



RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

SUBJECT: 2016/17 BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to advise of the revised approach to the budget consultation and engagement activity being undertaken this year.

In accordance with the Council's scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Chief Executive as described below.

DELEGATED DECISION (Date):

- A revised approach to budget consultation be undertaken to support the 2016/17 budget setting process which will include:
 - The use of an online budget simulator
 - Three town centre roadshow events (Pontypridd, Treorchy, Aberdare)
 - A young person's consultation event
 - Use of social media and video to provide information to residents regarding the budget challenge facing the Council
- The budget consultation will run from December 16th 2015 – January 18th 2016.
- The Council has a statutory duty to consult on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This duty will be met via the revised approach.
- In view of past practice there is an implied common law duty that the Council will consult on the setting of Council Tax levels as well as the Council's budget. Again this duty will be met via the revised approach
- The Chair Persons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Performance Committee be advised of the revised approach and the move to a single continuous phase.


Chief Officer Signature


Print Name

15.12.15
Date

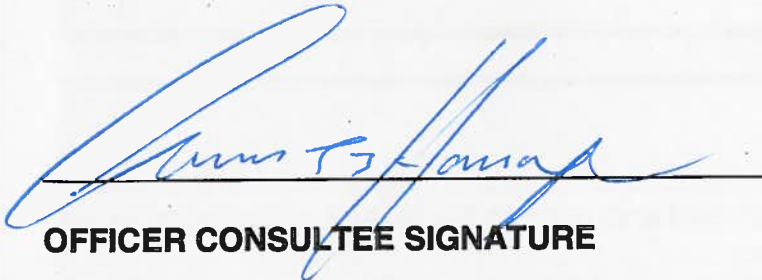
The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

K. J. Montague

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

15/12/15

DATE



OFFICER CONSULTEE SIGNATURE

15/12/15

DATE

Directorate:	Chief Executive
Contact Name:	Christian Hanagan
Designation:	Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations
Tel.No.	01443 424005



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

15TH DECEMBER 2015

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE DECISION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE 2016/17 BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

**AUTHOR(s): Christian Hanagan, Director Cabinet and Public Relations;
Tel 01443 424005**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise of the revised approach to budget consultation and engagement activity being undertaken this year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 A revised approach to budget consultation be undertaken to support the 2016/17 budget setting process which will include:
- The use of an online budget simulator
 - Three town centre roadshow events (Pontypridd, Treorchy, Aberdare)
 - A young person's consultation event
 - Use of social media and video to provide information to residents regarding the budget challenge facing the Council
- 2.2 The budget consultation will run from December 16th 2015 – January 18th 2016.
- 2.3 The Council has a statutory duty to consult on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This duty will be met via the revised approach.
- 2.4 In view of past practice there is an implied common law duty that the Council will consult on the setting of Council Tax levels as well as the Council's budget. Again this duty will be met via the revised approach.
- 2.5 The Chair Persons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Performance Committee be advised of the revised approach and the move to a single continuous phase.



3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. In previous years the Council has undertaken a two phase approach to budget consultation but due to the timing of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), this approach needs revising to ensure comprehensive consultation can take place and inform the budget setting process.
- 3.2. This has provided an opportunity to review and improve on the budget consultation process undertaken in recent years which has had limited engagement.
- 3.3. The revised approach outlined in the report enables this to happen via a single continuous phase whilst also providing opportunities for enhanced resident engagement in the budget setting process through the provision of a more engaging and interactive process.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. Due to the timing of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the Council did not receive its settlement until December 9th 2015.
- 4.2. This is considerably later than in previous years and has a knock on effect on the Council's ability to undertake its usual 2 phased approach to budget consultation.
- 4.3. In recent years the two phase approach has had limited resident engagement.
- 4.4. The way in which the Council consults with residents and stakeholders regarding service change has evolved over the last 12-18 months to make use of technology to provide information and opportunities to engage.
- 4.5. There is now an opportunity to increase engagement in the budget setting process by developing a more interactive and engaging process which will involve:
 - Use of an online budget simulator providing information on the services the Council provides and the potential consequences of increasing or reducing funding to services to set a legally balanced budget
 - Town centre roadshow events which will give residents the opportunity to engage with and speak to Cabinet Members and senior officers regarding the budget challenge facing the Council
 - An event for young people to engage in the budget setting process



- Use of social media and video to provide information to residents regarding the budget challenge and ongoing work being undertaken to tackle it.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Opportunities to get involved in the budget consultation will be provided via a range of methods including online, at roadshow events and a specific event for young people
- 5.2. The online budget simulator is accessible on mobile phones and tablet devices and residents without internet access or smart phone/tablet devices can visit a local library to access the online budget simulator or request a hard copy of the budget consultation questionnaire.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1. The recommendations outlined in the report seek to enhance the budget consultation process to make it more interactive and engaging.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1. There are no financial implications for this revised approach.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1. The Council has a statutory duty to consult on Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which will be met under the revised approach to budget consultation outlined.

9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.

- 9.1. The budget setting process clearly impacts on the delivery of all Council services which contribute in turn to the delivery of Council's Corporate Priorities, Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The revised approach to consultation in respect of the budget setting process seeks to ensure the timing of the CSR does not affect the Council's ability to undertake comprehensive engagement with residents and stakeholders regarding this important issue.



10.2 The revised approach also seeks to ensure the Council consults with residents in a more engaging and interactive fashion that it has previously regarding over budget consultation taking advantage of technologies available.