

Financial Sustainability Working Group – Terms of Reference**Objective**

There is an urgent imperative for the Council to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget and an expectation from Government, expressed through the recent MHCLG review, that the Council will move to this sustainable budget position by the 2023/24 financial year. Officer structures were introduced to ensure that the financial challenges and the move to sustainability are closely governed with urgency and grip. These arrangements are as follows:

- There is a two-weekly process of evaluating ideas, developing business cases, and escalating and unblocking issues (RIT and Executive CMT)
- There is a monthly meeting of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) that makes decisions on the strategic financial proposals (from an officer basis) and holds an operational oversight of performance against budget actions.

This officer structure (set out in Annex A) now needs to be matched in new member arrangements and structures.

Core to this is the creation of a cross party working group of members, working in partnership, reviewing Council expenditure and services, ideas presented by officers, and producing ideas of their own for officers to evaluate with a view to recommending a sustainable, balanced budget to Cabinet for the next financial year and the medium term.

This will also include reviewing the current year financial position and making recommendations to be incorporated as part of a revised budget, in order to strengthen the current financial position and deliver savings and efficiencies at the earliest opportunity. These terms of reference set out the purpose, membership and operations of this new cross party working group.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Financial Sustainability Working Group (FSWG) is to address the funding gap and deliver a robust and sustainable budget by 2023/24, by:

- Conducting a thorough review of all the Council's budgets;
- Formulating a budget strategy to create a balanced and sustainable budget by 2023/24;
- Reviewing budget ideas and proposals presented by senior officers and agreeing which of those ideas are incorporated in the budget and which require further work to be undertaken;
- Identifying new savings, income generation and efficiency opportunities for officers to work on and bring back as proposals for the budget;
- Recommending a budget for the 2022/23 financial year to Council within available resources;
- Advising the Council on a Medium Term Financial Strategy for following financial years;
- Advising the Council on the budget position during the current financial year (including Revenue programme, capital programme, reserve levels and asset disposals).

Constitution & powers

This is a working group of Cabinet and any recommendations would be made to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Membership

The FSWG shall comprise of:

- Group Leaders and their Deputies;
- The Finance Spokesperson for each Group;
- The Cabinet Member for Finance.

Substitution arrangements will not apply.

The Financial Sustainability Working Group shall appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair at its first Meeting. The quorum of the Working Group shall be half plus one based on the agreed membership at the start of each financial year.

Operations

Meetings will be held on a monthly basis, within 2 weeks of the Officer CMT Budget Group (as set out in Annex A). Meetings may be held more or less frequently as the Group sees fit.

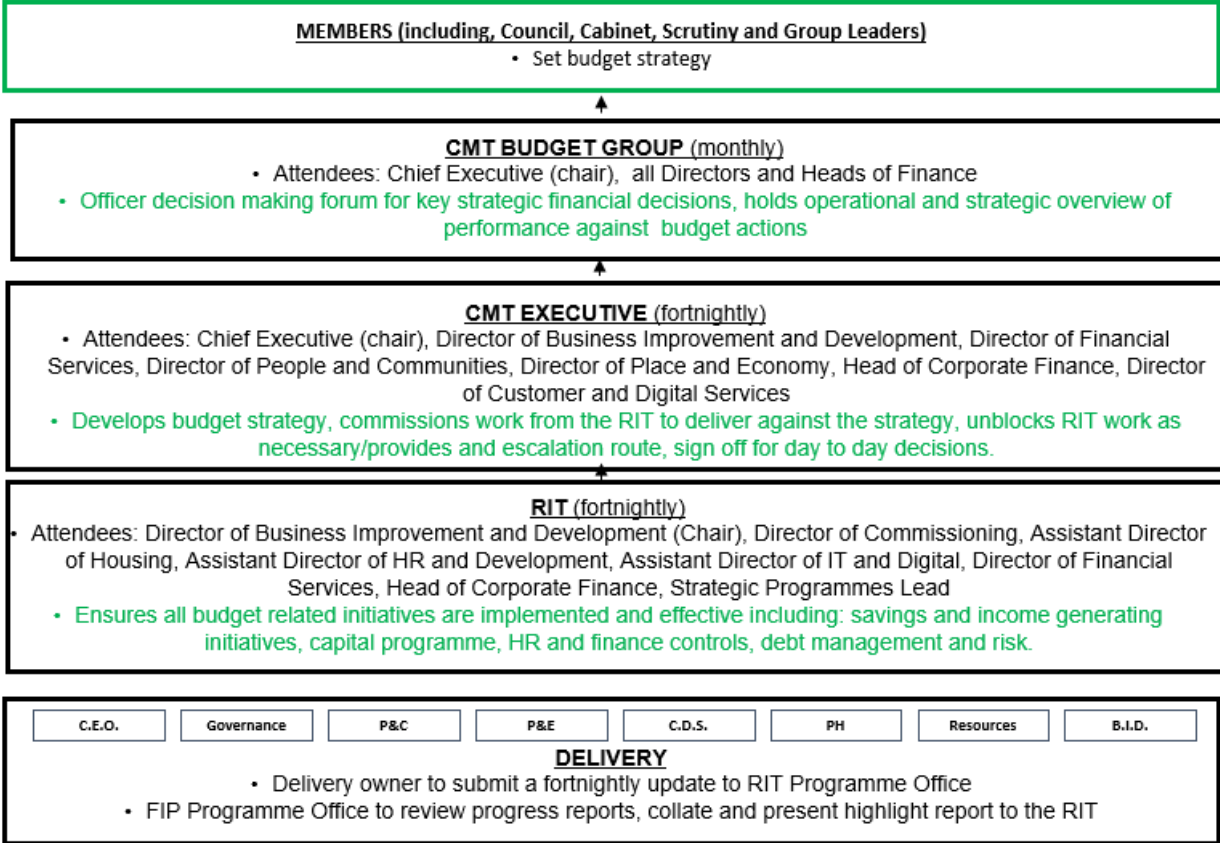
Meetings of the Working Group will be supported by the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer. The Corporate Management Team will attend as necessary to present and discuss proposals, and respond to Group queries.

Meetings will be administered by the Corporate Finance Team with confidential briefing papers issued in advance of the meeting and notes, attendance and actions taken at each meeting.

Papers distributed prior to the meetings will contain the same information as those discussed at Budget CMT and Budget CPF.

Papers will be confidential as proposals being discussed will directly affect Staff and Service users.

Officer Meeting Structure



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