget; a process that requires flexibility and compromise.

To that end, the Council will be asked to agree suspension of Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) and such other standing orders as may conflict with this budget process or the Mayor's administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.

Debate at Council

At the Council Budget Setting Meeting the Leader as Chair of Policy & Resources Committee (or in their absence the Vice-Chair), will speak to the minute and preceding report and will move the motion to propose the Council's annual Budget. The Leader will have 15 minutes maximum for their speech.

The Chair of Children, Young People & Education Committee will speak to the Schools' Budget element of the Policy & Resources Committee Budget Recommendations/Minute(s) will have 7 minutes maximum for their speech.

The proposals will need to be seconded and the Member seconding has 7 minutes available for this purpose, or where proposed alterations have been circulated, 10 minutes. The seconder may speak at the time of seconding or reserve their speech for later on in the debate.

The Leader of the next largest Group on the Council will have the right to speak first on the proposal, who may propose any amendment, which has been signed off by the Chief Finance Officer, and will have 15 minutes maximum for their speech. Any amendment will need to be seconded and the Member seconding the amendment has 7 minutes for this purpose and may make their speech at the time of seconding or reserve it for later in the debate on this amendment.

The Leader of the next largest Group will have the right to speak next on the earlier proposals put before Council, and may have 15 minutes to propose their own amendment provided it has been signed off by the Chief Finance Officer, which shall need to be seconded with the seconder having a maximum of 7 minutes for this purpose and the right to reserve their speech until later in the debate.

This process continues until the Leader of each Group and all Members who are not in a Group have had the opportunity to speak, and the budget and all proposed amendments have been proposed and seconded.

The matter is then open to one full debate from all Members of the Council. Each Member may speak only once on this item, other than those who have submitted the original proposal or an amendment who will later have a right of reply. Each speaker, other than as set out above, has a maximum of 3 minutes to speak.

The debate is managed by the Mayor who has control of the debate and may use their discretion to ensure the effective, efficient, fair and orderly conduct of the business. The Mayor's interpretation and their application of the standing orders and this process will be final.

At the end of the debate if any Member seconding a proposal (the substantive proposal or a proposed amendment) has reserved their seconder's speech to later in the debate, their speeches, of a maximum of 7 minutes will be taken in the reverse order in which the motions were proposed and seconded.

When the debate has concluded the Leader of the Council, and any Group Leader or Member not in a Group who has proposed an amendment, will have a right of reply. Each speaker will be taken in the reverse order in which the motions were proposed and

seconded, with the Leader of the Council having the last right of reply on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee. Any speaker with a right of reply has up to 5 minutes to respond.

When the debate has concluded, the Mayor will if he/she thinks fit, sum up the debate before putting the amendments to the vote. In doing so he/she may request the Chief Finance Officer to draw the attention of the meeting to any relevant factors.

The Mayor will then put the amendments to the vote in the order of the amendments proposed by the smallest Group Leader first, followed by the next largest etc. Each amendment will be voted on in turn, with a recorded vote being required to be taken on each amendment.

Some proposed amendments may impact on others and there may be inter-dependencies between them. For example, if one amendment is passed or lost it may result in others automatically being lost, whilst some amendments may have no impact on others and may stand alone regardless of the outcome of voting on other amendments. The Chief Finance Officer will advise accordingly and the Mayor may adjourn the meeting to facilitate the provision of that advice. Following the conclusion of the voting on the amendments, the Chief Finance Officer will confirm how the individual amendments that have been carried affect the Council Tax proposal as necessary.

There may be a need for a short adjournment to allow for the preparation of the Council Tax resolutions to reflect the budget proposals as amended/if amended to be circulated prior to the substantive vote.

Once the amendments have each been voted upon and determined, the Chief Finance Officer will clarify any amendments that have been agreed and how they affect the budget proposal. The Mayor will then put the substantive proposal (motion), as amended if they have been amended, to the Council for a vote. A recorded vote is required and will be included in the minutes.

If the budget proposal is accepted without amendment by Council, the Council may make a decision which has immediate effect.

If the budget is lost, the Council will be asked by the Mayor to adjourn and allow members of the Policy and Resources Committee to meet as a working group and return to the adjourned meeting with further proposals.

An adjourned meeting must make a lawful resolution before 11th March.

Exclusion of notices of motion and formal questions

Formal questions from Councillors and Notices of Motion shall not be received and considered and the respective Council Standing Orders 12 and 13 shall accordingly not apply.

For the avoidance of doubt, neither public questions may be asked nor statements or petitions be submitted (Council Standing Orders 10 and 11) and other reports will not be considered. Motions without notice may be moved (Council Standing Order 14 applies).

Speakers

With exception of right of reply, each speaker may speak only once.
Speakers will be allocated the following time

The Leader of the Council speaking to the P&R's Budget Recommendation(s)/Minute(s)	15 minutes
The Chair of Children, Young People & Education Committee speaking to the Schools' Budget element of the P&R's Budget Recommendation(s)/Minute(s)	7 minutes
Deputy Leader (or seconder) - May reserve right to speak later ^a	7 minutes
Leader of Second largest group speech in response and (if applicable) in proposing their respective Amendment (Alternative Budget Proposals)	15 minutes
Secunder (second largest group) (if applicable) speaking to their respective Alternative Budget Proposal(s) / Amendment - May reserve right to speak later ^b	7 minutes
Green Group Leader – as above	15 minutes
Secunder	7 minutes
Lib Dem Group – as above	15 minutes
Secunder	7 minutes
Other speakers – general debate	3 minutes

^b Seconders of amendments (if reserved right to speak) ascending group size order	7 minutes
^a The Seconder of the P&R Budget Recommendation(s) / Minutes(s)	7 minutes
Group Leaders right of reply (if an amendment has been moved) in ascending order of size	5 minutes
Leader of Council Right of reply	5 minutes
<i>Move to the vote. Amendments in ascending order of size of Group, followed by substantive motion on proposals</i>	-

(For the avoidance of any doubt the times mentioned in the table above shall not affect the Mayor's discretion to permit a speaker to speak beyond the allotted time).