

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 17 th October 2017
Report Subject	Financial Forecast and Stage One of the Budget 2018/19
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside and Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Report Author	Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) and Chief Officer (Planning & Environment)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the current financial forecast for 2018/19. The forecast position shows a projected “gap” of £11.7m prior to any modelling for an increase in Council Tax.

The Council favours a staged approach to planning and approving the annual Council Fund budget.

In a series of member workshops over the summer, details of the forecast and a range of solutions to how the annual budget could be balanced were shared, based on the well-established strategy set out within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Latterly the budget options within each of the service portfolios were shared.

The emergent options for the Streetscene & Transportation and the Planning & Environment portfolios are set out within this report. The financial pressures facing the portfolio are also set out.

The timeline for the budget setting process is also set out within the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee reviews and comments on the portfolio budget options.
2	That the Committee reviews and comments on the portfolio financial pressures.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FORECAST 2018/19												
1.01	<p>The Council has set a cycle of reviewing its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on an annual basis.</p> <p>The report to Cabinet in July gave the first detailed overview of the financial forecast for 2018/19.</p>												
1.02	<p>The Financial Forecast</p> <p>The financial forecast has been revised to take into account decisions made as part of the 2017/18 budget, and updated with the latest information on pressures from service portfolios. The key variable within the forecast will be the eventual local government financial settlement for 2018/19. A settlement at or similar to the 2017/18 financial baseline is used as the basis for calculating the forecast. No modelling has been included for raised Council Tax levels at this stage. The Provisional Local Government Settlement for Wales is due to be announced on 10 October.</p>												
1.03	The revised forecast for 2018/19 is shown in Table 1 below.												
1.04	<p>Table 1: Financial Forecast 2016/17-2018/19</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Expenditure</u></th> <th>2018/19 £m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>National Pressures</td> <td>1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Pressures</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inflation</td> <td>2.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Workforce Pressures</td> <td><u>1.3</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Projected Gap</td> <td>11.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This table groups the pressures into National, Local, Inflation and Workforce pressures and further details which are specific to the Streetscene & Transportation and the Planning & Environment portfolios are included in section 1.06.</p>	<u>Expenditure</u>	2018/19 £m	National Pressures	1.0	Local Pressures	6.5	Inflation	2.9	Workforce Pressures	<u>1.3</u>	Projected Gap	11.7
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1.05	<p>Emerging Pressures</p> <p>The previous Cabinet report also set out a number of emerging pressures and positive budget variations, which will impact on the 2018/19 budget.</p> <p>The following emerging pressures relate to the Streetscene and Transportation Portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement services following transport operator issues in 2016 - £0.675m • ESD Grant reduction 17/18 - £0.169m • Additional Gas Engine Income reduction – £0.200m • Non-delivery of efficiency (shared Plant with neighbouring Authorities) - £0.050m • Motor Insurance Premium and Tax increase 17/18 - £0.100m • NSI Street lighting Energy increase 17/18 - £0.131m 												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-delivery of efficiency - Bus Subsidy - £0.350m • School Transport additional costs due to relocation of pupils from JSHS to CQHS - £0.200m <p>Detailed work to mitigate the impact of these and other pressures is ongoing.</p>
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1.06	<p>Specific Portfolio Pressures Pressures included 18/19</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Street scene & Transportation</th> <th>£m</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ESD Reduction*</td> <td>0.144</td> <td>Further Potential Reduction in grant for 18/19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Streetscene & Transportation Pressures</td> <td>0.144</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*The pressure reflects a further reduction of 7% in the Single Environment grant for 2018/19.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Planning & Environment</th> <th>£m</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Planning Fee Income</td> <td>0.350</td> <td>Pressure due to the drop in planning fee applications</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Planning & Environment Pressures</td> <td>0.350</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pressure is caused by a reduction in planning fee income which is currently being experienced due to the number of large-scale (high fee earning) planning applications not being submitted as forecast. 	Street scene & Transportation	£m	Description	ESD Reduction*	0.144	Further Potential Reduction in grant for 18/19	Total Streetscene & Transportation Pressures	0.144		Planning & Environment	£m	Description	Planning Fee Income	0.350	Pressure due to the drop in planning fee applications	Total Planning & Environment Pressures	0.350	
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1.07	<p>Inflation</p> <p>The current forecast includes projections for increases in inflation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay – includes an increase of 1% on current budgets. Any increase above the 1% which might be negotiated at a national level would have a significant impact on the forecast funding “gap”; • Price inflation – included on a critical service need only basis with £0.170m set aside for specific pressures; • Food –includes an increase of 5% on current budgets due to latest indications from our suppliers; • Fuel –includes an increase of 5% on current budgets to reflect recent increases and current forecasts; and • Energy – includes increases in energy which range from 2% for fuel oil, to 11% for electricity, to 16% for street lighting. Gas is forecast to increase by 30%. <p>Inflation provision is held centrally initially and allocated out according to need. The position on inflation remains unpredictable in the current economic and political climate, and is therefore kept under review.</p>
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1.08	<p>Risks</p> <p>Ongoing risk of reductions in the Single Environment Grant over and above that already predicted will continue to place pressure on the service.</p>
1.09	<p>Operating Model Efficiencies – Streetscene & Transportation and Planning & Environment</p> <p>Appendix 1 sets out the current resilience position for each Portfolio. The resilience statements set the context for the savings and efficiencies proposed for 2018/19.</p> <p>The portfolio options for savings and efficiencies are risk assessed as either ‘green’ or ‘amber’ are set out below.</p> <p>Further details of these options are included in Appendix 2 for both Portfolios. These options total £0.960mm</p> <p>Streetscene & Transportation - £0.800m</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste Strategy – Implementation of charging for Garden Waste collections with effect from March 2018 <p>Planning & Environment – £0.160m</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development Management – Outcome of Service Review would generate efficiency of £0.015m 2. Highways Development Control – Review current charges and consider introduction of further charges - £0.015m 3. Building Control – additional charges to generate efficiency of £0.030m from a review of existing charges and increased partnership working 4. Built Environment – Efficiency of £0.010m through charging for pre application advice on Listed Buildings. 5. Flooding and Drainage – Efficiency of £0.010m through fees being charged for collaborative work and outputs of service review. 6. Energy – Efficiency of £0.010m through service review 7. Minerals and Waste – Efficiency of £0.050m from maximising regulatory compliance income and a review of daily charging rates, thus reducing the level of contribution to the Shared Service required from the Council. 8. Rights of Way – Efficiency of £0.020m from reducing costs and Service Review

