

## **Standards Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Elected Members role in the budget setting process (Draft)**

#### **Summary of report:**

The report is to consult with members in respect of a guidance note to be distributed to all elected members detailing their role in the budget setting process. This is part of the consultation process to aid the lawful setting of the council budget.

#### **Background papers:**

None

#### **Recommendation:**

##### **To note the content of the report**

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The council is required by law to set a balanced budget. This guidance is intended to provide elected members with information to help explain their role in the setting of a lawful budget.
- 1.2 This is part of a growing suite of guidance notes issued to help elected members in fulfilling their roles.

#### **2.0 Resource and legal considerations:**

2.1 There are no resource considerations. The council is obliged by law to set a balanced budget. This guidance is designed to help in facilitating this process. There is always a risk of legal challenge when there are proposals to change service levels this note should help improve the decision making process. The main challenges to service changes are normally in relation to lack of consultation.

#### **3.0 Financial Implications**

3.1 There are no financial implications.

#### **4.1 Performance and Risk Management issues:**

4.1 Performance and risk management is a feature of all council functions. It is important that council policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a

regular basis. If the council fails to do this there is an increased risk that the council will be subject to legal challenge or litigation.

4.2 In terms of performance it is important that both Elected Members have a clear understanding of their role in the budget setting process.

#### **4.0 Equality Implications:**

4.1 In maintaining up to date policies and procedures the council will ensure that services are delivered fairly in an open and transparent manner. There are specific requirements in both codes that elected members and officers observe equalities. The guidance note refers to the importance of the council having regard to the public sector equality duty in decision making processes.

#### **5.0 Consultation:**

5.1 There is no requirement to consult on this report.

#### **Author:**

Tony Cox  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
☎ 01922 654822  
✉ [coxt@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:coxt@walsall.gov.uk)