

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 72

**Subject:** Budget Setting Protocol

**Date of meeting:** 3 February 2022

**Report of:** Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

1.1 To agree the protocol for setting the council's budget and council tax including proceedings at the February Policy & Resources Committee and Budget Council in order to facilitate the decision-making process.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the budget protocol outlined in appendix 1 be approved for use at the Policy & Resources Committee on 10 February 2022 and the Budget Council meeting on the 24 February 2022.

### **3. Context and background information**

3.1 Budget council is a special meeting of the Authority to set the Council Tax for each year and approve the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets for the year ahead. In order to help councillors and members of the public with the process and running of the meeting a protocol has been previously adopted requiring the suspension of Standing Orders in so far as it is required to adhere to the protocol.

3.2 The protocol is being put to the Council ahead of the budget meeting so that all Members can be fully aware of the procedure that will be followed should the protocol be approved.

3.3 Similarly, the budget proposals are first considered by Policy & Resources Committee for recommendation on to Budget Council. Under normal procedure rules amendments can be submitted up to 10:00am of the morning of the meeting. However, in the case of amendments that impact the budget proposals, this is not appropriate as such amendments would be highly likely to be disallowed due to the lack of time to undertake the necessary checks, including by the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer. The protocol therefore suggests both a limitation as to the number of amendments that directly impact the budget proposals and a longer timeline for their clearance similar to the protocol for Budget Council.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 Without the proposed protocol, the budget council meeting will need to follow the usual process for its meetings, and this may prove difficult and lead to lengthy adjournments and points of clarification. As such the use of the protocol is recommended.
- 4.2 Similarly, without the recommended protocol for the February Policy & Resources Committee, there is a potential for a high number of budget amendments to be submitted which could disrupt the budget process and distract officer capacity at the very point when the substantive budget proposals are being finalised.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The council has provided budget information and a short presentation on the website to inform members of the public how the budget is formulated and set.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The budget protocol has been used successfully at previous budget meetings and is supported by the Leaders of the Groups.

#### **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications as the proposals are aimed at facilitating a smooth but robust procedure for facilitating the budget setting process through both Policy & Resources Committee and Budget Council.

Finance officer consulted: Nigel Marvel

Date consulted 26.01.22

#### **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 The legal implications of not setting a budget are outlined in appendix 2 to the report and will need to be borne in mind at the Budget council meeting on the 24 February 2022.

Lawyer consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date consulted 24.01.22

#### **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The protocol has been drawn up to enable a full discussion of the budget and for all Members who wish to participate in the debate and budget setting process.
- 9.2 The budget reports that will be considered at the meeting will include equalities impact assessments.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The protocol is proposed to ensure the smooth running of the budget council meeting and to enable the budget to be set rather than having to reconvene the meeting on another day which would then have an impact in terms of the resources required for a further meeting.

## **11. Crime & disorder implications:**

- 11.1 There are no crime & disorder implications associate with the report.

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.2 There are no public health implications associated with the report.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

- 1. Budget protocol for 10 February 2022 Policy & Resources Committee and 24 February Budget Council meeting
- 2. Setting a lawful budget for 24 February 2022 Budget Council meeting