2.00	BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMELINE 2018-19
2.01	Stage One service portfolio proposals are being presented throughout October for review.
2.02	The Provisional Settlement for Local Government in Wales is due to be announced on 10 October 2017. The Final Settlement is expected later in the calendar year and will follow the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s budget

	statement which is due to be made on 22 November.
2.03	Stage Two (secondary options) will be considered between December and February, with Stage Three (budget finalisation and approval) taking place in February and March 2018.
2.04	Council meetings have been diarised in December, January, February and March.

3.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
3.01	The resource implications of setting the annual budget are significant. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will continue to carry many risks. Careful risk assessment in planning and decision-making will continue to be a central feature of planning.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultation with Group Leaders, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, external partners, external advisors and representative bodies, and eventually the communities of Flintshire will follow. The strategic approach advocated for the MTFs builds on the current approach which had majority member and public support in planning the previous two annual budgets.

5.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
5.01	All parts of the financial forecast and all budget solutions, are risk assessed stage by stage. An overall risk assessment and risk management statement will be produced both for the revised MTFs and the draft annual budget for 2018/19.

6.00	APPENDICES
6.01	Appendix 1 – Streetscene & Transportation Resilience Statement Appendix 2 – Streetscene & Transportation Operating Model Appendix 3 – Planning & Environment Resilience Statement Appendix 4 – Planning & Environment Operating Model

7.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
7.01	None. Contact Officers: Colin Everett and Gary Ferguson Telephone: 01352 702101 E-mail: gary.ferguson@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS): a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.</p> <p>Revenue Support Grant: the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to fund what it does alongside the Council Tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although their freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.</p> <p>Specific Grants: An award of funding from a grant provider (e.g. Welsh Government) which must be used for a pre-defined purpose.</p> <p>Office of Budget Responsibility: created in 2010 to provide independent and authoritative analysis of the UK public finances.</p> <p>Institute of Fiscal Studies: formed in 1969 and established as an independent research institute with the principal aim of informing public debate on economics in order to promote the development of effective fiscal policy.</p> <p>Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in Wales: established to examine how local government funding can be made more sustainable with a view to providing specific recommendations for improvement and reform.</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association: the representative body for unitary councils, fire and rescue authorities and national parks authorities in Wales.</p>